From clouds, swallows and palm trees: the traditions and and popular stories form Escuintla

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Linguistic groups for Escuintla. Since 10th century before the spanish presence, this region was invaded for the second time by inmigrants from mexican central highlands, who speak nahua lenguage.

The previus invation was from nahuatl speakers. This later became known as Pipil, that was the spanish found. Currently the pipil has desapear however, Due to its proximity to Sacatepéquez and Chimaltenango, and through temporary or mercantile migrations, the Kaqchikel language is used. In Palín, since the 13th century, the Poqomam language is exclusively used.

Traditional material culture of Escuintla

The department of Escuintla is located in the south of the republic. Include an area around 4,384 square kilometers, with a total population of 386,534 people, acording to the sense of 1994, of which 6.44% were indigenous. Only in the municipality of Palín is the central Poqomam language spoken.

It borders to the north with the departments of Chimaltenango, Sacatepéquez, and Guatemala; to the east with Santa Rosa; to the south with the Pacific Ocean; and to the west with Suchitepéquez.

According to the historian Francisco Fuentes y Guzmán, the word 'Escuintla' is derived from the Pipil 'yzquit' - dog; and 'tepet' - hill, meaning hill of dogs, possibly because many 'tepezcuintles' are raised in its mountains.

This department is one of the most important from agricultural, livestock, and commercial perspectives, as it is a necessary passage for communication with El Salvador and Mexico, as well as with the shipping ports in the Pacific. Its topography is quite varied, with the volcanic group highlighted by the Pacaya Volcano, additionally, there is the Cerro Alto Volcano in San Vicente Pacaya and several other significant hills, causing the elevations of the municipalities to vary between 1,680 meters above sea level in San Vicente Pacaya and 1.98 in the Puerto de San José.

Its lands are very fertile as they are irrigated by various rivers such as Michatoya, Guacalate, Coyolate, María Linda, Nahualate, and Madre Vieja. Something unique is the Chiquimulilla canal, which is navigable by small boats, which make the comunication easier with several comunities not only with the department, but also with Santa Rosa. Inaddition, there are some lagoons like Tecajate, Quitasombrero, Los Patos and Sipacate, also three important ports, not only for tourism, but also comercial, that are: San José, Iztapa and Quetzal.

From a historical perspective, the port of Iztapa holds significance as it was where Mr. Pedro de Alvarado built the fleet of ships he sailed for the conquest of the South Sea. Likewise, the municipality of La Democracia encompasses a rich archaeological area, especially the ruins of Monte Alto and Santa Rosa.

In terms of agricultural production, Escuintla is one of the most important departments due to its cultivation of coffee, sugarcane, banana, plantain, lemon tea, and various fruits. To a lesser extent, maize, beans, vegetables, and other products are also

cultivated. There is livestock farming of cattle and horses, and due to its coastal location, salt exploitation and fishing are also carried out.

Being predominantly an agricultural department, there is limited artisanal development. In the municipality of Palín, traditional weavings stand out for their vibrant colors and beauty; in addition, they manufacture wooden furniture and engage in leather tanning. Industrial activities include factories for paper, cardboard, distilleries, rubber capes, and sugar mills.

The Escuintla Department, being predominantly agricultural and livestock-oriented, lacks popular handicrafts in many of its municipalities. However, we can say that in the department cotton weavings are produced which include different types of clothing, as well as leather products such as saddles, cowboy gear (bridles, reins, etc.). Additionally, tiles and bricks are crafted for construction purposes, commonly used in building houses and their roofs, observable in the rural areas of the department. It is also noteworthy that wooden articles, especially toys and furniture, are crafted.

Popular crafts are not produced in the following municipalities: Escuintla, Guanagazapa, La Democracia, La Gomera, Nueva Concepción, Masagua, San Vicente Pacaya, Siquinalá, and Tiquisate.

Popular crafts are practiced in very few municipalities, among which Iztapa stands out:

Iztapa

They manufacture casting nets, fishing harpoons, hooks, trammel nets, and lumps.

Palín

Traditional cotton weavings, toy marimbas, wooden furniture, soap, and tanneries are crafted.

San José

They produce fishing gear and also manufacture canoes; in the areas near the beaches, objects made of seashells and snails such as bracelets, rings, ornaments, and toys are crafted.

Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa

They create candles of various designs, as well as the art of embroidery using gold and silver threads.

The traditional social culture of Escuintla
Principal and patronal festivals

Municipality	Titular Festival	Advocation
Escuintla	December 8	Virgen de Concepción
Guanagazapa	February 15	San Lorenzo
Iztapa	December 25	Christmas
La Democracia	April 4	San Benito de Palermo
	January 1	Santísimo Nombre de Jesús (New Year)
La Gomera	November 12	San Diego de Alcalá
Masagua	Movable	3rd Friday of Lent
Nueva Concepción	December 8	Virgen de Concepción
Palín	July 30	San Cristóbal
San José	March 19	Patriarca San José
San Vicente Pacaya	January 22	San Vicente Mártir
Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa	December 13	Santa Lucía
Siquinalá	November 25	Santa Catalina Alejandría
Tiquisate	December 22 to January 2	Christmas and New Year

Brotherhoods and Fraternities

The Escuintla municipality that best preserves its brotherhoods with a deep-rooted connection to its customs is Palín, where the Pokomames exercise a strong influence over its population, facing a significant cultural opposition from the Ladinos. In the rest of the municipalities, brotherhoods and social committees responsible for patronal and titular festivities have taken place.

Dances and Dances

Due to its proximity to Sacatepéquez, Escuintla was one of the first regions influenced by the emerging culture in the century XVI of the city of Santiago de Guatemala and the former Ciudad Vieja in the Valley of Almolonga. As a result, colonial popular theater took root in the region, making Escuintla an epicenter for dramatic representations such as hymns to the Virgin of Concepción on one hand and traditional dances on the other. Palín and Siquinalá, for example, became crucial centers for dance.

Regarding dances, it was the Moors and Christians dances that thrived during colonial times, persisting in practice to this day. Thus, when it comes to Moors and Christians dances, some of their variations are still performed in the following municipalities:

Municipality	Dances
Palín	Los 12 pares de Francia
Siquinalá	El Rey Fernando Fierabrás Rey Azarín Rey David El Africano Santa Catarina Napoleón

Other dances found in Escuintla are:

Siquinalá	Los tres Venados
Pto. De San José	De Toritos; El Costeño
Siquinalá	Los Cuatro Toros
Siquinalá	La Conquista
Palín	La Invasión Extranjera (La Conquista)
Siquinalá	De Animalitos: El Tauro
Siquinalá	La región de los 24 Diablos Las siete virtudes

Markets

The Escuintla`s market is without a doubt, the biggest market in the southern coast. With a big amount of products, there is the possibility to meet domestic and everyday needs, as well as industrial ones. Its fruit market is extraordinary, as well as the seafood market. Escuintla attracts visitors from across the entire Central American southern coast, as it serves as an obligatory transit location for products that cross from coast to coast of the country.

Popular sayings

The official language is the Spanish. However some people speak pokoman in Palín and in some places k`aqchikel is heard and the immigrants from Chimaltenango speaking k`iche`, Sololá, Sacatepéquez, and Baja Verapaz come to work on its shores for seasons.

Traditional Spiritual Culture of Escuintla

Oral Literature

Escuintla is one of the most fertile and rich regions in Guatemala and even in Mesoamerica. Located between the volcanic chain that runs along the Guatemalan southern coast and the Pacific Ocean, the alluvial fans of volcanic soil make this region one of the most productive for agroindustry.

Since pre-Hispanic era, this territory was considered to possess the most abundant lands. It also served as a passageway for inhabitants of the central Mexican highlands who migrated to southern Mesoamerica in the late 13th century, particularly the Pipil people, who constituted part of its original population. Despite its pre-Hispanic indigenous population and its indissoluble connection to the Conquest of Guatemala, the population of Escuintla, due to its historical process, is highly mestizo, with the exception of the municipality of Palín (Pokomam) and in Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, there is some presence of the K'iche' ethnic group. The historical process and its socioeconomic development have made Escuintla a fertile ground for the emergence and continuity of very ancient Western oral traditions. These traditions also preserve the substrate of the ancestral pre-

Hispanic population in most municipalities of the department.

However, the oral traditional legacies are highly re-signified and hybridized, making it impossible to dissect historical inheritances. Furthermore, in modern times, this tradition is affected by the high socioeconomic development of the department, almost turning it into an extension of Guatemala City. Oral traditions in Escuintla, like in all of Guatemala, originate during very particular activities. They are reenacted during wakes, the conclusion of novenas, and also serve as a mnemonic resource for entertainment in the sugarcane fields, sugar mills, as well as in coffee plantations and processing centers. The stories and legends narrated on these occasions have the "function of breaking the monotony" of hot days and the routine of rural occupations, as well as in livestock activities, such as in Guanagazapa, where cowboys and laborers gather on the porches of houses to "tell things and stories," or as happens in La Gomera and Nueva Concepción, where they sit alongside the road, under the leafy trees, to narrate and listen to oral stories and traditions.

In the region exist two kinds of narrators. Any of them receive a particular name, But in most municipalities of Escuintla, they are recognized as storytellers or "palabreros." These storytellers come in two categories: firstly, the elderly who possess the wisdom of their community and have a great ability to narrate stories. They are called upon during wakes and the conclusion of novenas to entertain people, tell stories, and share jokes to ensure that the deceased does not leave the earth feeling sad, as asserted in Masagua. Secondly, there are middle-aged individuals who are knowledgeable about oral traditions and repeat them daily.

Two storytellers of extraordinary versatility in Escuintla are Mr. Oswaldo Alfaro, the guardian of the brotherhood of the souls in the city of Escuintla, and Mr. Antonio Ramírez (Tío Chío or Mr. Conejo) from the San Pedro neighborhood, also in the city of Escuintla. It is said that he rarely misses a wake or the end of a novena throughout the department of Escuintla. Noteworthy storytellers also include Mr. Reginaldo Marín from Tiquisate and Mr.a Zoila Higueros from Siquinalá.

In the municipalities with Maya heritage, storytellers are referred to as Ajitz in Palín and Ajtzij Winaq in the highlands of Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, with K'iche' heritage. The former is found throughout the department as the population is highly hybridized, though their ancestry is Western. Many ancient literary forms, both medieval and Renaissance, are preserved and have become distinctly Guatemalan through repetition.

Among the most enduring literary forms are various oral prose genres such as legends, myths, cases, and all types of popular stories. In oral verse literature, there is an abundance of couplets, ballads, décimas, and ancestral ballads and romances, often echoing Moorish and medieval Arabic literature. As Escuintla is a region with a Franciscan devotion, the cult of the Virgen de la Concepción is deeply rooted. In Guatemalan popular theater, praises are performed as a popular dramaturgy during the month of December, especially during religious processions. However, these authentic traditional theater companies are not native to Escuintla but come from Ciudad Vieja in the Department of Sacatepéquez.

This coastal region is one of the Guatemalan areas where folk tales of all kinds persist with

extraordinary proliferation. Among the marvelous tales in Masagua, the enchantment of the "guardacamino" is narrated: it is said that in the town, there was a man deeply in love with a girl who ignored him. One night on Dia de San Juan, he went to the nearby sugarcane fields, sat down, took off his headscarf, and placed it in front of him. Then, a little bird called "guardacamino," which sang very sadly and "cries as sadly as a lost soul," as they say in Democracia and San Vicente Pacaya, appeared. The bird, singing and crying, walked on the headscarf and began to "dance in a strange way." The man got scared, but he grabbed the headscarf, and from that moment on, women pursued him, "they swarmed around him like flies." He always wore the headscarf tied around his neck or on the machete handle, and women always sought him out.

Meanwhile, in the municipality of San José, the tale of the "Pitío," or as they call it in La Gomera, "Flor del Agilar," is deeply rooted. It revolves around a king who fell ill and sent his sons in search of a marvelous flower called Flor del Agilar, which would cure him. The three sons set out to find it but failed, except for the youngest, who was killed by his brothers and buried in a sugarcane field in Escuintla. The king recovered, but a "pitío" or cane flute warned the ruler that his older sons had murdered the youngest.

Then, filled with sorrow, he punished the older sons, and God allowed his youngest son to resurrect and rule the people of Masagua with justice. Similar tales of this nature appear in Iztapa, Guanagazapa, and Nueva Concepción. In Tiquisate, the story of Rosa Flor and Blanca Flor, with clear medieval influences, holds significant influence. In Escuintla, Mr. Chío narrates tales during wakes, including some of the most beautiful in traditional Guatemalan storytelling, such as "La princesa que cuidaba coches" and "el valiente Ricardo."

Animal tales abound, featuring characters like Tio Conejo and Tio Coyote, as well as other animals like the taltuza, tacuacines, horses, and bulls described as "marvelously adorned with gold, guarding the enchantment of the hills and water sources." In Escuintla, tales of marvelous bandits like Pedro Urdemales, known as such in Escuintla, Pedro Ardimales in Tiquisate, Pedro Tecomate in Palín, and Pedro el malo in Guanagazapa are professionally recounted. Religious tales are highly appreciated in Escuintla as well. In such a way that the popular saints live and coexist with the population: In Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, San Antonio, a priest from the central neighborhood, finds lost things and helps "girls" find boyfriends. In San Vicente Pacaya, San Francisco rides a horse, blessing "the beasts of the field." In Iztapa, San Isidro is a fisherman who ventures to the sea every day to collect fish and rain daily during the winter. On the coasts of Nueva Concepción, San Juan is a cattleman who appears with his horses and bulls that he keeps in enchanted pastures where grass never runs out. At every corner of the pasture, an amate tree and a peppermint plant grow, blooming only on the night of Dia de San Juan. In La Gomera, Santa Ana is a midwife who lives in the center of the town and helps ladies "who are going to fix themselves but find it difficult." She appears to help them give birth without pain, as she did "when the Virgen Maria was fixed." It is said that in the caves of San Pedro Mártir, San Pedro comes to bathe in its thermal waters.

In Palín, they claim that since San Pedro has walked a lot since always, he "comes to rest his feet" in these miraculous waters. In

Escuintla, storytellers, on the other hand, assert that the one who appears in the caves is the Wandering Jew. Many residents of La Gomera claim to have seen him in the deepest parts of the caves.

As for the praises, they are performed in Escuintla, Siquinalá, at the Pantaleón sugar mill during the sugarcane harvest days, and in the village of Los Tarros, where praises are numerous during the procession of the Virgen de la Concepción from December 8th each year.

Regarding legends, animistic ones abound, with the Sombrerón being particularly famous, but even more so the Cadejo, which is well-known in Escuintla, La Gomera, and Masagua. They tell that it is a black, shaggy dog that watches over the workers in pastures, sugarcane fields, coffee yards, and near the railroad tracks. In Tiquisate, it is said that the Cadejo does not allow workers to stay stranded on the train line; it drags and finds them to prevent the train from running them over.

La Siguanaba is a character of extraordinary significance throughout the department, including Iztapa and San José. In Escuintla, due to its own economic development, apparitions and wandering spirits have adapted to new conditions. For example, in La Democracia, it is claimed that the Siguanaba "is a woman with a horse's face who gets on your motorcycle when you're heading to the coast and takes you off the road." In Siquinalá, truck drivers complain that a woman dressed in white gets on straight roads and makes them drive into the sugarcane fields. They also tell stories that in the carts transporting sugarcane, the "tzipitíos" appear, sucking the juice from the cut canes, causing them to "rot." Therefore, in Tiquisate, all the carts carry red cloths to scare them away.

In Escuintla, it is said that every evening, swallows flood the trees in the parks and the electric power lines. They are nothing more than the souls of grandparents who come to visit to see how their people are behaving. That's why there are so many swallows in the palm trees of the city.

Regarding oral literature of Mayan origin, narrated in two municipalities of Escuintla, the following can be noted: In Palín, storytellers or Ajitz call "chim il sa" or star excrement to small stars that, in the past, before the existence of evil, descended to the earth and, upon collision, turned into silver coins. But when evil appeared, they stopped becoming "silver bombs" and turned into "worms." It is also told that at four in the morning, four stars (Cruz Chimil) appear, guiding the sugarcane cutters who come down from Palín to the sugar mills of Escuintla to work in the immense sugarcane fields. Here, the legend of the Tronchador is also narrated, which is an evil man who appears on the trails and roads of the region and scares people to death due to the diabolical nature of his outward appearance.

In Palín, there is a crossing known as Puente del Diablo. People say that very strange things happened in that place. Since the road machinery was stored nearby, it was always in good condition, but many mornings, the tractors appeared with bent teeth, and the bulldozers were cut in half. The townspeople claimed that it was the devil who came at night to play with the machines and hid under the bridge to laugh at the workers and supervisors who were very scared. In this municipality, there are legends of enchanted hills such as Pan Tereekb'al or Candelaria Hill,

Saq Kyej (or White Horse Hill). Pan K'iche pak or Pantlaguate, a small mountain where the Lord of the Hill resides. But the most famous is the Peñón de Palín, where all the Lords of the Hills are sheltered, guarding the entrance to the Poqomam region. When an airplane bothers them too much, the lords release hummingbirds that get between the planes and knock them down.

In Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, where heirs of the K'aqchikel culture reside, legends of the lords of the hills prevail. They are faithful guardians of the mountains and volcanoes of Escuintla. For example, on the Volcan de Pacaya, Rajawal Juyú, the owner of this great enchanted hill, resides. It is also asserted that the volcano will always emit smoke, ash, and fire because it is very fierce, and it will only calm down when Gukumatz and the Heart of the Sky return to sow corn on its slopes.

Music

The music of the department of Escuintla is rich in sound traditions. However, due to the industrial development of the department, the music of Mexican and North American counterculture has prevailed over the music of oral tradition.

However, there are sound expressions that resist disappearing. In the municipality of Palín, sones are performed on a simple marimba, and there are also sones and plays on chirimilla, drum, whistle, and tzijolaj. In Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, the double marimbas are famous, giving concerts in the gazebo of the park, the churchyard, and entertaining the civil and social festivities of the community. In San Vicente de Pacaya, there are string creators and drummers highly appreciated for their musical interpretation. They are hired to perform at various patron saint festivities in the municipalities of Escuintla and even in Sacatepéquez. In all municipalities, military bands are reported to accompany civil ceremonies and Holy Week processions.

Despite the musical richness of the department, in municipalities like San José, Iztapa, and Nueva Concepción, due to their proximity to the sea, public beaches, and agricultural areas, northern and tex-mex music rhythms have been introduced to accompany all their daily activities, especially recreational ones.

Traditional Medicine

Due to the proximity of the Escuintla department to Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, the capital of the Republic, health centers partially address the health problems of the population. However, in distant municipalities and villages, and even in the city of Escuintla itself, there are trained midwives, some by health centers, to assist with childbirth and childcare. These "healing women," as they are called in Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, Guanagazapa, and Tiquisate, are highly sought after.

In Palín, there are female healers who use medicinal herbs and aromas and perform "cleansings" against bad luck, the evil eye, fallen fontanelle, and love sickness. In La Democracia, there are herbologists who prepare infusions and perfumes with secret plants, with a clear Western heritage, that cure all kinds of ailments and diseases. These traditional perfumers of La Democracia are unique in Guatemala, resembling medieval alchemists in their technical procedures.

In Nueva Concepción, there are "bone setters" who are highly esteemed through the

department for "fixing" dislocated bones and fractures. To cure, they use herbs and movements inherited from ancient times, enabling them to realign bones without major issues. They are in high demand in the Escuintla communities because they also "fix broken bones" in domestic animals, especially dogs (chuchos), as well as cows, horses, and oxen, especially in Siquinalá. Additionally, in Siquinalá, there are famous witches and healers known for both good and evil throughout the southern coast.

Due to the volcanic characteristics of the department, there are abundant thermal and medicinal waters, such as those in Patul in the city of Escuintla itself, very close to Plaza Palmeras. Another notable location is the waters of the Grutas de San Pedro Mártir in the Municipality of Escuintla. The religious landscape in the department of Escuintla is diverse, with a mix of Catholic festivities and a proliferation of fundamentalist Christian religions. Nevertheless, within the popular religiosity, various religious festivities and ceremonies hold significance.

In all municipalities, the patron saint festivities stand out, such as those in Puerto de San José, where the Procesión del Patrón through the streets, squares, beaches, and has even reached the sea on some occasions, where it is celebrated by fishermen with a lot of gunpowder and even carpets made of seashells and flowers. The celebration of Santo Patrono in Palín is also splendid, dedicated to San Cristóbal, where the "Choferes" or motorists take charge of making carpets, adorning their vehicles with flowers and pine worm, and accompany the procession with a large amount of gunpowder. It is said in Palín that since the Church took San Cristóbal from heaven and the saint had nowhere to live, they gave him the ceiba tree in the square to make his home. On that day, they say they have seen San Cristóbal sitting in the ceiba, "fanning the Child Jesus with a palm frond.

One of the most splendid festivities in the region is the celebration of the Virgen de la Concepción, commemorated in December in Escuintla, Siquinalá, and villages and hamlets near the sugar mills like El Baúl and Los Tarros. Christmas celebrations are very joyful and traditional in Escuintla, particularly in Tiquisate, where large nativity scenes are still made, the Child Jesus is stolen, and Epiphany novenas are held, along with joyful posadas (processions reenacting the journey to Bethlehem) and the burning of the devil.

In La Democracia, it is said that on January 2nd, the Nino Dios descends from the main altar of the church and visits the nativity scenes in every home, playing with the clay shepherds. That's why sometimes the nativity scenes are found disturbed on that day. As it is claimed in Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa, the Nino de los Nacimientos appears on scenes, not because he's been stolen, but because he goes to bathe in the Rio Agunarcito and wander around the Montanas de la China or Achiotes.

In San Vicente Pacaya, it is told that San Vicente Mártir is tied by the heart to the Earth's crater of the volcano, which is why God punishes the inhabitants of the region so much and doesn't extinguish the volcano.

In Iztapa, they say that on the day of San Rafael Archangel, an angel has been seen walking on the waves of the sea with its wings spread. They say it is San Rafael descending from heaven to bless the beaches and the schools of fish.

Other festivities celebrated in the department of Escuintla are the Corpus Christi processions with their sawdust carpets, the palio, and the "quintado" in Custody of the Silver and Gold, which traverse the streets of the city and towns of the department in the month of June each year.

The beginnings of the controversy about the origin of marimba: some other reflections

ALFONSO ARRIVILLAGA

This work is part of a larger program developed by the Ethnomusicology Area around the "national instrument" and the invention-imposition of a certainly uniforming "sonic imaginary" that encompasses a good part of the speeches disguised as academic. Therefore, we can affirm that it seeks reflection on a little-studied and attended universe, namely the relative production of bibliography about the instrument and the discourse derived from these writings. It also seeks to support the consolidation of a historiography about the instrument, a vision absent throughout the efforts made, which mostly get lost in the pursuit of a genesis and patriotic rhetoric.

Background

In a recent work, Arrivillaga presents an overview of the first references and the corpus of data that support a poor and weak (if not non-existent) historiographical structure about the instrument in question. Starting from the well-known reference of Domingo Juarros, regarding the participation of the instrument in the inauguration of the Iglesia de Catedral in 1680, there is a recount of the scarce archival references that show the instrument from then until the 19th century. Linked to the music chapel, where surely throughout the 18th century it presented its maximum splendor within the ecclesiastical structure, although the latter is still a hypothesis, the marimba became appropriated by the middle class and later accepted by the more affluent groups. It is clear that delving into historiography is still a pending task.

By the late decades of the 19th century, the instrument had gained enough popularity to be included in Sáenz Poggio's first history of music, showing thereby the popularity it enjoyed. Even then, the addition of wax balls to produce semitones stands out, showing the constant concern that has been had regarding the instrument and new and better possibilities of interpretation. Juarros accuses Maestro Padilla of this, and it is what is about to happen, in the early 20th century, the process of transforming the instrument from diatonic to chromatic.

If the popularity of the marimba is something noted by the chronicles left by travelers, it will be the written press that reflects the impact of the instrument's emergence in society, and we can also notice the equally early development of a controversy regarding its origins, a problem that rests more on the national level than on the effective search for an origin that, anyway, I do not think serves much purpose.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the Diario de Centro América (DCA) and the Liberal Progresista (LP), among other written media, reflect an intense artistic life with

multiple facets, especially concerning music. A review of the news shows this panorama. We see notes related to shows, such as foreign companies visiting the country, such as the "Compania Mexicana" with musical revues or zarzuelas, and a wide range of pianos for sale, surely in response to demand, which includes musical grammars like that of Maestro Cantinela. There we find the presentation notes of bands, whether it be the well-known Banda Marcials or the Segundo Batallón, showing a society that is opening up to new public and civil spaces and showing unprecedented initiatives such as dance societies, as is the case with "El Lago Azul". Education is something that is not forgotten and is growing, as shown by the note on the inauguration of the music school in Mixco by Maestro Indalecio Castro, "one of the most prominent musicians of the moment at the national level," or even events of liturgical music that until recently functioned as the director of the fine arts scene, such as the announcement made for the performance of the Miserere.

This quick selection from a long list of events, of the nature mentioned, but with a much more extensive enumeration, gives an account of a broad scenario in the field of the arts, not only as shows but also in favor of users and practitioners of various arts. Undoubtedly, the nature of written media has been modified and specialized, leading these notes to briefly include a place, day, and time accompanied by brief reviews of cultural events.

The Marimba in the Diario de Centro América and the Liberal Progresista

After this enumeration of some notes about cultural and artistic life, we find the emergence of another type of advertisement, this time related to the marimba and the spaces it is gaining in society. This is the case of the recognition received in 1915 by the "Guatemala Marimba Band," which appears on the cover of the Diario de Centroamérica during its tour in San Francisco, California. This same newspaper presents an interview with the Hurtado Brothers after a tour through South America with the "marimba and the indigenous tun," a truly extensive and rich article about the instrument, the musicians, and the audience of that generation. Another tour that caused a great stir is the one referring to "a Guatemalan marimba at the Dallas exposition," which, by the way, had to stop being called "La Palma de Oro" to become the Marimba Guatemala. Additionally, we can appreciate the ensemble "Alma India" at the Tapachula fair, and the "Quiche Winak" at the inauguration of the Golden Gate in California.

In relation of the marimba and its participation in parties in the country, El Liberal Progresista which includes participation of Huehuetenango: “ in this capital it is customary to celebrate new year in the best way possibl: in the main square, a considerable number of people gather in the afternoon of December 31st to stroll through the park until after midnight, entertained by the marimba of the Palacios brothers"; or the interesting note about the great marimba "Maderas de mi Tierra," alternating with a 60-member orchestra, presented for the celebrations of Jorge Ubico's 6-year presidency, said event will take place in the southern market of Puerto Barrios.

Regarding this successful stage of the ensembles and their tours abroad, the recording of their ensembles with record labels such as JVC, even about their migration to the United States of America in the case of outstanding practitioners who are decisive for the development of the instrument in this

northern country, as well as the incorporation of certain local techniques by manufacturing companies like Musser in standardized marimbas, are the most abundant data, and these are presented more as a record than as a presentation of data for the interpretation of their social significances.

Guiding the controversy about the marimba.

Parallel to this series of allegorical notes, photos, and recognitions about the success of the marimba in the media, there also appear some notes that direct the gaze beyond the events and start to question the origins of the instrument, something that until now has not mattered to anyone, incorporating into the debate the theses of a local, American origin, and finally a series of claims that seek to advocate for the paternity of the instrument regarding the processes of transformation from diatonic to chromatic. There are three articles to which we refer in particular, one by Felipe Estrada Paniagua (1911) who poses a question that will persist in later works: Who invented the marimba?; then we show a dialogue between Manuel Adalid and Gamero, José Cruz Sologaistoa, and Manuel Saravia (1914) where the latter two present the American theses that the former requests; finally, with the title: Quien mejoró la Marimba? (1911) which Ignacio Solís used in Diario la Republica, a series of arguments are presented attributing said invention to Manuel Gómez Clavería in the mid-19th century.

Let's stop into the notes. Felipe Estrada Paniagua, in his fifteenth installment of the series Literature and Art, addresses the instrument starting from the question, Who invented the marimba? Interestingly, he begins by attributing to Mr. Santiago Becerra the statement that, although he does not know the origin of the instrument, he notes its African denomination, something that he later denied and even changed to suggest that the name comes from Mayan: mar, to lay on the ground, in, to add, and bah, joined planks. This thesis will be repeated and appropriated later in various nationalist theses about the origin of the instrument, of course, far from any rigor. Estrada Paniagua adds that, regarding the improvements of the instrument, it is valued as something done by "non-Indians, but ladinos or mestizos," its transformers and interpreters. This component of the incision of the Indian-ladino is a marker of the bifurcation of the instrument on the road and the social signifiers.

Three years later (1914), everything indicates that the Guatemalan public already had a lively concern about the origin of the marimba. We find that the artist Manuel Adalid y Gamero writes to Manuel Saravia and José Cruz Sologaistoa asking them if they indeed believe the marimba to be an indigenous instrument and wonders, "Doesn't the word reveal its African origin?" And he adds a series of arguments to support his assertion, including an "embryonic state" marimba of African origin displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Following this, after the intervention made by Mr. Manuel Saravia, he informs José Cruz Sologaistoa about the estimations of Mr. Manuel Adalid y Gamero and requests the arguments on which they base their assertion of the indigenous origin of the instrument. Cruz Sologaistoa continues to Saravia, and by extension, to Adalid y Gamero. Cruz's response begins by warning that he is not interested in entering into a controversy, and he adds: "I said in my mentioned chronicle that the marimba, like the tun and the chirimía, are part of the Quiche musical

instrument, recalling some pieces of Central American history (...)," and goes on to quote: "... the arts were very advanced: music consisted of instruments such as the flute, 'La marimba,' the chirimía, and the tun," from Rafael Aguirre's General History of Guatemala, lesson thirteenth, page 20; (he adds another quote) from the "Compendio de Historia de Centroamerica by Dr. Miguel G. Saravia and History of Central America by E. Martínez López (and closes by noting that) unfortunately, I do not have at hand José Milla y Vi daurre's study 'Historia de Centro América'.

Close this citation from newspaper notes with the one that holds the epigraph: "Who Improved the Marimba?" taken from the article we pointed out belongs to Ignacio Solís, and in which the pedagogue Manuel Gómez Clavería is identified as the architect of that process; "as at the end of said article it draws the attention of the correspondents of this city, from the newspapers of the capital, in order to gather more data to clarify whose was the original idea that although for some seems a trivial matter, it may be that over time, according to the idea of the double keyboard marimba's intervener, it reaches a degree of perfection, until it disappears the current form and make it presentable in any dance hall." Regarding this installment taken from La Republica, the Diario of Centro America, continues the notes of Mr. Francisco M. Morales. "... Antigua Guatemala, C of Ud, September 5, 1911, regarding a piano marimba invented and built by the late and excellent pedagogue Manuel Gómez Clavería and being aware of the evidence of this fact, I proceed to tell you the following: In the year 1867, my parents, who knew the excellent qualities of the humble and educated teacher Mr. Manuel Clavería C, They begged him to receive me among his disciples, which did not exceed eight, since the class he taught served him more as a distraction than as a means of livelihood, which he earned through the cultivation of cochineal and the elaboration of wax produced by his beehives, so it took him a year to accomplish it. He gave it the shape of an upright piano, composed of two resonant keyboards, with keys made of steel rings that, in addition to being cut mathematically according to acoustics, he gave them the corresponding tone by hammering them to raise and filing them to lower the tones and semitones; thus, the perfect double marimba was formed, with two keys to which he placed two boxes at the back with their respective divisions, which served of the voice or tecomates.

As exactly as vulgarly they are called, and its keyboard was exactly in accordance with that of upright pianos; however, as the hammers were finished with a piece of leather or little rubber plates, this imperfection was corrected. As this was an experiment, the instrument did not have a good finish, nor was it well polished, so its inventor intended to make another one with the proper perfection, but having dedicated himself to public teaching, he no longer had time to fulfill his desire. The marimba in question was known by most of Mr. Manuel's friends, played by several people including notable musicians like Mr. Vicente Peralta, Mr. Germán Alcántara, Mr. Pedro Samayoa, etc., and outlived its builder, as upon his death it passed to his son Mr. Manuel Gómez Paz. This is all I can say to you on the subject, and from what has been presented, it is evident that Mr. Manuel Gómez Clavería was the inventor of the double marimba." After quoting Francisco Morales' response, El Corresponsal adds (as signed by the columnist), it is a pity that none of these specimens were left in the hands of Manuel Gómez Paz, son of Gómez Clavería.

Tuning

As the reader may imagine, these notes were not isolated. Parallel to the introduction of the marimba, which until recently was a matter of indigenous peoples, into society and urban areas, that incision to which we allude and which refracts into music, sounds of Western music; in the religious realm, sacred-profane; spatially, countryside-halls, among other polarities, led to the arguments being brought to the forefront, and the written press was the main space for this. Founded on society and resulting from a racist structure, the recent indigenous past, later replaced by the African aspect of the instrument, serves as a clear reminder of the mestizo society that we are and perhaps it is better to keep it forgotten, or in any case reinvent it in another marimba, the chromatic one. The solution for this is to "civilize the instrument," and this is what is sought by portraying it as a piano, interpreting waltzes, schottisches, mazurkas, polkas, as well as serious music, concertos by von Suppe, Rossini, among others, showing a more "developed" face of how we want and think others see us. I'm afraid the perception is quite distant from the same. It will take several decades, nearly half a century, until an article written by Jorge Castañeda Paganini and published in El Imparcial, "La Marimba, su origen y evolución" (1951), will emerge, which will orient, for the first time from another perspective, the study and understanding of what by then is already an instrument that has acquired a national stamp. As well pointed out, it is an article with an evolutionary character, and although it gathers data distilled from the newspaper notes since the late 19th century, the rigor and didacticism with which it is presented are decisive. But before this, everything appeared as a pulse between a conservative society that doubted allowing space for the instrument in question and the increasingly sensitive and definable middle popular classes, as a great master, son of history, would say. After Castañeda Paganini, many ways of understanding our "national instrument" are also defined, initiating a new period of interpretation or perhaps, to be more precise, a renewal of the argumentation without big changes.

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Fireworks, joy for generations. The case of Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz

ARACELY ESQUIVEL VÁSQUEZ

Introduction

In the village of San Juan del Obispo in the municipality of La Antigua Guatemala, there is a fireworks factory named "Coheteria y Luces de Navidad," owned by Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz. In this workshop, he produces: stick rockets, light rockets, stick bombs, mortar bombs, "toritos" (small firecrackers), castles, and grenades. These pyrotechnic devices are used in various patron saint festivals, family celebrations, and religious processions in the Sacatepéquez region. Additionally, Mr. José Jerónimo produces the fuses used in these devices and the gunpowder used for this work. This essay narrates the life and work of the master pyrotechnician Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz. Considering Mr. José's advanced age, it is important for the Area of Popular Arts and Crafts to showcase the traditional craft of gunpowder making in San Juan del Obispo and preserve the history of its emergence And evolution, as well as to understand what their commercial prospects are in the face of the penetration into the local commercial market of foreign pyrotechnic products, mainly manufactured in China, which offer high-quality and safety pyrotechnic platforms but must be handled by technicians in these explosives. Imported products are used in big national events.

Currently, there are few popular rocket makers in Guatemala. In the text on the Geographic Distribution of Crafts in Guatemala, prepared in 1990 by the Sub-Regional Center for Crafts and Popular Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, co-financed by the Organization of American States (OAS), only 73 municipalities in the territory of the Republic of Guatemala are mentioned where traditional rocket making is carried out and used by both indigenous people and ladinos.

During the search for popular crafts for the creation of the Museo de Artes y Artesanías de Sacatepéquez, located at the Colegio Mayor de Santo Tomás de Aquino, La Antigua Guatemala, it was identified that in the village of San Juan del Obispo, traditional rocket making is carried out by the master rocket maker Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán, who comes from a tradition of traditional rocket makers passed down through the male line, as he inherited this work from his father who was a

traditional rocket craftsman in the same village.

San Juan del Obispo

According to Gall (2000, p. 362), San Juan del Obispo is a village in the municipality of La Antigua Guatemala, in the department of Sacatepéquez. Previously known as San Juan de Guatemala, it is located approximately 5 kilometers south of the municipal capital of La Antigua Guatemala and can be reached via the asphalted Sacatepéquez 1 Departmental Road.

It is situated at an elevation of 1,616 meters above sea level, with a latitude of north 14° 31' 20" and a longitude of west 90° 43' 38". The village includes a hamlet called San Gaspar Vivar.

According to data from the XI Population Census and VI Housing Census for the year 2002, conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, the total population of the village of San del Obispo was recorded as 4,452 inhabitants, of whom 3,512 were urban residents belonging to the village and 880 were rural residents belonging to the hamlet of San Gaspar Vivar.

Of the population of San Juan del Obispo, 1,698 are men and 1,814 are women; in a total of approximately 730 households, where only one is known to be of a collective type with 34 inhabitants. The rest of the households are inhabited by an average of 5 people per house.

It has all the necessary public services for its survival: electricity, potable water, public lighting, and schools, including the Escuela Rural Mixta Francisco Marroquín. In total, there are two official rural morning preschools, two official rural morning primary schools, and one official rural evening basic studies institute.

History of the Population

San Juan del Obispo took its name because the first bishop of Guatemala, the illustrious Francisco Marroquín, built his residence there. According to Gall (2000, page 363), in the chronicle of the Franciscan Francisco Vásquez, by 1541, Marroquín had managed to have Kaqchikel indigenous people, who had been taken as prisoners by the conquerors during the rebellion between 1526 and 1529 and enslaved, handed over to him to populate San Juan Guatemala. It was then designated as a vicariate of the Franciscans until February 26, 1651, when it was named as a guardian.

The Franciscan Francisco de Zuaza informed the bishop on June 8, 1689, that the "Convento de San Juan Bautista de Guatemala consists of the Guardian of San Juan de Guatemala, with 2 large towns and 6 small ones, and also has a neighborhood of ladino Indians. In one of the two large towns, which is San Juan Guatemala, the head of one of the doctrines, there are seven hundred people of confession, all Indians to whom the sacraments are administered in the native language called Kaqchiquel" (Gall, Ibid. 363).

According to Gall (Page 362 and 363), Fuentes y Guzmán noted in his book "Recordación Florida," written during the last decade of the 17th century, that "it lies at the foot of the Agua volcano, somewhat atop its bulk towards the eastern part facing the north, thus giving a view of the city of Goathemala, from where great distinction and clarity its church, convent, and hamlet. It does not seem that this convent, by its erection as such, has the antiquity attributed to its antecedents, but rather a more modern time and should only be counted from the government of General Martín Carlos de

Mencos (Note: 1659 to 1667) and spiritually from the no less successful governance of the Most Reverend Bishop Mr. Fray Payo de Ribera and the provincial triennium of Father Fray Francisco de Peña, around the year 1668, when until then it was a visiting town of the convent of San Francisco de Goathemala, to which it was spiritually subject due to its immediate proximity at only half a league's distance, and in which, growing into a large and numerous town, it became necessary for good governance... to make it the head of the curacy and at the same time confer upon it the rights and privileges of a convent, creating for it in the following chapter an ordinary prelate with a vote in the provincial chapter".

In another part of his work, he referred to the founding of towns by the Spanish: "the first with holy zeal being the venerable prelate of great perpetual memory, Mr. Francisco Marroquín, who, setting an example for his flock and subjects, gathered a considerable population in the place of his cornfield, which today is the populous town of San Juan del Obispo."

By the end of the 18th century, between 1765 and 1770, Archbishop Dr. Mr. Pedro Cortés y Larraz carried out a pastoral visit to his diocese, including the parish of San Juan del Obispo, which included the towns of Santa Catalina (now Santa Catarina Bobadilla), San Cristóbal El Alto, and Santa María de Jesús as annexes. He noted that in the town lived 122 families with 498 people, all Kaqchikel indigenous: "In this parish, they cover the children with a cap (or cloth, which covers them up to the nose) and when asked why they wear it like that, they respond that it is to protect them, because if any 'ladino' (non-indigenous) sees their face, they get sick....They are very inclined to drink the beverage they call Chicha."

For the early 19th century, in the "Estado de los Curatos del Real Tribunal y Audiencia de la Contaduría de Cuentas" dated July 8, 1806, San Juan del Obispo appears with 89 taxpayers without mentioning the total number of inhabitants (Ibid. Page 363). By 1880, San Juan del Obispo appears as a municipality in the census conducted that year and was a town in the department of Sacatepéquez, described as follows: "it is three-quarters of a league from La Antigua, with 833 inhabitants. The main natural products are cochineal or carmine, considered the best in the country; coffee, sugar cane cultivated and processed in the town itself, cereals, and grains. There is no special industry worth mentioning; there are 2 schools, one for each sex. The municipality has built 2 public reservoirs, one in the center of the population with 12 wash basins and another on the outskirts of a place called Garita Vieja, with the same number of wash basins. There is a daily mail service to the municipal capital".

By Government Agreement of August 23, 1935, it became part, as a village, of the municipality of San Pedro Las Huertas, but by Government Agreement of September 27, 1935, it was decided to annex San Pedro Las Huertas to the municipality of La Antigua Guatemala; thus, the two towns, San Juan del Obispo and San Pedro Las Huertas, became villages of La Antigua Guatemala (Ibid. Page 363).

In May 1973, the Empresa Eléctrtica de Guatemala, S.A. put into service an extension of the electrical line, electrifying the population, and on September 22 of that same year, the Dirección General de Obras Públicas put into service the aqueduct that supplies water to the population. The Congress of the Republic issued Decree 45-74 on May 30, 1974, published in the Diario

Oficial on June 17 of that year, declaring the dredging works and bridges over the river and streams coming down from De Agua Volcano urgent and of national interest, as they have damaged the populations of San Juan del Obispo and San Pedro Las Huertas.

Currently, the village has all the services and is becoming a tourist destination due to its proximity to La Antigua Guatemala.

Brief history of gunpowder

Gunpowder is an explosive powder mixture that burns and ignites rapidly. It contains saltpeter, sulfur, and charcoal. It was the known explosive also called "black powder." The oldest formula known is that of the English monk Roger Bacon, as it appears in his writings in the 13th century. It was invented by the Chinese in the 9th century. Initially, it was used for recreational purposes, as they began using it in fireworks without yet thinking of using it to shoot projectiles or other explosive purposes as happened later, when gunpowder was brought to Europe.

Although gunpowder is considered one of the four great inventions of ancient China (paper, the compass, gunpowder, and printing), some researchers attribute its invention to the Arabs. It could be said to have been invented between the 7th and 9th centuries and probably, as has happened with other inventions, may have arisen simultaneously in both cultures. Although the invention is attributed to the Chinese, gunpowder did not reach Spain directly from the Asian continent. It arrived in the Middle East, then to North Africa, from there to Spain and the rest of the Mediterranean countries around the year 1200. The Arabs used it to conquer the Iberian Peninsula using rudimentary cannons. Regardless of the precise data and the identities of its discoverers and first users, it is certain that gunpowder was being manufactured in England in 1334 and that by 1340, Germany had facilities for its production. Berthold Schwarz, a German monk, in the early 14th century, may have been the first to use gunpowder to propel a projectile.

Gunpowder appeared precisely in Europe, in the hands of the English army at the Battle of Crécy in 1346. It is known that the first recorded use of gunpowder for recreational purposes was in England at the wedding of Henry VII in 1486. Later, Queen Elizabeth I had a servant dedicated exclusively to staging shows with gunpowder. Years after its invention, it was used for military actions to protect walled cities, such as the thickness and solidity of the walls of Beijing, which clearly indicates that they were designed to withstand the attack of enemy artillery. They used weapons similar to what we know or small demonstrations of what we now call fireworks. The word pyrotechnics comes from the Greek pyros-techne, which means the technique of fire.

Legend has it that the formula could have reached Europe in 1324 by the hand of a pilgrim monk. The recipe consisted of a mixture of charcoal, sulfur, and saltpeter, which the monk communicated to the abbot of a monastery where he stayed overnight. The next morning, the monk who was at the door, upon seeing the guest leave, was horrified to see that beneath the monk's robes, a hairy tail was peeking out: it was the devil himself, coming to disturb forever and sow chaos in the society of the time with this terrible invention.

Gunpowder quickly spread throughout Europe and played a fundamental role in the balance of power that would be established thereafter, as very few individuals had the

money and capability to manufacture weapons. From the second half of the 16th century, gunpowder production in almost all countries was already in the hands of the state, and its use would be regulated shortly after.

The use of gunpowder became popular for recreational purposes in what is now known as Valencia and Murcia. In the Crown of Aragon, it was common to use fireworks in celebrations using rudimentary techniques left by the Arabs. The use of pyrotechnics spread to the American continent from Spain with the arrival of the Spaniards with more advanced technology in both weaponry and the use of cavalry and gunpowder. The use of fireworks became popular in Mexico and Argentina, as well as in the United States since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. With the massive emigration of Chinese people in the 19th century, it gained great relevance. Other innovations followed in the field of explosive materials until today, but undoubtedly, the appearance of gunpowder in the West in the Middle Ages was the most significant event.

Gunpowder in Guatemala

Fireworks are an element of identity for Guatemalans. The burning of gunpowder is common among the population. According to Rodríguez Rouanet (1990, p. 238), "Gunpowder was introduced by the Spaniards during the conquest, and this craft was practiced in the city of Guatemala in the first years of its foundation." The supply of gunpowder for the city was established through a monopoly, known as the Estanco y Asiento de Pólvora. For example, in 1618, the Estanco was auctioned to Pedro de Barahona (AGCA, signature A3.11, file 2770, record 39944).

Following Rodríguez: "Due to the increase in this craft, in the first half of the 18th century, the first guild of rocket makers was organized. In order to legally practice the profession, rocket makers had to undergo a very strict examination. Similarly, in order to aspire to the title of master rocket maker, to open a shop and workshop publicly on their own account, and to have employees and apprentices, they had to meet certain requirements, such as: the apprenticeship lasted six years, an apprentice was placed in the master's workshop under contract, examination requests were submitted to the City Council, and examiners were appointed. The exam questions referred to the method of making rockets, flying bombs, castles, and the composition of gunpowder. If the applicant passed the exam, they were sworn to use their craft well, and were granted the title of master rocket maker".

Currently, the tradition of gunpowder craftsmanship is deeply rooted among Ladinos and Indigenous people, a situation that did not exist in colonial times when it was exclusive to Spaniards and Criollos. However, despite the prohibition, Indigenous people learned the trade, and in 1794, when the rocket maker guild was intended to be established exclusively for Spaniards, it was rejected, and the incorporation of anyone interested in such a craft was allowed. As a result, Indigenous people were given the opportunity to work in the art of rocketry. Therefore, Indigenous people have participated with great skill in this craft, as whenever an important event is celebrated, pyrotechnics play a fundamental role.

In 1813, a Decree was published with the guild's regulations. Therefore, in 1814, in Quetzaltenango, three gunpowder shops were closed: Rafael Meoño's, due to the artisan's old age; Catalina Rodríguez's, for

being a widow and not having examined workers, and Alejandro Salazar's. However, in 1814, the Tobacco and Gunpowder Factor ordered them to be reopened and that it was not necessary to examine all the workers (AGCA A1, file 2533, record 37021). On the other hand, in 1833, in the square of the Old Parish, the gunpowder house was being built (AGCA, B.92.2, file 3612, record 84355).

In such a way that the production of gunpowder was a constant activity in the artisanal work of the colonial period.

Traditional Fireworker from San Juan del Obispo

Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz is originally from San Juan del Obispo. He is 82 years old, born on September 30, 1930. He married Mrs. María del Carmen Callejas de Sicán, with whom he had 5 children, four boys and one girl. His wife passed away on August 15, 2004, and her remains rest in the Cemetery of San Juan del Obispo. Two of his sons live with him in his house: José Lisandro, who lives with his wife Rosa Emilse Rodríguez de Sicán and their two sons, José Javier, 7 years old, and Diego Adrián, 6 years old. The other daughter is Miriam Yolanda Sicán Callejas, who is a primary school teacher. She taught for only two months as a substitute teacher. Later, she taught Spanish to foreign tourists, and her last job was as a cashier at a bank in the banking network of Guatemala. She stopped working to dedicate herself exclusively to caring for her father, Mr. José Jerónimo, after her mother's death. The other three children have their homes in San Juan del Obispo. Luis Ernesto, the oldest, Pedro Ariel, and Carlos Santiago, the only one who works in the production of fireworks in his father's factory. Mr. José Jerónimo's house is located at 2nd Avenida Sur No. 2, San Juan del Obispo, La Antigua Guatemala. Of his children, only Carlos Santiago liked and learned the work of pyrotechnics from his father. His other siblings work in other professions unrelated to pyrotechnics.

Years ago, Mr. José Jerónimo was the president of the Hermandad de la Virgen de Concepción and La Hermandad del Santo Patrón San Juan Bautista, of whom he had the privilege of keeping them in his home. Currently, he is a member of the Hermandad de la Virgen de Concepción and La Hermandad del Santo Patrón San Juan Bautista. According to Miriam Yolanda, they were the last ones to have custody of the images because now they no longer give them custody due to the risk of being stolen.

Mr. José Jerónimo attended the school in San Juan del Obispo, where he only reached the third grade of primary school, as at that time, primary education only went up to that grade, but according to Mr. José Jerónimo, they taught a lot. He learned to work with gunpowder because his father, Mr. Eustaquio Sicán, was dedicated to that craft. Mr. Eustaquio taught his son Julio, who has since passed away, how to work with gunpowder, and it was Julio who taught Mr. José Jerónimo. According to Mr. José, this was about 60 years ago. He says his father taught his brother Julio because he was the oldest of the children and he was very young. He mentioned that his father had a large family, many of whom have already passed away. Among the deceased, he remembers Tránsito, Julio, Concepción, Francisca, María Simona, and José Luis.

Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz, from San Juan del Obispo, doesn't know how his father learned to work with fireworks. But according to him, the tradition of gunpowder is very ancient. He says that the tradition of gunpowder in San Juan del Obispo is over 100

years old, as he is 82 years old and his father was already working with it. Mr. Eustaquio had the factory in the house where he currently lives, as at that time, only a simple permit was required, which they requested in La Antigua Guatemala, allowing him to work and install the factory wherever he considered convenient. Over the years, this situation changed, and the procedures became more complex, especially because manufacturers of fireworks were required to be part of the Social Security system with a strict prohibition against hiring minors due to the danger of handling explosives. According to information from Mr. José Jerónimo, his father's factory became part of Social Security almost immediately after the creation of the IGSS. And four years ago, the Ministry of Defense also intervened, maintaining a meticulous control over the use of gunpowder and potassium chlorate.

The Ministry of Defense provides him with the permit for potassium chlorate, which he obtains at the "El Polvorín Nacional." They also supervise the conditions of the factory so that the materials for making the different fireworks are stored separately and with security measures that prevent access to unauthorized persons.

Mr. José Jerónimo was 15 years old when he began learning the gunpowder trade with his brother Julio, who passed away at the age of 45. After several years working in his father's factory, he went to other workshops to acquire more skill in handling materials and learn other ways of making fireworks. He worked in workshops in Ciudad Vieja and Sumpango, municipalities of Sacatepéquez, and finally in Mixco, a municipality of Guatemala. He returned home and started working on his own at the age of 23. Three years later, he met the person who would become his wife.

During the time his father was in this trade, they made artificial toritos, light grenades, light bombs, thunder bombs, stick rockets, cane games, and castles, which constituted the traditional fireworks. Nowadays, they continue to make castles, grenades, toritos, stick rockets, cane games, and whistling wheels. They do not make mortars, machine guns, or small rockets in their factory. He reported that these are made in San Raimundo, a municipality in Guatemala.

Stick rockets are made with a stick to which two bombs are attached that explode when they reach a certain height. They also make light bombs that, instead of thundering when they explode in the sky, emit colored lights. Flying saucer rockets also have a stick as a base. When propelled and reaching the determined height, they release the saucer, which spins in the sky until descending. These, along with the light bombs and flying saucers, are the innovations that Mr. José Jerónimo included in the traditional fireworks that were made in his father's time. Currently, he continues to make traditional fireworks along with the new ones.

He also introduced the electric lathe to make the process of winding the rope more efficient and to grind the gunpowder because in his father's time, as he indicated: a child was responsible for turning the wheel where the rope was wound, and barrels were used that were manually operated by pulling the crank that turned the barrel and ground the gunpowder well. He still keeps as a relic the barrels his father used. It could be observed that Mr. José Jerónimo has safer means of production and in better conditions for handling explosives than those that existed in the past. He reported that Mr. Eustaquio had a more artisanal workshop because he did not

have instruments like the current ones to guarantee safety in handling explosives. Especially since he had the factory in his home. However, unable to have a more technified workshop, he produced traditional gunpowder crafts that brightened birthdays, feast days, weddings, Christmas and New Year's, and other events. Although he used rudimentary techniques to produce the gunpowder crafts, Mr. Eustaquio was an expert craftsman in handling and mixing the raw materials to avoid unfortunate accidents. In his workshop, Mr. José Jerónimo has five employees: Luis Aguilar, born in San Juan del Obispo, who has been working in the workshop for 15 years; Edwin Enrique López, also from the same village, who, although has not been working in the workshop for long periods, learned the trade from master craftsman Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán; in addition, his son Carlos Sicán, 50 years old, works there, as well as his grandson Carlos Jerónimo Sican, 21 years old, and Vitelio Toc Caal, originally from San Lorenzo El Cubo.

The materials he uses for making these crafts are: potassium chlorate, gunpowder, charcoal, sulfur, Castilian rods, cardboard, wood, a water container, shellac, cypress wood, ilamo or avocado to make the charcoal: he mostly uses cypress because it is softer for grinding; Castilian cane sticks, thick Castilian cane sticks, cardboard, hemp rope, a container to store the twine, tar, auger, paper, potassium nitrate, commonly known as saltpeter, which is not explosive.

To obtain the materials, in the case of potassium chlorate, the Ministry of Defense grants him a license provided he meets the requirements, which consist of having a warehouse with separate rooms with their respective lockable doors. Ministry of Defense personnel supervise the location, inspect it, prepare a report, and approve the permit. With the authorization, he travels to the Municipality of Sanarate, El Progreso, where the warehouses containing the potassium chlorate are located. This material costs Q800.00 per 50 pound bag. For his production, Mr. José Jerónimo needs to acquire 20 bags of potassium chlorate, which he uses slowly since every two months he has to report the consumption and what remains in stock to the Ministry of Defense. Potassium nitrate, commonly known as saltpeter, is freely available and he buys it in Guatemala City at a price of Q900.00 per sack, which he believes is a hundredweight sack. He buys about 10 hundredweight sacks of this product and believes it will last for about six months. Sulfur is another material he uses to mix with charcoal, potassium chlorate, and potassium nitrate to produce gunpowder, which he buys in Guatemala City in 50-pound sacks.

He buys cypress wood in the municipality of Santa María de Jesús, as he produces his own charcoal in a very artisanal way. In a stove, made by himself, he places the cypress wood until it is full, lights it, puts a sheet on top to prevent steam from escaping, covers it with earth, and the next day, all the wood is burned but maintains its structure; he removes the earth and stores it in the charcoal warehouse. Sometimes he has bought charcoal at the coal shed in La Antigua Guatemala, but he prefers to make it. Of these products, the one used in the highest proportion is potassium chlorate.

He gets the Castilian cane sticks in zone 6 of Santa Cruz Chinautla; these are very different from those used to make baskets. The sticks are purchased by the gross, which brings 144 sticks, at a cost of Q100.00 per bundle. He makes a single rocket from each stick. When he obtains the gross of sticks, he carefully checks that all are straight, without knots, as

they are for the stick rockets, so the stick is special. And the hemp twine for the twining process of the Castilian cane stick tube should not be missing among the materials.

Artesanal process of traditional pyrotechnic crafts

A rocket with a stick

According to Mr. José Jerónimo, many steps are involved: First, the thickest stick of Castilla cane is prepared. Then, a thin but strong rope is prepared and joined with tar. He mentioned that the rop comes from Cobán, Alta Verapaz. Once the rope is mixed with tar, the entire stick is wrapped. This process is called "encordelado" with the purpose of making the stick more resistant so that it does not crack when filled; otherwise, the rocket would not serve because the fire would escape through the slot. Mr. José Jerónimo calls this: so that the stick gains strength when mixed. Then, the bottom of the stick is perforated with a metal tool similar to a needle. He calls this process: "taquear el asiento del canutillo" (tacking the seat of the stick). After the stick is perforated, it is filled with gunpowder using a small cane mallet, so that the gunpowder remains firm, and the hole is closed using a small clay plug. Then, the position of the stick is inverted, and the other end is drilled with the help of a drill. In this hole, the Castilla stick will be inserted and entwined with the rope that secures the fuse from the top to the bottom so that, when the rocket is burned, the fuse containing gunpowder smokes and propels the rocket, causing it to explode. This is the work of a single operator.

Apart from that, another operator is in charge of preparing the small bombs. This operator must be skilled so that the bombs are synchronized, causing one to explode first and then the other. Mr. José says: "You have to have a steady hand, a little looser for one and tighter for the other." They call the tighter bomb machito and the looser one hembrita, so that one explodes first and then the other. The first to explode is the hembrita, and the machito explodes after producing a louder sound.

The bombs are wrapped in paper and placed on the head of the rocket in parallel. The rope that entwines the stick carries the smoking flame fuse. When the hembrita explodes, it passes the fire to the machito, thus completing the artisanal production of a traditional rocket. The light rocket is similar to the one described above, except that instead of the two bombs, the hembrita and the machito, the head of the rocket contains light balls with the chemicals that produce the colors and the shellac, which is a binder. They explode due to the action of the chlorate and emit red, green, silver, and blue colors, depending on the mix of chemicals used for this purpose.

The chemicals to produce the lights, in the case of silver, are: white aluminum powder for brightness; for red: chlorate, strontium carbonate, and shellac; for green: potassium chlorate, barium nitrate, and shellac; for blue: potassium chlorate, copper sulfate, and shellac. The colors most used in the production of light rockets are silver, red, green, and blue.

The Bombs

First, the fuse is prepared on the lathes in his workshop. Cardboard is cut and made into a kind of small box. One ounce of gunpowder is weighed, filled into the box, and corded with fuse and pitch. It turns into sebum as Mr. José Jerónimo indicated, which is the time powder, determining when the bomb explodes. The box is sealed, leaving a small hole in the middle to insert the fuse containing gunpowder. The hole is sealed with

moistened gunpowder and then set out in the sun to dry completely. Afterwards, they are stored under safety measures as they are very dangerous. To detonate the bombs, they use a mortar into which the bomb is placed. The fuse is left exposed and hanging to be lit, which causes the bomb to rise and explode. In making the fuse, a frame is used, placed on the fuse harpoon, which is over a gentle heat. It is turned and turned until it starts emitting a little smoke, then it is released to avoid the danger of explosion, as the fuse contains gunpowder. The fuse is prepared in half an hour, and the harpoon holds, as the craftsman indicated, four gross of fuse.

To prepare the gunpowder, he has a rotating drum where he mixes the elements that make up its base, which according to Mr. José are: potassium nitrate, sulfur, charcoal, and lead pellets. The barrel is powered by an electric motor which rotates to disintegrate the materials and turn them into powder, then mixing in the potassium nitrate to prepare the gunpowder.

The grenades and the toritos

Grenades are made with a frame of vine and only contain rockets. The top part is spherical and the bottom part cylindrical. The top part contains rockets of different colors which, when lit, emit lights of different colors. Toritos are made with cardboard and wood. They have six rockets on the top, a spinning wheel of eight lights, and a dozen spitters, which are the ones that come out at the end after the first ones have burned. This type of craft is only prepared by order. The wings used in traditional dances have silver lights.

commercialization of Pyrotechnic Products

José Jerónimo sells his products in the southern coast, the capital, La Antigua Guatemala, Santa Cruz Balanya, Santo Domingo Xenacoj, and in some municipalities in the eastern part of the country. People come to buy directly from the factory, which is built on two cuerda of land that he owns. Although he used to have the sales room in his house, he moved it to the production site several years ago because there are small children who are his great-grandchildren, and it is, as he stated, very dangerous. Others come to order products depending on the festivities for which they will be burned. His factory is always open for either direct sales or orders. The peak production season is from early December to January 15. The low production months are March and April because, as he indicated, gunpowder is not burned during Holy Week.

The product can be sold individually, in half a dozen, a dozen, and by the gross. A dozen bombs costs Q125.00, as do flying rockets. The toritos cost Q450.00, as do the grenades. The castles are the most expensive as they are true works of art since they bear the image of Virgen de la Concepcion; they have a value of Q 2,500.00. The light rockets are priced at Q200.00 per dozen. The wings have the same price as a torito. In the case of toritos, what is sold is the quantity of rockets it contains, as the frame and structure are returned to be re-covered with rockets, colored lights, and spitters to be ready for the next sale. There have been occasions when people who buy the torito do not return the structure, and to guarantee the return of the frames, the customer must leave a deposit. For the burning of the bombs, he has a mortar which he rents to the customer who acquires the bombs, and like with the torito, they also leave a deposit.

In a day of production, they work on a gross of fireworks. To supply customers, production is maintained at 24 dozens of each variety of pyrotechnic products. Therefore, the buyer is assured of finding the product. When the

harvest ends on the coffee or sugar cane farms on the south coast, they come to buy up to a gross of different products to celebrate the end of the harvest. The best time to work on gunpowder crafts is in the summer, to sell them in the December season. Mr. José Jerónimo told: "Once I had a fire, around midnight there was an explosion and I thought it was the guerrillas because at that time there were guerrillas. Did it happen in the factory? We went to see and when we arrived, everything had already burned, fortunately there were no deaths to lament. I didn't know the cause of the fire, but it could have been from a projectile fired. After that accident, I never had another one.

Due to the danger of working with gunpowder, employees from the Ministry of Defense come to supervise the factory, especially when the sun is strong, to ensure that no products are exposed to the sun. Social workers visit up to three times a year to supervise and ensure that all products are safe and do not pose a danger to the workers and customers. Sometimes they make suggestions, such as opening small windows to allow air circulation and prevent the generation of heat, which could lead to an explosion. They also control the existence of potassium chlorate to ensure that it is being used for its intended purpose.

Risks Associated with Gunpowder Work

Working with gunpowder poses many risks. It is a very meticulous job; pieces containing gunpowder must be handled with extreme care to avoid friction, as they can easily explode. According to Mr. José, when products are exposed to the sun, they should not remain for long periods because they absorb heat, which is very dangerous. Likewise, care must be taken when making the hole in the bombs, as a metal punch is used. Objects should not be rubbed on the table where you are working. The use of a mask is also advisable to avoid breathing gunpowder particles. The wheels that drive the motors for various processes should not remain in motion for long periods to avoid generating friction. Although it is a dangerous job, if the minimum precautions are taken, it can be done without accidents.

On the other hand, at a personal level, parents must be careful, especially with children, to avoid burns or deaths when handling the different fireworks that bring happiness to young and old.

Final comment

The invention of gunpowder has been important in human history, not only for military and recreational purposes, but also because before gunpowder existed, there were no efficient methods to remove rocks that would allow for the development not only of mining but also for the construction of large engineering works such as tunnels and canals for the benefit of communities.

Guatemala is a country with deeply rooted traditions, in which gunpowder products, popular crafts of material culture, are present in all social strata to liven up local festivities, religious ceremonies, birthdays, national events, and family ceremonies.

In the case of the "Cohetería Luces de Navidad" handicrafts, it is interesting to have found an elderly gunpowder artisan in San Juan del Obispo, a village near La Antigua Guatemala, who, even at 82 years old, still works and preserves the tradition of pyrotechnics that his father elaborated decades ago.

It can be said that Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz is truly a traditional gunpowder producer because they make the products that were made in the past and continues to maintain

the tradition of the fairs in the region. Additionally, his workshop is fully equipped with machinery to work and produce the different gunpowder crafts.

It is important to mention that, in the village, only Mr. José Jerónimo is dedicated to producing this type of artifacts, which present a high degree of danger in handling the mixtures of potassium chlorate, charcoal, sulfur, and potassium nitrate. But thanks to his skillful hands, except for the fire that occurred several years ago, there has never been one during his artisanal work.

Finally, the researcher, in charge of the Área de Artes y Artesanías Populares del Centro de Estudios Folklóricos at the San Carlos de Guatemala University, through this publication, values and recognizes the artisanal work of the master pyrotechnician, Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz, who is the heir and bearer of the material popular culture, the fireworks, tangible and intangible heritage of San Juan del Obispo, a village of La Antigua Guatemala, recognized locally and regionally.

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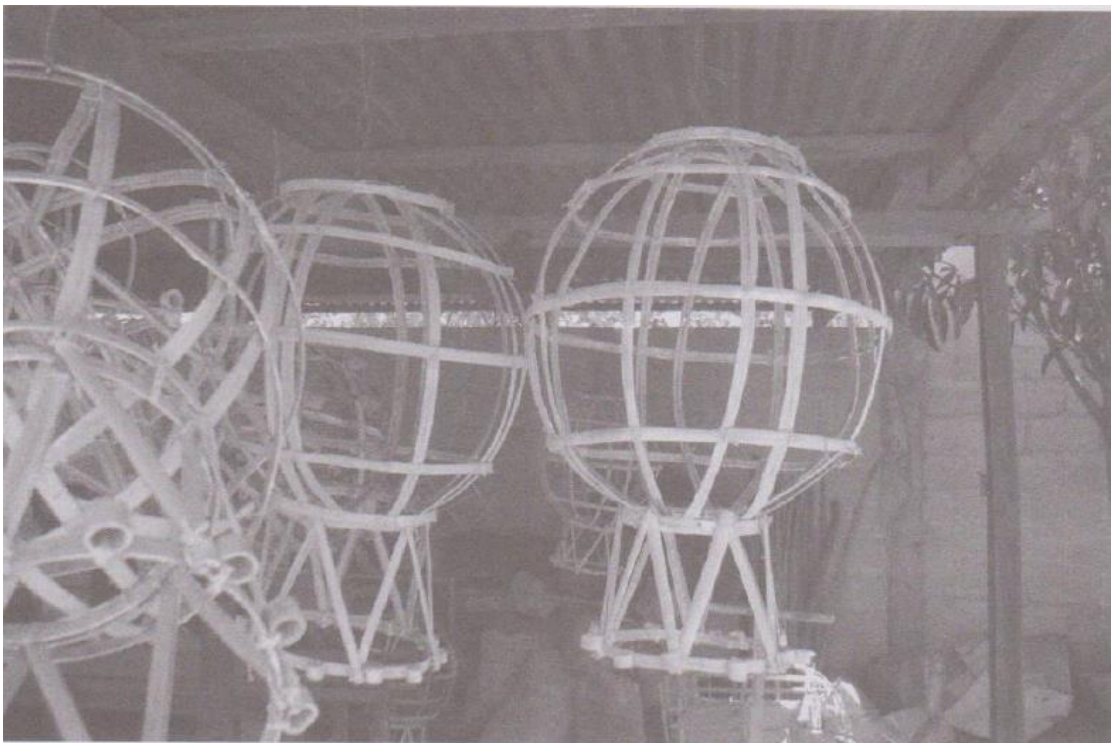
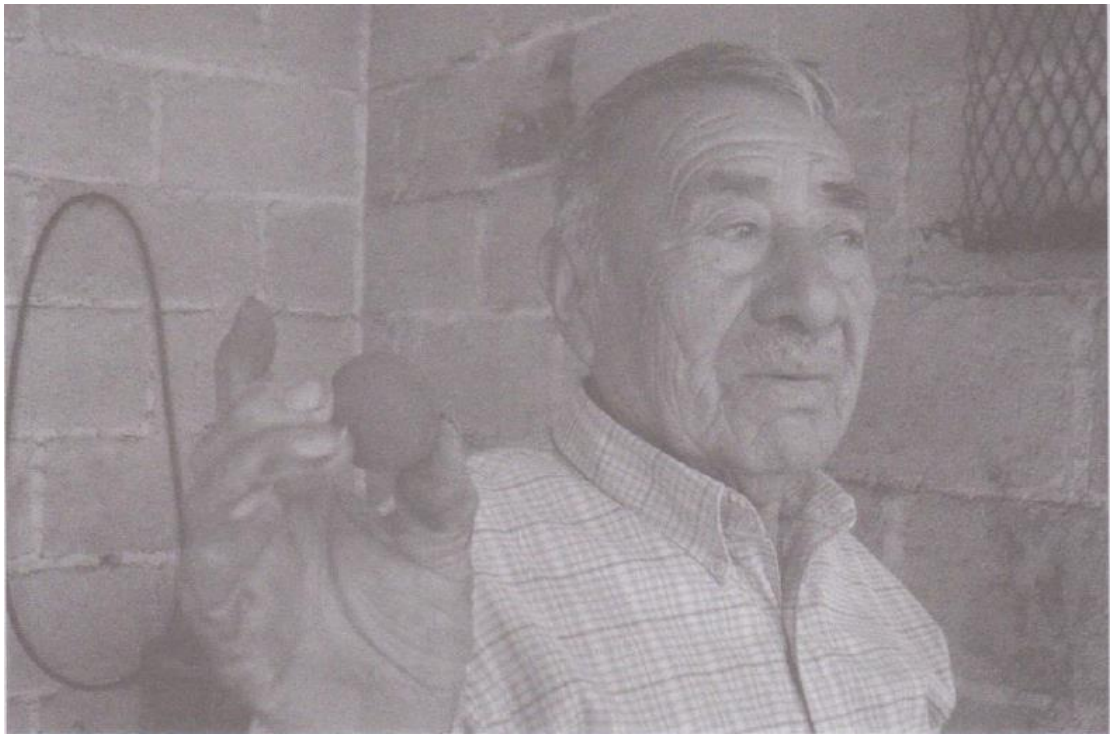
Finished Bombs



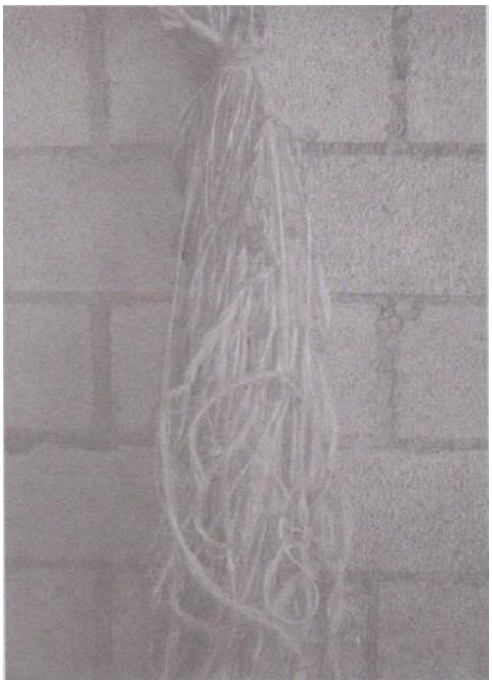
Frame of a granade

The researcher and the traditional rocket maker Mr. José Jerónimo Sicán Díaz

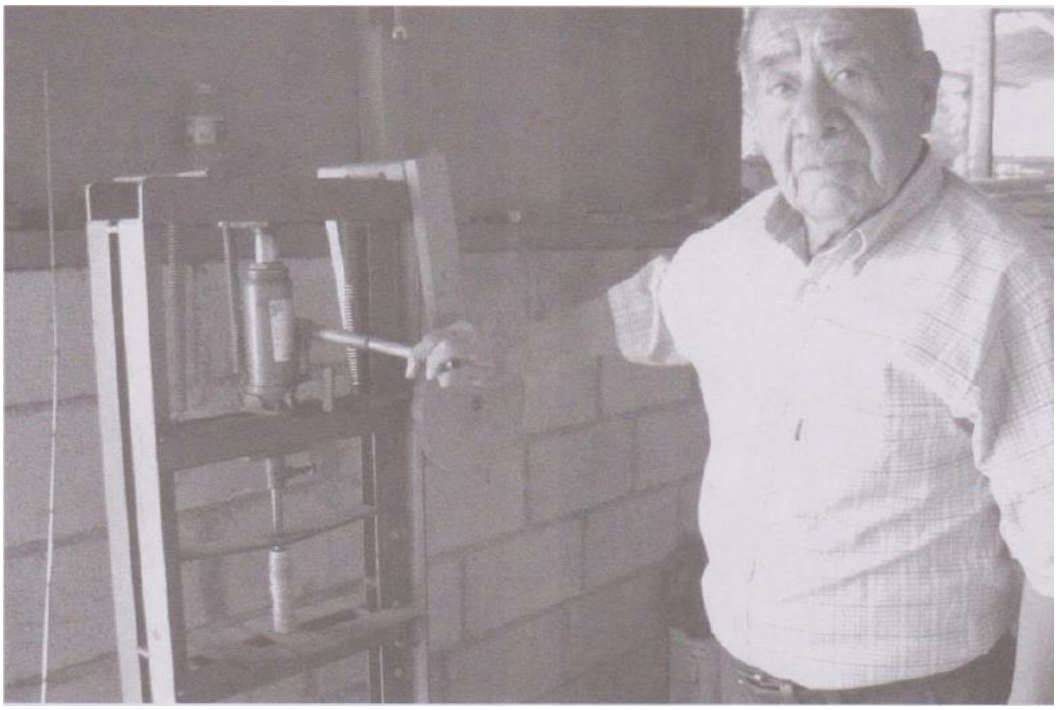
Traditional Torito



Craftsman with gunpowder in his hand

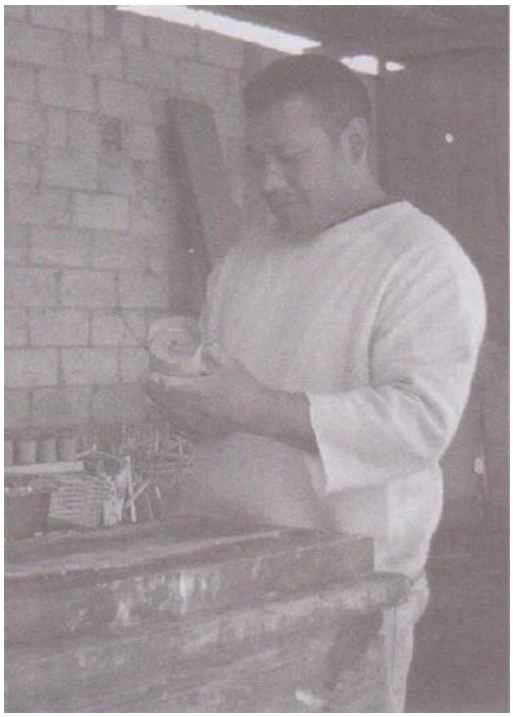


rope for wrapping the rocket



drill for drilling the rocket

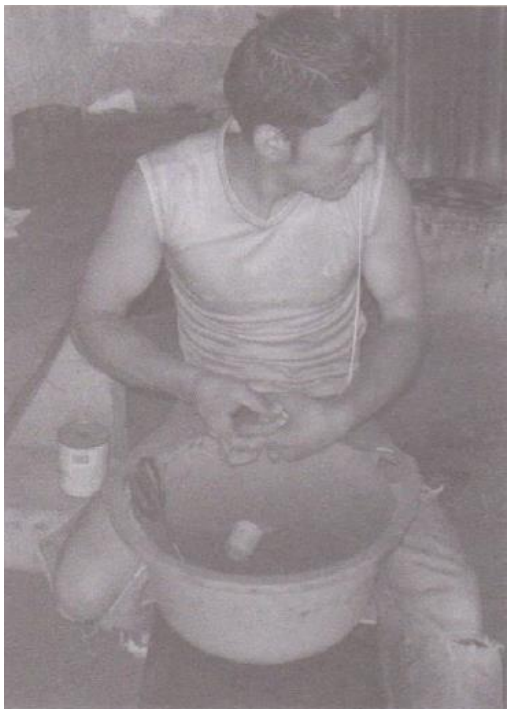
Thick Castilla cane tubes for the rockets



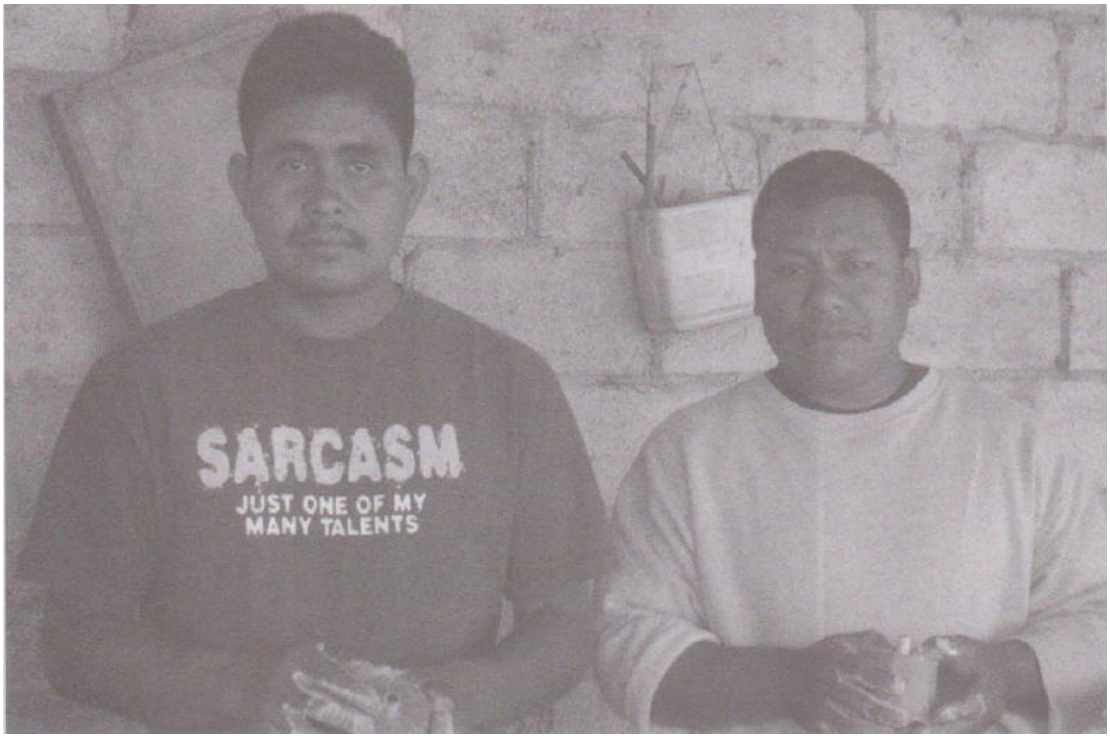
Procedure for covering the bomb

Twisted tube for rocket

Placement of the bushing



Gunpowder filling process

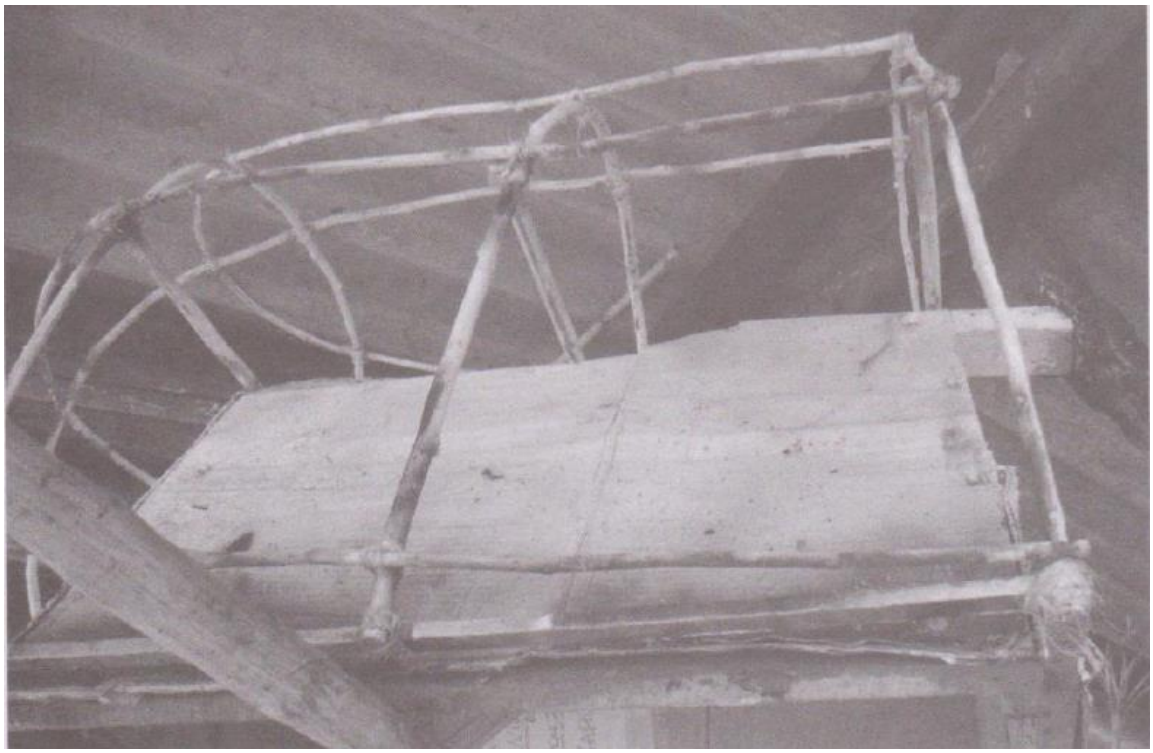


workers from Mr. jose's workshop

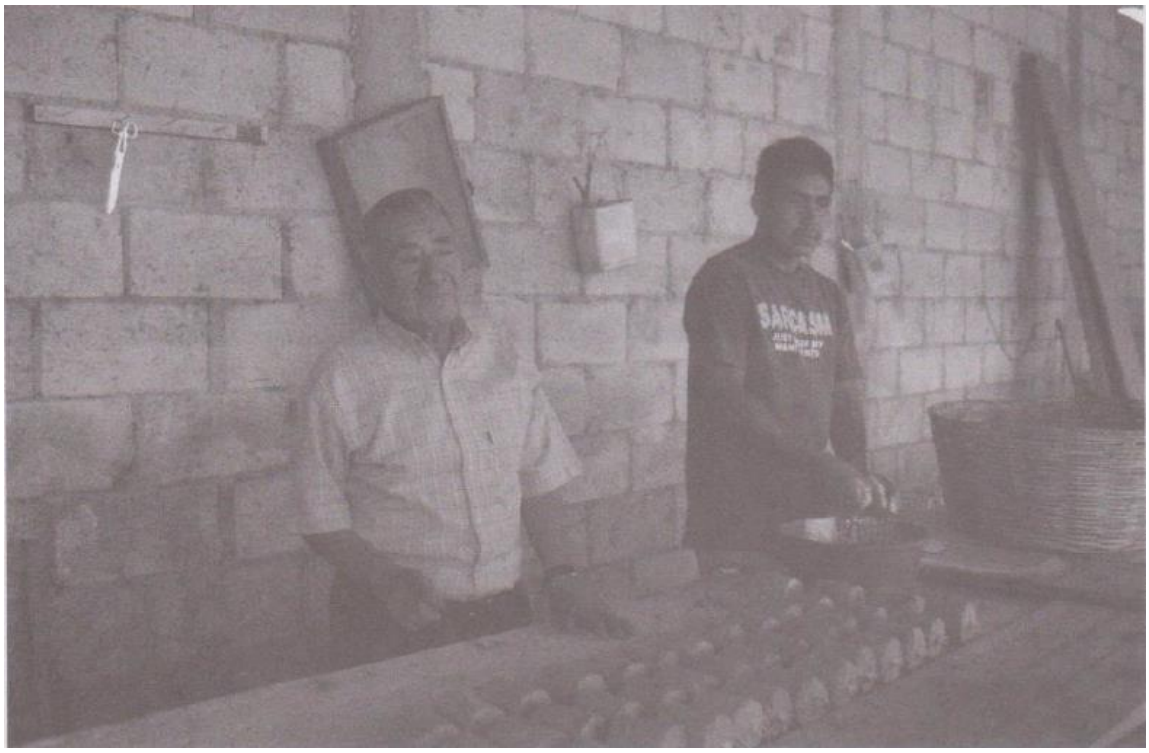
Three generations of rocket makers: Mr. José Jerónimo: progenitor. Julio Sicán, son, and Carlitos Sicán, grandson.

Bundle of Castilla canes for making the sticks for rockets

Ground gunpowder



Torito’s Frame



Finished bombs

Panoramic view of San Juan del Obispo.

Photographs: Roselia Orellana Pinto

Patron Saints: Icons of Popular Devotion in the Cantonal Markets of Guatemala City. Part VI

ARTEMIS TORRES VALENZUELA

Introduction

Continuing a series of investigative works already published by the Folklore Studies Center of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, the description of religious images in three important popular markets is incorporated: in zone six, the Candelaria market; in zone five, the Asunción market; and in zone seven, the San José Mercantil market. The methodological approach to the subject continues to respond to the nature of

each trading center, the particularities of the devout tenants, the consumers (whether identified with the Christian-Catholic cult or not), the characteristics of the advocations, and the factors that differentiate the environments. This presents another stage of an unfinished investigative project, while also inviting interested readers to consult the previously published works on the same topic.

Candelaria Market

According to one of the oldest tenants and founder of the market, Mrs. María Elena Escobar (known as Doña Elenita), due to the absence of spaces offering various products, approximately fifty years ago, a satellite market was implemented on First Street and Railroad Avenue (bordering zones one and six, respectively), a sector popularly known as Candelaria. This market gradually expanded.

The need for a permanent structure became evident in the following years, so in 1964, during the municipal administration of Ramiro Ponce Monroy, the construction began, culminating and inaugurating two years later. The new facilities located at 15th Avenue and 25th Street in zone six, Project 4-3 (Kaibil Balam neighborhood), housed most of the tenants from the Candelaria sector. Among the founders, the names of Mrs. Catalina Díaz de Donis, Ana María de Barreda, Paula Valdez, and María Elena Escobar are remembered, whose families and descendants still work in the market. Over time, the market and its organization have changed; according to current administrator Karin Ola, in the eighties, the company called Fedepesca was installed, which supplied fresh fish wholesale and retail. Currently, there is Fundaniñas, an association that collaborates and helps the daughters of market tenants.

Origin of the Image of Nuestra Senora de Candelaria

As the name suggests, the Candelaria market honors the Virgin. According to María Elena Escobar: "the sculpture that is venerated was donated by a tenant during the early years when it was still a satellite market, and from that moment on, it became the Patroness of the place."

Notes about the Image

The iconographic attributes that historically identify Our Lady of Candelaria are based on the biblical episode of the presentation of the Nino Jesús in the Temple of Jerusalem. The most important element is the candle from which its name is derived, which is related to the purification of the Virgin.

The sculpture in the Candelaria market is located in a chapel that measures approximately two meters eighty-five centimeters wide by two meters twelve centimeters deep. In this space, an altar cast and covered with tiles was erected, on which rests a wooden and glass shrine that houses the image.

Nuestra Senora de Candelaria measures about one meter and, according to tenant Sonia Pacheco, is a sculpture with flesh tones reaching the middle of the body, complemented by a frame structure. Her attire consists of an imperial crown (a gift and work of the blacksmith artisan Efraín Valdez), a wig, in her left hand she carries the child Jesus, and in her right hand, the traditional candle and a rosary.

A Miracle of Faith

Miracles are attributed to Our Lady of Candelaria, these being objective expressions of unlimited subjectivity of faith. One of the most significant and well-known in the area of the market is told by Mrs. Sonia Pacheco: "... some years ago, the child Edwin Leonel Pacheco was born at Roosevelt Hospital,

grandson of tenant Paula Valdez (RIP). Immediately, a tumor was detected in his head, so he had to be urgently operated on. Faced with this anguish, Mrs. Paula asked the image of Nuestra Senora de Candelaria to intervene, so that the newborn would survive and recover his health. Accompanying the request was the promise that if he was saved, she would be eternally grateful, celebrate her day, and take her every year - for her anniversary - to her home, where a novena would be prayed. The offering included that the celebrations and liturgical acts would be repeated and inherited in the family, becoming a tradition."

The celebrations, the traditional Dos de Candelaria

For decades, by custom and inheritance, the Valdez Pacheco family has held special activities offered to the Virgin. They began with Mrs. Paula Valdez (RIP), founder of the market, along with other old tenants, including Catalina de Díaz and Hortensia Monzón. From the beginning, five days before the second of February, the image was and is welcomed into Mrs. Paula Valdez's house (currently, in that of her daughter Sonia Pacheco Valdez). There, year after year, her attire is changed and she is beautified; the novena is prayed until the date of her devotion, when she returns to the market.

Similarly, every February 2nd, the following program is carried out:

6:00 am: Entrance of the image into the market. Fireworks. Placed on her altar.

9:00 am: Entertainment by the marimba of the Municipality of Guatemala. Mañanitas in honor to Nuestra Senora de Candelaria. Sometimes accompanied by mariachis and disco.

12:00 pm: Celebration of the Holy Mass and bless of candles.

2:00 pm: Traditional lunch invitation, to taste a meal donated by tenants and suppliers.

In the last five years, after lunch, the image is placed outside Fundaniñas, where an altar is erected and another candle blessing is performed. It remains there until six in the evening.

Tenant Committee

The tenants of the market are organized and represented by a committee elected in a general assembly for a period of two years. Currently, the position of President is held by Mr. Efraín Ramírez. The other members are: Carla Baján (Secretary), Irma Baján (Treasurer), Flavio Suret, and Emilio Alvarado (Vocal I and II, respectively).

Interviewed Persons at Candelaria Market

Karin Ola, Administrator. Judith Méndez García, originally from Guatemala City, owner of Meriendas La Única. Sonia Pacheco, originally from Guatemala City, owner of the eatery "Sucely". Silvia de García, originally from Guatemala City. Shoe Stores Sector. María Elena Escobar, originally from Guatemala City, Plastic Sales. Efraín Ramírez, originally from Los Amates, Izabal. Owner of a poultry shop, pork shop, dairy, and deli, "Katerin".

Asunción Market

Located on 18th Street and 35th Avenue in zone five of Guatemala City. This market was inaugurated by the then mayor, Ramiro Ponce Monroy, in February 1968. In the new facilities located in what was popularly known as "La Laguna de Canoa," tenants from the markets known as El Tierrero and La Chácara.

Currently, this trading center opens its doors from six in the morning to six in the evening, benefiting the following neighborhoods: Arrivillaga, El Edén, Abril, La Limonada, Jardines de la Asunción, Ferrocarrilera, Monja Blanca, Santo Domingo, and La Chácara, among others. As is usual during the year, tenants carry out various celebrations, including: Tenant's Day (June 6), Mother's Day (May 10), market anniversary, Dia de la Asuncion =(August 15), and the Dia de la Virgen de la Concepcion, patroness of the market (December 8).

According to the opinion of some tenants, prior to the earthquake in 1976, the market had higher sales. After this event, there was a noticeable division in the profession of faith, as many devout Catholics converted to other religions. This was evidenced by a certain decline in the celebrations dedicated to the Virgin.

Chapel, Altar, and Image

In a space of approximately four meters wide by two meters deep, a chapel was erected with perishable materials containing the altar. Inside a wooden and glass shrine, the sculpture of the Virgin is protected.

According to one of the founding tenants, Mrs. Margarita Mármol (one of the former vendors from the El Tierrero market): "Our Lady of Concepción was a donation from the journalist and politician, Jorge Carpio Nicolle (RIP), at the request of the president of the new market committee."

The image, possibly carved in wood and partly framed, is attributed to the sculptor A. Chacón, whose workshop was located at 12th Street "C" 4-55 in zone 3, as noted on the base of the effigy. It measures approximately one meter in height, retains a wig, eyelashes, and glass eyes, and boasts a ducal crown with embedded celestial stones, earrings, and an elegant silver necklace. As part of its iconographic attributes, it is accompanied by a wooden dove and the moon at its feet.

Over time, the Virgin accumulated a countless number of tunics in various colors and styles, some accompanied by capes and others by embroidered mantles, made of velvet and corduroy. The characteristic colors have been blue, white, and yellow. Among the dressmakers who have designed and exclusively made the image's costumes for several years, we can mention the tenant and seamstress, Carla Azucena Santos.

The altar, the setting that frames Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion, provides a creative and harmonious background; the composition of the curtains, as well as the flowers and other ornaments, has been the responsibility of the tenant Carlos Montúfar for several years. Two angels dressed in white and gold complete the visual scene, placed on either side and accompanying the Virgin inside the shrine.

Celebration of the birthday of Nuestra Senora de Concepción

The planning, organization, and realization of the commemorative activities for the Virgin are carried out thanks to the work and responsibility of the Committee for the Festivities of the Virgen de Concepción, which for several years has been composed of the tenants: Carlos Rubén Montufar Palencia (President), Margarita Mármol (Secretary), and Clorinda Concepción Berganza (Treasurer).

As part of the preparations, days before the celebrations, the entire market is decorated, a new dress for the Virgin is commissioned, and special flowers are ordered to create an original decoration. Then, prior to the grand celebration of the day of Nuestra Senora de Concepción, the novena is recited, and on the

eighth of December, as is tradition, activities such as the following:

From 8:00 to 11:00 am: Alternating disco music and marimba, accompanied by fireworks, the celebration of the mass is announced and the atmosphere is animated.

11:00 am: Celebration of the Holy Mass at the altar.

12:00 pm: Traditional lunch is offered to all tenants and attendees.

From 1:00 to 6:00 pm: Dance with disco music.

Other actions, some years ago

As some merchants recall, to proclaim and increase faith, the well-known Father José María Ruiz Furlán (RIP) carried out the Corpus Christi procession. In such a way that the Blessed Sacrament first visited the altar of the Virgen de Concepción in the Asunción market and then, made stops at internal altars, through the aisles. This activity of singular importance directly linked the Church with the popular sectors that eagerly awaited it. On December 7, 2007, for the only time, the image of the Virgen de Concepción from the Asunción market went out in procession, at the request of members of the templo de la Inmaculada Concepción of the Arrivillaga neighborhood, zone five. According to the tenants: "the nocturnal route extended to the Chácara neighborhood, the procession was carried on the shoulders by merchants, neighbors of the area, and faithful devotees of the virgin, who acquired their turn in advance. It was also accompanied by a musical band; the procession was a whole rejoicing, the Virgin, the Queen, Our Mother, distributed blessings to all the neighbors."

An original approach

Following some celebrations of the liturgy and the Catholic Christian calendar, the Virgin's celebration committee usually introduces into the shrine and displays to the sculpture, the image in chrome of the most known and venerated advocations in the Catholic Christian worship. In this way, they aim to fulfill a didactic function and at the same time, to ground the principles of faith in tenants and visitors.

Similarly, it is characteristic that, when Christmas arrives, in the Virgin's altar, the scene of the Nativity of the Nino Dios is placed. With this activity, the tenants also celebrate the advent of the new year.

People interviewed in the Asunción Market

Heydi García (Administrator), Carlos Rubén Montúfar Palencia (President, Committee for the Celebration of the Virgin), Margarita Mármol (Secretary, Committee for the Celebration of the Virgin), Clorinda Concepción Berganza (Treasurer, Committee for the Celebration of the Virgin)

from the archive: Contract and Market Regulations. Property of tenant Margarita Mármol, Exterior Store No. 21, Guatemala, March 15, 1968.

San José Mercantil Market

Located at 12th Avenue and 5th Street in Zone 7, Quinta Samayoa neighborhood of Guatemala City, the San José Mercantil Market has been venerated by its tenants for several decades. The faith and devotion of the inhabitants of this urban sector revolve around this image; schools, medical centers, and churches, among others, are united under the same invocation. At the center of the facilities of this important supply hub stands the altar that houses the image. In a space approximately three meters long by

three meters wide, the altar table is erected on which two platforms with stone finishes are raised, supporting a metal plaque with the inscription that literally reads: "DONATED BY THE CITIZEN PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC JULIO CESAR MENDEZ MONTENEGRO, GUATEMALA, MARCH 1968."

Above, with an approximate height of one meter fifty centimeters, is the image of San José and El Nino, both looking at the devotees and wearing garments that blend green and blue tones. Saint Joseph is identified by his particular attributes, and the Child, with a radiance of three powers, is characterized by the luminous effect that sets Him apart from humans.

Next to these sacred figures inside the shrine remains a mystery, which is used during the months of December and January when the Nativity scene is erected. The entire altar is illuminated by lanterns and topped by a cross. The surroundings are protected by grilles, which prevent approach to the sculptures.

The celebrations

Like in other markets, the celebrations are planned, organized, and carried out by a committee, in this case, by the board of directors of the Central Market Committee, which is democratically elected by a general vote of the tenants. It is currently composed of tenants: Elizabeth Pérez (President), Vicky de Godínez, Juan Meregildo, and Hilda Araujo, among others.

Year after year, on the nineteenth of March, a series of religious and cultural activities are held in honor of Saint Joseph the Merchant. Although with variations, the program generally consists of the following points:

7:00 a.m. Fireworks display. A mariachi band sings "Las Mañanitas" to Saint Joseph.

12:00 p.m. Celebration of the Holy Mass, usually offered by the priest of the San José Obrero church.

1:00 p.m. Lunch for all attendees.

2:00 p.m. Special performance by the ensemble from Chichicastenango, who perform, accompanied by their own marimba, the dance popularly known as los moros.

This traditional dance is performed in the space of the twelfth avenue and fifth street; the dancers delight the spectators with spectacular costumes, performing various dances, which stands out the torito.

In previous years, the sculpture of Saint Joseph has been paraded through the aisles and surroundings of the market's facilities. In the year two thousand nine, it was transported by bicycle, along with the accompanying procession. Among other activities carried out in honor of Saint Joseph, the marathon and torch relay stood out. This dynamic gave it a lot of prominence and was carried out as part of the celebrations dedicated to the Patron Saint.

Historical references

According to tenant Elizabeth Pérez, owner and heir of the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús dining room, her maternal grandmother, a founding tenant of the market, Mrs. Trinidad Girón, recounted that: "the beginnings of the market were in the floating market called Mercantil, located near the current facilities. In that place, built with makeshift shelters, efforts began to erect the building. Later, when it was established, the image was donated by the then President of Guatemala, Julio César Méndez Montenegro, and [she adds] the Baby Jesus was incorporated, which was donated by a wealthy tenant."

In this regard, the current Administrator, Mr. Sergio Madrid, contributes: "The first small

market was called Mercantil because, as the oldest tenants tell it, in that sector (tenth street between seventh and eighth avenues) there was a large grocery store that bore that name; this was back in the fifties. Later, and at the request of all those involved, sellers and buyers, help was requested to build a formal market that would shelter them, and when Ponce Monroy was mayor, the market was built and delivered in July of 1967".

Final reflection

The tenants who share devotion to San José express an organization of power and control that manifests itself at different levels. For example, there is a differentiation between the core of vendors located within the facilities of this supply center and those who also remain in the building but in external corridors. The former show more organization and cohesion, with the saintly figure as the axis, making decisions. The latter, external vendors in corridors, collaborate by carrying out agreed-upon decisions, although they sporadically participate in making some determinations. On the other hand, the floating vendors, ambulant workers who, due to the nature of their work, operate in the market on days and hours of their convenience, also participate, although not necessarily collaborate. Finally, it is worth noting that they all identify with the patron saintly figure, participating in the various activities held in his honor, but experiencing them in different ways.

People interviewed from the San José Mercantil Market

Sergio Madrid (Administrator, San José Mercantil Market). Elizabeth Pérez (President of the Central Committee of the San José Mercantil Market).

Owner of the "Sagrado Corazón de Jesús" food stall, stall number 19. Juan Mejía Quino, originally from Chichicastenango, seller of spices. Vicky de Godínez, originally from Guatemala City, seller of new clothing.

Electronic references (not cited) http://www.muniguate.com/index.php/mercados/2977-mercados, consulted in June 2011.

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Suggestions for content and style correction

Teacher Ingrid Verónica Molina Pineda and Bachelor Aída Chavarría de Calderón.

Photographs:

Guillermo Vásquez and Artemis Torres Valenzuela.

Front view from Candelaria market, zone 6, Guatemala city

Religious committee of the Candelaria market. In the background, you can see the shrine that protects the image of the Virgen de Candelaria, Patroness of the place.

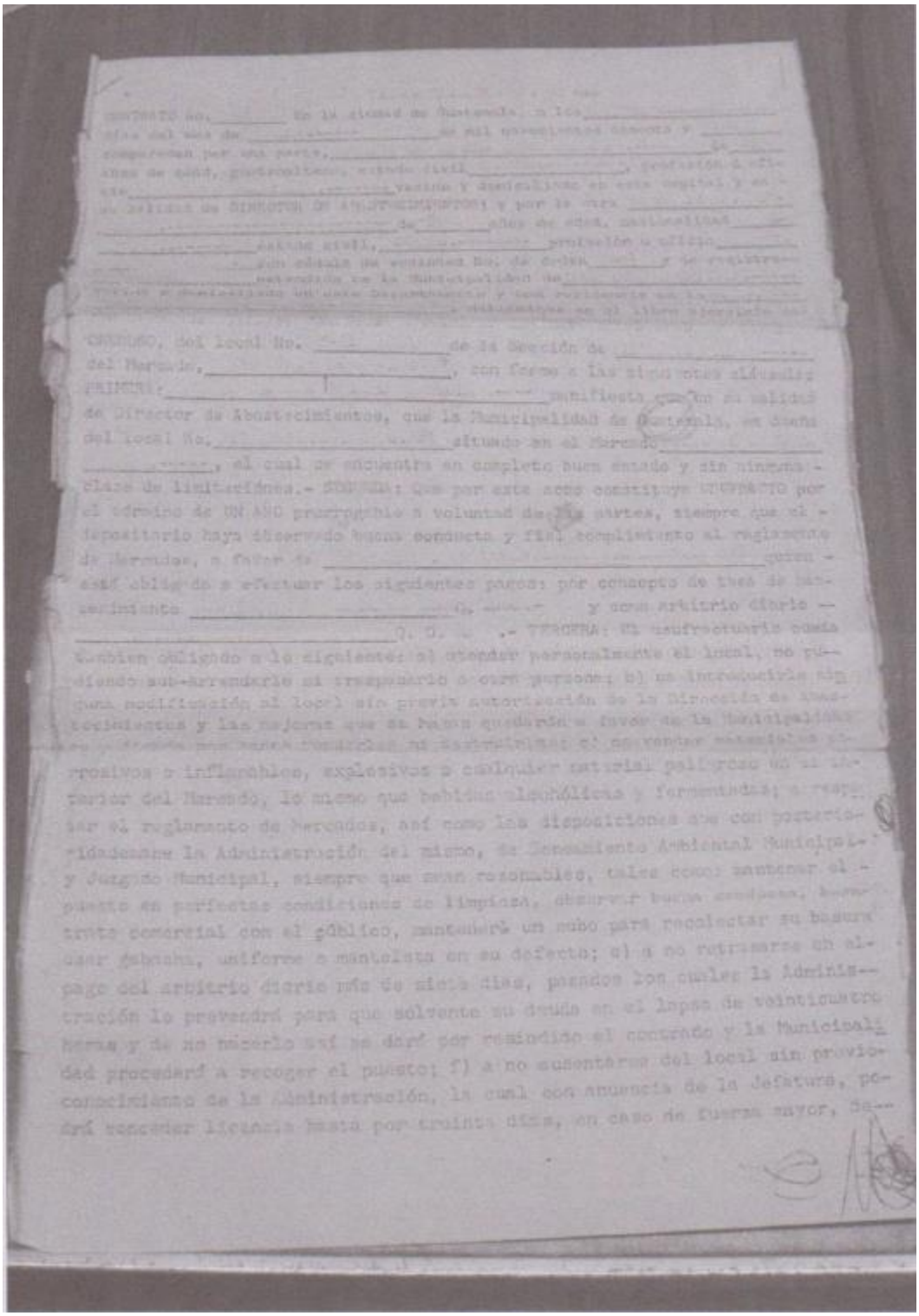
Photograph of the image of the Virgen de Candelaria, where the most characteristic element of her iconography is observed: the candle. Likewise, the beauty of her clothing and that of the Nino Dios.

Close up of the image of the Virgen de Candelaria and the Nino Dios, showing details of both sculptures.

Foreground of the Asunción Market, located in zone 5 of the capital city.

Religious committee of the Asunción Market, standing in front of the shrine where the image of the Virgen de Conception, Patroness of the place.

Commemorative plaque of the establishment of the Asunción Market, 1968.



Photograph, as an example, of one of the lease agreements signed between the tenants of the market and the Municipality of Guatemala, to regulate the use of the premises.

The teaching of history and the formation of identity

ANIBAL CHAJÓN

There is abundant literature on the importance of history and the formation of identity in young generations, as it is the scientific discipline that best accommodates the integration of children and youth into society. However, in Guatemala, there is little information about some of the historical phenomena that have shaped the current social situation. As part of a project with the Centro de Investigaciones Educativas de la Facultad de Educación at the Galileo University, the author collaborated with several students from different majors at that study center, and some surveys were conducted to identify the lack of information about national historical development. Some volunteers were questioned about specific historical figures, with the intention that, upon obtaining the results of each survey, information about the least known figure could be provided to the respondent. The surveys were circulated in September 2010 and March 2011. Two questionnaires were conducted, due to the surveyors' concerns. The figures included in the first survey, conducted in 2010, were:

1. Hasawa Chan K'awil, also known as Ah Cacao or Gobernante A de Mutul (Tikal), reigned from 682 to 734. After his victory over the ruler of Oxté Tun (Calakmul) in 695, he revitalized his city, and he is credited with the construction of Temple I, dated to 700, where he was buried (Burial 116); Temple II, where his principal wife, Kalajun Une' Mo', was buried; the remodeling of the royal palace (Central Acropolis); and several Twin Pyramid Complexes. Of interest to the surveyors was the fact that a large portion of the tourism that comes to Guatemala goes to visit Tikal, particularly Temple I or the Grand Jaguar, a building constructed by order of this sovereign. The name Grand Jaguar, by which the construction is known, is due to the lintel where Hasawa Chan K'awil appeared seated on a litter captured from the king of Oxté Tun.

2. Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat, also known as Cauac Cielo, was the ruler of Eq Na'ab (Quiriguá) from 724 to 785. In 738, he secured the freedom of his kingdom in a war against the king of Xukpi (Copán). He is responsible for most of the stelae of Eq Na'ab. This city is also a major tourist attraction and, along with Mutul, is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, with Eq Na'ab designated in 1981 and Mutul in 1979. The reasons for the interest of the surveyors were similar to those presented by Hasawa Chan K'awil.

3. Ajaw Kalel was the title of the leader of the K'iche' army who opposed the Spanish conquest in 1524. By Decree No. 1,334 of 1960 (which is still in force), he was assigned the name Tecún Umán as a National Hero, a name taken from the Title of Izquín Nehaib and from a version of the Dance of the Conquest. The surveyors were interested in identifying a more suitable name for the historical figure surrounded by myths.

4. Alonso López de Cerrato was the second president of the Audiencia de los Confines, from 1548 to 1554. He was responsible for the transfer of the capital from Ciudad de Gracias a Dios, in Honduras, to Santiago de Guatemala (now La Antigua Guatemala), in 1549. He also liberated indigenous slaves, created most of the towns with Maya inhabitants, and promoted evangelization by the religious orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. The surveyors were interested in the existence

and little known nature of this figure, who was responsible for the liberation of the indigenous population and the return of their lands by order of the Crown.

5. Rafael Carrera was a peasant leader who participated in the wars between conservatives and liberals between 1826 and 1829. He opposed the taxes established by Mariano Gálvez, whom he expelled from the government. He was the head of state of Guatemala between 1844 and 1848, during which the Republic of Guatemala was created in 1847. He prevented the separation of the State of Los Altos and invasions by Salvadoran and Honduran liberals into Guatemala. In 1854, he was proclaimed president for life. He died in 1865. He established the border with Belize to prevent British expansion into Petén, at a time when Great Britain had the best army in the world and was the largest buyer of cochineal, Guatemala's main export product. The surveyors found it convenient to inquire about this character, of whom they had more references.

6. Rafael Pérez de León: Guatemalan engineer and architect, responsible for the construction of numerous buildings in the first half of the 20th century, including the Ministry of Education (originally a school), Customs House, National Palace, National Police Headquarters, Post Office Building, Public Health Building, La Aurora Airport (on Hincapié Avenue), Monument to the Heroes, Monument Los Próceres, Monumento a las comunidades indígenas (previously known as the Monumento al Indio), National Library, Posada Belén in La Antigua Guatemala, Central America Park in Quetzaltenango, and other works. His artistic legacy was of interest to the surveyors.

7. Jacobo Árbenz: One of the leaders of the movement known as the Revolution of '44, which ended liberal governments in Guatemala. He was elected president of the country in 1951 and overthrown by Guatemalan opponents with the support of the CIA in 1954, accused of communism during the Cold War. He was one of the most well-known figures to the surveyors and, therefore, they wished to include him in the tool.

8. Carlos Castillo Armas: Leader of the movement known as Liberation, which opposed the government of Árbenz and managed to overthrow him in 1954. He continued with the projects of his predecessor: the Atlantic Highway and the Jurún Marinalá Hydroelectric Plant. He was included in the survey for being the antagonist of Árbenz.

9. Carlos Arana Osorio: A military officer who was elected president of Guatemala and ruled from 1970 to 1974. He successfully and harshly fought against the guerrilla forces, implemented agricultural development projects known as the Revolution Verde, and established Health Centers and Posts, as well as effective vaccination campaigns that allowed population growth. He was included due to the little knowledge the surveyors had of his government period.

10. Ramiro de León Carpio: A politician who served as the Human Rights Ombudsman in 1993, from which position he opposed the break-up of the democratic regime established in 1985. In 1993, the then-president, Jorge Serrano, had dissolved the Supreme Court of Justice and the Congress of the Republic, but faced with citizen opposition and that of friendly countries, he was forced to resign, leading to De León being appointed president. He successfully initiated the peace process with the guerrillas, which culminated a year after the end of his term. He was included for his political relevance in

the peace process and the proximity in time to the date of the investigation.

The survey was conducted at various points in the capital city, two private universities, shopping centers, and residential areas. The sample was random and involved 295 people aged between 19 and 51. Of these, 46% were men and 54% were women. 38% of the respondents had higher education (graduates and those about to graduate), 58% had secondary education, and 4% had primary education, so everyone could be familiar with the characters in question. The results are presented in this chart:

Chart 1
Identification of Historical Figures

subject	Known	Unknown	Total	Unknown %
Hasawa Chan K'awil	1	294	295	99.7
Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat	9	286	295	97
Ajaw Kalel	14	281	295	95
Alonso López de Cerrano	10	285	295	97
Rafael Carrera	165	130	295	44
Rafael Pérez de León	44	251	295	85
Jacobo Árbenz	193	102	295	36
Carlos Castillo Armas	141	154	295	52
Carlos Arana Osorio	144	151	295	51
Ramiro de León Carpio	185	110	295	37

Source: Own elaboration

The results were predictable for the first four figures. Almost all respondents were unaware of Hasawa Chan K'awil, and very few knew about Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat, Ajaw Kalel, and Alonso López de Cerrato. A similar situation occurred with Rafael Pérez de León. According to the interviewers, when informing respondents about the relevance of the figures, they expressed surprise and there was a predominant interest in learning about Pérez de León and his relationship with the National Palace. Contrary to expectations, almost half of the respondents were unaware of the importance of Castillo Armas, despite the constant publication of articles about the events of 1954. Carrera was more widely known. Almost a third of the respondents had information about Árbenz and De León, probably due to the dissemination in mass media.

The second survey, conducted in 2011, included variations in the included characters due to the concerns of the surveyors. Hasawa Chan K'awil, Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat, Alonso López de Cerrato, Rafael Carrera, Carlos Arana Osorio, Ramiro de León Carpio, and Jacobo Árbenz were included. Additionally, Francisco Morazán was included:

1. Francisco Morazán: Honduran military leader, president of the Federal Republic of Central America. He invaded the city of Guatemala in 1829 and moved the capital to El Salvador. He attempted a new invasion in 1840 but was defeated by the troops of Rafael Carrera. He was of interest to the surveyors due to the existence of a municipality in El Progreso with his name and a park that was dedicated to him despite having weakened Guatemalan power in the isthmus. His invasion of Guatemala is remembered with the phrase "Se fue con Pancho" ("He went with Pancho"), to designate an adverse outcome.

2. Carlos Herrera: The first elected president after the liberal dictatorships in the 20th century. He governed between 1920 and 1921 and was overthrown by a coup d'état. He caught the attention of the surveyors for his role in democratic development.

3. Jorge Ubico: A liberal president between 1931 and 1944, remembered for the buildings and infrastructure created during his government, which ended with the protests of June 1944 and was a precursor to the Revolution of '44. He was one of the most well-known figures to the surveyors and was therefore included.

The survey was also random, conducted at various points in the capital, with 142 participants aged between 18 and 48; 43% were men and 57% were women; with 1% having completed middle school education, 9% having completed high school education, and 90% having completed university study. The results can be seen in Chart 2.

The data is similar to that obtained previously. Almost all respondents were unfamiliar with Hasawa Chan K'awil, Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat, and Alonso López de Cerrato. Herrera was unknown to two-thirds, and Morazán to almost half. On the other hand, Arana was recognized by 73%, Carrera by 85%, De León by 91%, and almost everyone identified Ubico and Árbenz, despite the sample not being taken from people old enough to have had personal references of both governments (the oldest were born in 1963). This is due to the importance placed on them in the system.

Chart 2
Identification of Historical Figures

subject	Known	Unknown	Total	Unknown %
Hasawa Chan K'awil	5	137	142	97
Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat	2	140	142	9
Alonso López de Cerrato	13	129	142	91
Rafael Carrera	120	22	142	15
Carlos Herrera	34	108	142	76
Carlos Arana Osorio	103	39	142	27
Ramiro de León Carpio	129	13	142	9
Jorge Ubico	132	10	142	7
Jacobo Árbenz	132	10	142	7
Francisco Morazán	79	63	142	44

Source: Own elaboration

educational system to the information about the governments of Ubico and Arbenz, regardless of its political or ideological orientation.

Recommendations

Based on the data provided by this survey, it is suggested to incorporate more information about the lesser-known figures, specifically about Hasawa Chan Kawil, Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat, and Alonso López de Cerrato, into history programs. This would effectively developed a work plan with students from various levels starting in 2012, which includes a publication with relevant data. In the publication, information about Guatemalan traditional culture (the primary focus of

CEFOL) was included alongside details about Hasawa Chan K'awil and Alonso López de

Cerrato, while Kak Tiliw Chan Yoat will be reserved for the near future. This decision was made due to a simple factor: for the majority of children, whose native language is Spanish, the pronunciation of names in the Cholan language is complex, and confusion regarding the importance and location of each character was to be avoided. The bulletin containing this theme has been

published concurrently with this article and will be used in activities with teachers and students starting in 2012.

Notes for the Study of Traditional Guatemalan Altar Making

FERNANDO URQUIZÚ

The purpose of this presentation is to expand on the generalities of the topic identified in a publication by researcher Gonzalo Mejía Ruíz in the magazine "Tradiciones de Guatemala" No. 5 from the Center for Folkloric Studies at the San Carlos de Guatemala University in 1977.

The aforementioned writing is a first step in the formal scientific knowledge available in the country that identifies the topic, which dates back more than 34 years, when awareness of the value of this type of traditional artistic manifestation in the country was just emerging. This article was later enriched in the introduction to the work "Crónicas de Semana Santa" by the historian Haroldo Rodas (2001, pp. 11-24), who also expanded the list of altar makers. However, both presentations have overlooked the analysis of the advancement of capitalism and global culture within the traditional artistic world in an attempt to explain its evolution in the 20th century and understand its current manifestations.

These studies have been revisited and expanded with new contributions resulting from the passage of years and the refinement of knowledge, in order to leave a testimony of our institution's concern for revaluing the art and traditional artists of this branch of popular plastic arts who tirelessly struggle against the changes of the material world.

General Concepts and Periodization

The reference concept we will use for altar is taken from the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, which defines the word as follows:

Altar. Mound, stone, or elevated construction where religious rites such as sacrifices, offerings, etc., are celebrated (Royal Spanish Academy, 1992: 114).

The periodization used in the identification of altars made in the current Republic of Guatemala will be: pre-Hispanic (5,000 B.C. to 1524 A.D.), Hispanic (1524 - 1821), and Republican (1821 to 2011).

Pre-Hispanic Altars

Historical sources allow us to associate pre-Hispanic altars with a religious cult of an animistic nature whose main social function was to contribute to the maintenance of social cohesion through rites and ceremonies with an annual cyclical character related to the harvests derived from agricultural work as a means of support for the different communities.

The rites explained to the public the social organization through intricate ceremonies that were performed in front of the altars, where many artistic manifestations now called theater, dance, music, and applied arts of a sumptuary and utilitarian nature intervened, in order to reinforce in the minds of the attendees the knowledge and explanation of social organization. In this process of knowledge transmission, the sense of sacrifice and penance fulfilled by its leaders and priests also played a fundamental role in communicating with supernatural beings and their ancestors, with some objects and natural products acquiring a character of offerings to contribute appropriately to this approach process.

Colonial Altars

The Spanish invasion that began in late 1523 marked an expansion in the use of altars in the region, reorienting them for the reproduction of their ideology expressed in Catholic Christianity, which legitimized and strengthened their economic and social power in the area. In the process of consolidating their culture, we can see two stages: a warlike one and one of ideological conquest.

The first stage was characterized by the plundering of local indigenous populations by an invading army. In this process, pre-Hispanic altars served as the last refuge for these peoples, while the occupying army brought mobile altars to perform their ceremonies, which provided cohesion and explained the assault.

In the early itinerant Christian altars, triptychs, travel showcases with religious images, and paintings called Sargas. These are identified in documentary sources as Christian religious representations that were transported rolled or folded to be spread on tree branches for itinerant worship in Christian armies during the war.

The foundation of the first Spanish settlement in the capital of the former indigenous kingdom of the Kaqchikel, transformed into the Villa de Santiago de Guatemala in July 1524, became a fundamental point for the presence of the first sedentary Christian altar.

This fact does not mean that the use of itinerant altars was abandoned, as the conquest process was carried out by individuals who immediately seized land and its inhabitants, setting aside other objectives of the Spanish monarchy and the Church, which consisted of incorporating subjects and faithful followers into the Spanish empire. This eventuality led the Church to undertake they called "Pacific Conquests," which are nothing more than specialized studies to incorporate the natives of the New World into the Spanish productive process based on exploitation, supported firmly by religious conviction, which at the same time provided cohesion and a common ideology to the different kingdoms of different cultures.

As a result of these experiences, specialized works in the teaching of the Gospel were born, such as the Christian Rhetoric by Fray Diego de Valadés (1989), where he explains the academic use of artworks accompanied by the correct use of the indigenous language or Spanish, along with the use of altars that were conveniently adapted to play a fundamental role in the process of universalizing ideas based on Catholicism.

The advance of Hispanic culture in the region led to the establishment of the Diocese of Santiago de Guatemala in 1532, formally organizing the functioning of the local Catholic Church. This situation officially established the validity of the Roman Catholic Calendar, destined for the cyclical recapitulation of the Gospel and the commemoration of its official festivities. In the New World, the archdioceses of Mexico and Lima were founded, which proceeded to organize local councils to legislate the organization of the Church according to the characteristics of each population, which were completely different from those of Europe.

In 1545, the first Mexican Council was convened, in which the Diocese of Guatemala officially participated. This council proceeded with local legislation that influenced the use of didactic material composed of artworks, which, due to their quality, began to position themselves in the particular ideological frameworks. Some of these artworks were enriched with ideas from the Council of Trent, which were approved and adapted in the Archdiocese of Mexico.

The validity of the Roman Calendar marked obligatory festivities known as major feasts, including Christmas, the birth of the Virgin, Easter, Corpus Christi, Ascensión del Señor, La invención de la cruz, el día de cada uno de los doce apóstoles, and others. These feasts were used as protectors of the towns that were being founded as the Spanish occupation in the region consolidated. This led to the cyclic construction of commemorative altars whose main social function was to disseminate ideas among the different social groups, reinforcing the religious messages expressed in their artistic manifestations. Accompanied by rituals, music, floral compositions, and the use of aromatic resins, these altars created the precise settings that simultaneously appealed to the five senses, fundamentally contributing to the fixation or recapitulation of the message being conveyed.

Alongside the altars used for religious purposes, a type of civil altar also developed where images of kings and non-religious personalities were enthroned to teach or recapitulate their status as legally established authorities, explaining the limited social mobility. These altars are identified in documents of the time as "Túmulos" and were erected with a triumphant character, expressing joy, or funerary, when they were motivated by sorrow and mourning “figure 1”.

An equally important commemoration was the taking possession of the kingdoms incorporated into the Spanish Empire, which later gave rise to Independence Day celebrations. In the case of Guatemala, this event was celebrated on the day of Santa Cecilia. For this occasion, a civic altar was set up in front of the Royal Palace as the epicenter of the commemorations. A colorful parade led by the banner of Spain, carried by knights directly descended from the most illustrious families, passed in front of it, culminating the festivities with a grand apologetic ceremony that explained and exalted the existing political and social power system.

In studying the altar making of this period, one must take into account the specialized study by historians Heinrich Berlin and Jorge Luján Muñoz, titled "Los túmulos funerarios en Guatemala" (Funerary Tumuli in Guatemala), published by the Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala in 1982, This figure directly brings us to a mound erected for the funeral rites of King Felipe V, which were held in the church of Santo Domingo de Cobán around 1747 “figure 2”.

This evidence shows us the development of altar making not only in the capital of the kingdom but also in distant towns for that time, where we can appreciate the apologetic symbolic language that, back then, fixed in the collective memory the image of a monarch as the repository of earthly political power, who, through his virtues and service to the community, would attain "Eternal Glory" thanks to the good wishes and prayers of the faithful of the church on earth.

In examining the images of the triumphal mound erected in the main square of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción for the swearing-in of Fernando VII (Varios Autores, 1808), the transition of political ideas that made evident the advance of the French Enlightenment is perceptible. This movement recognized the presence of indigenous peoples distinct from the Spanish, represented in images of matrons identified as Guatemala Cachiquel and Guatemala Quiché, positioned on either side of another similar figure titled Guatemala Austriaca. These figures followed the same physical beauty standards with particular attributes of each people, supporting the monarchy of that time.

The altars of the independent period

In 1821, the independence of the former kingdom of Guatemala was declared as an extension of the ideological productive system of the Spanish regime without Spain, according to an interesting commentary by historian Severo Martínez. This statement explains the continuation of traditional Spanish altar making with enlightened overtones in both the civil and religious spheres.

The foundation of the Republic of Guatemala in 1847 was decisive for civil altar making, as its manifestations had to have an eminently local character, replacing the figure of the king with that of the president, supported by Catholicism as a system of ideas for explaining society.

The local productive regime was reoriented towards agro export, with cochineal cultivation standing out as the nation's main source of foreign exchange. The ideology of the emerging nation developed under the influence of the French Enlightenment, which began to take hold alongside a thought influenced by Catholicism. This ideology materialized in the construction of three grand neoclassical temples in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción: San Francisco, La Recolección, and the Cathedral. These were inaugurated during the presidency of General Rafael Carrera, who held office as president for life until 1865. During his presidency, the first national theater was opened for non-religious performances, and local scenography began to develop for these representations.

In this social context, civil art began to influence traditional altar making due to its innovative character, typical of the local intellectual elite expressing a preference for French Enlightenment aesthetics. This influence can be seen in sculptures from this period, such as the Sepultado del antiguo templo de Santo Domingo, whose presentation was completed in an urn expressing the same artistic trend.

In 1871, the Liberal Reform arrived, which changed the role of the local Catholic Church from a reproducer of ideas to more of an arbitrator among other institutions formed by different social groups. Civil altar making aimed to solidify ideas of freedom and progress, expressed in allegorical figures of the nation of Guatemala and its heroes, which began to be officialized from the day of their triumphant entry into the capital on June 30 of that year.

This objective motivated new forms of provisional altar making, which later materialized in a special road connecting the city with the so-called Palacio de La Reforma, inaugurated during the government of José María Reina Barrios, nephew of the Reformer. He thus harvested the first fruits of coffee cultivation, an economic motive that had driven the reform of the State's structure, expanding the power groups and the superstructure with new institutions such as banks and Protestant churches.

The reduction of the Catholic Church's role as a reproducer of the system of ideas naturally led to a decline in local altar making because it did not have the economic patronage of the monarchy in colonial times, which had continued after independence until before the aforementioned Reform. The tolerance of the expansion of new Christian currents with different religious customs marked a difference in the elaboration of altars.

However, despite these challenges posed by the development of material life, Catholicism was reorganized by Pope Leo XIII, who began to proclaim substantial changes in his views regarding Liberal States that reproduced an educational system with a secular character. Gradually, his encyclicals began to revive Catholicism in the emerging nations of Latin America, reclaiming the deep Hispanic tradition as a cultural scaffolding.

In Guatemala, this process was closely followed by Archbishop Ricardo Casanova y Estrada, who proceeded to reorganize the old brotherhoods of the colony, transforming them into modern brotherhoods and religious societies in support of Catholicism. Their main reason for existence was the economic self-sufficiency of the Catholic Church without the help of the State.

Casanova y Estrada's work, along with his group of priests in charge of the main temples in the capital, coincided with the rise to the presidency of General José María Reina Barrios (1892-1898), who as an enlightened military man respected religious manifestations as part of a civilizing process that materialized locally, resembling a small Paris in the constructions of his government.

Religious altar making began to gain special importance in subjective artistic expressions of secular taste due to the lack of religious personnel and funding. Additionally, the sponsorship of religious festivals became increasingly private, with the preferences of the sponsors taking precedence over the didactic purposes of the Gospel.

In the last decade of the 19th century, the Passion processions began to emerge from the city's old parishes, located in what is now known as the Historic Center, ornamented according to the tastes of their sponsors. For example, the procession of Holy Thursday of Jesus of Nazareth of Candelaria in 1898 was noted for being placed on a striking fabric cushion (Semana Católica, 1898: T VI, 374). A detailed analysis of this description can be considered as an enrichment of the sense of penitence through the elegance of an altar that is not necessarily didactic about the Passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

It is at this moment that we must revisit the analysis of these materials and contrast them

with photographs from the era as evidence that allows us to infer profound changes in traditional altar making. These changes reflect a transition from the reproduction of ideas for didactic purposes to a particular decorative taste that impresses the attending public, educated in liberal schools. This audience did not perceive this expansion of altar making from the early 20th century onwards because their education was no longer essentially religious. They were acting in front of a minority that still had historical memory on the subject, whose knowledge was based on another reality that was gradually transformed. Thus, the cited changes seemed appropriate to them because they broke the cyclical routine of didactic teaching and recapitulation of the Gospel, which was beginning to coexist with a changing material world where machines and new inventions were taking on an unexpected boom, and conveniences like the use of electrical energy were becoming more common.

Traditional altar making and the mechanical reproduction of images in the 20th century

A fundamental part of the reproduction of a new order of ideas in the 20th century was the use of mechanical reproduction of ideas through moving images that began to influence people's thinking, extending beyond the sacred spaces of churches, schools, and theaters, and reaching from small towns to movie theaters.

The diffusion of films depicting life in more developed countries, coupled with the first screening of "El Nacimiento, la Vida, la Pasión, la Muerte de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo" from the Pathé Frères factory in Paris, a 3,250-foot-long film in full color titled in Spanish, had a profound influence on traditional altar making.

It is interesting to note some promotional comments regarding this screening, as mentioned above. "This view has been presented in New York, London, Berlin, Paris, and in the other great centers of the civilized world." The influence of mechanical reproduction of images can be seen in the commemorations specific to each world of ideas that, at the beginning of this century, were expressed in public manifestations of a religious nature, while those of a civil nature were expanded by two new forms of public expression that made use of altar making: La Huelga de Dolores and Las Minervalias.

The first commemoration began on Viernes de Dolores in 1898, originally satirizing the traditions of Holy Week in Guatemala, especially the procession of the Santo Entierro of Santo Domingo in the capital. It was reinterpreted as a burlesque parade to denounce the mismanagement of the government and the churches, using fixed and moving altar making to spread its ideas among the different social groups of the country.

The second, Las Minervalias, is a direct response to this manifestation and those of a religious nature, aiming to honor the studious youth of the country outside the participation of university-level students who were already expressing their views on national life publicly.

The development of these three annual commemorations will set the tone for behavior and the visibility of the altar making profession itself because the State will be interested in reproducing its system of ideas through a Ministry of Public Instruction and Education, which will have a direct participation in civic commemorations. This results in students and teachers being responsible for the decorations in schools,

and heads and employees in other state institutions.

Therefore, students and intellectuals who uphold another form of interpretation of the world of knowledge express their ideas in the Huelga de Dolores through different types of decorations carried out by students and professors of San Carlos de Guatemala University organized in their various faculties.

Consequently, the altar maker is an artist's profession derived from the survival of the Catholic religious ideology that survived from the period of Spanish domination to the onslaught of the Liberal Reform, derived from the movement of the process of reintegration of Catholicism into the Liberal States that proposed a reorganization of its brotherhoods, fraternities, and Catholic associations, which began to demand artists for the making of altars and platforms for their teachings and recapitulation of the Gospel.

The role of the altar maker began to be in demand as a result of the need for splendor in religious worship, stemming from the sale of the right to carry religious images in processions of various advocations. This practice created its own budgetary limits for worship and ornamentation on commemorative days, a situation also related to the sense of identity that the neighborhood or city has around certain images, which determines the value of the right to carry them in the procession and the quality of the throne or altar where the image is placed for public veneration on its designated day according to the Catholic calendar.

In this context, commemorations in honor of the patron saints of neighborhoods are added to the annual cyclical commemorations, as well as other important ones such as the elaboration of the nativity scene for Christmas and the arrangement of altars and floats for the Lent and Holy Week season. Although their didactic purpose is different the former commemorates family unity and the latter commemorates Christ's sacrifice for the redemption of sins both celebrations aim at social unity, expressed through art. These festivities are complemented by others derived from the Ancient Roman Catholic calendar, which has been transformed over time according to changes in the material world.

In our country, in addition to the Nativity of the Lord, there are other important celebrations such as those of the patron saints of each town and particular devotions to Jesus and the Virgin Mary, which are currently complemented by others, including: the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary as Queen and Mother of the Church on January 1st, Epiphany on January 6th, Lent, Holy Week, Easter in March and April, the Ascensión del Señor forty days after Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi on the octave of the previous celebration, the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús on June 17th, the Asunción de la Virgen on August 15th, the Virgen de Dolores on September 15th; which nowadays in our environment has extended to every Sunday of this month, the Virgen del Rosario on October 7th, whose festivity also extends throughout the month, Día de todos los Santos y fieles difuntos on November 1st and 2nd, the Immaculate Conception on December 8th, the Virgen de Guadalupe on December 12th, and Christmas Eve and Christmas on December 25th.

For each of these days, altars and floats are made for processions that often no longer serve the didactic purpose of teaching the reason for their commemoration. In this context, we can appreciate an image of the Passion with themes such as: The

Transfiguration of the Lord, the Virgen de la inmaculada Concepción on a cross, or the tomb of Christ surrounded by Easter lilies and Christmas flowers, which shows us profound transformations in the ideology of religious worship “figure 4”.

It is interesting to note that altar making, especially dedicated to the Passion of Christ, with images deeply rooted in popular tradition, has grown immeasurably without control or adequate didactic direction, due to the demand for purchasing slots to carry in their liturgical processions, leading to other processions and alternate commemorations such as the altars and decorations of vigil processions, which compete in splendor with those of Lent and Holy Week, resulting in a transformation in the use of traditional altar making.

In this sense, the mechanical and technical division of art has led to the computerized design of decorations, itineraries, procession march times, and the use of cameras placed on the floats to make them visible to an increasingly growing audience that exceeds the limits of the country, such as residents abroad, who create their own altars in honor of images of their devotion derived from mechanical reproduction of art through prints and follow religious acts through the internet, bringing altar making as a means of unity beyond national borders where a different culture is experienced outside the home, yet remains united by religious faith expressed in traditional culture, which modern science currently calls "Intangible Heritage" “Figure 5”.

On the other hand, the development of productive forces in the 20th century determined the emergence of new materials and techniques in the elaboration of altars, which are increasingly made with mass-produced materials, a situation that should be addressed in another special essay that refers to this phenomenon, as well as its management by professional artists, amateurs, and devotees of the images.

The construction of altars and floats in Guatemala is determined to this day by the fundraising capacity of a brotherhood, guild, or Catholic association responsible for the worship of a particular image, which comes to life through the pomp in the commemoration of the feasts dedicated to its invocation. The altars and floats serve as thrones for their altar, whose richness is also exhibited and positioned in the religious ideology according to the delicacy and quantity of compliments expressed in flowers, fruits, wax, and the use of aromatic resins that serve as offerings complemented by the debut of jewelry and other garments that are very important for their ephemeral and renewed nature, which as the century progressed, have transformed into mass-produced products such as the use of artificial flowers and fruits, industrial wax from China, and jewelry and garments made of synthetic materials.

It is interesting that after the first decade of the 21st century, the use of splendor in worship is mixed, as it is not uncommon to see the care of a natural environment in a vigil altar or procession float, but the embroidery of the image's attire is done in golden plastic thread, an eventuality that makes it difficult to perceive the displacement of materials and techniques in Guatemalan altar making.

The life of altars in the religious ideology of the country

The construction of altars in Guatemala has varied as the didactics of the Gospel have demanded. Understanding this situation, it is reasonable to think that we cannot consider the social function in the construction of an altar as the epicenter of a prayer during the

period of Spanish domination 1552-1821, where a novena was held in a church and on the last day a procession took place that visited several houses where a float entered to be placed on a throne where a mystery of the Rosary, a Sorrow or Joy of the Virgin Santisima, a station of the Stations of the Cross were prayed. Spiritual exercises very different from today where these religious acts no longer occur because the novenas, prayers, and other liturgical manifestations have been reduced to the Stations of the Cross during Lent and Holy Week, remaining in most cases altars and processions as walks of beautifully decorated images.

The large cities like Mexico City and Santiago de Guatemala were designed and planned with the construction of the Vía Matris and Vía Dolorosa, suitable for the realization of altars that taught and recapitulated a socially accepted behavior for men and women. This was reinforced by other spiritual exercises such as the Dolores y Gozos de San José, novenas of saints, blessed ones, and other members of the heavenly court who served as specific examples for the reproduction of a certain order of ideas, explaining the power of the Church and the Monarchy that materialized in their assets managed by ecclesiastical and royal officials.

Currently, this scheme of ideas reproduction has been replaced by "the enjoyment of material goods in the shortest possible time accessible to anyone who possesses money as an equivalent commodity among these goods," leaving aside the prevailing ideology of those times expressed in the idea of "coming to life as a temporary opportunity for preparation for eternal life, ruled by an omnipotent God who reigns in a spiritual world of perfect order."

The diffusion of the new ideology has not necessarily determined the death of the previously mentioned one, much less the exercise of its manifestations properly adapted to other situations of material life. Attending to these theoretical evidences allows us to interpret specific aspects such as the non-identification of the Vía Matris in the city of Santiago de Guatemala, which included the construction of seven temples dedicated to the meditation of its VII Dolores and VII Gozos still present in the ideology of the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, about to be lost forever in our ideology if it had not been for the emphasis on specialized studies about popular religiosity supported by the San Carlos de Guatemala University.

The analysis of the written and material evidence leads us to new, increasingly perfect knowledge of the reality in other times in the old kingdom of Guatemala, where we find the root of some manifestations whose beginning we can perceive as we have made evident in this exposition from the pre-Hispanic period.

However, it is the logical concatenation of ideas that leads us to new formal knowledge, such as the ones presented, which make clear the validity of traditional altar making in our country as a means of identity among Guatemalans, struggling not to succumb to the advance of global culture and its ideology that has determined severe transformations that new generations cannot perceive because they became aware of their existence when synthetic materials were already part of their culture.

The liturgical year and the survival of altar making in Guatemala's ideology

The disappearance of the identified Sacred Ways in documentary and monumental sources has determined a greater cultivation of private and public domestic altar making

for commemorations. In the first denomination, we can identify that which is done within households without the participation of the community, such as a nativity scene, and publicly, in which the community participates, such as a Corpus Christi resting altar or a specific Station of the Cross, which is done in a public place appropriate in the street in front of houses or commercial premises where a procession or pilgrimage passes by. The nativity scene as an altar and Guatemalan tradition

Currently, the most popular altar in churches and private homes in our country is the "Nativity scene," which must be completed on the night of December 24 of each year. Within the popular ideology, it survives under the name of Christmas Eve so that at 0:00 hours on December 25, the image of the Nino Dios is placed to commemorate the Nativity of the Lord or Christmas. The ideological message of the festivity is family unity.

The making of these types of altars has its origin in the Mexican Councils (1545-1589) that initially governed their representation with a didactic purpose, which was expanded with the modernization movement of the Church due to the advance of the Protestant Church in Europe in the 17th century. This movement gave rise to the foundation of new religious orders with characteristics of service to the community, such as the Orden de Belén in the former kingdom of Guatemala. Meanwhile, the Council of Trent became a reference in the world of Catholic ideas, to which was added a taste for the representation of the Neapolitan Nativity, which added to the central figures of the Nativity, originally composed of the Holy Family, shepherds, and other symbols, scenes of Italian landscapes from the 18th century. This eventuality gave freedom to incorporate other scenarios of a local nature, expanding the creativity of each country and region, which was transformed by the French Enlightenment and the industrial revolution, which incorporated from the late 19th century the mechanical reproduction of images, whose use was approved until its last decade by Pope Leo XIII.

In the 20th century, nativity scenes in Guatemala transformed with the incorporation of electric lighting into these types of altars, and in the second half of this century, synthetic materials from a more advanced second industrial revolution appeared, eventually leading to industrially designed materials from China. These compete against those made in different regions of the country, which strive not to disappear in the face of global culture. This phenomenon is a subject of study and monitoring by the Popular Religiosity research area “Figures 6 and 6A”.

In the new order of ideas of the early 21st century, where communication is facilitated through specialized social networks, those interested in these types of traditional manifestations have formed their own communication block in Guatemala. Pages dedicated specifically to Guatemalan nativity scenes and the Baby Jesus are very popular on Facebook and can be found under different cybernetic access routes.

Altars for the Patron Saints and Devotions in Guatemalan Tradition

One form of altar that has persisted in our traditional religious ideology, albeit in a very transformed manner, are those dedicated to the Patron Saints and specific devotions of houses, neighborhoods, towns, and cities in the country. The purpose of their existence is to invoke protection for the referenced sites, maintaining a certain relevance to this day in

a hierarchical order, which we can describe as follows.

In the political-ideological sense used by the Catholic Church and the State, the most popular image in the former archdiocese of Mexico, to which the diocese of Santiago de Guatemala was attached (1545-1741), is the Virgen de Guadalupe, whose dissemination began to be prominent from the second half of the 16th century. It was fully strengthened in the 17th century with the arrival of bishops from New Spain who positioned her cult, which began to take on a local and regional character. This can also be perceived in the literary production of the former kingdom of Guatemala, with the splendor of Hispanic culture expressed through works such as "La Recordación Florida" by Francisco de Fuentes y Guzmán and "Rusticatio Mexicana" by Rafael Landivar.

In 1743, the Diocese of Santiago Guatemala was transformed into a Metropolitan Archdiocese. Its patron saint remained Santiago Apóstol (Saint James the Apostle), but its own devotions also developed, highlighting another image significantly: El Santo Cristo de Esquipulas, venerated in the current municipality of Esquipulas, Department of Chiquimula, a strategic site located as the epicenter among the main cities of the new archdiocese. A monumental temple was chosen as the holy site of pilgrimage for the new archdiocese. This devotion became popular as an icon of local unity, with altar making playing a fundamental role in the movement of ideas among the different social groups, particularly highlighting this aspect in liberationist governments after the counter-revolution in 1954. “Figure 7”.

However, the disorientation of altar making in general, and particularly regarding this advocacy, began to become evident after 1982 when the first apostate president of Catholicism came to power in our country, General Efraín Ríos, who led a crusade for the development of Protestant churches in order to divide local ideology as the local armed conflict developed and global culture advanced.

The image of the Holy Christ was replaced by "Esquipulas" as a respected pilgrimage site known as a "holy place" above ideological differences, developing a new image of the site that emphasized its tourist destination. This appearance was exploited by various local and regional social groups to serve as a neutral site in the process of approaching and discussing the resolution of their conflicts in the last decade of the 20th century.

The use of popular devotions and their sacred sites as part of complicated political processes, together with the commercialization of the place for tourism, has resulted in the presentation of hybrid altars that we can appreciate in a recently crafted nativity scene. This scene presents a mixture of ideas aimed at the commercial positioning of the place, supported by a commercial campaign sponsored by a bank, la devoción al Santo Cristo (devotion to the Holy Christ).

These aspects are evident when a painting of the Esquipulas sanctuary was used as the backdrop for the aforementioned nativity scene, with a commercial sign from a bank replacing "Gloria a dios en el cielo y en la tierra paz" (Glory to God in the highest), and on earth peace," which every nativity scene should have. Instead, the sign promotes the place as a tourist site through a computer-based campaign. This issue should be carefully analyzed and understood from a scientific point of view to document these apparently unnoticed changes in traditional Guatemalan altar making. “Figure 8”.

It is interesting to note that this type of altar making with a commercial connotation is also projected abroad, as many people who have emigrated to the United States of America have enthroned the Lord of Esquipulas at various key points along their journey to that country by land, even exalting Him in several Catholic, Protestant, and private churches in that country. This strengthens His image as a symbol of Latin American migrants alongside the Virgen de Guadalupe, transcending a new form of altar making in their worship that presents special characteristics where the mechanical reproduction of the image plays a fundamental role within the global culture, leading us even to the sustenance of a large part of His worship through electronic means. “Figures 9 and 9B”.

The altars of Lent and Holy Week, and brotherhoods of souls in the Guatemalan tradition

Altar making around the Passion of Christ has been very important since the period of Spanish domination (1524-1821) because a fundamental part of ideological dominance was the positioning of the principle "that every man and woman came to the earthly world as a preparation for eternal life in an immaterial world where they will live comfortably forever." Naturally, if one behaved socially acceptably in the material world or repented at the last moment and amended it through a donation to society as a way of compensation, administered of course by authorized Church officials.

Social reparation could also be reinforced by the pleas of the survivors in the material world, through donations that developed specific devotions expressed in the brotherhoods of souls with special commemorations that coincided with All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, November 1 and 2 of each year, expanding the dogmas with the spread of Purgatory as a prelude to Eternal Glory or Hell. This type of commemoration occupies altar making with great life in the imagery to this day, still surviving the Altars of the Deceased where paintings and photographs of ancestors are never lacking alongside a Christ of Souls. This type of altar is also typical in the novenas for the deceased after the passing of someone, at forty days from the event, and on the first anniversary of their death. The construction of the altar can continue for many years, according to the legacies left by the deceased or simply the memory they managed to position during their life in their descendants. "Figure 10".

The positioning of these ideas of eternal life after death and the possibility of helping achieve it from our world required a great apparatus of teaching, learning, and recapitulation of religious knowledge that obliged the vassals of the Spanish monarchy to commemorate the Catholic liturgical calendar cyclically, which also marks a season of Lent and Holy Week prior to the celebration of Easter or the Resurrection of Christ after having been subjected to cruel tortures that he overcame death, thanks to the acceptance of his inevitable fate of death on the cross.

Teaching also included the role of the mother of Christ as co-redeemer of humanity, as she contributed fundamentally to the model of female behavior. These teachings are supported by the understanding of the role of the apostles as direct disciples of Jesus, the Martyrs as the first Christians, the Doctors of the Church as interpreters of the material organization that reflects the divine will, and the Saints as exemplary lives to be imitated by society. This commemoration takes place according to the full moon of summer, an event that makes it vary in the calendar in the

months of late March and early April each year.

Big cities like the city of Santiago, capital of the kingdom of Guatemala, had a network of churches dedicated to meditating on this way of life and explaining society, where the chapels dedicated to the Via Crucis and the Via Matris stood out regarding the theme that now concerns us. The route was made every Friday and Saturday of the year and every day of Lent and Holy Week, respectively, to achieve a standardized behavior of society in Spanish and indigenous towns.

The penitential processions were carried out with images of Jesus and the Virgin, according to the occasion, and had special splendor during the so-called Dias Grandes (Grand Days) such as Holy Week, when special altars were set up in public and private places along the processional routes. In the 18th century, the splendor of the Passion brotherhoods grew strongly as a preparation for the process of founding a new archdiocese. Thus, on August 5, 1717, the image of Jesus of Nazareth of La Merced was consecrated, with the chronicle of said event stating that "the church was adorned inside and out, two sideboards were placed with 200 sources and 60 pitchers of silver" (Álvarez, 1977: 124-125). This citation allows us to place the role of altar making in the devotion to Jesus Nazareno within the movement of ideas among the different social groups of the time.

In 1743, the archdiocese of Guatemala was founded, which gradually acquired its own character with the advancement of the Enlightenment, which began to enrich the thinking of the city dwellers. In the religious sphere, we can find a subtle clue in the field of art when analyzing the following comment: "Meanwhile, music, which softens manners so much, received advancement that came in the boat directed by Father Goicoechea at the end of the year 90, Father José María Eulasia, an expert in the keyboard, who instructed Benedicto Sáenz and he to other professors and enthusiasts, this branch of teaching becoming widespread among educated people." (García Peláez, 1972: 196) The presence of these enlightened intellectuals of the arts was reinforced by others from different branches of knowledge, such as the doctors José Felipe Flores (born in Chiapas) and Narciso Esparragosa y Gallardo (born in Venezuela), the lawyer José del Valle (born in Honduras), and officials like Alejandro Ramírez and Jacobo de Villa-Urrutia (promoter of the Economic Society), Ignacio Beteta, editor of La Gazeta de Guatemala, or Antonio García Redondo, a peninsular, and dean of the ecclesiastical chapter. (Luján Muñoz, 1999: 99, 100) Some of these figures undoubtedly came to hold public office, as the historian Jorge Luján Muñoz refers, citing a document he located in the General Archive of the Indies, we can find a first transformation of the Passion processions of liberal origin that has reached our days, dating back to March 20, 1797. when a process was initiated to denounce and eliminate the excesses that occurred in the Lent and Holy Week manifestations in the capital of the kingdom, which led to extremes of vanity and excess in mortifications, causing scandal and confusion among attendees. The cited document urged participants in these forms of expression of faith: "to be inflamed with true spirit of penance, to choose other more rational, more secret, and less exposed forms with the advice and direction of their confessor... In view of these excesses, the Audiencia prohibited the participation in any procession of 'covered individuals, impaled penitents, and disciplinants without the slightest violation being concealed'" (Luján Muñoz 1984:76) The analysis of this document explains the loss of these living

elements in city processions, which must have had some kind of follow-up within the kingdom, because the representations in indigenous and ladino towns are of a theatrical nature where the disciplinants have also disappeared, with rare exceptions, while the presence of impaled individuals is reduced to the representation of Dimas and Gestas. It is interesting to note that the implementation of these measures contributed to the strengthening of traditions, which were gradually updated to new rational forms of expression of faith, an aspect that may have positively contributed to their being attacked less ferociously by thinkers of an eminently liberal background and iconoclastic religions, which were introduced into the environment years later after the Liberal Reform of 1871.

This reference, together with other graphic sources like Figure 3, brings us directly to the Altar making of the Passion, which was reoriented at the end of the 19th century with the advancement of liberal culture, which determined the sponsorship of private individuals in these manifestations of faith where a marked personal taste by private sponsors of these manifestations of faith began to prevail, as is evident in Figure 3 A, where the use of ornamentation not necessarily related to the theme proper for Holy Week liturgy is evident, but rather a decorative purpose of the float.

Altar making for didactic and commemorative purposes received a huge influence from global culture through cinematography from 1903, becoming more frequent by 1907 with the re-release of the film El Nacimiento, la Vida, la Pasión, la Muerte de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo (The Birth, Life, Passion, Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ). The propaganda announcements add that it comes from "The famous Pathé Frères factory in Paris, 3,250 feet long, all in colors, titled in Spanish" and adds "This view has only been able to be presented in New York, London, Berlin, Paris, and in the other great centers of the civilized world" (La República. Year VII. Second Epoch. No. 4614. Guatemala, July 29, 1907. p.3.).

The development of the influence of mechanical reproduction of images through cinematography and its influence on Guatemalan altar making has been analyzed in more specific studies, as it grew throughout the 20th century. For now, it is convenient to identify where and when this manifestation began to dominate the making of altars and local processions whose themes expanded beyond this commemoration as cinematography became an important medium for the reproduction of ideology.

In 1952, the use of Passion altar making was oriented towards an anti-communist campaign led by Archbishop Mariano Rossell, which was modified in 1955 when the theme El triunfo del cristianismo sobre las doctrinas ateas (The triumph of Christianity over atheistic doctrines) began to dominate, clearly alluding to the triumph of the National Liberation Movement. However, these themes began to fade with the arrival of General Efraín Ríos to the presidency in 1982, when he supported the development of Protestant religions as mentioned earlier, considerably weakening Catholicism, which left altar making related to the Passion of Christ and his Resurrection in the hands of individuals who have oriented it according to their knowledge and opinion.

The altars for other commemorations and devotions

The altar making tradition is very popular in the Guatemala. One of the most notable is the "Winter Festivities," which begin with the Invention of the Cross, celebrated every May

3rd, prescribed in the ancient Roman calendar in force since the first Mexican council of 1545. This celebration has a deep impact on national altar making, manifesting in prestigious festivities like the tricentennial fair of the Cross in the municipality of San Juan, Amatitlán.

In the same calendar, we find other commemorations of great importance in this cycle of winter festivals, such as the Ascension of the Lord, celebrated on a Thursday after forty days of Easter, and its octave, the feast of Pentecost, which in turn has another octave called Corpus Christi. In the Hispanic-influenced altar making tradition, these festivals are celebrated with altars known as "Sagrarios," which are erected every Maundy Thursday in all churches to commemorate the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus.

It is still possible to appreciate the creation of elaborate altars to commemorate these religious festivals in various towns in the current Republic of Guatemala. The Corpus Christi celebration, in particular, continues to have special splendor in the capital and other towns, including Palín in the department of Escuintla and Patzún in the department of Chimaltenango.

In this winter cycle, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus strengthened in the 19th century as a result of the advancement of the French Enlightenment, with its celebration taking place on the octave of Corpus Christi. A first advance on Hispanic culture was expressed with the substitution of the patronage of the musicians' guild with this devotion, replacing Santa Cecilia, whose day commemorated the Spanish invasion of the kingdom, as evident in Figure 1.

The altars and social events

Hispanic culture also made religious life and the fulfillment of the Church's commandments a social event centered around the creation of altars, which has evolved according to the material world. In this sense, baptism altars can still be seen in private ceremonies, as well as altars for first communion, marriage, and the deceased. “Figure 11”.

There are also private altars that enshrine protective saints of neighborhoods and houses, whose worship is both personal and social. In some homes, altars of brotherhoods are set up, responsible for the worship of images owned by communities that annually remain in the homes of the stewards of these religious institutions. These altars enjoy social prestige and shine particularly bright during patron saint festivities when they are taken to churches to accompany the prayers of the local patron saints.

Epilogue

Altar making in Guatemala, both civil and religious, is the result of a fusion of pre-Hispanic, Hispanic, and capitalist ideological elements. This presentation has made clear its role as a didactic element of power groups to fix their ideas on the rest of society through its construction.

This branch of artistic expression has varied in materials and techniques, influenced by the development of industrial design products for commercial decoration that use mass-produced materials, increasingly homogenizing the lives of people who become consumers whose lifestyle is reproduced in shopping centers where we can appreciate modern setups that emulate life in more developed countries. Meanwhile, in the old houses and churches of the old neighborhoods now called historic urban centers, the old altar making tradition still stands against the advance of global culture, whose changes are duly recorded in this type

of research work to bear witness to our Higher Education Institution's concern for the safeguarding of these manifestations of traditional Guatemalan culture.

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Lara Álvaro. 55 years old, altar maker, resident of the La Parroquia neighborhood in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción.

Figure 1 - Procession of the banner of Spain on the day of Santa Cecilia in the former kingdom of Guatemala, in the background of which we can appreciate a triumphal mound or civic altar. Antonio Villacorta. History of the Republic of Guatemala. National Typography, Guatemala, 1961.

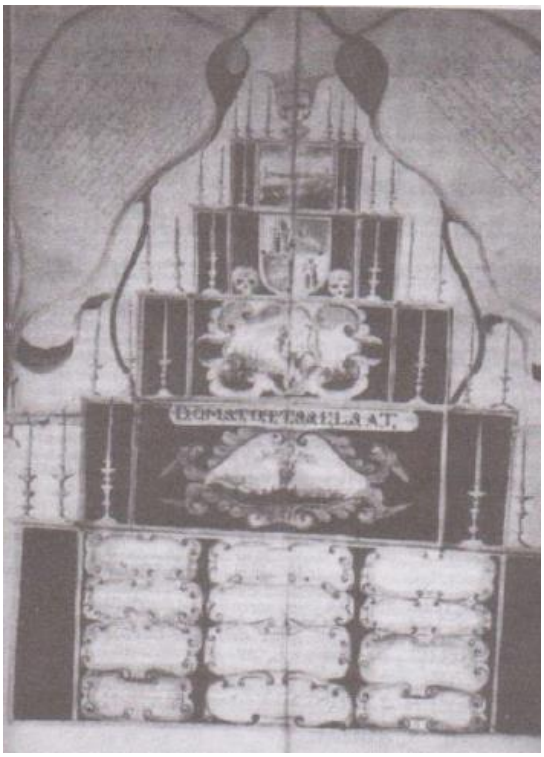


Figure 2 - Funerary mound of Felipe V, erected in the city of Cobán, Alta Verapaz, in the former kingdom of Guatemala in 1747. From the Central American General Archive, published by Heinrich Berlin and Jorge Luján Muñoz. Funerary Mounds in Guatemala. Academy of Geography and History of Guatemala. Guatemala, 1982.

Figures 3 and 3A - Altars and processional platforms of the Vigil of Jesus of La Merced, where we can see a transition from a traditional didactic sense of altar making to a preference for the sponsors' ornamentation. We can also appreciate the ritual use of candles alternating with electric lighting. (Photographs, anonymous from a private collection)

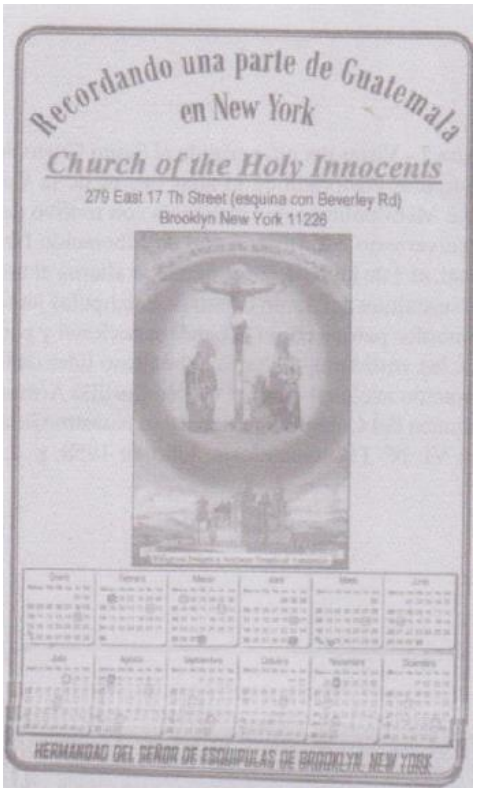
Figure 4 - Holy Sepulchre of the Cristo Yacente de la Recolección surrounded by Christmas lights and poinsettias, a decoration typical for Advent altar making. (Photograph, Fernando Urquizú)

Figure 5 - Altar to Jesus of Candelaria created in the home of his devotee Werner Ochoa in the city of Chicago in the United States of America in 2010, evidence that shows us the evolution of traditional altar making and its reach in Guatemalan culture beyond our borders. (Photograph, Werner Ochoa)

Figures 6 and 6A - The nativity of Jesus, a New Spanish painting by Pedro de Ramírez from 1672, illustrates the perfect model of a nativity scene to be made in those years, contrasted with a traditional domestic nativity scene using electric lighting and synthetic materials. (Photographs, Fernando Urquizú)

Figure 7 - Views of the altar erected to the Holy Christ of Esquipulas, elaborated in the main altar of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Guatemala, on the occasion of the IV anniversary of the National Liberation Movement, on July 3, 1958. The altar alternates the use of the sculpture of the Holy Christ of Esquipulas with national symbols such as the national flag and part of the military attire of the successful leader of the national liberation, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas. Students of San Sebastián College Our Guide. Year VI. No. 117. Guatemala, July 1958, p. 2.

Figure 8 - Nativity scene of the Basilica of the Holy Christ of Esquipulas from Christmas 2009, where the sign "Glory to God in the highest" was replaced by a commercial one promoted by a bank for a commercial tourism campaign that positioned this sacred site as the most visited by tourism in our country. (Photograph by Oscar Haeussler Paredes, year 2009.)



Figures 9 A and 9B

Devotional almanac from the parish "Church of the Holy Innocents" in the city of New York, United States of America, featuring the image of the Holy Christ of Esquipulas and a box for requests and petitions to this devotion sent electronically; printed and placed at the feet of the sculpture in its basilica located in the municipality of Esquipulas, department of Chiquimula in Guatemala.

Figure 10 - Domestic Altar for the Deceased, typical of All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, novenas, forty days after someone's death, or the end of the year. In this monument, we can see a Holy Christ, flanked by the figures of two naked souls in purgatory floating over flames, surrounded by photographs of the deceased from the house as well as flowers and candles, where there is always a glass of pure water that supposedly the dead need to drink to quench the heat produced by the fires of Purgatory. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú.)

Figure 11 - First Communion altar created by Ramiro Araujo on October 15, 1966, which served as the centerpiece for the First Communion breakfast of the children graduating from Casa del Niño N °2, located in front of the Candelaria church where the respective mass was held. (Photograph by A Gonzales. C.)

Figure 12 - Holy Thursday monument from the year 2007 at the Nuestra Senora del Rosario of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. (Photograph by Fernando Urquizú.)

Historical Notes on the Contests for the Election and Coronation of Indigenous Representatives in Guatemala

DEYVID MOLINA

The patronal and titular fairs are significant events in the lives of Guatemalan communities. Among the many activities scheduled for these celebrations are the elections and coronations of queens, who represent the beauty of the local women and, in recent years, also represent the culture of the community. Guatemalan indigenous peoples have not escaped this phenomenon, with the difference that in these contests or "convivencias" as many call them, beauty is not the primary factor in choosing the winner. Instead, aspects such as ethnic background, use of the mother tongue, traditional dress, and a comprehensive knowledge of the customs, traditions, and worldview of the community being represented are evaluated.

This work addresses the origin and historical data of some of the events held throughout the country, in which indigenous representatives are chosen. It is necessary to clarify that the term "representative" will be used instead of "queen," as according to several informants, the latter concept does not exist in Mayan languages; furthermore, "a representative is one who is elected by a jury, before an audience, and therefore represents the popular will."

Another point to note is that this essay only addresses the contests held in municipal seats, not those organized in villages, which in recent years have gained popularity and multiplied, especially in the municipalities of Sumpango (Sacatepéquez) and San Juan Sacatepéquez (Guatemala).

For the realization of this brief history, hemerographic sources were a very useful tool, especially due to the limited knowledge of the topic, the lack of studies on the issue, and the total ignorance or apathy on the part of the organizers of some events, as well as of people who have participated in them.

First Events: Indias Bonitas

It is not known for certain when the events of election and coronation of indigenous representatives began. However, among the oldest that still exist in the 21st century are Umial Tinimit Re Xelajuj No'j (Daughter of the People of Quetzaltenango) and Rab'ın Kob'an (Daughter of Cobán), both dating back to the 1930s. It is necessary to clarify that for many years these contests were known as "India Bonita," a title that was changed in the 1970s as part of the indigenous peoples' struggle for recognition.

The term "India Bonita," referring to a beauty pageant context, was coined by the Mexican newspaper "El Universal" in 1921, when it called for a contest to choose the most beautiful indigenous woman in the country. The winner was María Bibiana Uribe, from the region of Puebla. Surely, this idea was transferred to Guatemala, a country that has often been a recipient and imitator of ideas and activities from its northern neighbor.

One of the first historical references found on the topic of indigenous representatives occurred in La Antigua Guatemala, the departmental capital of Sacatepéquez, in the early 1930s. In the month of March, a summer

fair was held, and in the 1933 edition, the idea arose to hold a "beauty" event, where the contestants would come from the municipalities with the highest indigenous population. "El Imparcial," one of the few newspapers of the time, published the following: "The committee in charge of the India Bonita contest, which will be one of the most charming attractions of the fair, has agreed to invite municipalities with indigenous populations to hold a beauty contest in their respective jurisdictions; the winners, with the title of India Bonita of such municipality, will participate in the general contest to be held in Antigua, where the one deserving to be called the India Bonita of Sacatepéquez will be designated." Agustina Xar de Santa María de Jesús was the winner of that contest.

The following year, one of the oldest events that still exist was about to emerge: the Umial Tinimit Re Xelajuj Noj contest. In the first days of August, a call was made to choose the India Bonita of Quetzaltenango, who would be present at the independence celebrations the following month. Among the rules, it was stated that the reign would last for a period of one year, starting from September 15, 1934. All young women between the ages of 15 and 25, provided they were daughters of indigenous parents, could compete for the title of India Bonita. The selection would be made through popular vote, which could be cast by men and women, indigenous and mestizo, over 15 years old. For this purpose, voting booths would be set up in Parque Centro América on August 23, from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. The votes would be counted the next day, and the name of the winner would be announced, who would be crowned on September 14. One of the first tasks of the sovereign would be to choose her court of honor, consisting of no more than ten people, including five indigenous men. Rosa de Paz Chajchalac was the first Indita Bonita of Quetzaltenango.

The idea of having an indigenous queen in the city of Quetzaltenango had been in the minds of several community members for years, as previously it was the wealthy mestizos who chose the indigenous representative, without the winner having a major impact on local life. It was for this reason that: "tied to the desire for there to be a representative of Xelajú's beauty permanently, in the various cultural events during the Independence fair and others, because due to the social and economic factors in which the country was at the time of Jorge Ubico, it was not possible to do much in terms of culture" (Tzunum, 1984: 3).

Apparently, the election of the India Bonita of Quetzaltenango generated expectations in some sectors linked to the politics of the time: "Mr. Lionel Sánchez Latour, returning from the fair in Quetzaltenango, and excited by the result obtained with the indigenous queen contest of that city during the fair, has addressed the central committee of the November national fair suggesting that on the occasion of those celebrations, and to make them more attractive, the queen of the Quetzaltenango indigenous people be invited as a special guest, as well as the girl from the fair, also elected in that city. Some members of the central committee, from whom we obtained information about this matter, have informed us that they intend to propose at the next committee meeting that not only the mentioned beauties be invited, but also all the indigenous queens who have been or will be elected in advance, in all regions of the country, considering that they will be a great attraction for tourism and a revelation for the capital city residents"

In Cobán, the capital of Alta Verapaz, the first departmental fair was held in August 1936.

"At that time, a group of entrepreneurs and residents proposed an event they called the departmental fair, in which they chose the Misses Flower of the Fair and India Bonita Cobanera." A written media of the time refers to the way the first Alta Verapaz representative was chosen: "A very nice and brilliant point was the parade of the Indias Bonitas to choose the India Bonita of the department. Quechies and Pocomchies, two well-differentiated branches that populate the department, entered the competition. A tough task for the judging panel to choose among so much India Bonita, it must be noted that in Cobán there are very Indias Bonitas girls, the product of either the mix of the Saxon and the Spanish, but this time they were discarded, the competition was for pure Indigenous girls. There were several eliminations, and when it came down to the last two, the jury tied three times until they resorted to the popular vote, and by acclamation, the Cobanera Amandias Macz was chosen."

It is striking that in the origins of these types of events, elements such as discrimination and the superiority of the mestizo over the indigenous are latent. The figure of a representative indigenous person in that distant era was seen as something exotic, out of the ordinary, but at the same time it was a way to attract tourism, and therefore money. It is well known that during the 14 years he governed the country, Jorge Ubico presented indigenous people as objects of exhibition. It is enough to mention that during the November Fair, groups of indigenous people were brought from the interior of the country so that the people of the capital could learn about their ways of life. For this purpose, the so-called Pueblo Indígena (indigenous village) was set up, which tried to reproduce some place from where the people who were exhibiting came from. Therefore, the idea of there being a "India Bonita" fit within that mentality, which was shared by some sectors of the population.

Some newspapers from the 1940s mention that in some departments of the country indigenous elections were held, almost all under the name of "India Bonita," highlighting the elections in San Marcos, which took place within the April fair; likewise in Sacatepéquez and even in the city of Guatemala, but apparently in this last place, more than a departmental election, it was national.

After the triumph of the 1944 Revolution, written media stopped giving allusions to the election of indigenous queens, with the exceptions of Cobán and Quetzaltenango; therefore, it is inferred that for some years this type of event stopped being held in several towns.

The same modality referred to the issue of indigenous representatives from the regime of Jorge Ubico continued during the government of Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as noted by Jon Schakt citing Jorge González, when he refers to the president encouraging the holding of events to choose "indigenous queens" (Schakt, 2002: 115).

As evidence of the previous assertion, it is sufficient to read the following two examples: "Miss Natalia Curup, 16 years old, from San Juan Sacatepéquez, was elected the indigenous queen of the department of Guatemala, and she will participate in the contest to choose the national indigenous beauty queen, which will take place during the national spring fair. Possessing a unique beauty, Miss Curup won the crown in a fierce competition among the representatives of the municipalities of Chinautla, Chuarrancho, and San Pedro Sacatepéquez. The judging panel was composed of the director of fine

arts, the departmental governor, and the director of the indigenous institute of Guatemala." "The department of Quiché will be represented in the national contest to choose the indigenous beauty queen by Miss María Elena Aceituno, 15 years old, from the municipality of Sacapulas. As reported, she obtained first place in the departmental contest held in the respective governorship."

If the newspaper articles are analyzed in detail, these types of events are the direct antecedents of the national-level elections that currently take place in the country. Although apparently at that time they did not have the continuity of those of the present, and the role of the winners did not go beyond the activities of the fair, that is, being present during the inaugurations and participating in some cases in the processions dedicated to the patron saints.

An informant mentioned that in Palín (Escuintla), the first indigenous representative was elected in 1956; also in San Cristóbal Verapaz (Alta Verapaz), the first indigenous representative was Macaria Mus, elected in 1959. In 1961, San Lucas Sacatepéquez (Sacatepéquez) elected its first indigenous representative, and in 1962, Mazatenango (Suchitepéquez) did the same, with the responsibility falling on Petrona Hernández Chavajay (Portillo, 1991:65).

The departmental elections continued during the last years of the Ydígoras Fuentes government. Regarding this, "The presence of the different indigenous representatives from the municipalities of the cold zone of the department, and some from the hot zone, caused a real sensation, as true creole beauties appeared to compete in the selection of the one who will represent our indigenous race in the tournament that will take place in the capital city with others from the departments of the republic... The tribunal appointed to elect the indigenous queen of the department was in a quandary as it had before it a group of beautiful wildflowers, but after a prolonged discussion among the members, the indigenous queen of the department of San Marcos was declared to be the precious ishtía sampedrana Roselia Julia Velásquez Gómez, 15 years old."

In the second half of the 1960s, some written media began to report on the election of indigenous representatives in communities such as Santa Cruz del Quiché (Quiché), San Juan and San Pedro Sacatepéquez, Mixco (all in the department of Guatemala).

In 1969, at the initiative of Marco Aurelio Alonso, a young teacher from Tamahú (Alta Verapaz), the "National Folk Festival" was created in Cobán, aimed at rescuing the dances and ceremonial costumes of the region, which were gradually being lost. This also gave rise to the "Princess Tezulutlán" contest, which was responsible for choosing the indigenous representative of the department of Alta Verapaz. In 1971, the first Reina Nacional de la Belleza Indígena (National Indigenous Beauty Queen) was chosen, an event that the following year would be called "Rab'in Ajaw." This event quickly became popular among a large part of the Guatemalan population, motivating communities where indigenous reigns did not exist to choose their respective queens to represent them in Cobán. An example of this is the municipality of San Gabriel (Suchitepéquez), whose indigenous contest dates back to 1971, with Julieta López y López being the first representative of that community (Ceballos, 2011:71).

According to the author, the events of investitures and coronations of indigenous representatives can be classified as follows:

- Local
- Departmental
- Regional
- National
- International
- Children's

Next, we will proceed to learn about the details of these types of events, with the caveat that these are partial results, as due to space and time constraints, it was impossible to document all the contests that currently exist in the country.

Local Events

These are all those held in a community with the objective of choosing the delegate who will represent them in various events at the regional, departmental, national, and even international levels. These events are usually held in neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and municipalities.

Discrimination and racism were obstacles faced by some indigenous representatives for several years. In November 1972, the III National Fair was held, and a beauty contest was called with the participation of a young woman from each department of the country. Totonicapán was represented by the indigenous queen, Susana Tacam Batz. Apparently, the rules indicated that the delegates should be of mixed race, a requirement that the Totonicapán commission overlooked. This led to an official of the fair asking Tacam Batz to withdraw from the competition, which provoked rejection and total support for the indigenous queen. Days later, the civic group Tecún Umán and the Lions Club Reforma held an act of reparation for the representative from Totonicapán.

In the 1970s and following decades, several of the local contests, called "Indias Bonitas," changed their names. Among them was the contest in Quetzaltenango, which had long been called "Indigenous Queen of Quetzaltenango." In 1979, it was renamed Umial Tinimit Re Xelajuj No'j, as it is known to the present day. In San Cristóbal Verapaz, the contest had changed to "Indigenous Queen"; however, in 1986, the municipal mayor changed that title to Rixq'uun Kaj Koj or "Daughter of Kaj Koj," in reference to the community's former name. Rab'in Kob'an was renamed in 1994 to what was previously known as India Bonita of Cobán.

Aspirants to local events are usually between 15 and 22 years old, although candidates of younger or older ages may also participate. Among the requirements for a future municipal representative are being native to the place, speaking their native language and Spanish, wearing the regional costume, and having general knowledge about the culture, traditions, and customs of their municipality.

In many communities, winners are crowned, which can be made of wood or silver. In others, on the contrary, they are adorned with a ceremonial headdress, for example, in the city of Quetzaltenango, San Sebastián (Retalhuleu), and Palín (Escuintla). While in some places, winners are dressed in ceremonial garments used in the solemn acts of the brotherhoods, such as in Chichicastenango (Quiché). In San Cristóbal Verapaz (Alta Verapaz), the winner receives a necklace and a red tupuy, which symbolizes high hierarchy and fertility.

The use of ceremonial costumes in these events has sparked negative criticism from some sectors, who see it as a lack of respect

towards the people who belong to the brotherhoods and fraternities, as these garments are intended for ceremonial purposes. In this regard, someone commented, "Where have you seen a member of a brotherhood running in the park with a pot".

The anthropologist and expert in indigenous clothing, Barbara Knoke, commented on this situation: "In this sense, it is important to emphasize the ceremonial role of the attire of the texeles or captains of the brotherhood in community rites. On the other hand, the 'Rab'in Ajaw style takes on meaning among young people exposed to a growing national and global cultural modernization. Instead of elders who fulfill ritual roles through community service and economic contributions to carry out the cycle of ceremonies dictated by custom, these are young women who are often elected from among several aspirants. Age as a highly valued hierarchical principle is replaced by others associated with youth, including oratory skills and self-confidence... the contest is a modern reference derived from the specific differentiation that in the past was generally associated with ceremonial dress. However, it should also be emphasized that the indigenous queens of some municipalities wear everyday or festive attire. The latter is made with better materials or is more ornamented than the everyday attire worn by women who are not texeles or captains... In other cases, the festive style is used in places where daily and ritual clothing are not traditionally sharply differentiated" (Knoke, 2010: 12).

Being a municipal representative implies a series of economic expenses, in most cases covered by the candidate's family. The queen of San Andrés Itzapa in 2008 stated in an interview with a national newspaper that participating in the election in her community was a significant investment because: "... the Council (municipal) only spends on the event invitation and setup, but does not support the aspirants in any way... they participate to keep a tradition alive, which has characterized this place for many years, but it is very expensive for them... Apart from the expenses incurred during the election, the winner has to buy a ceremonial güipil that costs Q2,000, a "sut" worn on the arm, Q2,000; a tocoyal, Q300, and buy a new skirt, Q200. Additionally, she has to host a reception with drinks and food for the people who come to greet the new sovereign."

In the 2007 edition of Rab'in Ajaw, the representatives of San Martín Jilotepeque and Comalapa, from the department of Chimaltenango, were finalists, and in their messages, they expressed that "our culture is not folklore" and "the duality and complementarity of the sexes," respectively. They considered these themes fundamental within Maya culture. Days later, in the election of Rukotzij Kaqchikel Tinamit held in Sumpango (Sacatepéquez), both were finalists again and, when addressing the public, they repeated the messages they had brought to Cobán, which proves that many of the candidates take ownership of a discourse that, while learned at first, becomes their calling card in the various events they participate in. Marta Margos, a former Rab'in Ajaw, expressed: "I left the script behind and made the discourse my own... I embraced the topic of Poqomam culture and nature."

Behind the young girls who aspire to become the representative of their municipality, there are people who are responsible for preparing them for the responsibility that awaits them. For Andrés Ramos, a resident of San Sebastián (Retalhuleu), who has been supporting aspirants to the local event for several years,

the activities of electing indigenous representatives are a way to "highlight the intellect of indigenous women on the stage... as well as the space for young women to learn about and value their identity as indigenous women." Ramos indicated that one of his tasks as a collaborator is to train the candidates in fundamental topics about Maya culture; as well as the rights, principles, and values of indigenous women, Oxlajuj Baktun, among other topics.

In their speeches, the representatives have insisted that they are not objects of a fair, nor are they elected to inaugurate important activities. Their role is more than that; they must be women with a voice and a vote, in addition to presenting proposals and influencing various aspects of national life.

For Estela Cutzal, who in 1998 was Ru K'otzijal Tinamit of her municipality, San José Poaquil (Chimaltenango), the role that an indigenous queen should play in Guatemalan society is: "To be a representative of her community, having a voice and a vote in the social and political decisions of her community, and thus being able to create with other indigenous queens a council of queens at the departmental level, through which they can seek national and international aid, and thus bring development in an equitable manner to their communities. For example: computer equipment, electricity, education, desks."

Several representatives have been involved in social and assistance projects. María Imelda Quixtán Oroxón, Indigenous Queen of Quetzaltenango in 1971, in an interview with the newspaper Prensa Libre, stated that she would focus her activities as queen on educational, sociocultural, recreational, and sports aspects. To carry out these projects, she stated that she would develop them with the organization of volunteer groups in literacy; as well as radio programs for educational and guiding purposes. She also indicated that it was necessary to hold a seminar on indigenous issues and conferences to better understand each other among indigenous peoples and to raise awareness among mestizos to strengthen and respect the cultural autonomy of indigenous peoples.

During the Aghata storm in 2010, the Coordinator of Indigenous Queens of the department of Chimaltenango collected food and clothing, which they distributed in communities affected by the natural phenomenon. In December of that same year, Silvia Nájera, representative of San Luis Jilotepeque (Jalapa), organized an activity for the end-of-year celebrations: "For Christmas, we collected food and distributed it on the 24th and 25th of December, and it was called the 'Telethon for a Happy Smile'... First, we visited all the neighborhoods to see where there was the most need, and then we went there to deliver them."

Some detractors of this type of event have indicated that they are not purely indigenous activities, but rather folkloric in nature; therefore, they do not have significance and impact within the culture and worldview of the Maya peoples of Guatemala. They also point out that these contests exhibit indigenous women as archaeological artifacts, emphasizing that the important thing is to seek mechanisms to protect the culture and to generate spaces for the participation of indigenous peoples in all aspects of national life. Others argue that these types of events should disappear, as they do not contribute anything to society and the country's development. They see these activities as another way to perpetuate for centuries the racism and discrimination that the Guatemalan indigenous peoples have been victims.

However, there are people who see positive aspects in the development of these events. Fernando Morales, who has been attending indigenous queen elections and coronations for several years, sees these activities as "ways to keep certain customs and traditions of each region of our country alive, to preserve the use of ceremonial attire or to rescue the use of these costumes, even if only in the election events. It is also a platform for the representatives to stand out in the social sphere, as they become a symbol of authority in their communities. Although for some, it may be seen as satirizing indigenous customs, for others, it is a folkloric attraction and even a sense of identity in their community."

Despite the criticism and accusations against the elections of indigenous representatives, many young women who aspire to become the queen of their community see these events as a stage that opens doors for them. It allows them to make new friendships, to get to know the country's reality more closely, and to visit new places. A young woman in Palín who had been a candidate for the local crown expressed, "Going to Cobán was my dream, I didn't achieve it, but I am satisfied with having tried. Marta Margos adds again, "More than winning, I wanted to stand up and say, 'Palín, Escuintla... present!"

In 2010, Gladis Roquel was named the first indigenous representative of Zaragoza (Chimaltenango), a community that is predominantly mestizo and where such an event was impossible until a few years ago. Despite the obstacles and little support from the municipal corporation, she managed to make some trips within the country, representing her municipality in significant events such as Princesa Indígena Nacional and Rab'in Ajaw. Due to political issues, she could not hand over her title in the year it was due; she did so until the end of September 2012, setting a precedent in the history of Zaragoza.

Being an indigenous representative for many means building bonds of sisterhood and creating a group identity around these events. The constant travels that some undertake, either as candidates or special guests, are experiences that will always be remembered, as expressed by María de los Ángeles Navichoc, who represented her village San Pedro Cutzán (Chicacao, Suchitepéquez) in several activities in 2006: "the outings were very joyful... I met many companions, and although sometimes the accommodation was uncomfortable, they are experiences that I will never forget."

Social media also contributes to strengthening the friendships that the representatives have created. In 2011, the "Colectivo Representativas Indígenas" Facebook profile was created, formed by young people from the department of Chimaltenango, whose functions include informing about future elections and providing information on various aspects related to indigenous culture.

Some representatives have taken significant steps in favor of the contests they have been part of. In October 2011, the Ministry of Culture and Sports declared the Umi'al Tinamit Re Xelajuj No'j event as "Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Nation", a declaration promoted by the former representative from Quetzaltenango, Astrid López, her father, Israel López, and the cultural group K'astajba'al No'j, who had initiated the corresponding procedures a year earlier with the support of the Departmental Governorship.

The experiences and moments lived will be part of the life stories of the women who have been indigenous representatives of their

community. Sebastiana Sen, was appointed in 1991 "Ixkik Umial Pop Wuj," the highest representative of Chichicastenango (Quiché). When asked about her experiences during her tenure, she said: "A gratifying experience to break mental schemas due to the persistent idea that those of us who live in rural areas do not have the capacity to develop in different aspects of life. It was the first time that a representative from Pachoj won this honorary title, and that's why I was declared Distinguished Daughter of the canton. With the cultural group of my community, we had an initiative to request the return of the Pop Wuj, deposited in the Newberry Library in Chicago, United States, for which we carried out several activities, visits to institutions, presence in the media to spread the project, press conferences, collection of signatures from the people of Chichicastenango, in short, a lot of mobilization, but we did not advance due to many factors, the main one being economic. Thanks to God, I had the support of the municipal mayor and his corporation at that time, who took me into account in several activities. It allowed me to research, deepen my knowledge about the Chichicastenango culture, as well as strengthen my reading and writing skills in the K'iche language."

Departmental events are those held, as the name suggests, in a specific department, with the participation of indigenous queens from the various municipalities that make up the entity. Some of these events are:

Princess Tezulutlán

In 1969, Marco Aurelio Alonso organized the first "Altaverapacen Folk Festival." Among the activities carried out was the selection of a young woman to represent the Q'eqchi' and Poqomchi' peoples during the departmental fair in August, from among the indigenous representatives of the department, known at that time as "Indias Bonitas," thus giving rise to the Princess Tezulutlán contest, with the first winner being the representative of Cobán.

For several years, the Princess Tezulutlán election was held on the same night as Rab'in Ajaw. Since the late 1980s, both coronations have been held separately, with the departmental election taking place in June.

Among the requirements that aspirants must meet for the Princess Tezulutlán title are: being single; knowing how to read and write; speaking and understanding the languages of the municipality they represent; remaining single, during the year they hold the title; being the official delegate of the municipality they are representing, and being committed between the ages of 15 and 24 years old.

Some of the aspects evaluated by the judging panel are: authenticity of the ceremonial attire and the regional dance of the municipality represented; mastery and clear presentation, both in the native language and in Spanish; and spontaneity and clarity when responding to questions from the evaluators.

On the morning of the election day, the candidates participate in a religious ceremony officiated at the Cathedral of Cobán. They then move to the hermitage of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, where they perform traditional activities typical of the Alta Verapaz department.

The winner receives: the Cross of the Christ of the Calvary; prizes donated by the event sponsors; a cash prize and a Honor Diploma granted by the municipality of Cobán; and a traditional Cobán dress. Princess Tezulutlán must also participate in the election and coronation activities of Rab'in Ajaw, as a candidate and departmental representative.

Within the anecdotal history of Princess Tezulutlán, several of its winners have been finalists in the Rab'in Ajaw event, including Olga Marina Cucul Rax in 1998 and Icelia Virginia Chen Rax, ten years later. Others have been winners of national events, such as Sara Caal in 2010, who won several titles, including National Queen Goddess Ixchel in San Bernardino (Suchitepéquez); and Rosa Elvira Chub Choc, winner in 2007 and elected Rab'in Ajaw that same year.

Princess Xinabajul

An event that emerged in the city of Huehuetenango in the early 1970s, within the framework of the July Fiestas, which commemorate the departmental fair in honor of the Virgin of Carmen during the month of July. The title Xinabajul refers to the pre-Hispanic name of Huehuetenango.

It is the main event of the department where representatives from most municipalities with a predominance of indigenous population participate. The winning young woman is awarded a sash embroidered with traditional designs and bearing the inscription "Princess Xinabajul"; in addition to a wooden scepter and crown.

Some winners have carried out various projects aimed at rescuing the traditional culture of the department and defining the role that an indigenous representative should play in the departmental and national context, as Guadalupe López did during her tenure between 2011 and 2012.

As an anecdote, it is noted that most winners of the Princess Xinabajul title have belonged to the q'anjob'al linguistic community.

Nim Ali Re Xochiltepetl

The first departmental representative of Suchitepéquez was Hermelinda López Rodríguez, from the municipality of San Gabriel, who was awarded the crown and sash of Reina Indigena (Indigenous Queen) during the Carnival celebrations in 1977 (Ceballos, 2011: p. 92). Later, the event changed its name to "Nim Ali Re Xochiltepetl" or Gran Muchacha de Suchitepéquez (Great Girl of Suchitepéquez). The winner is crowned and given the "perraje," one of the most representative textile garments of that southwestern department. As it is an activity that is part of the Mazatec carnival, where it is based, it takes place in the last days of January or the beginning of February, depending on the date when Lent begins.

Ixkik Uk'ux K'iche'

Santa Cruz del Quiché, the departmental capital of Quiché, is the setting for the selection of Ixkik Uk'ux K'iche' (Girl Soul of the K'iche' Culture) from among the representatives of the department. It was not possible to determine since when this election has been held, but it is known that in the early 1990s it was called "Umi'al Tinimit Kiche" (Daughter of Quiché). The winning young woman is given a ceremonial huipil and veil similar to those used by women belonging to the brotherhoods of the municipality, as well as a tz'ut or napkin and a candle. In previous years, the winner was crowned. The pageant is part of the activities of the departmental fair in honor of Santa Elena de la Cruz.

Rum'ial J'un Aj'pu

An event started in the department of Sacatepéquez in 1998 and based in the city of La Antigua Guatemala. According to César Sactic, one of its organizers, it emerged after the signing of the Peace Accords in response to the levels of exclusion and discrimination

to which indigenous women have been subjected for centuries. Representatives from different communities of Sacatepéquez participate in the contest. The first winner was from Santiago Sacatepéquez. Interestingly, the election is not held as part of the patronal or titular fair, but takes place in August to commemorate the Day of Indigenous Peoples, which is the 9th of that month.

The event organizers present the winner with a silver crown and commit to providing her with the necessary support in all activities requiring her participation. In the 2007 edition, the representative of Santiago Sacatepéquez (Sacatepéquez), Ana Floricelda Yucuté Cutzán, won, and the following year she would obtain the title of Rab'in Ajaw.

Rum'ial Tinamital B'oko

The election and coronation of Rum'ial Tinamital B'oko (The Daughter of Chimaltenango Department) took place for the first time in the municipality of Comalapa on September 29, 2012. With the participation of nine representatives from the same number of Chimaltenango municipalities, Delmi Carolina Curruchich Chex, a native of the host town, was chosen as the first departmental representative. This election was held with the aim of having a young indigenous woman represent the Chimaltenango department in the election and coronation of the Princesa de los Cuatro Puntos Cardinales (Princess of the Four Cardinal Points), an event that originated in 2007 in San Lucas Sacatepéquez and has taken place in La Antigua Guatemala in recent editions.

Events at the regional level

These events are characterized by representatives coming from specific geographical regions or linguistic communities. Most of them are part of the preliminary activities for the patronal fair of the municipality organizing them. Some of these events include:

Ka'tu Suckchij

The Raphael Girard Teacher Folkloric Association has organized this event since 1985, and it is part of the Ch'orti' Area Folkloric Festival. Its headquarters is the municipality of Jocotán (Chiquimula), and it takes place on the first weekend of May. According to its organizers, these events contribute to keeping the customs and traditions of the region alive. The central point of the festival is the election and coronation of Ka'tu Suckchij (Maguey Flower), who is the representative of the Ch'orti' area and Princess Ch'orti', representing only the municipality of Jocotán.

Among the founders of this festival are Otto René Argueta Vanegas and Manuel Enrique Campos Paíz, who passed away in 2012.

A newspaper article from the time states: "The Yuji Chortí necklace and the Maguey Succhuj silver crown, the Chiquimula Chamber of Commerce decided to establish to reward whoever is elected indigenous princess in the first folkloric festival of the Chortí linguistic area to be held in Jocotán, Chiquimula, from July 19 to 21. Teachers, municipal authorities, and residents have joined forces to achieve success in what will be the first attempt to give the greatest possible prominence to the customary wealth of the eastern indigenous sector, which has remained almost ignored by the competent authorities of the country."

During the festival, traditional dances from the department of Chiquimula and folkloric projections are presented by local students and guests from other parts of the country.

The election of both representatives takes place over two days. On the first day, the candidates are presented to the public and the judging panel wearing the regional attire of the community they represent. They then share their message to the audience in both Ch'orti' and Spanish. Finally, they dance to the rhythm of marimbas and accordions. During this first phase, there are artistic presentations by students from the diversified level of the municipality, as well as special guests. After the judging panel's decision, the two winners are announced. Finally, gifts are presented by individuals and commercial houses that sponsored the event. This activity generally takes place outdoors with the participation of neighbors and relatives of the candidates.

The second phase takes place on the following day, which is usually a Saturday. It begins with a parade through the main streets and avenues of the town of Jocotán, in which the invited artistic groups, the candidates from the previous night, the outgoing and incoming sovereigns, and educational authorities participate. This activity concludes around noon.

The last stage takes place at night and is of a private nature, with few attendees, who usually do so by invitation. Artistic and folkloric projection activities take place throughout the evening. After the presentations, the investiture and coronation of the winners from the previous night are carried out. First, that of Ka'tu Suckchij is performed, to whom a collar, scepter, and crown are imposed. Then, Princess Ch'orti' is crowned, who is only given a collar. The new sovereigns then offer a message to the attendees, thus concluding the activity.

Rukotz'i'j Kaqchikel Tinamit

This event was created in 1985 in the municipality of Sumpango (Sacatepéquez) by the Fraternidad Maya Hijos del Pueblo, as part of the first interdepartmental festival of the Kaqchikel language, now known as the "Encuentro Maya Kaqchikel." The central point of this activity is the election and investiture of Rukotz'i'j Kaqchikel Tinamit (Flower of the Kaqchikel People), for which the representatives of this linguistic community are invited to participate.

The young woman who is elected is invested with a wooden crown representing a sacred altar of the community. The attire is complemented by a red napkin reminiscent of the ancient textiles of Sumpango, on which the title is written in Kaqchikel language and the reign period in Mayan numerals.

The contest takes place in the first half of August and is one of the activities leading up to the patronal festival of Sumpango on August 28 in honor of San Agustín, the bishop.

Rixq'uun Poqom

The election and investiture of Rixq'uun Poqom (Poqom Princess) have been held since the mid-1980s in the municipality of Tactic (Alta Verapaz) and are part of the fair activities in honor of the Virgen de Asunción, the patron saint of the area. Only representatives from the Poqomchi area of Alta Verapaz participate in this event. The winner is invested with a ceremonial huipil indicating the title she holds, as well as a necklace with the image of the patron saint of Tactic.

Nim Ali Rech Tinimit Rech Kakaw

The first Reina Nacional del Cacao (National Cocoa Queen) was the representative of San Sebastián (Retalhuleu), Catarina del Rosario Chaperno Saquic, who was designated with

the title Nim Ali Rech Tinimit Rech Kakaw in October 2010, at an event held in the municipality of San Antonio Suchitepéquez (Suchitepéquez), with the participation of young women from cocoa producing regions in the nation.

National Level

According to many, these are the most important, and participating in them is the dream of most municipal representatives.

Rab'in Ajaw

In 1971, there was a desire in Coban to elect an indigenous representative at the national level, which is why young women from other departments were invited to participate in the pageant. The call indicated that there was only one representative per department. The candidates were: Rogelia Ortiz García from Samayac (Suchitepéquez); Hermelinda Huix Hernández from San Cristóbal Totonicapán (Totonicapán); Berta Tajiboy from Chichicastenango (Quiché); Mercedes Irlanda Juc Quim from San Juan Chamelco (Alta Verapaz); and Catarina Ortiz Jiménez from Ixtahuacán (Huchuetenango), who turned out to be the winner. Ortiz Jiménez received a silver chachal, crafted by silversmiths from Coban. Days later, the newspaper Prensa Libre collected the impressions of the Reina de la Belleza Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Beauty Queen): "An indescribable emotion came over me at the thought of reaching that extreme, feeling my strength falter, but I tried to overcome it, when at that moment, the final verdict declared me the Reina de la Belleza Indígena Nacional."

The following year, the contest was named Rabin Ajau, and América Son Huitz from San Cristóbal Totonicapán (Totonicapán) was the first winner with the new title, defeating 24 colleagues from an equal number of municipalities. Son Huitz was crowned by Alida España de Arana, wife of the president of the Republic, and by the secretary of public relations of the presidency, Mario Ribas Montes. A newspaper from that time reported the impressions of the nation's first lady: "she was very pleased with the high honor of crowning such a distinguished queen because it was not just a symbolic or social act, but a continuation of the investiture of the aboriginal royalty that has been maintained through the ages." The crown was donated by the Vice President of the Nation, Eduardo Cáceres Lennofh. By that time, the pageant was becoming a popular event in the country. It was inaugurated on several occasions by the president of the Republic at the time, or by his wife or another official.

María de Jesús Surqué Alonso, Rab'in Ajaw 1975, witnessed firsthand the catastrophe caused by the 1976 earthquake. At the request of the nation's first lady, Hellen Lossi, she collaborated with her in delivering provisions to the victims in various regions of the country. Surqué Alonso also encouraged other representatives to contribute to this project, stating: "The general coordinator of the social affairs secretariat of the presidency of the Republic, Mr. Luis Fernando Barrios, received from the hands of Miss Dominga Trinidad Sam Hernández, indigenous queen of Cantel, Quetzaltenango, a lot of huipiles and typical skirts to be donated to the victims of the earthquake”.

Due to the tragedy caused by the 1976 earthquake, at first it was thought not to hold the VIII Festival Folklórico de Cobán and therefore the election and coronation of Rab'in Ajaw. However, the activities were carried out in a similar manner to previous years, and on July 31 of that year, the representative of the municipality of Cobán, Ana Alicia Jucub, was crowned.

By the late 1970s, Guatemala was experiencing the beginnings of the strong state repression that would reach its peak in the early years of the following decade. At that time, the speeches delivered by the participants of Rab'in Ajaw addressed the country's problems, and more than a few spoke out against the repression that a large part of the Guatemalan people was suffering.

On July 30, 1978, an article appeared in the newspaper El Gráfico reporting that the representatives of Chichicastenango, Cantel, La Esperanza, San Sebastián (Retalhuleu), Soloma, Nahualá, and Santiago Atitlán issued a public statement condemning the holding of the Festival Folklórico de Cobán that year. They argued that, due to the recent bloodshed in Panzós the previous month, organizing such an event showed a total disregard for the lives of indigenous people. Among the points they raised in their petition were: "That the recent massacre of our indigenous brothers in Panzós, Alta Verapaz, is nothing more than the continuation of centuries of denial, exploitation, and extermination initiated by the criminal Spanish invaders. That the Cobán folkloric festival is a response to this oppressive indigenism, which, using local and departmental authorities, presents indigenous queens as mere objects of tourist observation, without respecting our authentic human and historical values".

Despite the pressure from various indigenous groups to suspend the tenth edition of the Festival Folklórico, the event went ahead. A newspaper announcement stated that as of July 25 that year, 53 communities were registered to participate in the selection of Rab'in Ajaw. Tickets for the arena area had been on sale in Guatemala City, while gallery tickets would be sold to the public at the Cobán municipality. On Saturday, July 29, the day of the election, the event would take place at the "Hellen Lossi de Laugerud" gymnasium. It was also reported that in case visitors couldn't find accommodation in some of the hotels in Cobán, the local municipality would provide land for them to set up their tents. That year, the winner was María Consuelo Guacamaya Tunche from San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Guatemala).

The military regimes that ruled the country during that time strongly supported the event, with several of them in attendance at the coronation night. In the election evening of 1980, several state officials were present, including the ministers Donaldo Álvarez Ruiz and Edgar Ponciano Castillos, from the Ministries of Interior and Agriculture respectively, as well as the President of the Congress of the Republic, Tomás Zepeda, and Miss Guatemala 1980, Ligia Martínez Noack from Alta Verapaz.

The early 1980s are considered by many as the heyday of the Rab'in Ajaw election. María Elena Winter, popularly known as "Nana Winter," was a character who greatly influenced the prominence of all activities that were part of the National Folkloric Festival, which she directed for over ten years. During that time, the event was broadcasted eight days later by a local television channel, garnering high viewership.

On July 27, 1982, while having breakfast with her parents at a restaurant in the city of Quetzaltenango, Rab'in Ajaw 1981, Ventura Puac, was surprised by criminals who stole the crown and scepter of Rab'in Ajaw from the family's vehicle. The stolen items would be returned three days later to that year's winner. After an exhaustive search by the Departamento de Investigaciones Técnicas de la Policía Nacional (Department of Technical Investigations of the National Police) (DIT), the stolen items were recovered, and three

individuals were captured in the municipalities of Villa Nueva and Petapa in the Guatemala department. The jewels were found inside a bar in Zone 19 of the capital, where two of the thieves had arrived to drink liquor. After not having enough cash to pay for their consumption, they offered the crown as payment and asked for 20 quetzales; the offer was accepted. Finally, the crown was returned to the members of the Folkloric Festival in Quetzaltenango on August 17, 1982.

It had been announced that Ana María Xuyá Cuxil, Rab'in Ajaw 1982, would be appointed by the head of government, Efraín Ríos Montt, as a State Councilor. However, days later, Xuyá was notified that this decision was nullified, mainly because to be a State Councilor, the members should be at least 30 years old, and she was only 21 at that time.

In 1985, a newspaper reported that 125 candidates participated in the Rab'in Ajaw election, a number that has not been surpassed. The event also broke the record for the longest folkloric evening, lasting six hours from eight o'clock on Saturday night to two o'clock on Sunday morning, with the attendance of national and foreign tourists, enthralled. María Camposeco Silvestre, from Jacaltenango (Huehuetenango), was the winner that year.

Marta Margos, originally from Palín (Escuintla), won the Rab'in Ajaw title in 1988. She recalls that part of her message in the preliminary interview phase was about the impact of deforestation in the country and its future consequences: "I said, this is the moment to make known the reality that my culture, my country lives... I managed to adapt the theme of the environment and Poqomam culture, and at that moment it no longer mattered if I was going to win, I had already managed to express my feelings and thoughts." She was later invited by the president of the Republic, Vinicio Cerezo, to participate in various activities during the early days of the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

1993 was a significant year during the Rab'in Ajaw election and coronation. Firstly, the Folkloric Festival was about to celebrate its 25th anniversary, and secondly, it was the 450th anniversary of the founding of Cobán. La Orden del Quetzal in the rank of Commander was awarded on July 25, 1998, to the creator of the National Folkloric Festival, Marco Aurelio Alonso. This recognition was signed by the president of the Republic, Álvaro Arzú, and the ministers of State.

2001 was a year that made history within the annals of the Festival Folklórico Nacional (National Folkloric Festival) and therefore in Rab'in Ajaw. On July 28 of that year, what promised to be an election that would surpass the previous one, resulted in a night of denunciations of discrimination and mistreatment; a mistaken ruling by the judging panel; a queen for a minute; widespread discomfort among the candidates; a confiscated crown and no winner.

The development of the 2001 election followed the parameters of previous years. After the presentation of the 96 aspirants, including a Xinka delegate from the department of Santa Rosa, Mercedes Marroquín, the reigning sovereign who would be handing over her title that night, proceeded to give her final message. However, it was different from those given by her predecessors. Marroquín made a public statement denouncing that she had been a victim of discrimination and exploitation by the organizers of the event. She also declared that "the organizing committee receives financial assistance from international

organizations, which ends up in the hands of a few families in Cobán." Finally, she urged the mayor of her hometown, Comitancillo (San Marcos), not to send any more municipal representatives in future editions.

With tensions running high, the event continued. However, another incident was going to contribute greatly to the outcome of that night. At the moment of giving the final ruling, the members of the judging panel mistakenly announced the winner as Migdalia Gómez from the municipality of Chiché (Quiché), when in reality she represented Colotenango (Huehuetenango). As Gómez was preparing to give her winner's speech, she was interrupted to be informed that the judges' decision would be corrected, and that the true winner was Manuela Pol Algua from Chiché. Pol rejected the crown, joining Mercedes García's statements, and indicating that she had only come to Cobán to participate and denounce the discrimination her people were subjected to. She finally asked for forgiveness from her homeland for the disappointment she had caused, as they had trusted in her.

Chaos reigned in the venue where the event was taking place, which escalated further when, in view of the virtual winner's refusal of the scepter and crown, it was announced that the new Rab'in Ajaw would be the third finalist, Tomasa Milagrosa Tut Beb from Tucurú (Alta Verapaz). Attendees and candidates no longer tolerated this series of irregularities. Several representatives left their seats to express their total disapproval of the final decision. Some parents proceeded to remove their daughters from the venue, fearing for their safety. Finally, the intervention of the Policia Nacional Civil (National Civil Police) was necessary to calm the situation.

After this series of incidents, the Municipal Council of Cobán declared the title uncertain: "The municipality has requested the crown and scepter from Mr. Marco Aurelio Alonso, so that these may be kept in the municipal treasury vault until next year. After what happened on the day of the event, the crown and scepter were in the hands of the police; Alonso collected both."

A university professor who conducted fieldwork in various regions of the country, including Alta Verapaz, during the 1980s, commented on situations similar to those denounced by Rab'in Ajaw 2000: "ideologically, we did not agree with this type of exploitative and abusive events towards Guatemalan ethnic groups. In the course of my work in Alta Verapaz, I learned firsthand from indigenous girls participating that they were accommodated in rundown boarding houses and their companions (parents and elderly siblings) on the floor of the corridors... They were not allowed to speak in their natural languages, and there was a time when they cut off the microphone to one of them."

In an interview given days later to elPeriódico, Manuela Pol commented that she had not accepted the crown for two reasons: "the first one is that I didn't want to humiliate the companion who had been announced (by mistake) as the winner before me, and the second one is to show solidarity with the words of the former Rab'in Ajaw... At that moment, I was thinking more with my heart than with my mind. When the indigenous people are hurt, one has to leave behind the most valuable things and individual interests to show that all we want is to be respected.

Marco Aurelio Alonso, president of the Folkloric Festival committee, indicated that the incidents were "a conspiracy of highland leaders to block the activity. They think it's a

business and want to move it to other departments."

The event organizers kept total secrecy regarding whether or not a winner would be named. Days later, it was reported that Rab'in Ajaw was Tomasa Tut. The credibility of the Rab'in Ajaw event was called into question, to the point that many, especially detractors of this type of contest, questioned whether it should disappear.

In view of the events of 2001, the organizing committee of the Rab'in Ajaw event was changed. According to Agustín Hum, current president of the National Folkloric Committee, "that shake-up was necessary for the event to take the right direction." In July 2002, a congress was convened to which all former Rab'in Ajaws were invited, where the future of the event would be discussed. Only 12 former sovereigns attended the call, including María Surqué, winner in 1975. The group concluded that the contest should continue.

With the attendance of 33 candidates, the election of the new sovereign took place, a title that fell to Blandina Maribel Juárez Romero, from Ostuncalco (Quetzaltenango). In their speeches, several of the finalists expressed that they had received good treatment from the organizers. In November of that same year, Juárez Romero's Rab'in Ajaw crown was stolen, and it never appeared.

The original Rab'in Ajaw crown consisted of a silver diadem "symbol of indigenous nobility. The design of the diadem is inspired by authentic pieces belonging to Mayan kings, surrounded by jade... It has two quetzal feathers, the national bird that inhabits the mountains of Oxib' Peq, a hill in Alta Verapaz. These feathers represent Gukumatz, the feathered serpent. It was crafted by Francisco Coy Um, a craftsman from Cobán... They also wear earrings that are archaeological pieces made of authentic jade. They also receive a silver scepter, which represents the Monja Blanca orchid. The ancient inhabitants called this flower Sack Ijix, as a representation of the Maya goddess of purity. A group of former Rab'in Ajaws managed to obtain a new crown, which is currently used to crown the winners.

The elections in the following years took place without major incidents. In 2008, Agustín Hun assumed the presidency of the Comité Folklórico Nacional (National Folkloric Committee), giving greater opportunity to the departmental delegates who are in charge of summoning future aspirants to the national contest. In 2008, it was achieved that the Fondo de Desarrollo Indígena (Indigenous Development Fund) (FODIGUA) would provide a job position for the winner of the Rab'in Ajaw title, which has continued to the present day.

On July 24, 2010, marked an unforgettable moment within the over 40 years of existence of the National Folkloric Festival of Cobán. During the election and coronation ceremony of Rab'in Ajaw, the Ministry of Culture and Sports declared the event, which was in its 42nd edition that year, as a "Cultural and Intangible Heritage of the Nation."

During 2010 and 2011, the work of Rab'in Ajaw of that period stood out. Sara Mux undertook a series of activities aimed at environmental protection. She also maintained a critical stance towards transnational corporations: "the megaprojects presented as development for indigenous peoples have so far only caused division in communities, negative impact on nature, and put water supply at risk... they also cannot be indifferent to the persecution of indigenous leaders defending their rights." Several representatives joined Sara Mux's

work, who also organized congresses related to her work themes; one of them had the participation of indigenous queens from other parts of the continent.

In the 2012 edition, 103 candidates participated, with the winner being the representative of Cunén (Quiché), Lidia Dominga Canto Carmajú.

The election and coronation of Rab'in Ajaw take place in phases that last several days. The first phase consists of protocol acts and a parade through the streets of Cobán. On Thursday, they visit a tourist site near Cobán, where a Maya ceremony is usually offered. Friday is undoubtedly the busiest day for the organizers, judging panel, and contestants.

Each candidate presents herself to the evaluators with a message (usually learned) on different topics. During the early years of the Folkloric Festival, these messages were about women's issues, defending customs and traditions; in the 1980s, the armed conflict and the search for peace were the central themes of the candidates' messages; the signing of the peace accords, including the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples Accord, were constant during the 1990s. In 2012, the central theme for most Rab'in Ajaw aspirants was the Oxlajuj Baqtun and its significance within the worldview of Guatemala's indigenous peoples. The messages or speeches must be delivered in the mother tongue and in Spanish.

All candidates are received by the kul'ul ula', which in Q'eqchi' language means hostess. This young lady is the first runner up in the Rab'in Kob'an event. She dresses in the ceremonial Cobán style, carrying an incense burner, which she constantly moves to prevent it from going out. Once this stage, which ends late at night, is completed, the candidates are taken to where they are housed to have their meals, rest, and prepare for the final night.

For years, the venue for the election and coronation of Rab'in Ajaw has been the Instituto Nacional de la Juventud y del Deporte (National Institute of Youth and Sports) (INJUD). The final night, which is always on a Saturday, begins with a protocol moment by local authorities or arrivals from the capital city, followed by the presentation of each of the contestants. They are received by ku'lul ula', who places them in their assigned spots. This phase is one of the most emotional; the candidates wear the ceremonial attire of the municipality they represent. In the past, some were accompanied by their parents, elders, or children, forming a sort of court of honor, but this has diminished in recent years. Details such as the names of their parents, the languages they speak, their educational level, in some cases their professions, and brief monographic descriptions of their communities of origin are heard during the slow parade of the Rab'in Ajaw aspirants.

Once the parade of candidates is over, the final phase begins: the son dance. Previously, all representatives danced in groups; however, in 1999, due to the considerable number of aspirants, it was decided to divide this phase into two groups. In recent years, during the regional son dance, the candidates are divided by departments or regions. This is a space where both the judging panel and attendees can observe, in addition to the variations in attire, the different ways the son is danced, considered by many as Guatemala's national dance.

Subsequently, other brief protocol acts or artistic presentations by invited groups are carried out. Next, the semifinalists are designated, which in recent years have been 13, due to the importance that this number

holds within the Maya worldview. The aspirants answer a question posed by the judging panel, which they must do in their native language and in Spanish, respecting a certain time limit, which generally should not exceed four minutes. Gradually, the group is reduced as the end approaches. In the last elections, only four candidates managed to reach the final stage. After the final decision, the investiture and coronation ceremony takes place. The new queen kneels, in most cases shedding tears. Her predecessor places the patriarchal cross on her, then presents the crown to the audience, which is placed on the temples of the new queen, finally she is given the Monja Blanca scepter, she greets the attendees and her fellow candidates, and then takes her seat of honor. The event concludes with a brief speech by the Rab'in Ajaw and the presentation of prizes and recognitions.

Currently, the young lady who wins the title of Rab'in Ajaw receives a crown made of silver and jade, with two quetzal feathers; the patriarchal cross of Santo Domingo de Guzmán; the "Monja Blanca" scepter, which they keep as a memento of their reign. Likewise, they receive a regional dress from Cobán; a salary from the local municipality; and a job position at the Fondo de Desarrollo Indígena (Indigenous Development Fund) (FODIGUA). Generally, in the month of September, they take a trip to the United States, which is financed by the Maya community in exile, which in recent years has been supported the event.

On Sunday morning, a mass is held in honor of Rab'in Ajaw at the cathedral of Cobán. After the religious service, a procession takes place through the main streets of the city, leading to the chosen location for the paabanc ceremony. During the procession, the new queen is accompanied by members of the National Folkloric Committee, ku'lul ula', Princess Tezulutlán, and Rab'in Kob'an. Most of the candidates have already left Cobán, which is why they rarely participate in the final ceremony.

While it is true that the Rab'in Ajaw contest has been strongly criticized by indigenous intellectuals, there are large sectors that fully support it, and a significant number of young women who participate in the event. The contest in Cobán has also set the stage for the emergence of others in later times, some national ones like the Princesa Indígena Nacional (Indigenous National Princess) contest that emerged in Quetzaltenango in 2005, and the Princesa de los Cuatro Puntos Cardinales (Princess of the Four Cardinal Points) contest in 2007, as well as others at the regional level.

Some former Rab'in Ajaw winners have made history for their achievements after being the highest indigenous representative in Guatemala, excelling in various fields of the nation's social, political, and cultural life. As examples, the following are mentioned: Ana María Xuyá Cuxil, Rab'in Ajaw 1982, who was the first indigenous woman elected as a deputy; María Elisa López Ixtabalán, Rab'in Ajaw 1973, elected as departmental governor of Quetzaltenango in 2000 and as a deputy to the Central American Parliament in 2012; Marta Margos, winner in 1998, who has run as a candidate for mayor of her hometown Palín. Similarly, Marta Julia Ruiz Gómez, Rab'in Ajaw 1983, and Norma Griselda Pacajá López, winner in 1992, have excelled in the field of health, with the former working on projects with national institutions.

Other former winners collaborate by motivating new aspirants to the different titles available in the country. An example of this is Marleny Macario, Rab'in Ajaw 2005, who has held meetings with the aim that "the

queens return to their communities to teach what they have learned to leaders and groups of young people so that together they protect nature and the immense legacy left by the grandparents"... the purpose is for communities to also get involved in defending their rights contained in treaties such as International Labour Organization Convention 169, ratified by Guatemala. Topics discussed in the meetings include poverty, malnutrition, access to education, as well as organization and respect for community consultations.

Rumi'al Yum Kax

The city of Chimaltenango celebrates its patron saint festival in honor of Saint Anne on July 26, which is why several religious, social, cultural, and sports activities are held, including the election, investiture, and coronation of Rumi'al Yum Kax (Daughter of Corn). Apparently, this event began in 1989 and is the only one of its kind held in the department of Chimaltenango.

Aspirants to the title of Rum'ial Yum Kax must be single, communicate in the native language of the municipality they represent and in Spanish; they must also be between the ages of 16 and 23; wear their regional attire daily and present themselves without the use of makeup during the election days.

Among the aspects that the judging panel evaluates are: expression in the native language and Spanish; a message focused on indigenous cultural, environmental, and women's participation in Maya society, among others. Likewise, the use of the community's clothing and regional dance are also evaluated. Each aspirant must be endorsed by the municipal mayor from where they come from.

The event unfolds in two phases on the same day. In the morning, each aspirant delivers a message, thus initiating the evaluation phase by the members of the judging panel. Next, a lunch is offered, followed by a walk through the main streets and avenues of the city of Chimaltenango. In the afternoon, the final election takes place, preceded by the coronation of Rum'ial B'oko', who is the municipal winner elected eight days earlier. Then, the different candidates for the national title parade, from which five finalists are named, and the winner is chosen.

The elected Miss Rum'ial Yum Kax receives a cash prize, a ceremonial huipil from Chimaltenango, a certificate of merit, and a distinctive sash indicating the period she represents. From the beginning, it was intended that the new queen would accompany the rest of the city's queens in the opening of the municipal fair, as well as participate in the religious procession on July 26th. However, this has rarely been achieved, as most winners tend to participate in the Rab'in Ajaw election, whose preliminary phases coincide with the dates of the Chimaltenango fair.

Reina Diosa Ixchel

This event, which takes place in December, was created by the folklorist and former mayor of San Bernardino (Suchitepéquez), Ignacio Castillo, in 1993. The aspirants to the title, in their presentation to the public, display scenes of customs that reflect the traditions and culture of their communities of origin. The winner is adorned with a sash woven and trimmed with colored tassels, as well as a wooden crown.

Tixel Tenamit

An event held in June in the municipality of San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Guatemala). Tixel Tenamit, in Spanish, means "Tenanza del Pueblo" (Strength of the People). In several indigenous communities in Guatemala, and

especially in San Pedro Sacatepéquez, the tenanza is the person (woman) who accompanies the mayordomo (steward) of the cofradía (brotherhood) of San Pedro, the town's patron saint. The winner of this event is presented with a badge similar to the one worn by the tixel. The first edition took place in 1998, with the representative of Parramos (Chimaltenango) becoming the first Tixel Tenamit in history.

According to the rules, all candidates who arrive before the specified time in the invitation can compete for the title. In the first phase, which generally takes place in the afternoon of the election day, various aspects are evaluated. The second phase is held in the evening, by which time the finalists have been previously selected, and questions are asked that must be answered in the aspirant's native language and in Spanish.

Doncella de Ju'na Aj'pu

This competition emerged parallel to the Rum'ial J'un Aj'pu in 1999, and its history is similar, with the difference that the participants come from all over the country. The first winner was the representative of Santo Domingo Xenacoj (Sacatepéquez), María Eustaquia Hernández España. One of the main objectives of this event is to rescue traditional values and give indigenous women the role they deserve in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

Reina Indígena Nacional Cotz'i'j Iximulew

Since 2000, the Casa de la Cultura "Oxlajuj B'atz" in Chichicastenango (Quiché) has organized this event. Representatives from different communities in the country participate, and they are prohibited from using crowns, sashes, scepters, or other attire that does not correspond to the municipality they represent. Speeches must be brief and focused on topics of culture or Guatemalan reality. The contest takes place in December as a prelude to the patron saint fair in honor of San Tomás, the Apostle, celebrated in this town on the 21st of that month. The winner is invested with a huipil from Chichicastenango, made of brown cotton with characteristic designs of the place; the following year, when she hands over her title, she is given a financial reward.

Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya

As part of the Central American Independence Fair 2005 in the city of Quetzaltenango, the election and coronation of the Reina Indígena Nacional(National Indigenous Queen) took place for the first time, a title that fell to the representative of Chiché, Marleny Macario Mejía. Regarding this, a news report stated: "During a ceremonial event that lasted more than eight hours, highlighting traditions and rituals of Maya culture, Macario was chosen from a group of 38 candidates, representing communities and municipalities where indigenous ethnicities predominate." This contest was founded by engineer Fernando González.

In that first election, representatives from the departments of Quetzaltenango, Sololá, Retalhuleu, Totonicapán, Guatemala, Suchitepéquez, Huehuetenango, Sacatepéquez, and Chimaltenango participated. Macario Mejía was crowned by Umial Tinimit Re Xelajuj No'j 2005, María Lizeth Ixcot Cajas, and by Rab'in Ajaw of that year, Marleny Macario.

Mariana Sales, Rab'in Ajaw 2006, expressed discomfort at the emergence of the Reina Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Queen) position, alleging that there was duplication of representation of Guatemala's indigenous peoples. She argued that the

event in Cobán had been taking place for decades and that it was important for the organizing committee to maintain the traditions of the Maya communities. She also stated that if there was another similar event, it should not cause disagreements among the indigenous population and that there should be no negative talk about the National Folkloric Festival and the title she held. The Cobán committee, on the other hand, commented that the election held in that municipality was the only one that had representation from all the peoples of Guatemala, expressing their full support for Sales.

Despite the previous problem, in 2009 there was a special guest appearance by Mirna Judith Chavajay y Chavajay, Rab'in Ajaw elected that year. Unofficially, it was reported in 2012 that there had been an approach between the organizing committee of the Quetzaltenango event and the National Folkloric Committee of Cobán, with the aim of twinning both events and avoiding future misunderstandings.

In its brief history, this event has undergone modifications to its original name. In the 2007 edition, it was known as "National Indigenous Princess of Independence" and in subsequent years simply as Princesa Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Princess). However, the most significant change occurred in 2012 when it was renamed Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya (National Flower of the Maya People) or "Uko'tzijal Ri Maya Tinamit Re Paxil Kayala." The change, according to its organizers, was because: "The event has been held for nine years, originally under the name of Indigenous Princess, but because this has no translation into Quiché and also because that title does not exist within the Maya worldview, it was decided to change the name." As a curious fact, on the election night of 2012, the event was often mentioned as the Flor Nacional del Pueblo Indígena de Guatemala (National Flower of the Indigenous People of Guatemala), without a doubt, due to the participation of a Xinka representative from the department of Jutiapa, an ethnicity that does not belong to the Maya group.

The first National Flower of the Maya People was Glenda Maribel Macario Toj, representing Chichicastenango (Quiché), a 16-year-old student who had previously won other titles, including "Ixkik Uk'ux K'iche'", held weeks earlier in the departmental capital of Quiché. Macario Toj prevailed over 49 contestants from various municipalities of the country, was invested by her predecessor and by four former national indigenous princesses.

Among the items worn by the winner of the title of Princesa Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Princess), now Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya (National Flower of the Maya People), are: a crown; a chachal with the figure of the Luna de Xelajú; as well as a wooden scepter, made by the sculptor from Quetzaltenango, Pilar Ajcá. The scepter is a piece of great significance, composed of a quetzal; Lajuj No'j, which is the nahual of the city of Quetzaltenango; figures of corn cane, roots, earth, and a square. In summary, the scepter of the Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya "reminds Guatemalans that they live in a land full of culture and corn."

One outstanding feature of this event is its brevity. Contrary to other pageants that last for hours, the Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya has been characterized by the smoothness of all its stages. There were years when each candidate recorded a message, which was played as they walked the runway on the night of the election. In the 2009 edition, the event was broadcast live nationwide on a

television channel. The following year, a website was created to provide details about the pageant.

In 2012, admission to witness the election and coronation of the National Flower of the Maya People consisted of a donation of three pounds of basic grains. Since its inception, this pageant has been held at the Municipal Theater of Quetzaltenango, which is always packed.

Catalina Ajanel, Princesa Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Princess) 2010, was one of the most outstanding sovereigns of this event, focusing part of her activities on social projection. She organized collections of school supplies, which were donated to children and young people from low-income families in various regions of the country. In September 2011, when she handed over her title, she was awarded the Orden Princesa Indígena Nacional (National Indigenous Princess Order), in recognition of the work and achievements during her tenure. Ajanel also organized an event to elect and crown indigenous representatives in the United States, details of which will be provided later on.

Reina o Princesa Indígena Nacional (Indigenous National Queen or Princess) (2005-2011)

Name	Place of Origin
Marleni Anastasia Mejía Macario	Ciché, Quiché
Yolanda Lucía López Fernández	Soloma, Huehuetenango
Maruca María Pérez Velasco	Nebaj, Quiché
Ángela Tzian Solval	Samayac, Suchitepéquez
Lesly Carmelina Chiquín Aguilar	Santa Cruz del Quiché, Quiché
Miriam Catalina Ajanel Ixtabalán	La Esperanza. Quetzaltenango
Nora Elizabeth Diéguez Shuncax	Santa Eulalia, Huehuetenango

For many people and former indigenous representatives, after the Rab'in Ajaw contest, the Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya contest is the next most important, due, among other aspects, to the number of participants and the impact it has on the young ladies participating.

Princesa de los Cuatro Punto Cardinales

The Permanent Commission of Alux Culture and the Alux Cultural and Asociación de Desarrollo Cultural Educativa Alux (Educational Development Association) (ADECA), from the municipality of San Lucas Sacatepéquez (Sacatepéquez), have organized this contest since 2007, whose original idea dates back to the late 1990s. It is also known by its Kaqchikel name, "Rumial Ri Kajtz 'Uk Ruwa-chúlew". From the first edition until 2010, the event was held in San Lucas Sacatepéquez; however, in 2011, it was moved to La Antigua Guatemala.

The first winner was Rocío Jeanneth García Matías, originally from Comitancillo, who participated representing the department of San Marcos. A particularity of this event is

that one candidate competes per department, usually the one who has won the departmental title, for example, Princesa Tezulutlán represents Alta Verapaz. However, there are some exceptions, such as departments where several languages are spoken, like Huehuetenango, which can send more than one candidate as long as they come from a linguistic community different from the departmental sovereign.

There is a special point that sets this event apart from the others in the country. In the election of the Princesa de los Cuatro Punto Cardinales (Princess of the Four Cardinal Points), not only indigenous representatives participate, but invitations are also extended to mestizo and Garifuna young ladies. A historic moment in the brief history of this contest was in 2010 when candidates from the four peoples that make up Guatemala participated, making the election a multi and intercultural event.

To choose the Princesa de los Cuatro Puntos Cardinales, the candidates are evaluated in several phases over two days by a competent judging panel. Aspects such as the performance of each candidate, historical and cultural knowledge about the department they represent, and proficiency in their native language and Spanish are some of the topics evaluated on the first day. During the final phase, other points are judged, including regional attire, traditional dance from their region, and again, language proficiency.

A silver crown with jade inlays and a medallion are part of the garments imposed on the winner. The crown awarded to the winner, once not in use, must be entrusted to the local authority that endorsed the representative. In case it is lost, the full amount must be paid. The sovereign delivers the crown to the organizing committee one month and fifteen days before the coronation event, which is deposited in the municipality of La Antigua Guatemala to be later blessed by the spiritual guides who will accompany the candidates in the election. The winner cannot participate in another similar election event, only as a special guest.

It is intended that the winners focus their work plan on social projection, community management, cultural, health, educational, and environmental projects; likewise, they must be oriented towards respecting the rights of children, youth, the elderly, and women; in order to benefit the linguistic communities they represent and the four cardinal points of the country. It is enough to cite the example of Emélina Monroy, winner of the 2010 edition, who for that year's Christmas distributed toys in communities in Sacatepéquez, which she obtained through donations from various Protestant and Catholic churches.

International Events

Such is the impact that the events of election and coronation of indigenous representatives have, that they have transcended national borders, proof of this is that Guatemalan communities, especially from the northern region of Huehuetenango, residing in several cities in the United States, annually elect an indigenous representative, an election that in most cases coincides with the celebration of the patron saint festival of the community they are promoters.

In June 2011, at the initiative of Catalina Ajanel, National Indigenous Princess 2010, the election of Princesa Ixchel Internacional (Princess Ixchel International) was held in the state of Florida, United States. Several representatives were invited to participate, including those from Chiché (Quiché), San Francisco La Unión (Quetzaltenango), and Santa Eulalia (Huehuetenango). The winner

was Nora Diéguez, from Santa Eulalia, who would later become the last National Indigenous Princess of Guatemala.

Other titles awarded were "Princess Ixchel," in which young women born in the United States to Guatemalan indigenous parents participated; and "Ambassador of the Migrant." For Catalina Ajanel, the central purpose of these events was: "that the role of a queen is not only to travel but to do so to bring something positive to our communities... The objective is to transcend borders and open doors abroad."

In June 2012, the second edition was held, again in the United States. The winners were, as "Princesa Ixchel Internacional," María Magdalena López Lucas, from Soloma (Huehuetenango); and Isabel Leonarda Dionisio Pérez, representing Santa María Visitación (Sololá), who was awarded the title of "Ambassador of the Migrant."

While it is true that this event is considered international as it takes place outside national borders, the ideal when discussing a contest of this level is to have the participation of representatives not only from Guatemala but also from the rest of the countries with indigenous populations, as expressed by an informant in San Lucas Sacatepéquez: "to invite the Maya from Honduras, the Tzotzil from Mexico... to have more representation."

Children's Events

Children's pageants, in most cases, follow the same parameters as those of the adult representatives. These are events where girls participate, ranging in age from 6 to 12 years old. Some of them originated in the late 1980s, others in the following decade, and a few in recent years, such as Alaj Ukotzij Tinimit Re Xelajuj No'j (Little Flower of the town of Quetzaltenango), which dates back to 2005 and is part of the preliminary activities of the Central American Independence Fair. The first winner of this title was Ángela Alma del Rosario Salazar Figueroa, 10 years old.

In Cobán, for several years, Ri' Man Ajaw (King's Granddaughter) has been chosen from among young girls. Previously, the candidates came from some schools in the city; however, currently, it is only organized by one, which is why this election does not have the endorsement of the National Folkloric Committee. Therefore, it is planned in the near future to organize an event where girls from the entire school district of the municipality participate.

Among the children's pageants are: Ranima Ixim Re Apoxab' (Heart of the Corn of San Sebastián, Retalhuleu); Florecita Xilotepeq in San Martín Jilotepeque (Chimaltenango), and Ukotz'ijal Nardo re Tinamit re Acalab' in San Gabriel (Suchitepéquez).

In the election of the Pequeña Flor del Pueblo de Quetzaltenango (Little Flower of the Town of Quetzaltenango) in 2012, a mother accompanied by her 10 year old daughter expressed her disappointment to the researcher because the girl did not want to participate as a candidate in the event, even though she had been invited to compete by the organizers. According to the lady, this type of event is very important for girls, as it motivates them to preserve their identity, especially in terms of wearing traditional costumes and expressing themselves in their native language, a situation that has diminished among the youth of Quetzaltenango in recent decades.

Gradually, children's pageants have gained popularity, and it is common in some communities that before the election of the representative young lady of the place, the children's pageant is held, which usually lasts a few hours without exceeding the time too

much, considering that the participants are young girls who easily get tired and bored.

Conclusion

Participating in events to choose and crown indigenous queens, and winning them, is considered by many participants as a means to transcend beyond the roles traditionally assigned to indigenous women; at the same time, it allows them to reach other levels that, according to them, they could not achieve as easily if they were not representatives. Sonia Gutiérrez, Rab'in Ajaw 1999, stated: "It did open doors for me... thanks to it, I got a scholarship to study English at CALUSAC, and other spaces." Manuela Pol also expressed her opinion on the matter: "If I had accepted, I would have had the opportunity for doors to open for me; the title is known nationally and internationally. Now that I am without a crown, the doors are closing for me." Sebastiana Sen also commented: "In a way, it does open doors to make yourself known, but in the end, everyone gains a space in society. Through this means, you have contact with organizations, you know their ideas and projects, which gives you an idea of where to develop yourself later."

Although the events to choose and crown indigenous representatives have been harshly criticized and questioned by intellectuals, both indigenous and mestizo, for the people who participate in them, they see them as a way to preserve and make known community identities; at the same time, in many cases, they are a platform for the representatives to transcend to other spheres of national life.

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María Marta Guacamaya, Flor Sampedrana de San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Guatemala), 1968 (Fotograph Collection Lisseth Monroy)

(Photograph from the Ixkik Museum of Indigenous Attire Collection's, Quetzaltenango)

Sebastiana Sen, representative from Chichicastenango in 1991-92 (Photograph from the Sebastiana Sen Collection)

Estela Cutzal, representative from San José Poaquil, 1998 (Photograph from the Estela Cutzal Collection)

Isabel Sebastián, Princesa Xinabajul 2012 (Photograph from the Isabel Sebastián Collection)

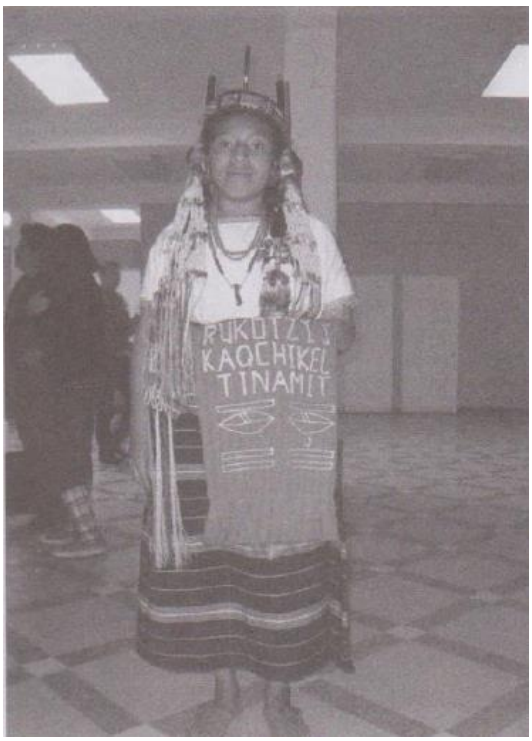
Icelia Chen, Princesa de Tezulutlán, 2008 (Photograph from the Icelia Chen Collection)

Luisa Candelaria Mulul Paz, Ixkik Uk'ux K'iche' 2011, with the representative of Santa Cruz del Quiché, 2012. (Photograph by the author)

Hermelinda López Rodríguez, Nim Ali Re Xochiltepetl, 1977 (Photograph from the Clemente Ceballos Collection)

Moment when Delmi Carolina Curruchich Chex is crowned as Rum'ial Tinamital B'oko, 2012 (Photograph by the author)

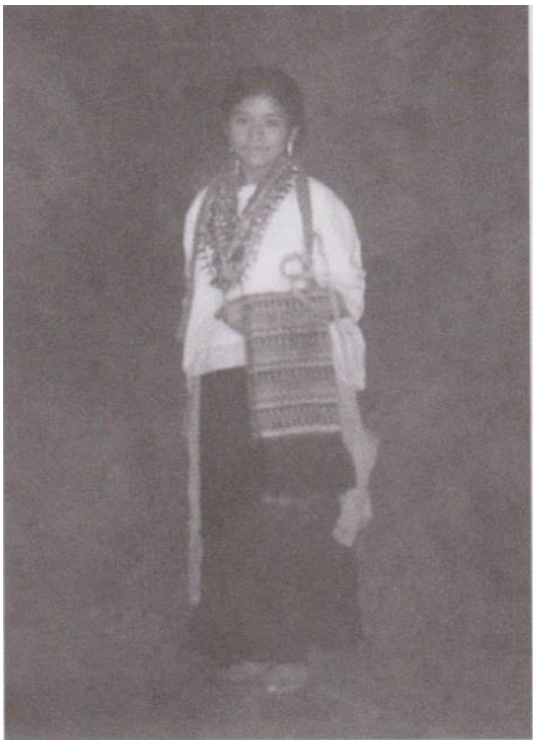
Blanca Leticia Boror España, Rum'ial J'un Aj'pu, 2012 (Photograph by the author)



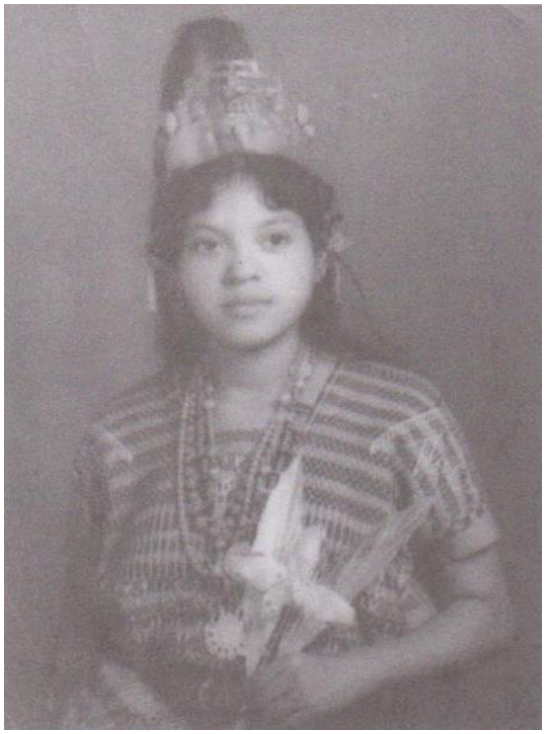
Albertina Xon. Rukotz'i'j Kaqchikel Tinamit, 2010 (Photograph by the author)

Ka'tu Suckchij, 2011 (Photograph by the author)

Catarina del Rosario Chaperno Saquic, Nim Ali Rech Tinimit Rech Kakaw, 2010 (Photograph by the author)

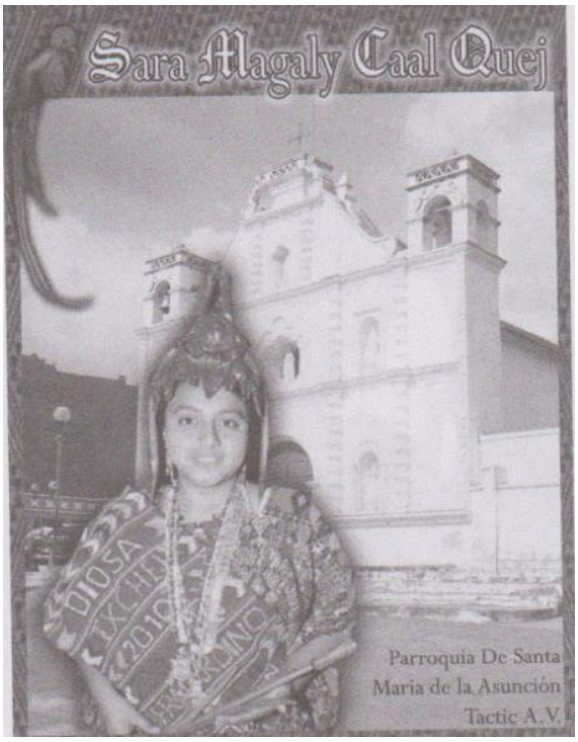


Vilma López Caj, Rixq'uun Poqom 2012 (Photograph by the author)

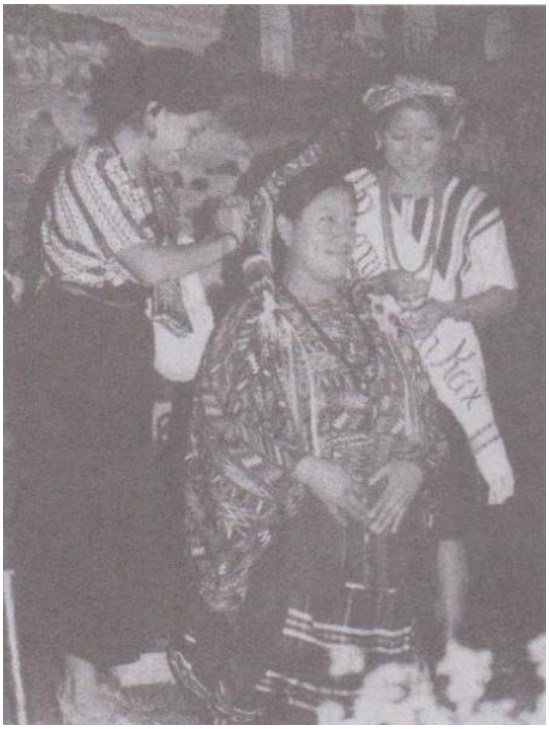


Marta Margos, Rab'in Ajaw 1988 (Photograph from the Marta Margos Collection)

María de Jesús Surqué Alonso, Rab'in Ajaw 1975 (Photograph from the María de Jesús Surqué Alonso Collection)



Sara Caal, Reina Diosa Ixchel 2010 (Photograph from the Sara Caal Collection)



Coronation of Rum'ial Yum Kax (Private Collection)

Marilyn Sacul, Reina Indígena Nacional Cotz'i'j Iximulew 2011 (Photograph from the Marilyn Sacul Collection)

(Photograph from Lisseth Monroy Collection)

Glenda Macario, Flor Nacional del Pueblo Maya (Photograph by the author)

Shayla Abaj, Maiden of Ju'na Aj pu 2012 (Photograph by the author)

Ranima Ixim Re Apoxab', 2012 (Photograph by the author)

Sheyla Caal, Princesa de los Cuatro Punto Cardinales 2011, with her predecessor (Photograph by Eddy Hernández Cotta)

Sonia Gutiérrez, Rab'in Ajaw 1999 (Photograph from the Collection of Sonia Gutiérrez)

Microhistory of Patzún Municipality of Chimaltenango Part I

ARTURO FRANCISCO MATAS ORIA (+)
ABRAHAM ISRAEL SOLÓRZANO

Introduction

This essay reconstructs the microhistory of the municipality of Patzún, located in the department of Chimaltenango. The techniques of ethnohistory have been used, allowing through the multidisciplinary work of archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians to rescue material evidence from pre-Hispanic and colonial cultures, the collective memory of its people, and the historiographical and archival documentary sources which, once analyzed and interpreted, allow for the construction of its own history in a broader scenario of information. Until now, only small descriptive monographs contained in geographical information dictionaries and scattered data contained in general histories of Guatemala exist. Therefore, this work constitutes a contribution to the formation of the regional histories of Guatemalan populations. Additionally, it contributes to consolidating the identities of its inhabitants in a multi-ethnic and pluricultural society and to strengthening the encounter of its peoples with their sociocultural origins.

Colonial Period

Origins and Foundation of Patzún and the 16th Century

The origins of Patzún are lost in history; there are no actual historical data indicating the founding date of the town or more information about its origins, other than some scattered data indicating a Kakchiquel settlement in the region at the time of the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors.

The story of its origins among the inhabitants of Patzún is part of the oral history of the Kakchiquel origin population and is based on the collective memory of the population. It is more of a legendary than a historical narrative, and it lacks historical temporality. However, it forms the mythic system that structures Patzún society and gives it its social cohesion and ethnic identity.

The municipal seat of Patzún, known as La Villa de Patzún, is located in a valley called Codjell Juya, situated at an altitude of 2235.38 meters above sea level, with a geographic position of long. 91, 00, 45 and lat. Of 14, 40, 07.

In the region where La Villa de Patzún is currently located, there are archaeological evidence of pre-Hispanic settlement from the late post-classic period. This is evidenced by the presence of Mica pottery, which was typical of the pre-Hispanic Kakchiquel people of the late post-classic period. However, these samples are very scarce, indicating that there was very little human settlement in the region at the time of the conquest.

The archaeological evidence from the exploration of the municipality indicates a significant pre-Hispanic settlement in the classic period that almost completely disappears in the late classic period, as found in the entire region analyzed so far in the central Guatemalan highlands. Therefore, it is likely that the post-classic settlement in the Patzún region consisted of Kakchiquel people who lived in dispersed populations, as was

their custom, and were part of the region known at that time as Iximché.

Novales (1970, 21) states that the settlement of the Patzún region predates the conquest and probably dates back to approximately the 12th century, as this region was part of the Kakchiquel empire under the reign of Iximché at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards.

It is most likely that the town of Patzún was originally part of a reduction of indigenous people after the imposition of the New Laws of 1542. According to Novales (1970, 21), the first missionaries to arrive in Patzún were the Franciscan fathers in 1540, who founded the church in Patzún, which belonged to the jurisdiction of Tecpán. This led to the construction of the parish church, which later became the head of the Previsterio, extending its ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the colonial period to the department of Retalhuleu.

It was the Franciscan Fathers who brought the image of the Franciscan confessor San Bernardino de Siena to the town of Patzún, which became the "patron saint of the town," and since then, the town's feast day has been celebrated in his honor on May 20 of each year.

According to oral tradition as mentioned by Novales (1970, 21), the origin of San Bernardino de Siena was due to the fact that the Franciscan priest who led the missionaries was named Bernardino and he was accompanied by an image of San Bernardino de Siena.

The oral tradition also states that when the Spanish conquerors passed through Patzún, one of them stayed in the place because he fell in love with a local indigenous woman. However, Novales' version of this event (1970, 21) does not mention any significance this isolated event may have had on the town's foundation.One of the most significant elements for the narrative of Patzún's origins, according to the historical memory contained in the oral tradition of Patzún, is related to the Kaqchikel etymology of its name.

According to Gall (1972, 922), Patzún was known in the colonial period as Pazón, Pazúm, or Pazún. Its etymology may come from the Kaqchikel words "Pa," which means place, and "Son," which means wild sunflowers. Its meaning could then be "place of the sunflowers." It could also come from "Tzun" or "Tzum," which means leather in the Kaqchikel language. Novales (1970, 22) also states that the name comes from the Kaqchikel words, meaning "in place of," and "Tzun," which means "leather"; that is, "in the place of leather" or "where there are hides."

In researching the origin of the town in the municipality of Patzún, Mr. Juan Sincal Ajsic, an employee of the municipal corporation, recounted the origin myth of the creation of Patzún and its historical development based on the collective memory of the Patzún community. Following the etymological changes of the town's names, they tell their legendary history.

This account refers to three variations of the name Patzún in development, and like all origin myths, it is ahistorical, as it lacks chronological references, which must be sought if they exist in other sources. Sincal's account states:

"Patzún has gone through a first name. The first name of Patzún known as Pazum, because it is called by that name, is because in the land of Patzun, the famous sunflower grew a lot, and sunflower in Kaqchikel means 'zum.' So, Patzún became known by that first name Pazum, because the sunflower grew a lot, and our grandparents made it known by that name.

But throughout history, the famous bells were made or invented by the same population, and they said we have the big bell, and that is one of the stories that make Patzún, not that it has that bell from somewhere else, but that bell was created in Patzún."

All the towns knew each other, and Tecpán didn't have a bell, so when they saw a town with a bell, it made them a little more famous. Our people from Patzún didn't like the first bell they created so much because of the tone of the sound. They said, "Well, we need to think of a new one," and they made a second bell, which had a much better sound, and they came to the conclusion of accepting the second bell. So, they already had two bells, but Tecpán said, "They have two bells there, and we don't even have one," and it turns out that Tecpán came to do business with Patzún, asking if they could lend them a bell. But in exchange for what? At that time, Tecpán's territorial boundary reached what is now the third street, or the main street of Patzún where the municipal building is, which was the territory occupied by Tecpán at that time, and the market area beyond that, to the west and south, belonged to Patzún.

Then negotiations came, according to history, they made a trade, an exchange for the bell, for the land. When they reached the final agreement, they had to make a boundary measurement to reach the territorial limit between Patzún and Tecpán. But to do this, our grandparents ingeniously thought of slaughtering cattle so that the hide could be cut into strips and stretched together to give a length, and that was going to be the boundary measurement.

After that measurement was completed, all our grandparents gave Patzún a second name, with the name of Pat' zum, measured with leather, because it passed to a second name due to the land ceded from Tecpán to Patzún in exchange for the bell.

So, the second name of Patzún is Pat' zum, but throughout history, with the arrival of the Spaniards, due to their lack of pronunciation or their inability to pronounce the word Pat zum, they simply said Patzún. This means that Patzún has gone through three historical names, but with real roots. That's why Patzún is currently named Patzún, but we could say it's like a modern name, but its roots come from "the land of sunflowers," "the land of leather," and it's not that there were a lot of cattle here, no, but because of the land measurement, from the trade that was made between Tecpán and Patzún.

According to Mr. Juan Sincal, based on the collective memory of the people of Patzún, the original settlement of the town was located towards the southwest of the town, where the calvary and the cemetery of the town are now located. Therefore, the center was later moved, and the church was built where it is currently situated. Nowadays, in front of this church, there are different businesses, and Mr. Juan Sincal says that during the construction process of these buildings, when excavating for the walls and columns, a large number of human bones were found, leading to the belief that the cemetery was located there.

It is worth noting in this case that during the colonial period, it was customary to bury the deceased in churches and their surroundings, so it is very likely that these sites were used as cemeteries.

Novales (1970, p. 22) indicates that some believe that the name Patzún comes from the exchange of land provided by the neighbors of Tecpán to Patzún, in exchange for a bell, and that the shape of the land was taken based on a stretched cowhide. This is a different

version from the one about the leather cord made with cowhide, which is not very credible, as no matter how thin the leather strips were made and tied together, they could not have an extension of more than a hundred or 150 meters. The municipal boundary of Patzún with Tecpán is between two to three kilometers from the main street used as a reference point and with an irregular layout, which, although it does not eliminate the possibility of the oral tradition, turns it into a legend and, at the same time, due to the lack of temporality, it becomes ahistorical. Subsequently, Novales (Ibid.) mentions that a public fountain was built in honor of Charles V and an arch of lime and mortar at the end of the main street of the town, which serves to divert the flow of water during the rainy season, and the aqueduct that conveyed potable water to the population, constructions that could be appreciated in 1970 and still now.

Regarding the construction of the bells, Mr. Juan Sincal recounts that the popular tradition states:

"The creation of that bell. When it was created, it was made of apaste, the lady who created it, for her it was not a simple invention, because it was already a sacred invention through the nahuals, or through the angels. In the second term, they say that the Sipac families were the creators of that bell, for her it was simply an apaste. Known pots for wedding feasts, she said that whoever invented this, the first bell that she didn't like because of the sound, had to invent a second bell, but had to be in communication, like in a second, in a third dimension, in communication with the spirits, so that bell gives her, as the story goes, the voices of girls and boys who were enslaved at that time to be donated in view of the preparation.

We could say so, then, someone also donated their son or daughter, who in the preparation, in the boiling of the choir, also as if they hear spiritual life and have incomparable sound.

The current bell is the one that appears in this story, even in it, the names and surnames of the founders or creators, or inventors appear. There even appears the writing engraved on the bell, in a somewhat rustic way, and it needs a lot of analysis to capture how the present meaning really was."

In this mythical tale of the Patzún bell, Mr. Juan Sincal relates that since the first bell did not meet their expectations regarding the sound, they set it aside and made another one, in which they took special care. According to him, apart from the story, "since this bell meant a sacred instrument, some neighbors gave gold and some parents donated their children and sacrificed them when it was being melted, so that the voices of the children would be recorded, for having a special sound and thus give a special sound to the church bell."

The bell, according to Mr. Juan, was "made in an apaste, a container used in the kitchen to make different foods, by the Sipac family and it was a sacred invention for the nahuals." According to Gall (1983, 924), in the church of Patzún, a large bell was seen with the inscription "Jorge Sipac, year 1780," at that time the donor was one of the wealthiest men in the town.

According to Novales (1970, pages 21 and 22), there are reports that one of the caciques of the town of Patzún, Jorge Sipac, was a very rich indigenous man. His neighbors claimed that he had a "pact with the devil," because during the nights, they would arrive at his house with a good number of mules loaded with gold and silver. They say that this cacique bought the title of "Don" from the king of

Spain for 1000 ounces of gold in the year 1720, and that said title came to him in parchment and that he had it carved in stone above the door of his house, amidst two lions and two men.

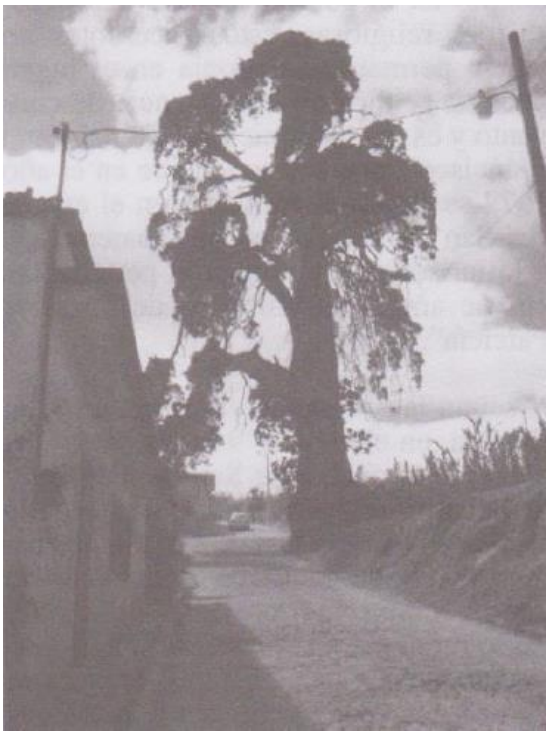
So Jorge Sipac usurped the position of governor by taking advantage of the noble title he had bought, and it was then that he acquired a large bell, which he placed in the church of Patzún, where the inscription "Jorge Sipac, year 1780" can still be read.

According to Novales (Ibid.), during the administration of General Justo Rufino Barrios, at the end of the 19th century, the lions that were on the lintel of Jorge Sipac's house were demolished, as it was believed that they were filled with gold, which turned out to be nothing but a supposition. Even in 1968, when Novales conducted his research, the rubble of Jorge Sipac's house and part of the mentioned tombstone could still be seen.

Novales (1970, 21) indicates that he had reports that the indigenous man Felipe Cumes narrated that certain documents tied with a red handkerchief were on the back of the town's patron saint "San Bernardino," but their current whereabouts are unknown. Only the handkerchief in which these papers were wrapped is preserved, and it is believed that the history of the town's foundation was in them. This raises doubts because it is known in other cases that the documents placed in the images during the colonial period, in most cases, refer to their making.

Another legendary tale of Patzún is the existence of a gigantic and very ancient cypress tree, which can be noticed by the large thickness of its trunk, and which is currently located on private land, west of the current church.

According to Juan Sincal, his grandparents told him "That tree was planted on the same day that the construction of the current temple of the town began, so that it would serve as a living judge of the lives, deaths, and history of the inhabitants of the place as part of spiritual morality."



Legendary Cypress of the Town of Patzún

Although this cypress may not be as old as the church in the area, it has become imbued with spiritual significance for its inhabitants, like a living being that has witnessed the passage of Patzún's history and seen countless generations born and die. When the owner of the land, due to the tree's size and the inconvenience of its branches falling, wanted to cut it down, the people of the town opposed it. The cypress is part of Patzún's living history, and the municipality had to intervene to prevent the conflict that was brewing, declaring the cypress a protected heritage of the municipality of Patzún.

According to the data provided by Gall (1983, 922), in the year 1566, there was an earthquake that destroyed the houses of Patzún, which is recorded in the memorial of Sololá or Annals of the Cakchiquels.

Despite the fact that the Franciscan fathers had arrived since 1540 to evangelize the region of Patzún, probably reducing the indigenous population and building a temple to attend to their religious needs, these priests did not have a permanent presence in the area, as there is no mention of a convent. It is in the chronicle of the Franciscan Francisco Vásquez that we read that in the year 1572, the convent was founded in what was then San Francisco Tecpán Guatemala, and belonged to its jurisdiction in that year to the villages of Pazón and Patcicía.

According to Captain Juan Estrada's description, in the year 1579, the distance from the city of Santiago de Guatemala to Patzún was six leagues if one took the royal road. The roads were bad, and the town was settled on a plain. The climate was cold, and the land was fertile. In terms of agricultural production, they harvested maize, chili peppers, beans, vegetables, and peaches. Among other activities of the indigenous people were the breeding of Castilian birds and quails, hunting of deer and rabbits. The indigenous people used the products of hunting and bird breeding for their food and for trade, as they sold these to travelers passing through the town since it was on the royal road, the route taken to reach other provinces. This way, they earned money. Additionally, they also traveled to "Atitan" and the coast of Suchitepequez to trade their agricultural products or breeding birds, for which, according to this description, they had horses of their own for transporting goods. On their way back from Atitlán, they brought back cocoa, which they sold to the Spaniards, and cotton which they used to make blankets, "gueypiles and naguas", which they used for clothing and for sale. The town was an "estate of Tepan Atitlan and paid tribute to the municipality".

According to Gall (Gall 1972:923), in the visit made by the Franciscan commissioner Fray Alonso Ponce in the year 1586, the commissioner speaks of the journey he had to make to reach the town of Patzún. He says it was a road of "ups and downs", of ravines, and a river. He also says that the people of the town are very devout and the indigenous people offered him peaches upon his arrival.

In the data provided by Gall (Ibid.), it is mentioned that by the year 1590, Diego Cote Chuy was appointed as the governor of the Tukucheés of Patzún.

17th Century

During the first half of the 17th century, there is no significant historical evidence regarding the life in the region of Patzún. According to the documents contained in the General Archive of Central America, it seems that during that time, the town of Patzún had become a pass-through point for "passengers" or travelers. This was because it was located on the road that led from the city of Santiago de Guatemala, passing through Chimaltenango, Chim, and Patzicía, to Sololá and Mexico. It was also a pass-through point towards the southern coast of Guatemala, following the route of Tolima along the canyon of the Madre Vieja River. Additionally, it was on the current route that goes to the towns of Patulul and Cocales, connecting the Guatemalan highlands with the commercial routes of the southern coast, Mexico, and El Salvador, routes that also existed during the colonial period.

So, Patzún was a resting point for travelers and muleteers with merchandise passing through the area on their way between the towns of the Guatemalan highlands, the city of Santiago de Guatemala, and the towns of the southern coast, the western highlands of Guatemala, and Mexico. This indicates the importance of the establishment and therefore its inhabitants. In addition to their subsistence crops, the indigenous people of Patzún dedicated their time to attending to the travelers passing through the town, providing them with accommodation, food, provisions for their journeys, supplies, and pack animals. Many indigenous people who owned pack animals appeared in the area, and they were probably muleteers, although the documents do not mention this. This is one of the key reasons for the existence of Patzún during the colonial period.

During the colonial era, it is mentioned in the region of the parish of Patzún, as Cortéz and Larráz (1958, vol. II, p. 92) refer to it by the late 18th century, there was only one town that was "the head of the parish of Patzún, without any annexed town, and it only has a valley of Ladinos called 'Sierra de el Agua' situated one league from Patzún." This place populated by Ladinos already existed in the 17th century, and its origin and exact possession are unknown.

According to municipal authorities, the place called "Sierra de el Agua," which was a settlement of Ladinos during the colonial period, no longer exists today. Due to its distance of about four kilometers, approximately one league from Patzún and its border with Patzicía, it is very likely that it was near what is now the village of La Vega, on what is now the La Sierra farm, a canyon formed by the Xaya River. Nowadays, this place is a private property where only the caretakers of the place live. However, according to informants, Ladinos used to inhabit it before.

It seems that in the 17th century, the Ladinos of the Sierra del Agua were already cultivating wheat in that place, which gives rise to the origins of the first conflicts that appear in the General Archive of Central America.

Según Cortéz y Larráz en su crónica, al llegar de Patzicía hacia Patzún, "a about a league before reaching the town of Patzún, one crosses a ravine called Sierra de la Agua, where the valley of the same name is located, similar to Piscaya, and a river called Sierra de la Agua runs through it, not very abundant, flowing from west to east, and on both sides are the Ladino valleys." This description coincides with the doubt of the municipal authorities of Patzún, and according to Gall (Ibid.), the river mentioned by Cortéz y Larráz as Sierra de la Agua is currently known as the Xayá River, which descends from the north of the municipality in a south-southeasterly direction. Along the banks of this river, then to the south, were the estates and settlements of the Ladinos.

According to a document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.24 Exp. 10205 Leg. 1561), Don Juan Tomás de Leyba requested in 1655 that twenty indigenous people be given to him to work in wheat planting. This indicates that wheat was already being planted in this year, which was a fundamental food for the Spaniards. He argued that he could only plant twenty five bushels of wheat due to a lack of labor and wanted to plant more. He requested that at least ten indigenous people from the town of Patzún, which was the closest place to the plantations, be sent to him every week. The place where the workers were needed was called La Sierra del Agua.

Upon learning of the request, the procurator or defender of the indigenous people sent a written response stating that Patzún, being a place where many "passengers" or travelers passed through, needed approximately fifty indigenous people for the work of attending to the traveling people. And that if the indigenous people went to work the land, they would lose two or three days in round trip, so they would abandon their work of assisting travelers. According to this same document, Patzún was only allowed to provide seven indigenous people for distribution to the estates near the town.

The officials responsible for overseeing the indigenous people said:

"Mighty lord = The Indigenous mayors and councilors of the town of Pason under your royal crown, wherever there is a place to be heard, we appear before your highness and state that due to our town being the most traveled through and where many pass by, whether on horseback, young men on foot, or Indigenous travelers, as it is a journey where those who come and go often stop, it has often happened that, due to the lack of other Indigenouss except those who administer justice, they have had to go out with duties or as messengers, according to the royal provision that we present in a legal manner. We have been relieved of providing Indigenouss for extraordinary service, as it is mandated that we are not obligated to provide more than seven Indigenouss for service... all of this to the detriment of the town and its natives. Considering, your highness, the extensive work done in said town, as is done every day, we request that your highness relieve that town and reserve it from all unnecessary service, and that no Indigenous shall be sent for any purpose... as said town is the stop for all who come and go from all provinces within and outside of the kingdom..."

It is also mentioned that this was the route taken to other provinces, both within and outside of Guatemala. The provisions ranged from material goods like horses to mozos de recuas, who were indigenous people specifically for that work. What is not mentioned in the document is whether this work was paid for by the Indigenouss or if it was free and part of their obligations. This was the reason they requested not to be obligated to send Indigenouss for distribution, as if they did, they would be left without Indigenouss to provide service to travelers.

The document also mentions that the route from Patzún was taken by travelers heading towards the coast, Suchitepequez, Chiapas, Soconusco, and Mexico. Among other services provided by the Indigenouss were innkeeping and community service. On the other hand, it is also mentioned that due to a plague or epidemic that occurred, some Indigenouss died in that century, which reduced the number of workers. The resolution given by the Royal Audiencia to Mr. Leyba's request was to not provide the Indigenouss for distribution, for the reasons stated by the mayors and councilors of Patzún.

According to information from the General Archive of Central America (A1.11.14 Exp. 31468 Leg. 4057), Fray Juan Abarca de Paniagua, who was the guardian of the Franciscan convent in that year, requested economic aid to rebuild the temple that was destroyed by a gunpowder explosion that caused a fire in 1678."

Around 1686, Captain Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán wrote in his "Recordación Florida" about the towns in the valley of

Guatemala, stating that "some towns in the valley had experienced significant growth. Among these places, one of them was the town of San Bernardino Pazón... The town of Pazón lies in an elevated and clear location, with a cold and unpleasant climate, eight leagues away from the city of Guatemala, to the north of its position, and on the common road to Mexico. Its terrain is uneven, with large and extensive plains, mountains, hills, and ravines, but it is fertile and substantial, suitable for the production of corn, wheat, beans, peas, and other vegetables. It has the material structure and appearance of a distinguished and well-organized town, with most houses made of tiles and well distributed... This town is composed of a republic of 1,600 indigenous resident taxpayers, of the Kaqchiquel language, and among them thirty Spanish residents, owners of the surrounding estates. San Bernardino Pazón has five approved brotherhoods, with whose ministers the altars are given due and praiseworthy worship, and the sick Indigenouss are assisted..." (Gall, 1983, p. 923)

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.30 Exp. 41720 Leg. 2864), in the year 1688, four indigenous people from the town of Patzún appeared before the prosecutor of the Royal Audiencia to request the division of a communal land that they claimed belonged to them. They asked for the respective measurement and demarcation of the land so that each one could have their delimited property. The disputed land was called Panqbah and was three leagues from the town on a hill called Vutzan Huyu. In addition to the measurement, they requested the corresponding title to prove their ownership. The prosecutor proceeded to grant their request and ordered the land to be measured and marked with crosses and stones. They also asked to be provided with iron to brand the animals, indicating that they owned horses. Furthermore, this document mentions that at this time, there was already a brotherhood called the "Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception."

In the information provided by Gall (1972:923), there is a description of the town of Patzún signed by Francisco Zuaza on June 8, 1686, in which he mentions that in that year.

"San Bernardino Pazón Convent, The town of San Bernardino Pazón is located in a cold and high land on the royal road from Guatemala to Mexico, nine leagues from the city of Guatemala; its climate is good, and its terrain is very suitable for growing wheat and corn, with many plains and some ravines and slopes. It has one thousand and six hundred Indigenouss of confession, including men and women, who are ministered to in the Kaqchikel language, and thirty Spanish and mestizo individuals, who are ministered to in the Castilian language. It has no visitation or adjacent town to the east of Pazón. It has five approved brotherhoods by illustrious bishops, and each one commands to say its own monthly... In the towns, preaching is also done in their native Kaqchikel language, not only on their feast days but also on all obligation days and as the opportunity allows, alternating between the towns on Sundays... Food is always sent to the sick, due to their lack of care for each other, and this assistance becomes daily, as rarely are there no habitual sick..."

In the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1. Exp. 52143 Leg. 5954), the indigenous Francisco López Sipac, originally from Patzún, requested protection in the year 1695 regarding a plot of land that

the town community had given him. Among the arguments he presented was the fact that he had donated three thousand pesos to the church. The Mayors and leaders of the town agreed to grant him the protection he requested, as the document states that this did not harm the other indigenous people. It should be noted that Francisco López had been the governor of Patzún before requesting this protection, which placed him in a special position, both in terms of influence and economically. The document does not specify why the land was granted to him. What is important in this document is the fact that he was granted protection, and it was communicated to all people not to disturb him on his land. This indicates that there was a certain form of property, although it was not private ownership but rather concessions for land use, allowing indigenous people to have land for themselves, separate from common ownership. Additionally, it is important to note that the document mentions that due to the growth of the town, they no longer had land for cultivation. This indicates that there was already pressure for land among the indigenous people.

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18th century

In the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1 Exp. 52205 Leg. 5957), it is mentioned that in the year 1700, there was a problem regarding a piece of land near the towns of Patcizia and Patzún. The land had been inherited by two brothers, Nicolás Santiso and Bernardo Santiso. Nicolás Santiso's widow, María Callejas, argued that Bernardo Santiso had completely taken over the land and was not allowing her to carry out her work. Mrs. Callejas was dedicated to raising cattle and horses, and Mr. Bernardo Santiso had planted the entire land, leaving no space for her livestock. She requested the land court to measure the land equally and to impose a fine of two hundred pesos on Bernardo Santiso.

The land consisted of eight "cavalries" (a unit of measurement). In the same year, the land was measured again, and each of the litigants was given half of it. The remeasurement was done by Phelipe Días. Bernardo Santiso argued that María Callejas Vda. De Santiso had too much livestock for thirty years. This leads us to the conclusion that the livestock business in the town of Patzún was carried out by some landowners since 1670. On the other hand, the document mentions that María Callejas lived in the city of Santiago de Guatemala and had the land for livestock breeding in Patzún. Finally, it is mentioned that there was a large amount of wood on the mentioned land, that is, a forest used for firewood or fuel. This suggests abundant flora and fauna.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.24 Exp. 10216 Leg. 1572), in the year 1701, fray Antonio García, a member of the Order of San Francisco, was appointed to impart the Catholic doctrine to the people of San Bernardino Patzún. He had to speak Kaqchikel, as it was the language spoken in that region.

In the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.24 Exp. 10217 Leg. 1573), it is mentioned that in the year 1703, Fray Sebastián de Porres was presented to teach the doctrine in the town of San Bernardino Patzún, who spoke the languages: Quiché, Caqchiquel, and "Sotogil."

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.24 Exp. 10217 Leg. 1573), in the year 1703, Sebastián López Xup, an indigenous man and principal of the town, was appointed Governor of the town of Patzún for a period of one year. Among the responsibilities of the governor were: ensuring that indigenous men and women attended mass and received Christian doctrine, ensuring compliance with the ordinances of the time, collecting taxes, overseeing the planting and harvesting of corn and vegetables, ensuring that the indigenous people had food and clothing, raising chickens, and assisting in public works. He was also responsible for ensuring that there were no idlers, drunkards, vices, "gentile" sacrifices, or non-Christian customs. Another responsibility was to oversee the money of the Royal Chamber. Among the privileges of the governor were: having his orders obeyed, if his house needed repairs, he would send other indigenous people to do it, and if anyone refused to obey, they would be punished. On the other hand, a cornfield was planted for him, each of the planters providing for his food, and a woman was given to him each week to perform domestic duties, such as making tortillas. Each week a different woman provided this service, and it was free servitude. These privileges lasted for the period in which he served as governor.

In the year 1706, according to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.23 Exp. 39284 Leg. 4569), it is stated that for the good administration of the indigenous people, population censuses had to be carried out, as dictated by the laws of the Compilation of the Indies, in article 4 of book 6. Reference is also made to the Royal Decree of February 1, 1697. It is also mentioned that the books of community funds, which were to be managed by the royal officials or the district leaders, had to be observed, all for the purpose of collecting the money that went to the coffers of the royal treasury. The purpose of this decree was primarily to increase the funds of the community funds. On the other hand, it is mentioned that the officials in charge of this control were not to increase their salaries or take money from the mentioned funds, since they charged and took money from the funds for any service they provided to the indigenous people, which was not allowed according to the laws of that time.

In the year 1707, according to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.11.14 Exp. 6796 Leg. 328), the Order of San Francisco sent a document to the treasurer judge official of the court of the royal audience, Captain Juan Angel de Arochena, to collect eleven thousand four hundred ninety three tostones and three maravedis. This was for having imparted the Christian doctrine and administered the Sacraments for a year. This work was done by priests of that order, with the indigenous people of the towns of: Santa Catarina Barahona, Milpas Zamora, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Milpa Dueñas, Santa María Jesús, San Juan del Obispo, San Bartolomé Carmona, el Alto, San Francisco Mexicanos, San Francisco Milpa Cotusa, San Bartolomé Becerra, Mexicanos and Tlascaltecas of the city, Resurrección de la Ciudad Vieja, San Andrés de Cevallos, San Lorenzo Monrroy, Godinez, Pason del Valle de esta Ciudad, Patzicía, Joliman, and thirty-seven more towns. The total number of evangelized towns was 56. The document does not mention the way, the days, or the hours in which the doctrine was taught.

In the year 1711, according to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.21.3 Exp. 3274 Leg. 163), the following information is provided: The lords Mayors, Governor, Aldermen, Justices, and common people of the town of Patzún made a request for the introduction of water, as up to that year, there was no piped water reaching the town square. According to the information in the document, this request was not the first time it had been made; it had been ongoing for thirty years before. What they needed was to have water brought to the square, the church, and the convent. At the same time, with the water conduits established, they also requested that basins be made for the common people of the town. The problem they faced was that the nearest place to get water was in a ravine half a league outside the town. Another problem was that women were responsible for carrying the water, which created another issue: the women had to go at night, and according to the document, they spent the whole night fetching water, which created "many disorders." The disorders mentioned in the document, as can be inferred, were violations against the women, which in turn created discontent among the indigenous people, since as the document itself states, the women who went to fetch water were "maidens and married women," which was offensive and led to disputes among the residents, as it also caused "serious offenses to God Our Lord."

As the church, the convent, and the indigenous people needed water, they stated that they were willing not only to give everything they had in their community funds for that year and the past years but also to work on the project because it was so necessary.

The prosecutor ruled that regarding the request by the administrators of the town of Patzún, they should submit a budget indicating the cost of the work and the amount they had in the community fund. Diego de Porres, a master builder, was appointed to conduct the feasibility study and prepare the budget, as a report was needed to determine where the piped water would come from. Mr. Porres did the work, and in his report, he mentioned that the water could be piped from a spring two thousand yards from the town. Four thousand pipes were needed, and the cost of piping, masons, lime, stonemasons, and other materials was one thousand pesos.

The money they had in the community funds was one thousand three hundred forty tostones, which totaled six hundred seventy pesos.

Balnodano Arana and Rodesno of the royal audience authorized the implementation of the water introduction project to the town of Patzún on October 14, 1711. The agreement was signed by the gentlemen of the royal audience: Manuel Balnodano, Pedro de Ozaeta, Diego Antonio de Oviedo, Thomas Arana, and Joseph Rodesno.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.24 Exp. 10228 Leg. 1584), on April 27, 1724, the priest Domingo Marruve was presented to teach the doctrine in the town of San Bernardino Patzún. He spoke the Cackchiquel language, which was the language spoken in the town.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.39 Exp. 41844 Leg. 2876), in the year 1727, the indigenous people Lucas Ihu, Pedro Boch, Antonio Xahpot, Nicolas Mustia, Nicolas Cum, Lorenzo Camux, and Juan De Dios Xiquita, mayors, aldermen, and scribe of the town of San Bernardino Patzún, in the year 1725, reported that as was customary, the elected mayors would give an account of the community goods, that is, of what they had in funds, to the ordinary mayor magistrate of the valley, and for that purpose, they gave Captain Juan Rubaro the funds they had that year. However, they made the reservation that they had used their personal money to pay for the indigenous people who had died or disappeared from the town. Since in the year 1720, there was a plague in which some tribute-paying indigenous people died. Therefore, they also requested to be exempted from paying for the tribute-paying indigenous people who had died and those who had disappeared. This document was signed by the squadron chief and knight of the order of chivalry of the Golden Key of His Majesty's council, Antonio de Echevetz y Labiza.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15235 Leg. 2140), in the year 1728, in the account book of communities, the town of San Bernardino Patzún had in its cash box the value of 9285 pesos. This recount of the money in the community funds was being done because in this year the construction of the hospital San Juan De Dios was beginning. This construction work was assigned to Diego de Porres, who was the master architect, and Joseph Barrientos, who was the master carpenter. The total value of the work was 89,500 pesos. In September 1728, the two masters were paid the first installment for the

work. The cost of this construction was to be paid by the towns of Guatemala.

According to the data from the document in the year 1731, based on the community accounts, Chimaltenango and its towns had to pay 131183 pesos and 8 reales for the construction of the aforementioned work.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1, 24 Exp. 10228 Leg. 1584), in the year 1737, the indigenous people of the town of Patzún requested from the supreme government that they be granted protection so that the Spaniards, Blacks, and Mulattos who had estates with the raising of "major" livestock, adjacent to the communal farming lands, would not cause them harm by allowing the livestock to enter their corn planting plots. Since if the livestock ate their corn crops, they could no longer pay their tributes. They asked for a subdelegate to go to the lands to see the damage caused, and after verifying the damages, they should be compensated for their losses. Mr. Diego de Avendaño ordered that the owners of the livestock from the neighboring estates should pay the indigenous people for the damages caused, on May 13, 1744.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.11.14 Exp. 31498 Leg. 4058), in the year 1740, Fray Joseph De Fuentes from the order of San Francisco was appointed to teach Christian doctrine in the town of San Bernardino Patzún. He had to speak the Cackchiquel language, as it was the language spoken in the town.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.11.14 Exp. 31506 Leg. 4058), in the year 1746, Fray Miguel De Arrivillaga from the order of San Francisco was appointed to teach Christian doctrine and to serve as the parish priest of San Bernardino Patzún. Fray Miguel De Arrivillaga spoke Caqkchiquel and replaced Fray Sebastián De Valenzuela, who resigned and was promoted to the convent of "Nexapam." The document was signed by Fray Joseph Ximenes, who was a professor at the "Royal and San Carlos de Guatemala University" and a synodal examiner of the Archdiocese of Guatemala.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1. Exp. 52394 Leg. 5969), in the year 1749, Mr. Francisco Juárez, who lived in Patzún, requested protection to enjoy two units of land, called Chicoy, beside the Chocoyos River.

In the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.2.2 Exp. 29797 Leg. 3096), a book of secret agreements of the city council of Guatemala from the year 1754 was found. Among the information obtained, it was found that the president of the Royal Audience was interested in eliminating the position of ordinary mayor and, instead, ordered the creation of two positions of higher mayors, prescribing a salary of one thousand pesos per year for each. These, from that order, were responsible for administering justice and collecting tribute. In this change made, the president of the Royal Audience had economic interests at stake, as stated in the document:

"...because two of the members of this Royal Audience are involved in this matter and depend on the two higher mayors who are in office, one being a relative who lives within the same house and the other a godparent. And that thus, due to this close friendship and dependence of these two gentlemen on said higher mayors, as well as because all have expressed their opinion in the notes that circulated between said gentlemen and the most excellent Mr. President about giving him

the opinion for the city to be deprived of the magistracy..."

As can be seen, the positions in this year were bought, those in charge of public offices were corrupt, and there was always an interest in money. Positions were always given to relatives, friends, or godparents. Those who could aspire to political positions were wealthy Spaniards or Creoles.

This document mentions that all inhabitants were being affected by this measure, both the citizens and "distinguished and noble republican neighbors," by leaving the towns without magistrates and mainly affecting the indigenous people.

"... the burden of ensuring the collection of tributes, since it redeems the public and the miserable indigenous from such a heavy burden as the one introduced with said new provision, whose bad consequences and disadvantages are extensively contained in the representations made by this city in defense of its execution..."

According to this document, the measure would cause much harm; in the case of indigenous towns, justice and the collection of tributes were the responsibility of the second mayor, who was an elected indigenous person, likely one of the principals. This measure eliminated the position of second mayor. As read in the following quote:

"... About the considerable debt that was supposed to be experienced by the royal treasury in said towns, and under the title of arrears, considerable sums have been demanded from the miserable Indigenous, this debt being imaginary in the prudent judgment of this council, since from what was owed by the deceased and fugitives who remained recorded in the rolls and assessments, the debt should have been legitimized by making a detailed liquidation..."

Although according to the document, the magistracy was reinstated on November 20, 1754. The information provided is very important, as it indicates that large sums of money were demanded from the indigenous people, and tribute was collected for the deceased and those who fled the town. It also speaks of the misery in which they lived, which confirms the poverty of the " indigenous towns."

According to the Document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.23 Exp. 39572 Leg. 4619), in the year 1754, according to the Royal Decrees, which dictated the laws to be applied in Guatemala, it was ordered that indigenous people must pay tribute from the age of eighteen to fifty-five. It was also established that they should do so "without distinction of states," referring to both married and single individuals. Additionally, it was established that women should not pay tribute. The date of the Royal Decree is September 13, 1754.

In another Royal Decree dated March 26, 1755, the above was ratified, and it was established that men should pay tribute until the age of fifty, but not upon turning fifty; their obligation ended on the day they turned fifty-one. An important note from this decree reads:

"... and I request and charge the priests to convey this information to the indigenous from the pulpits in their native language..."

This means that from the pulpits, they provided this information to the indigenous people in their local language. This indicates that priests had the mission to inform, not only about Christian doctrine but also about the changes that occurred over time.

Furthermore, an order was given to make a new registry of tributaries in that year, as indigenous people claimed they were charged tribute for the dead and those who fled, which was unjust.

According to the Document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.23 Exp. 39573 Leg. 4620), in the royal decree dated March 29, 1757, the two mayoralties were created: "Sacatepequez and Amatitlán" and "Santa Anna de Chimaltenango." Estanislao Croquer was appointed as the mayor for "Sacatepéquez and Amatitlán," and Manuel de Plazaola for "Santa Anna de Chimaltenango." They were paid an annual salary of one thousand pesos each. One of their responsibilities was to collect taxes.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.64 Exp. 15243 Leg. 2141), information was provided regarding the repairs carried out in the town of Patzún concerning public works in the year 1760, with Manuel de Plazaola serving as mayor at that time. The repairs included: Renovation of the two town halls, with the addition of roof tiles and bricks, New walls for the stables, Repairs to the water pipes, which were either filled with garbage or in poor condition. Regarding the repair of town halls, the document mentions that additional pieces were being made due to the high number of travelers, as the existing facilities were insufficient.

...a town hall with roof tiles was constructed by order of its mayor in previous years, and currently, work is being done to renovate the other one, roofing it and bricklaying some parts because one is not enough due to the many travelers who come and go to New Spain, making it necessary for them to stay in said town. The water pipes were cleaned and repaired in the year fifty-six...and indeed, the water reached the fountain in the square, adjacent to the town halls and churches. However, currently [referring to the year 1760 A.S.], they do not benefit from this anymore, either because it is broken, filled with garbage, or because during the rainy season, it is easier for it to be introduced, which the mayor personally attended to. He also repaired the royal road to Chocoyos, which was impassable, and due to the measures he took, it became very good. In the year fifty-four, the mayor established the school attended by sixty-three boys...and for the other works mentioned, no special assessment has been levied by the authorities or by the mayor, nor has any contribution been imposed, because they were carried out by the natives and leaders of said town, some contributing with wood, and others with their personal work...”

This document was signed by Pedro De La Carrera.

According to Novales (1970, p. 22), in the year 1760, a large shipment of gunpowder was brought to Guatemala from Mexico, and the muleteers transporting it made a stop, as was customary, at the corridors of the Patzún council. For unknown reasons, the gunpowder exploded and destroyed the building, reaching even part of the church roof, which was later repaired, according to Novales, by the indigenous Justo Coyote, when he served as Governor. If Novales' data is reliable, this explosion must have occurred at the end of 1760 and probably destroyed the works that had been carried out that year in the expansion and renovation of the council.

This situation was not the first time it had occurred in the town, as in the year 1678, as previously reported, there had been a gunpowder explosion that destroyed the temple, which demonstrates the lack of safety measures that existed in the transport of

these explosives, which should not remain stored in these public sites or populated areas during their transport.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1766, the community chests had funds that came from charging the indigenous people for their cornfields or crops. As was usual, these funds were used to pay for different goods and services, including payments to priests for religious services, payments to the church for various celebrations or festivities, such as the anniversary in commemoration of the patron saint, in the case of Patzún, San Bernardino, which was the name of the town. Other payments that had to be made included the payment of the school teacher and his food, as well as the salary of the priest and his food, repairs to the church building and the jail. The document also warns that under no circumstances should any "ladino" touch the money in the chests.

Among the data provided by Pedro Cortes y Larraz in his journey to the towns of Guatemala in the years 1768 to 1770 (Cortes y Larraz 1958: 92 to 97), the following can be mentioned:

The town of San Bernardino Patzun was in a valley, and the road to reach it was full of ravines, making it difficult to access. There were forests full of pine trees, and it was seven leagues away from the town of Comalapa. During these years, the church of Patzun was established as a parish, with no annexed towns but only a valley of "ladinos" called "Sierra del Agua," which was one league away from the town. According to these data, there were 900 indigenous families with 3,600 people and 53 "ladino" families with 522 people. In total, Patzun housed 953 families, with 4,122 people between indigenous and ladinos, from both the town and the Sierra del Agua valley. There was a priest who administered the church temporarily and another who assisted him with the tasks.

The agricultural production was mainly maize and wheat, which Cortez and Larraz described as abundant. The climate was cold, and in Cortes' observation, he mentioned that some people walked around naked, which he attributed to a lack of shame as they had clothes to wear. The indigenous people of this place had a reputation for being "warlike and of bad quality," and they harbored hatred towards anything Spanish. Although the indigenous people understood Spanish, they only spoke the Kaqchiquel language, which was spoken in that region. Regarding trade, the indigenous people took their agricultural products to sell in Santiago de Guatemala, and Cortes mentioned that it was difficult to deceive them. They made their homes in "enclosures" that they built.

In terms of customs, during burials, the indigenous people made a commotion, shouting and saying all sorts of things to the deceased, not out of grief but as a form of reproach, with phrases such as calling them a coward or telling them to return home to take care of their family, etc. They did not like to be buried in the church, as they believed that the church was locked and the dead person could not leave to go home. On the day an indigenous person died, the night of the wake and the following day, it was customary for them to get drunk. The indigenous people were very superstitious and buried their dead with money, believing that the dead returned home to scratch their family members. They also believed in dreams and the songs of certain birds. On one occasion, when a priest went to administer the sacraments to an indigenous person, he burned cotton in the room, and they thought it was a ritual to harm

them, which enraged them so much that they were about to kill him, but two women saved him. Like in other towns, drunkenness was a deeply rooted vice among the indigenous people, and it was difficult for the priests to eradicate it as they were afraid of them and allowed it. Preaching was not enough, as when preachers arrived, they did not get drunk, but when they left, the indigenous people burned sticks in the streets, believing that the preachers left them "poisoned."

At Mass on feast days, an exaggeratedly small number of fifty people would attend, with no one coming from the Sierra del Agua valley. Due to fear of visits from the priests, the indigenous people would convert to Christianity, but when the visits ceased, they would return to their rituals. They would attend Mass in a correct and solemn manner and receive the sacraments when they were close to death, sometimes against their will. Cortes states that regarding their rituals, they were very cautious and were capable of killing those who contradicted their beliefs. During the Corpus Christi celebration, the indigenous people would perform a dance, with some wearing masks, others wearing feathers, and others wearing animal costumes. They would lead the procession and would periodically make howling sounds similar to animals. Cortes interpreted this as a manifestation of joy, but he also suggests it could have been something else. These howls continued throughout the afternoon, and the indigenous people became drunk in the evening.

Regarding schools, it is mentioned that there is one school attended by approximately thirty children, although it is not specified if only indigenous children attend. However, concerning indigenous children attending the school, they did not learn to read because when they were learning, the “alcaldes mayores” would remove them and return them to their parents to work and pay tribute.

Cortes and Larraz mention that the data provided by the priests of the church in Patzun is not accurate because the priests did not take the time to go to the mountains, marshes, sugar mills, valleys, or estates to count the people living in those places.

Cortes was in the town on the date of the Corpus Christi celebration, and the next day he had to leave to continue his journey. The priests of the church warned him that since it was a day of celebration, the indigenous people would get drunk. To ensure he could leave the next day, he had to lock up the two indigenous men who would carry his luggage, and he did so. On the day he left, neither the mayors nor the town's leaders arrived, only six or eight for the canopy, including some boys and two "ladinos" who showed him the way, as the indigenous people were drunk.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (Al. Exp. 52998 Leg. 6015), in 1769, Mr. Luis Alvarez, Gregorio De Escobar, and Manuel De Cardenas, residents of the Sierra del Agua, and owners of the land called Panucu, requested the return of the file containing information about the land surveys conducted by Pedro Pablo de Arévalo in 1749. The document relates that due to the surveys, Pedro Pablo de Arévalo collected their property titles and later called them to make the respective composition, indicating that they were occupying royal land and had to pay for it. In 1749, they did not pay for the land, so they requested the return of "the records" to settle the matter. Mr. Don Domingo Lopez Vrrelo authorized the return of the file.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1. Exp. 52899 Leg. 6006), in 1769, Mr. Juan Santiso and

Cristóbal Santiso, owners of a part of the land located in the place called Sierra del Agua, Joseph Urrea owned another part, and the heirs of Rosa Santiso owned another part. The disputed land had an area of 33 cavalries. As a result of the survey conducted by the subdelegate Pedro Pablo de Arévalo in 1749, it was found that the Santiso gentlemen had more land than their titles indicated, which is why Juan Santiso and Cristóbal Santiso had bought 34.75 cavalries through composition, and in 1768, they were granted the title to these purchased cavalries. The distance from the city of Santiago de Guatemala to the Sierra del Agua was 8 leagues. It should be noted that the land was in a border area between the towns of Patzún, Patzicía, and San Antonio Nejapa.

The conflict they had was that Mr. Urrea had not paid for his share of the land, including the survey expenses, administrative costs, etc. Therefore, they argued that he had no right to that land. The Santiso gentlemen requested a new survey, and Joseph Urrea said he agreed, but he wanted it to be conducted by the Subdelegate Francisco De El Camino. The Santiso gentlemen opposed this because they argued that Francisco De El Camino only benefited Urrea. They claimed that he only awarded them infertile land while he awarded Urrea productive land for cultivation, which they had made productive through their own efforts. Thus, they requested that another subdelegate be sent for the survey.

"... both due to the lack of understanding that Camino has in these matters, and because he has spread the word that he will harm us in the division of the cavalries, awarding the useful, more cultivated, and populated ones at the expense of our personal work, from whom he is a benefactor and beneficiary..."

This document reveals that the subdelegates had anomalous dealings with the owners or future owners of the surveyed lands. The "spreading the word" refers to his statement to everyone that he would harm the Santiso gentlemen. They requested that a subdelegate be sent to measure and distribute the land to them in a fair quantity and quality, specifically requesting that De El Camino not be involved in this survey. In his defense, De El Camino said the following:

"... they recused me, exposing in their writing a thousand falsehoods, such as that I wanted to buy a part of the land and many other things that I don't remember;"

It is not ruled out that the subdelegates bought the land and then resold it at a higher price. When De El Camino mentioned that he was accused of a thousand things, it leaves open the possibility that the accusations were not only numerous, which he chose not to mention, but also that they could be true. This leads us to think that there may have been anomalous dealings and corruption on the part of these officials.

In response to the request of the Santiso gentlemen, Felix de la Campa was sent as the subdelegate for the land survey. As was customary on November 28, 1769, he called all the people who knew the land and its owners, as well as its boundaries. The interested parties were informed of the survey and were also told that they could appoint a witness to attest to their ownership and boundaries.

"...as interested parties, each one named as they deemed appropriate to receive the necessary oath...

The interested parties immediately appointed sons, cousins, or relatives as witnesses, as the

law allowed. In this regard, we can infer two things: one is that they always appointed criollos or Spaniards, never indigenous people, which always created a certain differentiation between social groups. On the other hand, they appointed relatives, not impartial witnesses, which shows the lack of transparency in the process.

In December 1769, during the preliminary observation prior to the land survey, which was called a "vista de ojos," the subdelegate found that:

"...there is a discrepancy in the measurements made by Commissioner Arévalo in the past years of 1749 because they do not conform to the cords expressed in his aforementioned proceedings...also, the disproportion of the lines with which he formed the capacity of its area...and considering that until now, it is not verified that these parts, as possessors of them, have paid into the royal coffers the corresponding amount for their moderate composition..."

The subdelegate De La Campa appointed a rope puller and a measurer, the former being Spanish and the latter a "free mulatto." In the survey process, they used the river Xaya as the first landmark, continuing the survey towards the river Xuxulu, marking with crosses of "cal y canto."

Another mentioned location was the river Chelteya, with one important detail being that on the right side of the river Xaya were the common planting lands of Patzún. Among other places mentioned during the survey were Canac, Chavisut, Cojomavag, Cerro Chavisut, Balanjuyu, Montaña Atutiguac, Río Cuciliya or Sarco, Cerro Pachiut or Panacu, Sampatan Sobac, Río Pachiut, Barranca Colorada, Cuciliya, Pachitup, Sacaquieh, Cerro de Agua or Debojoya, Canoa or Lavaderos.

According to the document, the interested parties had owned the land since 1669, as in that year, Mr. Ignacio Santiso bought it from Pablo Camargo, who acquired it by Royal Grant. However, in 1749, when Arévalo conducted the survey, they did not have property titles, only a letter of protection granted by the Audiencia Real.

After the survey, it was determined that the land consisted of 66 cavalries, of which 30 belonged to Joseph Urrea, 10 to Juan de Santiso, 10 to Cristóbal Santiso, 10 to Desiderio Benavente, and 6 were royal lands. These last ones were decided to be put up for sale through composition. The price estimated for the land was 12 tostones each, which was the price estimated by subdelegate Arévalo in 1749. The land was classified as mountainous or of poor quality. From this information, it can be inferred that the value of the land either remained at a fixed price or there was a way to negotiate lower prices, as the quality of the land was considered poor, likely to decrease the price, since the land was generally acquired, as in this case, by Spaniards.

Once the land was surveyed, the owners had 15 days to arrange the corresponding titles. The document does not say if they did, but generally, the interested parties did not do so but let years pass, and in the meantime, they continued to use the land.

Another important piece of information provided by this document is that in 1769, the Convent of "La Concepción de Nuestra Señora de la Ciudad de Guatemala" (when mentioning the city of Guatemala, it refers to Santiago de Guatemala), had in usufruct a plot of land in the mountains of Patzún, which was royal land that had been granted to them by the crown but not in ownership, only for their use. They rented out this land, earning 750 pesos per year.

On April 17, 1773, Luis Días Navarro from the land court discovered that the survey carried out by Felix De La Campa in 1769 was incorrect, as the extent of the royal land was not 6 cavalries but 48 cavalries 45 ropes, which was what they should have paid to the crown through composition.

"...and subject to moderate composition the forty-eight cavalries, four and a half square ropes that exceed in the lands titled, it being understood that the true value of all of them must be declared much higher than what it is [i] and because it is well known that the titles of Panucu; or Chalaval were evidently exchanged..."

It can be inferred that in the 1769 survey, there was an anomalous deal by the Subdelegate or "commission judge," Felix De La Campa. Additionally, Spaniards or Criollos were acquiring royal land without paying for it. The document does not specify if they actually paid for the land.

Five years later, the problem persisted, giving us an idea of how lengthy the processes or lawsuits were in the courts, and the Spaniards or Criollos benefited from this delay as they continued to use the land. They likely prolonged the process more than necessary. Within the writings, it is evident that Spaniards and Criollos, by virtue of being so, always argued that as heirs of the conquerors or early settlers, they had rights, which they flaunted. Logically, according to the document, they also paid for legal counsel for their defense.

The property titles remained in the possession of the court or subdelegate until the interested parties paid. In this year, Felix De La Campa was the procurator of the Land Court, to whom the case was assigned. It can be inferred that this was not a coincidence but something preconceived, as he had been involved in land surveys before and was once again related to the same case.

In a form of justification, it was mentioned that the land survey conducted by the subdelegate Arévalo in 1749 was poorly done out of ignorance, as according to the document, he did not know who the lands belonged to and gave half to those from Panucu or Chalaval and the other half to those from Sierra del Agua. The owners of Sierra del Agua, the Santiso gentlemen, paid 86 pesos in 1759 for the Panucu or Chalaval land, claiming ignorance. The prosecutor stated that there was a confusion in the titles, as they were reversed: those from Panucu or Chalaval were given the titles of Sierra del Agua and vice versa. Therefore, those involved in the problem were summoned. Mr. Manuel Bernal and Laureano Alvarez, residents of Sierra del Agua, argued that Mr. Urrea and Mr. Santiso wanted to dispossess them of their land and that Felix De La Campa acted in favor of Urrea and Santiso.

In 1788, the court determined that, out of the 103 cavalries that comprised the disputed land, the interested parties had only settled: the Santiso gentlemen, 57 cavalries, owing 12 cavalries to the royal coffers. The Alvares and Bernal gentlemen had not settled anything and owed 34 cavalries. They were warned that if they did not pay, the land would be auctioned off. The land of the Bernal and Alvares gentlemen was also known as Pachimulín Corrayano.

In 1789, the Santiso and Urrea gentlemen told the court that the land of the Alvares and Bernal gentlemen should be auctioned off to the highest bidder. In this year, Chimaltenango was known as the Valle de la Vieja Guatemala.

In the same year, Francisco Robledo, judge and mayor of the court, ordered that the 54

cavalries and 31 ropes be auctioned off at a moderate composition, at a price of 5 tostones. The buyer had to pay, in addition to its value, the media anata, a tax, to obtain their title in court. And the 6 royal cavalries were to be sold to the highest bidder at a price of 12 tostones. Within these 54 cavalries were included the 34 that were owned by the Bernal and Alvares gentlemen, as well as those that for some reason had not been paid by the owners who had usurped royal land.

In the same year, the 16 royal cavalries were announced for three days at the doors of the royal palace of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. The Santiso and Urrea gentlemen presented themselves as the only buyers, and the land was auctioned off to them. From this information, it can be inferred that the announcements of the sale, called pregones, were not usually done in the same way for each auction. In this case, it was done in a location far from the land, such as the city of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, a new settlement of the city after the Santa Marta earthquakes. This leads to the thought that perhaps buyers who had the money and were interested in the land were notified to prevent many bidders and thus increase their property or reduce the price of the land.

In 1790, according to the same document, the Santiso and Urrea gentlemen paid the royal coffers the value of 135 real pesos for the composition of 54 cavalries and 3 ropes of land. They also paid 4 pesos of media anata, which was 18%, and 3 pesos and 3 reales of the castle tax.

In 1791, the Santiso and Urrea gentlemen paid 41 pesos and 11 reales for the land of the 6 cavalries purchased in 1789 (two years before). This indicates that possibly the Crown gave some time for the payment of the land, in this case, we are talking about two years.

In the same year, through a letter, the Alvares and Bernal gentlemen were asked to cancel the 34 cavalries they owed to the Crown. Likewise, they were asked again in 1794. If the mentioned gentlemen did not do so, according to the information in the document, they were known in the town of Patzún as lazy.

The fact that the case of the Alvares and Bernal gentlemen was delayed could have been due to the judge of Patzún being Juan Antonio Alvares and Santiso, who, judging by the surnames, could have been a relative of Mr. Alvares.

Among the values of the charges made by the land court were the following:

Each decree had a value of 4 reales, each document had a value of 4 reales, each acknowledgment had a value of 4 reales, notifications had a value of 2 reales, Non-Interlocutory Order had a value of 7 reales, each letter had a value of 6 reales, each certification had a value of 1 peso and 4 reales, each Order 1 peso, each Sealed Sheet had a value of 1 real, each appraiser's signature had a value of 2 reales. Fees for the Fiscal Agent, the value is not mentioned. Fees for the Attorney, the value is not mentioned.

In the case of the Santiso and Urrea gentlemen, the cost of paperwork and administrative expenses was 77 pesos and 6 reales, which they had to pay.

Judge Jacobo De Villa Urrutia ordered the land called Panucu, belonging to the Bernal and Alvares gentlemen, to be announced for sale in 1797. As a first step to sell them, they were announced in the Cabildo of Comalapa, with 8 announcements, one announcement each day, but there were no bidders or buyers.

In 1799, the area of the land put up for sale was 43.66 caballerías and 10.20 square

cuerdas. To set a price for the land, as was customary, they asked people familiar with the area, who were generally Spanish, and they concluded that the price of each caballería was 10 tostones. Following the sales process, this time they were announced in four places: Patzún, Patzicía, Nejapa, and Acatenango, thus increasing the chances of a sale.

In the third announcement, the leaders, mayor, and scribe of the town of San Antonio Nejapa presented themselves to the council of Patzicía to make their bid for the lands that had been put up for sale. As was usual, the subdelegate showed them the map and landmarks of the land, and as allowed by the laws for indigenous people to acquire land for common use, the subdelegate accepted their bid as valid.

During the fourth announcement, the leaders, justices, governor, and scribe of the town of Patzicía presented themselves to bid for the lands that were advertised for sale. They argued that they were interested in the land because they leased land on the hill of "Xelpatan," which belonged to Manuel Bernal, and they had no land of their own. Furthermore, they claimed that, being more numerous than those from Nejapa and having worked the land, they had more right to the land. The subdelegate commented in the document regarding the commoners of Patzicía:

"...they have partial possession. they are more numerous according to their register, and they do not have forests from which to extract woods and vines, which is why they claim the right to as much as they refer..."

This information suggests a significant need for land, as this need led them to lease land from a Spanish person. This is confirmed by the following quotes:

"...because the only provision, that of our crops to pay for the necessary tribute to His Majesty, to contribute to the expenses of the brotherhood, the maintenance of the parish house, the sustenance and clothing of our families, and if we were deprived of this purchase that we fervently request; we would be suffering from the same..."

The subdelegate commented the following:

"...I am aware that the town is populous and that the indigenous people are leasing others' lands to expand their crops..."

Although the arguments of those from Patzicía were valid and full of reality, the land was not sold to them but to those from Nejapa, as to secure the deal, the latter, when the fifth announcement was made, returned to the council and left 250 pesos in gold and silver as a deposit. The auction took place in that same year, selling the land to the commoners of Nejapa. The land consisted of 43.66 caballerías, and the price set for them was 10 tostones per caballería. The document, being incomplete, does not say if they paid the balance to the royal coffers, nor does it mention if they were given the corresponding titles.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.1 Exp. 14907 Leg. 810), in this document, Don Pedro Cortez y Larraz, Archbishop of the "Holy Metropolitan Church of Santiago of this city of Guatemala" and of His Majesty's council, stated in the year 1770 that due to the death of the parish priest of the San Bernardino Patzún parish, he proposed Andrés Enrriquez, a secular priest, as he met the requirements for the position. They needed someone to administer the sacraments in the church and to receive the "fruits and emoluments." As can be seen in this document, in San

Bernadino Patzún, the church already had the status of a Curacy.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), for the year 1770, it is recounted that the governor of the town was Pasqual Sula, the mayors were Manuel Baron and Antonio Alcotk, the councilors were Joseph Muxia Chicoh, Juan Cum, Lucas Ajpop, and Manuel del Barrio, and the scribe was not Nicolas Camux.

Here is a list of the payments made and the amounts:

- Payment for the Feast of the Holy Kings, 4 tostones and 2 reales.

- Payment for the celebration of Ash Wednesday, 4 tostones and 2 reales.

- Payment for the priest's food, 16 tostones monthly, totaling 192 tostones.

- Payment for the celebration of Holy Thursday, 40 tostones.

- Payment for the celebration of Palm Sunday, 2 reales.

- Payment for the celebration of Easter Sunday, 4 tostones.

- Payment for the celebration of Saint Bernardino, 100 tostones.

- Payment for the celebration of the Assumption, 4 tostones and 2 reales.

- Payment for the celebration of Corpus Christi, 4 tostones.

- Payment for the celebration of All Saints' Day, 4 tostones.

- Payment for Christmas Eve, only the value of the wax, 6 tostones.

- Payment for wax for each of the celebrations, 6 tostones each, totaling 42 tostones.

- Total: 406 tostones.

These expenses were annual. The conversion was made in the case of reales because four reales were equivalent to one tostón. Two tostones were equal to one peso, meaning that in this case, the expenses amounted to 203 pesos per year.

In addition to these expenses, the indigenous people had to pay:

- The teacher's salary, which was 16 tostones monthly, totaling 192 tostones annually.

- Payment for the prisoners' fund, 3 tostones monthly, 34 tostones annually.

- Alms for the San Juan de Dios hospital, 2 tostones monthly, 24 tostones annually.

- Offering for the church, 13 tostones monthly, 156 tostones annually.

Total: 408 tostones

To these expenses, we must add 12 fanegas of maize given to the school teacher for his sustenance. The value of one fanega of maize was 12 reales, totaling 144 reales, which was equal to 36 tostones, equivalent to 18 pesos. It is assumed this was a monthly allocation of maize, as the document only states that they were given 12 fanegas of maize. The approximate weight of one fanega was 112 pounds.

This annual payment amounted to 204 pesos, and when added to the 203 pesos from earlier, it totals 407 pesos per year. These expenses were fixed annually, while the expenses that changed were described as follows:

Among other expenses covered by the indigenous community fund were the repairs of church buildings, the jail, and the council. They paid for everything related to construction materials, such as lime, tools, hardware, locks, bolts, and the labor of the masons.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1771, there was a total of 5697 tostones and half a real (2848 pesos and a half real). That year, the expenses of the indigenous people increased from the community fund, as they had to pay 5 tostones to a scribe for writing down the income and expenses in the corresponding book. They also paid a donation of 4 tostones to the Convent of Bethlehem; these two payments were monthly. The expense for repairs to the council increased to 15 tostones that year, a cost that, as mentioned, varied depending on the repairs needed in different years.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.2 Exp. 13340 Leg. 709), in the year 1771, the priest Manuel de Corzo requested payment from Juan de Macia, treasurer of the Royal Treasury, for services rendered in teaching the doctrine to the indigenous people of the town of Patzún, totaling 185 pesos and 5 reales for one year of service.

In the information from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142) regarding the year 1772, the funds from the community funds of Patzún amounted to 5773 tostones.

Similarly, in the information from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), it is mentioned that in the year 1773, the funds from the community funds in Patzún amounted to 7000 tostones.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.80 Exp. 52394 Leg. 5969), in the year 1773, the community of Patzún sold 15 cuerdas of land to José Pineda in a place called Los Chocoyos.

Similarly, according to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1774, at the request of the priest of the town of Chimaltenango, it was instructed to pay a salary of 12 pesos per month to the "surgeon" who provided medical care to the towns of Tecpan Guatemala, Comalapan, San Martín, Patzum, Pasicia, Ysapan, Parramos, Chimaltenango, Sumpango, Xinaco, San Lorenzo del Tejar, and Jocotenango. This payment was made from the community funds, with each town covering the cost for one month.

The document indicates that in 1774, there was already a physician responsible for patient care, covering an area of 12 towns. It also mentions a hospital called Belen, for which the indigenous people also contributed monthly funds from the community funds. It is possible that the physician worked at this hospital and attended to the indigenous population, but the document does not specify the location of this hospital or whether the physician visited the towns to provide care.

In the same year, it is mentioned that the community funds were used to purchase a "solar" (plot of land) for 30 tostones and to pay for the construction of a "rancho" (shelter) for the church. The document also provides information on the community funds of Patzún, which amounted to 7077 tostones and 1½ reales in 1775, and 7134 tostones and 3 reales in 1776. There is no evidence in the General Archive of Central America documents that the church was destroyed by the Santa Marta earthquakes.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in 1777, Manuel José de Arrese y Olaverrieta, based on the Royal Provision of November 8, 1776, ordered that 33.33% of the community funds of the towns had to be allocated to "the construction of the Indian beaterio and the hospital of San Juan De Dios." The funds in the Patzún community funds amounted to 3168 tostones, of which they had to contribute 1056 tostones. Due to a shortage in the community funds, those managing the funds were threatened with punishment if they did not return the money.

Because of this shortage, it was ordered that the keys to the community funds be held by the town priest and that those who had been short of cash should no longer handle the money. In the same year, the town justices of Patzún contributed 34 pesos, equivalent to 68 tostones, for the construction of the royal houses, as ordered by the Royal Audience.

Among other contributions made by the indigenous people to the community funds were "carzelaje" (prison fees) and "sementera de maíz" (corn seed).

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in 1778, the indigenous people of Patzún paid 68 tostones from their community funds for the construction of the royal houses. At the end of 1778, there were 5215 tostones and 31½ reales.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.39.8 Exp. 53672 Leg. 6056), in the year 1778, the mayor of Chimaltenango requested to the royal audience the approval of a Lieutenant position to administer in the towns of San Martín Jilotepeque, San Juan Comalapa, Santa Cruz Balanyá, San Francisco Tecpan Guatemala, Santa Apolonia, and San Bernardino Patzún. Comalapa was the main town that year, "for being in a proportionate situation". The request was accepted by Andrés Guerra Gutiérrez.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 48434 Leg. 5767), in the year 1778, the Royal Audiencia gave instructions to properly administer the community assets to avoid the disorders and excesses that had occurred previously. Judges were ordered to make a count of the inhabitants of the towns and to account for what the previous judge had given them. This included income from community crop leases, or what was collected from broken tributes, profits, as well as all the funds of the towns. It was also ordered that all expenses be clearly and justifiably recorded, as long as they were authorized by the Royal Audiencia. Approved expenses included the payment of the School Master. It was ordered not to take any other expenses from the community funds, nor from previous years' customs, and if this was done, the money had to be reimbursed to the funds. It was also ordered to keep two books; one for general use of community fund expenses and another for the income and expenses of "the particular accounts". Furthermore, in this document, it is mentioned that the judges of residence had to make censuses to see how many tributaries there were, of which they had to give a report. They also had to report on leases of estates, pastures, "canoas", and the charges made for these items. These assets, the document says, could be sold to the highest bidder. It can be inferred that those who did not pay were embargoed and sold.

The Mayors were responsible for collecting what was related to communal lands.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254

Leg. 2142), in the year 1779, the community fund amounted to 215 pesos, equivalent to 430 tostones. As can be seen, the funds decreased considerably this year, indicating that most of the expenses in the towns were made from the community funds. As mentioned earlier, the funds would disappear, leaving the funds consistently low.

In this year, the Mayor of San Bernardino Patzún, Josef María Francisco De Paula Ponce Lion y Cotrina, collected from the indigenous people what was customary as "community collection", 2 reales from each of the previous year. According to the document, it amounted to 200 pesos. Considering that 1 peso was equal to 8 reales, this means that the collection was made from 800 men that year.

Among the charges made by the priest to the indigenous people were:

Confirmation of the mayor's staff 2 pesos and 2 reales, the value of a mass was 2 pesos 2 reales. The expenses for religious festivities, the salary of the teacher, the salary of the priest, and the salary of the town council scribe amounted to 320 pesos 2 reales for the year. As can be seen, there was an increase in charges for religious services and salaries this year, as in previous years they were charged in tostones, which was half of a peso.

This year, according to the document, was worked with a deficit, as mismanagement of community funds continued.

In this year, there is no doubt that the government needed money for the royal funds or for other expenses, as the document reads, the way of taxing changed so that the indigenous people would pay more.

"...that they should annually have a communal milpa corresponding to the number of tributaries in the town, prorating it at ten varas per indigenous person instead of the two reales they charged for the community..."

As deduced from the above quote, instead of each indigenous man paying two reales in tribute, it was ordered that a communal milpa be made, which would have an area of ten varas per tributary indigenous person, who would have to cultivate it. The product of this milpa, whether in kind or in money if sold, would be the tribute. The document does not specify exactly how it would be collected, whether in kind or in money, as mentioned earlier. It is most likely that in either case, the yield in tribute from the milpa would be much greater than the payment of two reales per indigenous person.

It was ordered that no indigenous man be taken from the community for other trades. And that everything collected for different items be recorded in clear accounts. The document was signed by Josef Ponce De Leon.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1782, the community funds of Patzún totaled 2626 pesos. On May 16, 1782, the Royal Audiencia ordered, as a "grace", that they would not pay tribute for one year for the construction of the church. The document was signed by Josef Ponce De Leon.

In this year, the collections made to add to the community funds were:

Community iron, jail fees, accumulated broken items, for community corn, for indigenous men of the community (2 reales each).

As the collection was made from the previous year, for the year 1781, the total collections were:

648 tostones and 2 reales, and the expenses were 197 tostones, leaving a balance of 491 tostones and 2 reales. In this year, the collection of 2 reales from each indigenous man amounted to 432 tostones and 2 reales, which gives a total of 865 tributary men. This leads us to infer that for this year, the number of tributaries and the population had increased compared to 1779.

In 1782, according to the document, the collections made were as follows:

- Community tribute, 2 reales per person
- Per indigenous man, 416 tostones
- Community corn, 210 tostones
- Accumulated broken items, 72 tostones
- Community iron, 23 tostones
- Jail fees, 13 tostones

Total 734 tostones

The expenses for the schoolmaster and the elaboration of the account book amounted to:

Schoolmaster 226 tostones, book 5 tostones, totaling 231 tostones, leaving a balance in the funds of 503 tostones. The document was signed by Josef Ponce De Leon.

In 1783, according to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), the community fund amounted to 1478 tostones and 2½ reales, which was equal to 739 pesos and 2½ reales. The collections made in this year included:

- Corn sold for 12 reales per fanega, totaling 450 pesos

- Indigenous people who did not deliver corn but cash, 165 pesos

- Accumulated broken items, 26.1/2 pesos

- Jail fees (prison), 15.6 pesos

Totaling 678.61/2 pesos

This resulted in a total of 678 pesos 6 reales. If we subtract the expenses of 2 pesos and 4 reales for the elaboration of the accounts in the book and add 739 pesos and 2 reales, the total in the community funds of Patzún for that year was 1415 pesos 5 reales. The document was signed by Josef Ponce De Leon.

As inferred, the corn sold at 12 reales per fanega, totaling 450 pesos, indicates a production of 300 fanegas. Assuming a fanega weighed 112 pounds, this would amount to 33,600 pounds of corn, equal to 336 quintals, which was the indigenous production. Additionally, some indigenous individuals did not deliver corn but cash, valued at 165 pesos. Assuming they provided the equivalent value in corn, this would amount to a production of 110 fanegas, or 12,320 pounds of corn, equal to 123.2 quintals. Adding the two production estimates (336 and 123.2 quintals) results in a total of 459.2 quintals of corn. It is also possible that some indigenous people did not have corn production that year and instead provided the cash equivalent. Considering that indigenous people also produced corn for their own consumption, the total corn production that year was significant. This estimate does not account for the corn production from Spanish-owned farms.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), for the year 1784, the following data:

Corn sold at 12 reales per fanega amounted to 450 pesos. Indigenous individuals who did not deliver corn but cash contributed 165 pesos. Additionally, there was income from "quebrado acrecido," amounting to 26.5 pesos, and "carcelaje" (jail fees) totaling 15.6 pesos. The total income was 678.5 pesos.

After subtracting expenses of 2 pesos and 4 reales for book keeping and adding the

remaining balance of 739 pesos and 2.5 reales, the total in the community funds of Patzún for that year was 1415 pesos and 5 reales. The document was signed by Josef Ponce De Leon.

It can be inferred that the corn sold at 12 reales per fanega amounted to 450 pesos, indicating a production of 300 fanegas. If each fanega weighed 112 pounds, this would total 33,600 pounds of corn or 336 quintals, representing the indigenous production. Some indigenous individuals did not provide corn but its cash equivalent, totaling 165 pesos. Assuming this value represents the equivalent in corn, it would be equivalent to a production of 110 fanegas or 123.2 quintals. Adding the two production estimates results in a total of 459.2 quintals of corn. There is also the possibility that some indigenous people did not have corn production that year and instead provided the cash equivalent. Considering that indigenous people also produced for their own consumption, the corn production in this year was significant. This estimate does not take into account the production from Spanish farms.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), for the year 1784, the following data is provided:

Corn produced by indigenous people:

- Sold at 6 reales each: 117 pesos 6 reales

- Indigenous people who did not have production "gathered": 352 pesos 0 reales

- Jail fees: 11 pesos 5 reales

- Community ironwork: 14 pesos 2 reales

- Additional broken items: 36 pesos reales

- Total: 533 pesos 5½ reales

Subtracting 2 pesos 11/½ reales and adding the value from previous years, which was 1415 pesos and 6 1/2 reales, we are left with a total of 1946 pesos 6 reales.

From this document, it can be inferred that, based on the value of the box being half the value of the bushel, it is assumed that the weight of the box was half, so there were 8792 pounds of corn, equivalent to 87.92 quintals. This document clarifies that in that year, a group of indigenous people did not produce corn and had to gather the previously noted value, but it is not known how many indigenous people did not provide the corn, how much each contributed in money, or what was the criterion or basis on which they were charged that money. Since the value they gave in money was equivalent to 469 boxes of corn, assuming by the price that it was half the weight of the bushel, there were 26264 pounds which was equal to 262.64 quintals of corn. The document does not clarify why the indigenous people did not produce corn that year.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (Al. Exp. 52899 Leg. 6006), the documents from the year 1785 were already dated with Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, which indicates that with the transfer of the city, the land court was also transferred.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142) for the year 1785, as stated in the document, there were 805 taxpayers who paid a tax of 4 reales each indigenous man per year. As can be seen, the value of the tribute increased for this year, as in previous years the indigenous people paid 2 reales each. So, for this year, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

- 805 taxpayers paid 6 reales each per year. 402 pesos 4 reales

- 60 boxes of corn sold at 6 reales each. 45 pesos

- Additional broken items 36 pesos real

- Jail fees 8 pesos 3 reales

- Community ironwork 11 pesos 2 reales

- Total 503 pesos 11/½ reales

If we subtract the expenses, which were 2 pesos 4 reales, and add the money from previous years, which was 1946 pesos 6½ reales, there was a balance of 2447 pesos 4 reales in the community boxes.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1786, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were:

- Income from indigenous tributes 432 pesos 0 reales

- Additional broken items 36 pesos ½ real

- Jail fees 8 pesos 2 reales

- Community ironwork 0 pesos 6 reales

- Total 486 pesos

If we subtract the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the corresponding book, which were 2 pesos 4 reales, and add the balance from previous years, which was 2447 pesos 4 reales, there was a total of 2931 pesos ½ real for the next year.

Signed by Josef Ponce.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1787, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- Corn produced by indigenous people 432 pesos 4 reales

- Jail fees 11 pesos 0 reales

- Community ironwork 17 pesos 2 reales

- Additional broken items 36 pesos ½ reales

- Total 496 pesos 6½ reales

Subtracting the value of the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, 2 pesos 4 reales, and adding the value from previous years, 2931 pesos ½ real, there was a total of 3925 pesos 3 reales for the next year.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.11 Exp. 8595 Leg. 410), in the year 1787, the Priest of the town of Patzún, Josef Corzo, requested to be paid for the services of Christian Doctrine, imparted in one year, an amount that amounted to 198 pesos 6 reales, which was authorized by Mr. Josef Ponce De Leon.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.2 Exp. 15459 Leg. 830), in the year 1788, the priest of the town of Patzún, presbyter Josef Corzo, requested to be paid for the services of Christian Doctrine, imparted in one year, inferring that the amount was equal to that of the previous year.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1788, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- Additional broken items 432 pesos 5½ reales

- Jail fees 15 pesos 3 reales

- Ironwork 8 pesos 6 reales

- Total 456 pesos 6½ reales

After deducting the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, 4 pesos 2 reales, and adding the balance from previous years, 3425 pesos 3½ reales, there was a total of 3879 pesos 5 1½ reales for the next year. Signed by Josef Ponce.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1789, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- Community ironwork 18 pesos 2 reales

- Jail fees 33 pesos 2 reales

- Total 52 pesos 4 reales

After deducting the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, which were 5 pesos, there was a remaining balance of 47 pesos 4 reales. There was no previous balance for this year.

It is interesting to note that the cost of preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book doubled this year.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1790, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- For community corn 865 pesos

- Community ironwork 8 pesos 2 reales

- Jail fees 20 pesos 1½ reales

- Total 893 pesos 3½ reales

After deducting the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, which were 5 pesos, there was a total of 888 pesos 31½ reales.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1791, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- Jail fees 31 pesos

- Community ironwork 12 pesos

- Total 46 pesos

After deducting the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, which were 5 pesos, and adding the previous balance of 843 pesos, there was a total of 881 pesos.

On November 1, 1791, the magistrate of the town of Patzún took 2000 pesos from the community boxes to give to Phelipe Benites, as a "pupilar usury" loan for a period of one year. Signed by Josef Ponce, the scribe, and Phelipe Benites.

On October 27, 1791, 1082 pesos 3½ reales were given to Cayetano Josef Pavon as a Usura Pupilar (pupilar usury) or interest loan. Authorized by Josef Ponce.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1792, the income and expenses of the community boxes were as follows:

Income:

- Community corn 865 pesos

- Community ironwork 8 pesos 2 reales

- Jail fees 20 pesos 1½ reales

- Total 893 pesos 3½ reales

After deducting 5 pesos for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the corresponding book, the total was 888 pesos 31½ reales. There was no previous balance.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1793, the income and expenses of the community boxes of Patzún were as follows:

Income:

- Community corn 854 pesos

- Community ironwork 9 pesos

- Jail fees 20 pesos

- Total 883 pesos

After deducting the expenses for preparing the accounts and transferring them to the book, which were 5 pesos, the total was 878 pesos.

In this year, an order was given to add to the community boxes of Patzún the amount of 5179 tostones 3½ reales, plus 72 tostones and ½ real, which totaled 5252 tostones for the community boxes.

In the same year, it was also authorized to take from the community boxes of Patzún 2126 pesos for the construction of the church in the town.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 15254 Leg. 2142), in the year 1794, it was recorded that the indigenous governor Diego Yos donated "a lot of money" for the construction of the church in the town of "Pasum." He also donated altarpieces, ornaments, chairs, and a lamp. This information indicates that the church in the town of Patzún began construction in the year 1794, with money from the community boxes and donations made by the parishioners.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3. Exp. 800 log(0.41)), in 1796, there was no sale of beef in Patzún, except in some cases where a cow owner, for some reason, decided to slaughter one and sell the meat at the price they desired. This was the reason why Mr. Mariano Arteaga submitted a request to the royal audience to sell meat for a period of two years in the towns of Patzún, Tecpán Guatemala, and Comalapa, as in these three towns, beef was not sold permanently. Mr. Arteaga offered to provide quality and price that he considered good, in addition to offering the sale at all times. The price he offered was one real for two and a half pounds of meat, which could be from a cow, steer, or bull. Don José Domas y Valle ordered that permission be granted to him to advertise the offer of meat from Mariano Arteaga, both in Patzún and in the other towns. It was advertised for nine days, and as there was no better offer, Arteaga was granted permission for permanent meat sales. According to this document, small towns were not preferred by beef sellers, but rather large towns. What can be inferred from this document is that, in this year, the inhabitants of Patzún, who were mostly indigenous, were not consumers of beef but of agricultural products such as corn and beans. On the other hand, their purchasing power was too low, and their income did not allow them to buy meat, which is why these towns were not of interest to sellers. It is possible that they substituted the consumption of beef with the consumption of meat from hunted animals or poultry.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A1.73 Exp. 13458 Leg. 1977), a decree was issued stating that all individuals such as ministers and government officials were required to donate money for the maintenance of Spain's war against the English. They were also instructed to take money from the community funds for the same purpose. The decree affirming this order is dated November 13, 1798, and is signed by Mr. Thomas Walding L. The document states:

"... at the same time that His Majesty reveals the financial difficulties in the Crown and the lack of funds to sustain its honor and respect in the present war..."

Some private individuals, such as the Minister of Finance, donated 50 pesos on that occasion, while another unnamed official donated 200 pesos.

This decree applied to all towns in Guatemala, including Patzún. In the case of the indigenous population, in addition to their tributes, they had to donate for the maintenance of the war. As was customary in Spain, they did not have money, and the financing of the war was obtained from these provinces.

According to the document from the General Archive of Central America (A3.3 Exp. 824 Leg. 42), in 1799, Mr. Marcos Ruiz submitted a request to the royal audience to supply meat to the towns of Patzún and Tecpán Guatemala. He was a resident of La Antigua Guatemala and lived in Nueva Guatemala, indicating that he was either born in La Antigua Guatemala or had a house there but lived in the capital, Nueva Guatemala. He made the request because there was no beef supplier available at that time. The document mentions a good and bad time for meat sales, with winter being the good time and summer being the bad time. It states:

"... Pasun and Tepan Guatemala from the province of Chimaltenango are without meat supply: surely their inhabitants suffer many scarcities in the summer when they manage to obtain some supply of this essential foodstuff at a very high price, and wishing, on the one hand, to address this need and, on the other hand, to sell my cattle, I hereby offer to supply the two mentioned towns for two years, offering to provide twenty ounces of meat for half a real..."

Marcos Ruiz's request was accepted, and it was ordered that the offer be advertised for two days, after which he was authorized to sell meat.

From this document, it can be inferred that supply businesses were conducted in the capital, La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, and that cattle owners did not live on the farms but in the cities, either in La Antigua Guatemala or La Nueva Guatemala.

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Psychological profile of the healers of Totonicapán

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Introduction

The Center for Folklore Studies (CEFOL) at San Carlos de Guatemala University is dedicated to the mission of researching, rescuing, safeguarding, and transferring all knowledge and information from its diverse cultures. The practice of Maya medicine and intervention in health, being cultural heritage of great historical and traditional importance, falls within this mission. The need to deepen our cultural roots, which lead us to identify ourselves as Guatemalans, is what drives us to visit the department of Totonicapán, which has eight municipalities divided into villages, cantons, and hamlets. This journey to the town of the Totonicapan is to experience,

learn, and collect data about the psychological profile of the healers or "Cunanel," including midwives and some spiritual leaders.

Overall, the objective of this research has been based on the need for the promotion, extension, and dissemination of various forms and techniques of traditional medicine. It seeks to inform and frame, from a psychological perspective, the psychic characteristics, the most general traits of personality, and the psycho-emotional and spiritual importance that healers have within their communities, individuals who currently preserve traditional health methods, which are an important part of Guatemalan cultural heritage.

Since ancient Mayan history, the concept of illness and health or well-being was closely linked to the will and design of the gods and even as a divine consequence of good or bad acts. Medicinal practices and spiritual rituals were carried out in search of the well-being of the body and spirit. However, after the fall of the Mayan empire and centuries later with the conquest, these original Mayan beliefs and practices declined and mixed with Judeo-Christian beliefs brought by the Spaniards, as well as the influence of other cultures such as African, Oriental, and later by the Aryans (Germany, England, and the United States). Today, Guatemalan traditional medicine practices have evolved into a fusion of Western, Eastern, and regional cultures, including within the practices utensils and chemical medicines, packaged, processed, and scientific medicinal procedures.

In this study, it is of utmost importance to infer whether within this cultural, ideological, and scientific fusion, there have also been changes in spiritual perceptions, the psychology of healers, and their beliefs about health and illness. It is unavoidable the need to develop a continuous research policy in the Area, which allows documenting and valuing the traditional therapeutic methods of Guatemalan culture, both physiological and psychic, and their bearers. In addition to identifying the elements related to health with the worldview of the four peoples that make up Guatemala, in the psychological and physiological aspect. Therefore, one of the objectives is to Socialize the results of research on health and the transmission of traditional therapies in Guatemala and carry out extension activities that promote knowledge about Guatemalan traditional medicine.

This scientific journey sought the psychological, anthropological, and historical explanation of the theory and practice of current Guatemalan traditional medicine and the healers who have a specific profile to practice their profession. In pursuit of achieving these objectives, a project in general that, although it begins, can attract great results in the continuity of its growth and enrich Guatemala.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Problem Statement

"*No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the whole. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee*."

- John Donne, Meditation XVII

The need for belonging in human beings is only preceded by the fighting need to avoid meeting our human reality, "our finitude." As

Donne aptly quoted, the pain of another's death is almost as if it were our own. Therefore, in all cultures, from the beginning of social organization, there was born the vocation of those who would relate to the divine and spiritual, seeking help to combat the ailments that afflicted the body, spirit, or mind, and even to appease death.

Anthropology, which studies health, recognizes the varied reality of conceptions, images, and representations of ailments (according to cultures and individualities), as well as the different therapeutic systems that have emerged throughout the world and history. Conventional, Western, scientific medicine, imposed today worldwide, can be combined with traditional medicines (depending on the culture in which we find ourselves) within programs or plans conceived from anthropology applied to health. Psychology, well supported by these sciences, has managed to explain the reasons and cultural and psychological determinations that promote and protect these ancient practices in all areas, which maintain in a certain sense magic, mysticism, and spirituality.

The problem of separation from our roots and traditional practices is basically due to two reasons: The first is the constant ideological, scientific, and technological conquest. In the percussion of Western judgments that find an explanation for every phenomenon within scientific-mechanical reasoning: that is, issues that are explained only through palpable processes, quantification and systematization of results, cause-effect, and constant measurements with numbers, times, and "calculable, measurable, and reasonable" derivations. But it turns out that after many years in vogue, today life and death, illness and health do not precisely conform to these standards. For example, when it comes to the most human experience solely experienced by women, "Childbirth," Western medicine presents shortcomings, is not total and absolute, and carries out procedures contrary to what a mother in labor actually needs. In many cases, behind practices that for Western medicine, or the need for scientific-mechanical reasoning, may seem absurd, there are very well-founded logics that only need a scientific theory to explain them.

The other reason seems to be misinformation through the separation between indigenous peoples, as well as between indigenous peoples and Ladinos. The disdain or secrecy of these ancestral knowledges is just one more of the abysses created among Guatemalan peoples. While Western medicine gives so much importance to the dualistic bio-social or psycho-social formation, as if speaking of a human being as a divided being into two, traditional medicine keeps in its knowledge an integral, systemic human being, influenced and composed of soul, body, spirit, and community. A being treated from all its aspects that directly converge into one another. Although it is not about idealizing or impoverishing the method or the mediator (doctor or healer), we see the problem that despite having the right to choose how we are treated, how to carry out the healing process, the birth or death process, and being worthy of knowing which method or who will be our companion, everyone being responsible for their own life; we have been relegated to only one method, one medicine, one way of knowledge, definitely no choice, only one option, and to surrender our total responsibility to an individual.

Now we ask ourselves, is there another method "as good" as the medicine we know today in the environment? Do we know anything about traditional Maya medicine? Who are in charge of traditional medicine?

What are the so-called "healers" like? Are there answers to these questions, or are we pioneers in demystifying and unmasking, profiling the true healers and getting closer to their reality? Without prejudice, without disrespecting their values, experiences, and truths, having knowledge of the complexity of the human being not bi, not tri, but tetra: Spiritual, psychological, social, and biological.

The term "Traditional Medicine" refers to a very heterogeneous set of ideas about illness, diagnostic procedures, and above all, therapeutic measures, which constitute the content of medicines also known as indigenous or popular. It is the set of practices specific to Maya culture, aimed at diagnosing, preventing, treating, and curing diseases of the body, soul, and/or spirit, often with the community's assistance, providing guidance though often in an empirical manner. It can also be said that traditional medicine is a medical system since it encompasses all the minimum and related aspects.

Traditional Medicine is based on a culture, worldview, and spirituality specific to Mesoamerican peoples, based on corn agriculture and whose origin, linked to the development of said crop, began with the experimentation with the plant called teosinte (Zea perennis) approximately three thousand years before the Christian era, in the territories of present-day Altos de Chiapas and Huehuetenango. This corn culture remains relevant in rural Mesoamerican areas, despite the changes since the Spanish conquest. Mesoamerican traditional medicine is based on the Balance of mind and body, energy meridians, biodynamic and holistic approaches; concepts that have gained ground in recent decades. So-called alternative medicine or neuropathy has become a normalized option to achieve health without side effects.

Little by little, and without making noise, the different disciplines encompassed within neuropathy or natural medicine have won the trust of thousands of people. There is knowledge acquired over time to work with plants. Beyond recognizing their healing properties, it is about treating their spiritual, emotional, and beneficent conception.

For Traditional Medicine, nature is above humans, determining their lives and their health-disease process. (For this reason, it is venerated and deified). The environment and the cosmos influence life, explaining the functioning of the body through the laws of nature. Traditional medicine considers man as an integral and interacting part of the cosmos and society, so all the individual's activities will have an impact on them. Any change or action in nature, community, and family will, in turn, affect him, causing health or disease.

This worldview affects traditional medical practice and gives rise to specific mechanisms for diagnosis and treatment. The holistic thinking of traditional medicine intimately relates the body and soul, relates all parts and organs of the same body, relates the body to cosmic time, and relates the body to cold and heat. It handles "vital principles" and conceptualizes illness as an imbalance, which can be caused primarily by elements with cold and hot properties. The causes that threaten bodily balance can be produced by the organism itself, its family, the community, nature, and various divinities. Health, then, is the result of living according to the laws of nature and society, and illness is the result of transgressing those laws.

In this sense, the mechanisms to achieve balance (healing) involve various elements such as the use of medicinal plants, making offerings, performing ceremonies, consulting indigenous therapists such as herbalists, healers, midwives, spiritual guides, massage

therapists, bone setters, and priests. They are social servants by family heritage, responsible for the community's health since ancient times and recognized today. We can access them, always willing to provide us with a consultation and share their cosmogony and worldview, giving us health and showing us a way to live in harmony with Mother Nature, the cosmos, and our fellow beings. These are invaluable principles of Maya culture and an important contribution to our identity as Guatemalans.

Traditional medical practices

Within traditional medicines and natural health care methods, the approaches to studying and proposing help for those who have been suffering from physical or psychological problems for a long time are different from those proposed for those suffering from acute illnesses. Chronic problems are understood, in the traditional view, as ailments established within the person. It has taken time to get to where they are. The present and future of the so-called "chronically ill" are linked to numerous factors, not only to the evolution of the specific illness they suffer from and the corrective measures implemented. Traditional medicine and natural systems address help and care when the patient demands them, taking into account the person's relationship with the environment: natural, social, and cultural.

We can identify, in Guatemala, the following types of traditional doctors: (* Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance. "Understanding Maya Medicine in Guatemala" Fundación Centro Cultural y Asistencia Maya (Cultural Center Foundation and Maya Assistance) CCAM., Association of Community Health Services ASECSA., Guatemala 2002. Pp. 30.)

- Hierberos (herbalist) are individuals who provide minor healings such as coughs, skin irritations, using only medicinal herbs, and perform divinations such as card readings.

- "Chapalbac'" (bone-setters or massage therapists) specialize in curing muscular pains caused by rheumatism, injuries, or dislocations using their hands.

- The most important and respected by the community are the Mayan priests (Ajcib') in charge of officiating agricultural ceremonies or presenting offerings to the spirits of the cornfield in gratitude for a bountiful harvest, or requesting rain from the gods and blessing a plot of land or corral.

- "Aj'ij" (spiritual counselors) are considered special individuals capable not only of mediating between men and invisible entities but also of curing serious illnesses with herbs from the region, so much so that some are capable of curing physical discomforts caused by bad winds.

- Healings and agricultural ceremonies are carried out through extensive prayers and litanies in the Maya language, invoking Christian saints and spirits of the countryside and mountains.

- This study based its search on the profile of the "Cunanej" or healers since the main objective is to obtain first-hand the general and specific characteristics of this group of people that add great value to our Guatemalan identity.

The research and identification of the specific characteristics within a psychological context were carried out through interviews with individuals fitting the "healer" profile, while considering the scope and limitations of this context. Surveys, community interviews, and focus group work were also conducted. This

approach helped define a personality profile that can be understood within the dynamics of social psychology, providing a more precise definition of the background of traditional medicine in Guatemala and the personal qualities of healers. This process is more effective and comprehensive in shaping cultural identity with our roots.

In traditional medicine, there are beliefs, methods, and practices that form the often implicit foundations of the cognitive aspects of such medicine. Understanding these elements allows us to comprehend and identify those traits of our own roots that distinguish us as Guatemalans, as they are an important part of how we care for our health and the practices through which we seek to make sense of the process of illness and healing. These elements enable the care of our health and form the basis of a long tradition that, even in our days, has managed to survive and continues to evolve over time to provide us with a simple and intelligible explanation and a conceptual coherence to create the indispensable conditions of trust for its functioning, which we must have towards all those we turn to for such practices. Hence, the importance of studying and knowing more about what helps shape our cultural identity.

Research Techniques

Based on the guidelines of the Annual Operational Plan of CEFOL for the year 2012, the department of Totonicapán was selected as the sole focus for this research. The study took place with visits to the eight municipalities: Totonicapán, San Cristóbal Totonicapán, San Francisco El Alto, San Andrés Xecul, Momostenango, Santa María Chiquimula, Santa Lucía La Reforma, and San Bartolo. Fieldwork was conducted with both the healers of the region and the general population.

This research is considered a study object as a social and psychological phenomenon shaped by social actors, namely the work of the healers of Totonicapán. It is approached from a mixed qualitative and quantitative research methodology.

Qualitative procedures included personal interviews, observation of the population and the sample, and bibliographic theoretical compilation. Quantitative methods involved a series of structured questions to healers and healer students in the region, as well as surveys to the traditional medicine users in the population.

- To achieve the objectives, the work was divided into three phases: Desk Phase, Field Phase, and presentation of expected results.

DESK PHASE: Consultation of bibliographies, texts, journals, theses, or documents on Traditional Medicine.

FIELD PHASE: Various field activities were carried out, such as interviews, consultations with community leaders in the Totonicapán area, and focus groups to obtain the community's reality and opinion on the "healers."

presentation of the expected results in the final report.

Research Instruments

- Interview and recording of the same.

- Survey to Healers of Totonicapán.

- Survey to neighbors of the community.

- Workshops with focus groups.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSIS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE HEALERS OF TOTONICAPAN

Psychological Background

"*What hurts us, the indigenous people, the most is that our attire is seen as beautiful, but the person wearing it is considered nothing*."

- Rigoberta Menchú.

A story that influences Maya thought. A story full of memories, illuminated recollections, and others that are opaque, with some fading away with time and the silence of those who have lived them in the time and space of beautiful Guatemala.

Guatemala is a potentially rich country, thanks to its people, its geographic location, its nature, being multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic, its ancestral legacy from the Maya, and its expansion into the world through Spain. It has vast experience in constant communication with nature, a sense of admiration for art, the traditions of its peoples that maintain their color, the brilliance of harmony, and the aesthetic expression of their mystical, religious, and spiritual thought, as well as the pursuit of continual improvement; all undoubtedly characterize our people.

The history of Guatemala is marked by that beauty and brilliance, but also by a dark, black shadow full of blood, pain, and poverty. The territorial conquest, ideological, political, and religious conquests, as well as the constant conflicts among indigenous peoples and the internal war that ended no more than twenty years ago, have left scars, some irreparable, gaps in collective thought, and deficiencies in various areas of development. It cannot be denied that these tragic and aberrant events have been and will continue to be part of our lives, affecting everyone, whether indigenous or not. Despite the great advances in agricultural technology, forestry knowledge, and medicine, these have not reached and are rarely shared with indigenous peoples, mainly due to social distancing. Due to various questions, whether ideological, economic, political, etc., attempts have been made to give one explanation after another, which have only served as excuses or for momentary solutions; but true solutions, real projects for restoration and appreciation for the life in general of the victims resulting from these grievances have not yet arrived with them.

The current economic, educational, health, or food problems of the Mayan peoples do not stem solely from the internal armed conflict, but rather from the beginning of our history as Guatemalans, and they persist as long as we are less aware. Below, we summarize some psychological effects resulting from these ongoing wars, abuses, violations, despotic community leadership, greed, avarice, assaults, expropriations, atrocities, and other offenses committed against and among the Mayan peoples throughout history.

- Disintegration of peoples, internal conflicts, leading to the loss of traditions and cultural family concepts.

- Poverty, hunger, ignorance, causing helplessness to meet spiritual, emotional, psychological, and self-development needs, natural in the human being.

- Repudiation, resentment, hatred, violence, and aggressiveness. Feelings projected onto their own families, or towards other peoples or towards the Ladinos.

- Due to the violations, abuses, mutilations, and murders against the Mayans, there are individual and social psychological damages that affect their development in different areas, mostly in productivity, creativity, and transmission of their traditions, knowledge, and beliefs.

- With the arrival of the Spaniards and the passing of the years with Western, macho

education, women were severely affected, being relegated to actions and opinions that have impoverished the true role played by an indigenous woman within her community.

- Separation of families, loss of the family nucleus resulting in vulnerability.

- Low self-esteem, little control over emotions and stress. Observed in violent behavior carried out within families and in inflamed groups in communities.

- In the most severe cases, mental alienation: total or partial loss of mental faculties. Mental disturbance or disorder.

- Rejection of their own customs and culture results in the lack of practice of trades learned from generation to generation and their decline.

- Due to the loss of important members of the communities who transmitted the knowledge and the disintegration of the peoples, many medicinal practices have lost substance, being carried out as mere tradition, without the explanation that strengthened their use. Therefore, some of the practices of traditional medicine are little or not understood.

The problem of the current medical system.

"*And so it was when my consciousness was born*"

- Rigoberta Menchú.

Some wonder, why despite these ancient medicinal practices subject to tradition seeming obsolete, they still persist? Why, if current Western medicine carries out procedures subject to different systems and methodologies, immersed in continuous scientific research of the body, which seems to be the best; has it not yet replaced Mayan traditional medicine in communities? The answer lies in the fact that saying that scientific research into the functioning of the body, conditions of illness-health, life, and death has advanced does not fully respond to the needs of the human being. Accustomed to wanting to manipulate the body separate from the mind or vice versa, we have left traditional medicine behind because in the Mayan worldview, man is not conceived as a machine, as a being subordinate to external agents such as viruses, fungi, bacteria, etc., as conceived in allopathy, which is constantly researching any "morbid agent" that constantly attacks the human being, as in an endless battle. It seems that man has a compromised immune system, is weak, and his body has been condemned to receive constant attacks and get sick without being able to defend himself.

In response to this perceived inadequacy of the body, medications arise, chemical compounds that "attack the disease." Of course, the big winner will be the drug, the doctor, and the person is relegated to a third place. From then on, their personal, spiritual, and social relationship is completely separated from the ailments of the body, and therefore they are not responsible for it; caring for their health becomes the interest of the medical system.

On the other hand, this medical system is burdened with useless or poorly empowered beings who constantly and in large numbers go to hospital facilities in search of the "answer" that will alleviate their ailments. As it is overwhelmed, the issue of patient care time prevails, which must be brief, the labeling of the patient to avoid misnaming or confusion due to the high number of patients, and the conception of cause-effect. This means a quick and effective treatment, without a deep knowledge of the person, their relationships, their life, without a personal relationship with the doctor, whose

intention is to know their symptoms to provide an immediate diagnosis and a cure that mainly alleviates the most obvious or painful symptoms and then move on to the next patient waiting.

The gap between doctor and patient widens, even though it may not be noticeable to the patient, the sense of emptiness, of objectification, or instrument for science is clear in the current behavior of those who go to an institution or a doctor who has lost their human sense. Such is the experience of institutionalizing childbirth in all cases, many women experience a traumatic birth tied to a bed, with intense light, alongside other women in labor, with several nurses, attendants, and doctors, coming in and out, running down the halls, in front of the woman in labor who, unable to decide, is lying down with her legs open; these medical agents evaluate, learn, and practice during the process. Not to mention the so-called "routine procedures" such as episiotomy, which despite knowing that it is not necessary in all cases, is carried out without criteria.

Unlike midwives, doctors usually do not like to wait for a baby to appear in its due time when labor can be accelerated with instruments. This rush in the timing of births, in addition to being due to lack of space, is reinforced by the discomfort caused by a laboring woman screaming, complaining, or crying in the doctor's office. This attitude was reinforced in the 1950s when American Emanuel Friedman investigated data about the dilation rate of women giving birth in a hospital and reflected it in graphs. He found that a woman typically dilated about one centimeter per hour, so a normal birth lasted about twelve hours. This confusion between statistical normality (what he observed) and physiological normality (what should happen in each woman) led to the belief that any birth deviating from this "normality" was "abnormal" and a cause for concern. Friedman's curve became the standard method for controlling the timing and progress of births. It is now shocking how this medical system relegates the importance of women, their maternal and feminine intuition, their own knowledge about their bodies and their own needs, and deprives them of the right to choice and decision-making. Ultimately, childbirth is not a process that should be schematized; both the timing and the position for giving birth will result from the anatomy, physiology, psychology, and individual process of each woman and her baby. There is no exact statistic or rule dictating the process of the beginning of life. As in this and other cases, there is an attempt to control and manipulate patients in order to avoid "risks, infections, diseases, and others" without a broad criterion or humanization in the process, conceiving that it is only the doctor who has absolute access or control.

Without any misunderstanding, we understand that undoubtedly technology and allopathy are very useful for solving certain problems, but they are not the answer to everything, nor the only means to reach a healthy state, a balance, to give birth, or to approach death when it is inevitable. It is the mother who must decide how to have her baby, as it is a natural process, not an operation, but an event of life in which the protagonist is the mother, not the doctor. At this moment, together with her baby, the mother experiences a series of situations that will allow her to carry out a healthy psychological process, an encounter with her own shadow, an effective bond with her baby, and a future postpartum period in the best condition. These psychological processes are necessary for the integral development of every person in adulthood.

But we are facing the problem of round businesses, the money provided to companies that develop this technology, the factories and those that maintain it and give power to doctors whose knowledge is necessary to apply these procedures or medications. This system allows many private doctors to charge exorbitantly for their services, increases the maintenance of a health center and its resources, which is why we face the current problem in communities, lacking economic resources and a deficit health system, people look for other alternatives, or do not seek any help, constantly suffering from their health, from unusual hygiene practices and routines, or self-medication. "Doubting the truths of science is as difficult today as questioning the authority of the clergy in the 17th and 18th centuries" (Gill Thorn, Spain 2002).

General psychological profile of traditional healers and midwives

Trying to define Guatemala through a single understanding becomes, in a sense, inconclusive. Trying to explain such a diverse country through a single structure is to truncate knowledge itself. Describing Guatemalan traditional healers through the rudimentary mechanistic expectation, understanding them through a single scientific pathway, quantifying or qualifying them through dualistic conceptions (cause-effect) is even more complex. Undoubtedly, we would be leaving behind years of experience, ancestral knowledge, and forgetting two great areas of the human being: the spiritual and the social.

One of the great characteristics of health care through a traditional healer is their general psychological profile, their personality, their characteristics as a leader, spiritual guide, their love for their people, their treatment in the process, the sense of belonging and human warmth, among other qualities. "From the Middle Ages until very recently, women preferred to be attended by a midwife rather than a doctor. When a birth required affection and a pair of hands to hold the baby, midwives were more than competent. In the 16th century, doctors were only called in extreme cases." (Choose How You Want to Give Birth. Thorn. Pp. 31) What Thorn cites is a reality today in communities; there are those who prefer the treatment of healers and the feeling of "being at home" when being attended to. Furthermore, many ailments are understood by people only through a mystical, spiritual, and religious vision that is closely related to the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the region. These diseases are often not translated by doctors from this conception, so it makes more sense to seek out healers or midwives from the region.

In some cases, traditional healers have been mythologized as dark individuals, full of secrets and to be feared, associating them with evil. However, these misconceptions about healers or midwives have an explanation dating back to the late 16th century when the witch hunt began, targeting "witches" and in some cases "warlocks or dark figures." As Christianity grew and the influence of priests increased, midwives and healers were accused of "witchcraft" whether they healed people or suffered harm, even by just trying to relieve pain. Their blends of teas, homemade ointments, and natural brews were believed to be magical potions, Satan's concoctions. Simply not recognizing Christ as the Lord or God or following his celebrations and accepting his dogmas was self-condemnation, and this person was considered a heretic. Thorn in her book "Choose How You Want to Give Birth" describes: "In the 17th century, the fanaticism of persecutions increased even more in

Europe. In one area of Germany, nine hundred witches were executed in twelve months, and in Toulouse, France, four hundred were burned at the stake in a single day. Apparently, the greatest zeal was reserved for midwives, who were often denounced by doctors who graduated from the new universities and sought to gain power in the field of childbirth." (Thorn; 2002, pp.21).

It is not surprising to find ourselves in Latin America a few decades later believing that both healers and midwives are related to Satan or evil. In Guatemala, with the growth of Christianity, Mayan religious traditions and their everyday practices in general have lost strength. As families were segregated after the internal war and their cultures and traditions were almost completely destroyed, healers were confined to an almost obsolete position in their practices or accompaniments. It is believed that their practices are totally naive, empirical, and lack practical, scientific, and rational sense. There has been the idea that healers and midwives do not know what they are doing, they use ineffective potions, or do things senselessly despite being actually an effective alternative in many cases.

Years later, after thousands of atrocities, Christianity took a step back, overwhelming in the knowledge of these cultures and allowing greater freedom of expression and worship. Psychology today studies this social behavior, giving rise to respect for the cultural traditions of peoples, understanding the harmony of these relationships, understanding the behaviors and practices of each community from a psychic, social, biological, and spiritual perspective. However, it has not yet come out to defend in the same way the new ideological scientific persecutions of Western allopathy.

In some cases, attempts have been made to understand this dynamic between healers and patients from a psychological perspective, initially erroneous. Trying to reduce healers or "Cunanel" to such a severe clinical diagnosis, saying they tend towards schizophrenia, dissociation, present neuroses, or clinical pathologies, is as insensitive and atrocious as saying in the 16th century that every midwife was a "witch". Inferring such diagnoses would require attending to each healer, conducting an appropriate clinical process, and exhaustively studying the psychology of each one.

In other words, at no time do these clinical pictures typify or describe the psychology of healers in general. Thorn refers to a similar description of midwives in the 18th and 19th centuries, who were considered charlatans, dirty, drunk, uninformed, and with a very bad reputation, and although it may have been true in some cases, most were clean, kind, collaborative women, capable of providing relief and simple herbal remedies, they knew if a birth was progressing normally and if there was a problem they knew to ask for help in time.

Carl Jung speaks about archetypes, which are models or principles of objects, ideas, or concepts derived from substantial forms (eternal and perfect exemplars) that exist in collective thought and present themselves to shape thoughts or attitudes of societies, of each individual, and even of each system. That is to say, the mythical and symbolic image of the doctor arises from the representations of the myths of Apollo, Chiron, and Asclepius as healing and saving gods, an archetype that has transcended from the shaman of the primitive tribe to the doctor of our days. They are all possessed by the same will, the same beneficent conception, the same end: that of healing. It

would not be very intelligent to separate one from the other, understanding that they play a common role. A healer could not be described as schizophrenic or sociopathic based on a clinical diagnosis because such a pathology has a definition contrary to the attitude and performance of the healer. But there is definitely an analogy between doctor and healer.

The healer is not inherently sick (although like any human being, they may present some psychological deficiency or ailment) behind the religious magical thinking, their career unfolds on the same level as a doctor, a psychologist, and a spiritual guide as understood by the modern world. Healers in general are people with positive qualities, they provide their services through the role they play in the community as doctors, psychologists, and priests. They tend to be positive leaders, charismatic, with the ability to influence and good interpersonal relationships. They are an example in the community and interact in the activities of the town. If there were an emergency, it is to them that people turn in search of wisdom. Their procedures and even their initiation into the art of healing are far from the current conceptions of medicine to practice as a doctor or healer. Being a healer in ancient times is understood as a gift, a dowry granted by God that is closely related to the day of their birth and their "nahual" (Mayan spirit guide), who at the time is responsible for calling them to the service and development of their gift. All the healer's activity differs from the systems, processes, and methods of allopathy but does not lack sense or logic; rather, it is simply different since it conceives disease and health from a holistic systemic perspective of the body. It takes into consideration the spiritual and social relationships and influences on the human being.

Health, according to the Mayan worldview, is a divine blessing, an integral state of being (understood in relation to the whole) through the protection of the body that results in balance with oneself, one's body, others, and God (or the divine). In illness, according to the primitive cultural scheme, there is a conception of an agent causing the illness, but this is linked to the intentions of others, divine purposes, or is the result of the person's bad attitudes and decisions. For example, it is said that when a baby cries, cannot be soothed, is sad, does not eat, it is because someone has given them the "evil eye," wished them harm, and therefore they become ill. The external cause is this person and their bad energy, which can result in discomfort for the baby, fevers, lack of appetite, etc. Of course, the healer has ruled out other possible causes. Assistance will be given by understanding the biological body and seeking remedies and brews that cure the bodily ailment (fevers, discomfort, rash, etc.), understanding the spiritual aspect by asking the giver of life for protection and preparing an amulet to protect the baby. This will give security to the anxious parents that their baby will soon heal, understanding the social aspect by seeking out possible people with bad intentions and keeping them away, giving greater importance to the care of the baby, thus providing greater closeness with the mother.

The logic behind this attention from the healer and the parents of the baby is not far from a rational reality. Every human being from birth needs skin-to-skin contact with the mother, emotional bonding, maternal protection, and care in response to basic needs "of existence, relationship, and growth" according to Alderfer's ERG classification. By giving greater attention to

this mother-baby relationship, an environment conducive to healing is created. It is then understood that every human being brings with them an immune system that develops through breastfeeding, which provides all the necessary nutrients and will protect them from the vast majority of malicious external agents, emphasizing this relationship makes sense. When parents are at a balanced level of stress, they feel relief and have confidence, they will be more willing to deal with any problem. The idea of an external organism causing illness is conceived alongside the idea of energies, cosmic influences, and the transcendence of each individual's life according to divine purposes. The brews and plant preparations will only be an extra help to the spiritual and personal work that must be carried out.

Much of the healer's help is thus to attentively listen to the person with the ailment, their complaints, pleas, and requests take place in every healer's office. Because without a doubt, most have seen people born, grow, and live in the community. Talking about the problem, expressing the pain is so healing because it involves the healer in their suffering and all shared sorrow is better, even in many cases the whole family is present or the patient remains at home, in their environment. Contrary to what happens dimensionally in the Hospital, a patient separated from their family, only a few hours to see the family, the distress of not being able to speak, shout, groan, or see, the anguish of not knowing. A stay in solitude in modern hospital facilities does not precisely help in the healing process.

We will then define the psychological profile of the healer as a person whose purpose is to preserve health, who is responsible for cooperating in the process of healthy living, assisting in health-illness issues, in the process of birth and death of people in the community. Whose tools are spiritual, social, and natural. Understanding that they comprehend the human being and their state of health or illness from the Mayan worldview that encompasses the person in this sense from a tetra conception: spiritual, mental-psychological, social, and biological. Whose medical practice has begun by the spiritual calling of their nahual, or by the cultural transfer learning about their work from an experienced healer. Their self-confidence, self-esteem, and respect for the knowledge they possess go beyond mere theory, they hold a mythical sense, preserve their identity as they are transmitted from generation to generation as a legacy of their ancestors and that prevail both for their good results and for their spiritual and religious beliefs. They have an optimal interpersonal relationship with the community, being an example and a figure of authority or community leader. This relationship grows towards everything and everyone from their communication with nature, for which they feel appreciation and respect, using its resources with moderation, respecting its properties, and being interested in its qualities and effects to have greater knowledge when deciding which treatment to apply.

A. Adler wrote in 1938:

"The individual can only achieve his adequate development by living and striving as a part of the whole. The superficial objection of individualistic systems is meaningless in the face of this conception. I could go even further and demonstrate how all our functions are designed to unite the individual with the community and not to destroy brotherhood among men. The act of seeing means receiving and making fruitful everything that the retina discovers. This is not simply a physiological process; it shows

that man is part of a whole that gives and takes.

By seeing, hearing, and speaking, we connect to another. Man only sees, hears, and speaks correctly when he is linked to others by his interest in the external world…

All our bodily and mental functions develop correctly, normally, and healthily to the extent that they are sufficiently imbued with social meaning and conform to cooperation.

The current problems of misinformation or obsolescence that traditional healers may present are mainly due to cultural separation, economic limitations, and territorial constraints that prevent them from approaching forums, workshops, and schools of natural medicine, allopathy, pharmacology, etc. The most futuristic idea would be to integrate the ancestral knowledge of traditional medicine with technological and scientific medical advances. It is not about rejecting one or the other, as they are complementary; we are not seeking the extinction of either method, much less of the traditional healers, whom we respect and who are part of our cultural heritage. In a publication by Raúl A. Borracci on the logic of extinctions, he talks about "Win as much as you can," the suggestive title of a sociological training practice known in the field of game theory. Participants in this exercise, in which they win or lose chips, have several opportunities to understand that the only way to succeed is by collaborating and acting together with the rest of the players, not by competing with them.

In conclusion, the improvement of traditional medicine practices as well as the improvement of the current medical system will be achieved through communication, openness to knowledge, and cooperation in education and training. Since the goal is not the method itself, but the person to be treated, the patient.

Personality traits according to the relational aspects necessary to exercise their role as a Healer or Cunanel

Personal Relationship.

- Good self-esteem: self-love, identity.

- Self-confidence: believes in oneself and in their abilities or gifts.

- Intellectual security: Knows themselves as a wise subject, a provider of knowledge, unbreakable but teachable, seeking knowledge.

- Emotional balance: Knows how to control and balance their emotions in stressful situations, danger, or in the face of illnesses and even death.

- Tolerant towards different justifiable situations.

- Altruistic personality: A being in touch with their natural need to give. Helping those in need.

- Self-respect: Recognizes their strengths and limitations, recognizes a higher being as the giver of life where they have no jurisdiction over life and death.

- Balanced personality: Recognizes who they are, where they belong, what their purpose in life is, and acts based on this self-concept and its projections. Has a goal to be and do.

- Balance with their spiritual area: Is in constant communication with the divine being, attends and participates in Maya rituals or sacred activities for the community.

- Spiritual growth: Practices ethical, moral, and spiritual values. Thanks to their constant communication, they have confidence in the divine being and this allows them to:

- Gifts: Through which they can obtain visions or mental images of possible health problems or moments when the person will recover their health, heal illnesses of different causes, and assist in life-threatening situations, in addition to...

- Mystical abilities: such as divination, future projection, empirical knowledge of ancestors, which makes them seen as special people within the community.

- They are mediators: They communicate with the Gods or with the life-giving being and intercede for their patients.

He possesses and practices the knowledge acquired during his teaching. He has a vocation to be a teacher.

Practices and promotes principles of responsibility with nature cognitive skills based on intellectual self-confidence.

- Ability to recognize diseases just by touching people.

- Ability to find cures for almost all types of diseases with the help of medicinal plants, such as rue, mint, black tea, chamomile tea, yanten, mint tea, Marialuisa tea, etc.

- Recognition of medicinal plants, knowledge in the preparation of medicines and ointments or tinctures.

- Knows how to confront the duties and ethical dilemmas of his practice in the field of traditional medicine.

- Detects capable leaders to successfully lead work in communities where there are fewer resources to help the population.

Relationship with the community

- Positive leader attitude: Innate leadership skills that allow him to lead or organize the community if they see fit. Organizes the community to resolve emergency situations.

- Uses dialogue and consensus as a means of communication and integration, contributing to the development of personality and overcoming of the families seeking his advice.

- Promotes activities related to the artistic cultural development of the department, municipality, and village. Respects and promotes the customs and traditions of each of the country's peoples, practices the cultural patterns of his region.

- Influencing ability: Can influence the decisions of his patients and their healing process.

- Community role model: Has a positive life trajectory, being a respectable, admirable person, is an example and possesses qualities worthy of imitation.

- Openness: A constant attitude of acceptance and agreement towards the other person, what they feel or think.

- Listening: Allows for deep levels of listening to empathize with the suffering of his patient.

- Empathy: Understanding of the other, feeling akin to their suffering.

- Practices appropriate interpersonal relationships.

- Properly directs activities organized by children.

- Shows a spirit of courtesy, respect, service, and self-improvement.

- Participates in habits and attitudes that contribute to the development of physical and mental health.

- Promotes actions aimed at strengthening self-esteem and gender equity.

- Cooperates in civic, health, and other projects and campaigns carried out in the community.

- Promotes a culture of peace through dialogue among peers.

- Promotes and practices values, respect for human rights, democracy, and a culture of peace.

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Profane Notes on Sacred Cuisine

LUIS VILLAR ANLEU

When our visual, gustatory, and tactile senses come into contact with fresh foods or with elaborated meals and beverages, whether they are everyday, ceremonial, festive, or sacralized, they immediately trigger spontaneous mechanisms of socio-cultural identification. However, at the same time, the inherent load of symbolic values in meals transforms them into means of a sensory communication conditioned by culture. Approaching what defines a character of sacralization in meals, let us recall with C. Classen its framing to the condition of a "strict asceticism of the body accompanied by a rich sensuality of the spirit, so that the divine is conceptualized and experienced mystically through a profusion of sensory symbols", which are what trigger such meals.

Since social codes respond to human behavior in any era, and with unusual force in times of heightened spirituality, food expresses a considerable part of its actions, and the cultural construction in which it participates becomes transcendent to the extent that it leads to evoke profound sensations, mystical or worldly, while cohesively binding the social nucleus.

As communities integrate into a religious event, certain foods become an essential part of it. Their multi social meanings transform the culinary expression of the celebration and become cohesive through being ritually shared with family and friends, or generously given in centuries-old social customs. For example, when a basket with Easter bread, sweet chickpeas, white honey, and chocolate is sent to the home of a family member or friend; or with boiled corn and squash and sweet pumpkin, or fiambre on All Saints' Day; or tamales, paches, or chuchitos on Christmas Eve.

The meals of sacred times are ritualized in the name of holiness, and as a result, they are blessed. They construct dualities in the Culture-Nature environment, from whose condition they take on symbolism associated with edible resources, which are in turn transported to the sacred sphere, either in the human or the divine realm, transformed into an act of faith if presented as an offering in icons of the era. This dimension corresponds to the edibles incorporated into Carpets, Arches, Orchards, and Lenten Steps, to the funeral headboards of All Saints' Day, and to the processional retinues of Advent, Christmas Eve, and Christmas, from the Rezado de Concepción to the Day of the Kings and its Procession of the Child.

The image of sacralized food, constituted as a marker of community events, is indivisibly linked to an ethereal cultural source of collective faith. It becomes an irrenounceable component of popular religiosity because it arises from the profane dimension of the social group that upholds it, to be consumed within the sacred framework of a time when religiosity is the central axis of community life. At that time, the food that comes into contact with the senses, sight, taste, palate, or touch, manufactures mysticisms and magical-spiritual evocations, constituting a link with the sacred world from a profane platform.

It is not just any moment that occurs when one is faced with a served table, with people one esteems, and in the full enjoyment of a meal. That moment, saturated and imbued with its own sacramental atmosphere, makes

food a transmitter that radiates feelings, communicates messages, contents of the collective imaginary, which fuse and strengthen bonds of brotherhood.

The signs and symbols of sacralized eating bring Man closer to divinity and coalesce individuals under any belief or faith reference. Food becomes blessed. It develops a varied range of dishes that tradition turns into communication, and through its smells, flavors, colors, appearances, and textures, Man "feels" the intense spirituality that revolves around him.

Eating: More Than Just Surviving

To Claude Lèvi-Strauss, a prominent contemporary social scientist (b. Brussels, Belgium, November 28, 1908), we owe the discovery that food is good not only for eating but also for thinking. Taking a step forward, always following the Lèvi-Straussian trail, I have ventured to postulate that in addition to being good for eating and thinking, food is equally good for loving. Loving, in the most sublime sense of the term, in the emergence of the deepest essence of humanity, bathing paternal, filial, familial, spiritual, or social love in philosophical nobility. Veiled or evidently, the cultural and psycho-social arguments and foundations of the postulate speckle the formal disquisitions of this essay.

The history and behavior of societies constitute the rich archive that shows that, in its evolution, cuisine transcended the material sphere to embed itself in the spiritual and social realms. When their food ceased to be merely a means to nourish the bodies of humans, it gained symbolic and magical-religious references. These gave it immeasurable values, traits that have come to fix it in the collective imagination, in the spiritual identity of communities, and to make it sacred by linking it to the commemorations and religious celebrations of the people.

In the life of communities, there are at least four reasons that lead them to religious practices: 1) the three major moments of the Church's liturgy, such as Christmas Eve and Christmas, All Saints' Day, Lent, and Holy Week; 2) special days recognized by the universal Church, including the Conception of Mary, the Assumption of Mary, the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Corpus Christi Thursday, or the day of St. John the Baptist; 3) special days of observance confined to regionalized advocations, for example, the day of the Lord of Esquipulas or the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe; 4) patron saint fairs, in which each town or group of people celebrates the saint of their devotion.

On this occasion, due to certain editorial limitations that restrict us, we can only touch on what concerns the first of the aforementioned motivations, that of the three great liturgical cycles of the Church. With brief, sporadic references to the gastronomy of the others, we leave for the next opportunity a more detailed consideration of them.

The symbolism that is managed arises within a belief adorned with mysticisms, syncretized in the fusion of Mayan, Xinca, Ladino, and ancestral Judaic cultures that culminated in Catholicism. These manifestations are of great expressive richness in our society. The perspective from which they are seen allows for interpretations as spiritual, or frankly festive, cultural and social celebrations. The evocation of the events of Christmas and Christmas Eve, All Saints' Day (association of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day) and Lent and Holy Week give rise to expressions, multicolored, multifragrant, and multiculinary, while also providing opportunities to exhibit the solemnity that

Guatemalans impose on their sacro-profane customs.

In its sphere, food becomes an important piece of traditional expression, which in addition to integrating religiosity into more mundane expressions reaches a high intrinsic value for gastronomy as such. Food, in all cultural contexts, vigorously in Guatemalan culture, becomes a marker of identity, and food becomes an important symbolic element of material culture. This means the ability to cohere society. And since a good part of culinary preparations are achieved from raw materials of natural heritage, gastronomy ends up converging into ethno-biological relationships integrated into ancestral traditions. Through this path, it shapes features of cultural heritage.

At the forefront of research in numerous disciplines, anthropology delves into the topic of food as a social phenomenon. In spiritual culture, it emphasizes the symbolic component that surrounds it, because through this it is possible to understand the cultural identity of each festive-religious manifestation. In the great mystical events of sacred commemorations, food radiates the rich symbolism it carries. This creates the framework of collective food behavior linked to the sacred dimension. With preeminence in spirituality, religious culinary practice, in its physiological (tastes) and semiotic (symbolic) aspects, is associated with popular spirituality.

It is understood that the natural and individual action of eating dissolves into the social action of dining, which can be expressed as a prayer through the blessing of food. In this sense, it transforms the individual into a sanctified "us" and prevents the asocial potential of purely profane eating. It must be recognized that there are alienating cultural strategies that foster asymbolic dietary individualisms, mainly favored by religious conceptions different from Catholicism. Within such a conceptualization, the attempt to understand the logic of identity in the sensitive and symbolic values of sanctified foods should be valid.

Notes on Christmas cuisine

Guatemalan Christmas Eve, along with much of the Advent and Christmas season, is filled with emotional love and moving peace. Feelings arise that are born alongside the celebration of the birth of Jesus, with vigorous and sincere impetus, exalted in traditions and customs that fill it with profound mysticism.

The local roots of the festivity go back to the 16th century, when Europe introduced it as a Christian commemoration through the Iberian invaders. Local ways of reconstructing the divine birth soon emerged, giving rise to a unique style founded on a blend of expressions from different sources. Europe brought the veneration of sacred images, particularly of the Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Magi, and the shepherds of Bethlehem; of some animals with recognized symbolism, among which the ox, the mule, and sheep; and the evocative construction of related ephemeral icons: Nativity scenes, cribs, altars, mangers, and later the Christmas tree. Guatemalan refinement turned them into masterpieces of temporary popular religious art.

The native cultural heritage contributed the magical-religious symbolism of elements from its ecological environment that it had integrated into its ceremonial acts before: pine leaves and cones, acorns and holm oak leaves, pacaya leaves, moss and white pashte, cypress twigs, "cock's comb" rosettes, "poinsettia", pine cones, small chamomile fruits, and wild grass straws.

It also yielded its cuisine, which, by being originally ceremonial, syncretism sanctified in the new era. This contribution includes warm drinks, among them chocolate, pataxte shake, and caliente de piña; ritual foods such as tamales, "chuchitos," tamalitos, and their corresponding set of ingredients, procedures, and components. The communal preparation of meals stands out, as well as the use of special vegetable products, such as cox leaves, maxa'n leaves, kanaq' leaves, chocón leaves, "cornfield leaves", tusas, cibaque fibers, and chamomile fruits.

The sociocultural environment: The assimilation of the new doctrine by pre-Hispanic spirituality was facilitated by several circumstances, one of them being closely coinciding with the celebration of pre-Christian solstitial festivals. The Church, based on its doctrinal sources and undoubtedly motivated by widespread festive participation, had found opportune moments to establish the nativity of the Messiah. It is no coincidence that a date so close, temporally speaking, to the "birth of the new Sun," an important event for the magical thinking of ancient peoples, was designated.

Thus, the birth of Jesus, the Christ, was fixed by the Council of Nicaea on December 24th. The night of that day would come to be known as Christmas Eve, and the following day as Christmas. The designation of the date, it is believed, responds to the masterful strategic move of the Church to take advantage of the pre-existing festivities dedicated to the moment when the Sun King culminates his boreal journey along the ecliptic and "is reborn" when he turns back to retrace his steps towards the southernmost point. This is the winter solstice of the boreal, from December 21st to 22nd. Until European thought came to our lands, with the military-evangelistic invasion and conquest, the Christian doctrine was incorporated into local religiosity, and it was not too complicated for the natives to understand the existence of a new festive time.

The Council of Nicaea took place during the 8th century. Eight more centuries had to pass before, in the 16th century, the corresponding festivities began in Guatemala. Here, too, there was a basis for solstitial celebrations. This existed thanks to the astronomical knowledge of our ancient peoples, perhaps superior to that of contemporary medieval Europe. Uaxactún, north of Petén, is a silent witness to this cognitive splendor. The pre-Hispanic native civilizations relied on astral movements, solstices, and equinoxes to govern their spiritual, individual, and collective development. They worshipped the four peak moments of the Sun's apparent movement in the ecliptic. They overlapped the ceremonial of the winter solstice with the newly arrived Christmas and Christmas Eve.

When Christianity arrived (Catholicism, actually) and with it the birth of Jesus, the Maya trunk had differentiated into peoples with distinctive identities. But each one retained a basic cosmogonic pattern. Their spirituality, simple in the best sense of the term, grandiose in its philosophical foundation, exhibited common principles with the one that was arriving: the conception of a supreme being incarnated in dual divinity, Creator and Former, Heart of Heaven and Heart of Earth, Lord of the Mountain and Lord of the Valley. In a cosmic order where Men, special natural resources, and all the elements of Nature would be endowed with soul, with spirit. Maintaining the harmony and concord of the human spirit with those of others meant living to the fullest, living well.

To reconcile the spirit of Man with the others, the most powerful means was, and still is, food. Food was prepared, offered, and given to the divine pantheon, which would please divinity. Uk'ux Kaj Uk'ux Ulew, Heart of Heaven and Heart of Earth, eats fire and drinks smoke, which is also characteristic of Tzuul Taq'a, Lord of the Mountain and Lord of the Valley. The divine spirits consume the flame of candles as food and the smoke of copal pom (storax, pom storax, incense, myrrh, or balsam) as drink. Men also eat to please their own spirit as well as the divine spirits and the Creator. Ceremonial foods and drinks are surrounded by strict ritual codes, and foods acquire a sacred character. Cocoa, pataxte, and corn acquire great sacramental hierarchy.

At a certain point in Christian history, in other lands, the divine lineages of Saint Anne, the Virgin Mary, and the embodiment of love in the body of Christ emerged. With their images, it was not difficult for pre-Hispanic spirituality to assimilate Christianity into its religious practices. Some of the early evangelizers valued the nobility of indigenous thought and understood that the philosophical principles of both doctrines did not clash. In consideration of the logical nature of the religious concept of native peoples, Catholicism was enriched by the incorporation of pre-Hispanic elements. These elements retained their powerful symbolic significance, part of which is expressed in the foods and drinks of Christmas Eve and Christmas.

Seasonal emanations. Christmas Eve in Guatemala smells of Glory, because Glory undoubtedly smells of moss, chamomile, pine, pacaya freshly cut, conception flowers, coxes, and corn dough. The mosses brought from the forests for the Nativity scenes give homes the aroma of the jungle because the jungles exude moss. Chamomile smells of windy and cold highlands, and brings to mind images of sheep and shepherds' meadows, pine groves, oak groves, and grasslands that are replicated in the icons. The emanations are of sacred mountain.

The soft aroma of pacaya leaves mixes with the resinous smell of pine leaves and cones, awakening intense sensations of sacredness with reminiscences of pre-Hispanic ceremonial structures. From the nearby mountains comes the sweet fragrance of conception flowers, from the kitchens the smell of popular foods, from the streets the odor of festive gunpowder, and from the subconscious, that of beatific collective spirituality. Plants in the icons smell, as do those that have been "watered" on the floor or hung on the walls; they exhale sacralized viands and aromatize the flame of candles, the wax of candles, and the aromatic resins in censers.

The smell of the apaste (pot) of dough over the fire competes with that of the pot where the sauce for tamales or chuchitos is prepared, or that of the tamalitos wrapped in corn husks. The fire itself smells of the heat of cooking, the oak firewood slowly carbonizing to add its vapors and sublime the flavors. Like oak charcoal eyes, the embers bless the kitchen that will celebrate the birth of Jesus. The fruit punch pot exudes pineapple, cinnamon, apple, prunes, and raisins; the addition of chamomile in the hot pineapple drink that will soon come out of it is the smell of Nativity and evokes the holy feast with its own personality. The chocolate being beaten somewhere in the house, which will serve to alleviate the cold, sends forth emanations to announce that it has been sanctified.

And what about the flavors? The tamal, which constitutes the undisputed traditional popular dinner of Christmas Eve, never tastes

like it does now. Perhaps because it has been made with special dedication, or because women have come together in a unique form of matriarchal cohesion to share the preparation of an irreplaceable meal, or because it is to be shared with family and friends, or because it has incorporated the flavor of the leaves that wrap it or those of chocón or kanaq' that have been placed on it in a very traditionalist home to make it a "bed" or cover. For whatever reason, "colorado" or "negro" is the flavor of a sacred feast.

It is usually accompanied by pineapple hot drink or fruit punch. A select tradition complements it with milk punch, a elaborated mix of milk and eggs served hot. But in many rural communities, the undisputed ritual drink is chocolate. In addition to being a dinner in the family nucleus, the rite of sharing must be fulfilled, giving these foods to others as a show of appreciation and affection. Historically, it is not difficult to notice the ancestral trait of ceremonial food. Thus, chocolate is not only drunk to withstand the intense cold of the season. In pre-Hispanic times, offering chocolate or its substitute, pataxte shake, was a sign of friendship, an act of intense affection... whose meaning still remains.

The pineapple hot drink from the western region of Guatemala, which under the hegemony of more Castilian customs, spread by Santiago de los Caballeros (today La Antigua Guatemala) and the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción was partially replaced by colonial fruit punch, is an energizing drink that is part of the gastronomy of the season. It is enjoyed with gusto in the "posaditas," processions and prayers of the novena before Christmas Eve, when the home that receives Mary and Joseph asking for shelter invites the faithful to partake of it. Those who stay at home to enjoy the inner warmth, in lively conversation or meditative rest, enjoy it. If it accompanies the tamal in the midnight dinner, it is a pretext for a happy after-dinner conversation, especially if the famous "piquete" has been added to it, the small but appropriate amount of ceremonial liquor.

The atmosphere around the meals on Christmas Eve: The atmosphere persists, swayed by a wind that blows in icy gusts. High above, a clear and serene sky can be seen, hanging hundreds, thousands of stars at night. The air has become saturated with unusually intense emanations that, despite emanating from diverse sources, individualize themselves like the oils on a painter's palette. The kitchens are adorned with appropriate viands, the houses display evocative hues, and in a preeminent place there will be a Nativity scene, a manger, an altar, or perhaps a Christmas tree. The central motif of the festivity will be there, the Sacred Mystery: the Child Jesus and his earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. Little shepherds, sheep, the ox, and the mule. The flame of candles and the smoke of incense.

The season is cold but burns with the love that saturates it. Its nature is linked to the noblest feelings harbored by "people of good will." A time of peace, of wanting and feeling loved, of celebrating the birth of Jesus. Such elevated spirituality is evoked with aromas, foods, and plant products that, although not immediately perceived, are components of ancestral rites that connect them to popular traditions and customs of the time.

In addition to the ancient origins of the characteristic foods and drinks of Advent and Christmas times, the incorporation of other elements into the celebrations may go back very far. The pacaya leaves as ornamentation were a frequent component of the sacro-

ceremonial bowers of ancient peoples. Their acceptance in Guatemalan Catholic homes, from the Colonial period to our days, is complemented by the high symbolic value of palm trees: their radiated foliage has represented the Sun, an image of powerful spiritual significance. For Christianity, they personify the glorious advent of the Messiah. In Catholicism, they symbolize triumph over death as an attribute shared by all martyrs, and Jesus blessed them in the desert and called them the palm of victory. The fusion of these meanings makes the pacaya leaves brought to beautify with their own character the solemnities and meals of Christmas Eve and Christmas.

Along with aromas, flavors, and symbolism come colors. Green are the pacaya leaves and the fragrant pine needles. Not only are they spread like a unique carpet, they are also displayed and enjoyed in the "pine worms," very Guatemalan artisanal products consisting of a thin maguey fiber loop, with pine needles conveniently trimmed and strung along it. Green are also the pinabete leaves and the cypress twigs that, according to taste, are added to the iconography. Green are the cox, maxa'n, banana, and chocón leaves associated with tamales.

Yellow has come with the manzanillas, those small fruits that are to Christmas Eve what corozo is to Holy Week. Characteristic, aromatic, and delicately flavored, they are found in the form of "manzanilla threads," long strings that carry them like beads on a necklace and to which many ornamental applications are given, either as an ingredient in the hot drink, the traditional Christmas beverage, or as a homemade dessert that is enjoyed with true delight.

White are the Flor de Concepción and the pascuillas, a bush related to the poinsettia whose floral clusters are occasionally brought from the countryside to homes. If in the regions where the Christmas Eve celebration originated Christmas is white because of the snow, in our latitudes it is white because of the flowers that have bloomed for the occasion, plant organs that Man integrated into his traditions, thus adding aromas to the sacred feast and an undeniable visual charm.

The significance of the Christmas tree is often minimized, and it is said that Nativities and Nativity scenes are more traditional. But before the conquest, none of them were, they are later incorporations. While the use of images and shepherds has a corresponding one in pre-Columbian spirituality, in the elaboration of figurines that were used as "doubles" to communicate with the supraworld, trees, as symbols of the incarnation of life by representing the point of union of sky, earth, and water, had divine hierarchy among ancient peoples. It is no coincidence that the tradition of the Christmas tree began in one of the regions with the most vigorous spirituality, the Q'eqchi', at the same time a haven for German immigrants who brought it in the early 20th century.

It is also not a coincidence or a simple ecological coincidence that the first Christmas trees were pines. The pine is one of the most sacred trees of ancient local cultures. Its needles, centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards, were already spread with great religious fervor. In certain regions, they gave way to firs, also of profound mystical significance. And as if following a celestial recommendation, how pleasant that in Guatemala an unexpected hybrid emerged: nativities under Christmas trees.

Mosses, fruits, and flowers continue, as in the past, to incorporate the spirit of Nature into a Catholic practice nourished by pre-Christian religiosity. A perfect setting to fully enjoy the

culinary glory of the season. Thanks to such sublime syncretism, the Poinsettia, which now universally represents Christmas, should mean more to us than the incorporation of red and green colors into the glorious feast. The practice of sanctifying it is ancient, which is why it was incorporated so easily into the select group of elements of Guatemalan Christmas Eve. And a magical association arises: seeing it is smelling tamales, hot beverages, and chocolate.

Social cohesion in Christmas cooking

While populations should be distinguished by their culinary culture, there is a fundamental pattern that gives national identity. In Guatemala, traditional food consists, at least, of tamales, paches, chuchitos, chocolate, shakes, hot beverages, punches, and sweets, including the indispensable buñuelos. For the 25th, Christmas Day, tradition dictates having a steaming and invigorating chicken soup for lunch. Economic power in populations with strong consumerism has imposed foreign customs, creating an elitist meal like turkey in various preparations, "stuffed pork leg," Torta Navidena (Christmas cake), and grapes, among others.

The undisputed Christmas Eve dinner in Guatemala consists of tamales, bread, and chocolate, or some type of punch. Slight variations include replacing tamales with paches or chuchitos, and the nature of the punch. Tamales and chuchitos are pre-Hispanic culinary contributions, like chocolate. While it may be thought that their high energy and caloric content earns them their place, given the cold weather, there are cultural reasons of greater weight than metabolic ones for this. It's not difficult to recognize their ancestral trait of ceremonial beverage. It continues to be the "food of the gods," and that's why in many rural communities, it's the undisputed sacred drink.

In the realm of popular Christmas gastronomy, Guatemalan cuisine is a ritual that draws from the wisdom of the people and produces symbolic expressions that impart a national identity to a universal celebration. Undoubtedly because its roots go deep into time, into traditions and customs that blend the pre-Hispanic with the colonial. And magnificent, almost like a rite, arises the behavior of communal cooking. In its endeavor to reconcile the profane and the sacred times, communication with the divine leads to structuring semiotic codes based on symbolism that shapes objects and beings from its surroundings. Having a very powerful vehicle in food, if the gods are prepared, offered, and gifted the foods that can delight them, people eat with them to please them, in mutual hospitality. Two culinary dimensions are created, one everyday and one sanctified, uniting ceremonial and festive spheres. In the sacred-festive realm, participating in ritualized protocols means having reached those codes. Sacred foods and beverages arise from behaviors brought from the collective imagination, and on Christmas Eve, one of those behaviors is communal cooking.

Its particularity is the protocol gathering of the cooks, usually housewives, to prepare the food, especially the tamales. As with expressions of their cultural identity, they only know they have to do it, not why. Many justify it for practical reasons: they help each other because they find the task more joyful that way, because they can talk and remember passages of family life, or some have special skills for wrapping, tying, moving, kneading the dough, making the sauce, seasoning; or because they save time, can share expenses, the work becomes less tiring,

it gives them an opportunity to come together and chat, or simply because it's the custom.

Undoubtedly, these practicalities are reasonable facts, but they conceal the ingenious wisdom of women to provide sacred food, of pleasant taste, irresistible aroma, and healthy nature without depending on any patriarchal influence. The sublimation of these behaviors is a deeply satisfying feeling at the fulfillment of a divine role. It's no coincidence that their contribution to the celebration of the birth of Christ revolves around the tamal, sometimes with some assistance from men, but without relinquishing the supreme responsibility of articulating codes to elevate their families to the sacred world.

The communal sacred cooking doesn't end there. There's still the sharing of the food, cooked or raw to be finished in another house. It means distributing ingredients, joys, satisfactions. Running with a basket of tamales freshly out of the pot to give to another family. Giving permanence to a tradition that, by its specialness, ennobles the cooks and their products.

Mysticism and religiosity in Lenten cuisine

A very relevant event in the Judeo-Christian faith in Guatemala is the celebration of the Lent and Holy Week cycle. During this time, the splendor of the traditions of the season is manifested. Incense, myrrh, candles, torches, flowers, processional parades, representations of passion, and ephemeral icons impose the religiosity of popular devotion. Also, foods, drinks, and recreational activities are articulated to the history, life, and sufferings of Jesus, including games like "taba and tipachas".

Guatemalan popular Lenten cuisine is adorned with special dishes, among which stand out dried fish, chickpeas in panela honey, recado bread, bee honey, occasion-stuffed peppers, aromatic hot chocolate, and an infinite variety of pickled foods. Less known, but no less sacro-profane in symbolism, are delicacies like the Ki' Pakap Kaqchikel (mascal for non-indigenous people) and white beans with fish, limited to cultural identities of geographically confined communities.

As a refined expression of Colonial cuisine, forged in blends of the pre-Hispanic and Hispano-Arabic, their meals stem from the Hispanic influence that emerged from the 16th century. With a motive for religious celebration founded on foreign beliefs and principles, the germ carried in rituals and culinary supplies accustomed by the Spaniards was reformulated with arts, knowledge, and local ingredients. Over the centuries, native foods became fixed to traditions by agglutinated symbolism in their nature and origin.

The process of culinary syncretization facilitated the articulation of hybrid cuisine to a new religiosity, in part because the pre-Hispanic worldview contributed its ancestral conformity to the sacralization of food. It can be inferred from a note in the Popol Wuj, a cosmogonic reference of the K'iche' People, that in one of the myths of human creation, the Creator and Formulator said, "[Let's make the one who will sustain and feed us! How will we be invoked, to be remembered on earth? We have already tried with our first works, our first creatures; ... Let us now try to make obedient, respectful beings, who will sustain and feed us. So they said."

Such cosmogony puts in the mouth of its celestial court the request to be invoked and praised, and suggests sustenance, food, as a way to achieve it. We have already mentioned that the K'iche' and Q'eqchi' spiritualities discover that their supreme deities, Uk'ux Kaj

Uk'ux Ulew and Tzuul Taq'a, like fire and smoke. Forms of praise and alliance are established by giving them candle flame to eat and aromatic resin.

In the symbolic-material realm, before 1524, ceremonial worship meals were closely related to the spiritual expression of our ancestors. Remarkable are the shakes and chocolates made from cocoa and pataxte, two native fruits with known sacro-profane symbolism. Also, spicy chirmoles and many fish; and of course, corn-based foods: atoles, tortillas, tamales, tamalitos, wild honeys, and fermented beverages that, through their persistence in the deeds of spiritual culture, become "spiritualized," such as boj, chilate, maguey liquor, and now cusha and fruit broth.

The Spanish invasion and the arrival of Catholic spirituality brought new philosophical conceptions and a new ritual calendar. In cycles of commemorations previously unknown, celebrations forced the integration of New World elements into those brought from the Old Europe. The extensive Lenten syncretic sacralized meals acquired an autochthonous spirit. First in Spanish towns, and gradually in evangelized communities; in the entire country. The mystical contributions of Christianity are incredibly rich.

Throughout Catholic biblical evangelism, the importance of food is evident. Saint Paul, in the First Letter to the Corinthians, partly delimits the scope of the sacred: "I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Co 10.15-16). He concludes authoritatively: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons" (1 Co 10.21).

Like a good educator, as the Letters to the Corinthians respond to an act of Saint Paul to order the church of Corinth, relaxed after the enthusiasm of the first years of the new faith, he offers practical solutions to what he deals with: "Eat whatever is sold in the market without raising questions of conscience, for the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (1 Co 10.25-26), and advises, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Co 10.31).

In the Gospel according to Saint Luke, in describing the mission of evangelizing the nations (contained in verse 19 of Mt 28), the symbolism of sharing food, the freedom to take it, and to observe reverence for what the Lord entrusts is prefigured. The apostle puts these words in Jesus' mouth: "When you enter any house, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' ... While staying in that house, eat and drink what they offer you, for the laborer deserves his wages" (Lc 10.5-7).

Something essential, which should not be forgotten, is the Lord's Supper: "When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God'... (Lc 22.14-16). Jesus and the apostles celebrated the Jewish Passover, a commemoration of the Jews' exodus from Egypt. According to several sources, the ritual foods were lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and wine. The "bitter herbs" were perhaps lettuce: in the critical discussion of Mc 14.1, theologians of the Church noted that "each family had to eat the roasted lamb, with lettuce and unleavened bread, alternating the singing of psalms with the blessing of several cups, according to a very old and detailed ritual."

Established the sacred Eucharist during the Supper, Jesus made the fundamental

symbolism revolve around bread and wine: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood... (Mt 26.26-28). The current Eucharist, or Holy Mass, based on the dogma of transubstantiation of the Middle Ages, believes that through the ritual, bread and wine become the flesh and blood of Christ. And the faithful eat and drink from them. Father Martín Valmaseda tells us that in the ancient masses there was "a festive meal, where the main food was lamb, a salad, a few cups of wine." Customs and culture changed this.

The sacro-profane duality. Situated on a purely material plane, it is easy to observe that in our Lenten food, most of the foods known by Jesus can be found. Although for cultural reasons we leave out the lamb and our bread is rich in yeast, this and the fish are not missing, nor even the lettuce, although it does not have the sacralization status that the others have. The Hispanic-native syncretism took care of incorporating other elements.

But it is not a material matter. It is the spiritual environment of a kitchen saturated with symbolic references that gives meals another value. It doesn't matter if some qualify them as traditional, others as custom, and some more as seasonal, behind their existence are centuries of social behaviors and magical-religious evolution that have fixed them in our imagination as sacro-profane vehicles to praise God. Hence, parallel to the creation of meals for believers, a universe of food-offerings arises whose primary objective is to pay tribute to the Lord, although afterward they may well end up in the stomachs of the faithful.

Almost all the food and offerings are fruits, although they do not exclude vegetables and flowers. They give the sense of "invoking through sustenance" to Guatemalan popular religiosity. They are arranged in Gardens, Arches, Carpets, and Stations, four preeminent ephemeral Lenten icons in Guatemala. The Gardens characterize the Velations, the Arches open triumphal gates to processional processions, the Carpets render honors at the feet of the Lord, the Stations allow prayer along the Way of the Cross. And they are filled with pataxtes, cocoa, pineapples, peach of smell, coconuts, bananas, oranges, corozo, pacaya...

I already said it, but it doesn't hurt to insist on it, in traditional Guatemalan cuisine, during Lent and Holy Week, the cultural facts of accentuated mixture of the pre-Hispanic and the Hispanic that characterize all its cuisine are manifested with great intensity. This has come from a gastronomic practice that, without excluding other groups, in Lent is more noticeable among the Ladinos or mestizos. The most probable source of the background is that the celebration was brought by the Spaniards, who reached this territory with their beliefs, customs, and preferred foods.

Once an adequate degree of ethnological fusion between the peninsular vanguard and the Mesoamerican peoples was achieved, spiritual syncretism worked the miracle of being able to look towards the sacred from an amalgam of expressions of the profane world manifested in various ways, gastronomy among them. From the new cuisine, the mestizo, arose aromas, flavors, colors, and protocols of peculiar identity. The characterization of Guatemalan Lenten meals requires considering the native cultural elements, the imported ones along with the Spanish way of being, the incorporation of a

foreign festival, the existence of native foods, the re-elaboration of potions laden with the symbolism of the incorporated components, and the methods of preparation and the way and time of being served.

A peculiarity of Lenten cuisine is the apparent contradiction between the principle of dietary austerity, fasting with sacramental overtones, and the abundance of meals derived from the wealth of recipes and the time available for good eating. Because of this, the exaltation of Lenten odors (Pacific corozo, pataxte in cob, peach cucurbitaceae, wet sawdust), of the colors typical of the season (golden chilca flowers, violet in jacaranda flowers, of estatisia and "nazareno," kaleidoscopes of bougainvillea, etc.) is confused with the fragrance of censers with burning pomestoraque to steaming dishes of dried fish and their entourage of pickled vegetables, stuffed chilies, and sweet garbanzo. Besides aromatic and delicious hot chocolate, recado bread, and abundant honey from bees.

Among the meals, dried fish is never lacking. Glorious viand of multitude of recipes, from the typical peninsular "pescado a la vizcaína" to fritters that end up in the unbeatable fillets wrapped in egg completed with tomato sauce. Not to mention, of course, pieces cooked with white beans. The ethno-biology surrounding the capture, commercialization, and preparation of fish is part of the intangible universe of traditions. It may have its roots in the main pier of Livingston, a corner of the Caribbean Sea, where meager crews made to the water return with their precious load of jureles, pargos, robalos, and palometas, awaited by people who will send them to other destinations, to kitchens and dining rooms directly or to tapescos where, with salt and sun, they will become dried fish. In the Caribbean tapescos begins a cycle in the traditional expression of Lenten dried fish in Guatemala.

In the Puerto de San José, in the center of the Pacific Ocean coastline, the ancient iron pier that still testifies to the integration of the port with the sea, also serves as a enclave to another human group driven by a similar desire: the encounter with the products of fishing. The millenary fishing trade has fixed differences. In Guatemala, contrary to what its name denotes, the Pacific is more violent than the Caribbean, so the trade has had to adapt to the conditions of the site. The boats of the Josefinos seafarers, which reproduce the characteristics of other towns on the same coastline, usually have only between 18 and 25 feet in length and are propelled by meager outboard motors; Caribbean ships are larger.

In the Pacific, the gill nets, colloquially called trammels, are of little more or less than 50 fathoms in length (about 150 meters). Depending on whether high-sea species, such as sharks, are sought, they are placed about 30 fathoms (just over 50 kilometers) from the coast. If high-sea fishing is not practiced, the nets are "thrown" on the coastal line itself.

In general terms, there are two modalities of dried fish: one, of small species, such as those scientists call Atherinella, Poecilia, Poeciliopsis gracilis, of preparation and consumption throughout the year. Another, of larger species, quintessentially Lenten, which uses any of the benthonic or coastal pelagic fish as well as some freshwater ones. Due to its culinary maneuverability, abundance, taste, and acceptance in the market, among those from the Pacific, robalete (Centropomus robalito), sierra (Scomberomorus sierra), pargo (Lutjanus guttatus), sábalo (Chanos chanos), bluefin tuna (Thunnus thynnus), barracuda (Sphyraena spp.), catfish (several species),

machorra (Lepisosteus tropicus), and common shark (Carcharhinus limbatus) are preferred. This, in the words of the fishermen themselves, has become "arisquiado" due to the intensity with which it is pursued. It is already estimated as a threatened species.

From the Caribbean come snooks (Centropomus undecimalis), crevalle jacks (Caranx hippos), and snappers (Lutjanus spp.). In Livingston, the fish are dried in cane tapescos, in San José and Monterrico on zinc sheets. In Monterrico, shark pieces are known as cecina, and in San José, skinless pieces are called cherla, regardless of the species of fish skinned (cherlada).

On the other hand, one of the most traditional, ancestral, and ritually identifying beverages is hot chocolate drink. It is the typical breakfast beverage on Holy Thursday in towns that still preserve such a custom, particularly in the western highlands. That dawn does not pass without the aromatic brew accompanied by sliced yolk bread spread with honey. Sometimes with chickpeas in honey, made with panela.

Pickles have a special flavor at this time. They can represent a seasonal reference, when they acquire the glow that expresses the aroma of their spices and vinegars, and the special flavor that the sacralization of the act that by essence surrounds a fervor made tradition implies. In Chiquimula, famous for its pickles available throughout the year, the preference in Lent leans towards palmitos. Pre-Hispanic cuisine bequeathed its contribution in the ki' pakap, whose approximate equivalent in Spanish is "maguey in panela," which consists of agave leaves (the maguey) in a mild ferment caused by the sugars of rapadura, or panela.

So there are peculiarities: if in general this food counts among its most popular dishes and foods dried or fresh fish, chickpeas cooked with rapadura, special occasion recado bread, torrejas (Panajachel), molletes (San Juan Sacatepéquez), pickled vegetables, plantain mole in chocolate, stuffed peppers, and chocolate. If San Juan Sacatepéquez has an exclusive dish, a tradition among the indigenous population, consisting of white beans cooked with dried fish, if the towns of the highlands delight in pataxte and peach of smell brought from the Pacific coast; if, as in its distant origins, cacao pods are brought from the same coast to enjoy their bittersweet pulp, the most ancestral style of food known for the raw material of chocolate (the popular market of Panajachel, for example, sells those that come from the cacao fields of Suchitepéquez), if all that happens, we can attest to the richness of Lenten cuisine.

The bread, sanctified in Easter. Jesus and the Apostles celebrated the Jewish Passover, a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt, and for this, Christ organized a dinner. It would be the last with his disciples. Far from a simple Passover feast, Jesus turns the gathering into a ritual dinner, the climax of which is the proclamation of bread and wine as his body and blood to be sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. That night in Jerusalem, the Anointed One established the Holy Eucharist. From there stems a remarkable fact: the Last Supper becomes the First, it is the origin of the ritual that makes us eat the body of Christ.

There are theologians who consider some acts of Jesus as prefigurations of the Eucharistic rite, among them the miraculous catch of fish (Lk 5:1-11), the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes (Mt 14:13-21), and the Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-12), a symbol announcing the conversion of water into wine

since the Eucharist later converts wine into blood. The usual image of the Last Supper indicates that the foods of that night were lamb, bitter herbs, bread, and wine.

In Guatemalan popular religiosity, bread takes up that sacred place in various aspects of spiritual culture, culminating in fixing it to the traditions and customs specific to the time. Whether called bread of yolks, sleeping bread, or simply cake in the style and taste of today's capital city residents, its presence in Holy Week cuisine is ensured by syncretisms between pre-Hispanic cosmogonies and the Christianity that has surrounded it with sacred symbolism.

It was a deeply rooted practice to have Easter bread made. Unlike just "ordering" a certain amount in compliance with custom or buying it from any bakery as is the contemporary tendency, participating in its preparation gave believers a profound sense of belonging to their religion and intense family cohesion. In that transcendental and little perceived role that women play as guardians of traditions, they were in charge of acquiring the raw materials: flour, yeast, sugar, eggs, lard... of finding, hiring, and ensuring the work of the best available baker... of ensuring that the dough, oven, and firewood were ready... of ensuring that there were no lack of small pots and tins...

And when the agreed-upon time between the housewife and the baker arrived, and everything was ready, the carrying of the ingredients from the house to the bakery began. The mother, father, and children participated. Once everything was delivered to the artisan, an excited coming and going between both places began: making sure everything was going well, that nothing was missing. bringing "a bite" to the baker, keeping track of the progress of the work, supervising that the dough had the preferred "touch," that it did not "fall" or "release" too much, that the bread did not burn but also did not come out raw, and... what time will the bread be ready?

When it came out of the oven: to bring baskets and cloths to contain and cover it. The journey back home is an inner celebration, an ineffable joy, pride in the eyes of the neighbors and family happiness. And already at home, which should preferably be on Holy Wednesday, its aroma of holiness fills the atmosphere and will undoubtedly mix with the scent of corozo and chilca flowers. The sacred Easter bread will be in time for the ritual breakfast of Holy Thursday, with it and hot chocolate.

In addition, bread becomes a vehicle for another homage to the tradition and its tremendous spiritual significance: sharing it. Tradition dictates that it should be offered, given as a gift, shared with family and friends. It is because it is a sacralized bread, and through it, a state of submission to the faith can be achieved. This act is another facet of the sublime integration of bread into Guatemalan Holy Week.

For the glory of Guatemalan traditions and customs, the ritual of making "pan de recado" (special bread) during Holy Week persists in many communities. The product continues to reign alongside fish, and wine in the distance. And the very traditional social behavior of sharing, when a small basket with bread, a bottle of honey, a jar of sweetened chickpeas, and artisanal chocolate tablets are taken to the homes of relatives or friends. This expresses part of a cultural identity loaded with symbolism, in which the European and American aspects emerge in a cuisine that cannot help but be enjoyed, even knowing that the season demands greater fasting. But... who can resist the sacralized delicacies of Lent and Holy Week?

The cuisine of All Saints' Day

During the first two days of November, another religious celebration occurs within the liturgy of the Church. It constitutes another reason to manifest the feelings contained in the spiritual culture of the Guatemalans, which, as in equivalent opportunities, finds a means of expression in tangible realizations of material culture. Food, the sacred food, becomes a key element of the solemnity.

The commemoration is defined by the ritual of the Catholic Church. With the approval and blessing of Saint Odilo, abbot of the Monastery of Cluny, in the year 980, the Church designated the days of November 1st and 2nd, of every year, to commemorate All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. All Saints' Day is celebrated on the 1st, and the faithful departed on the 2nd. The commemorations, one following the other, have been blending into one due to collective behaviors, which in practice have been fixing it as All Saints' Day. It is not entirely correct, but it is usual. Popular culture has imposed this fusion, and the manifestations with which the event is celebrated, honoring saints and deceased ancestors.

Food maintains its validity and preeminence in the sacro-profane manifestations of the case. Most authors lean towards seeing it as an extension of the ancestral concept of food for the deceased, with all the philosophical and cultural conceptualization that it represents. Since the earliest times of awareness of death, it has been considered that, after passing away, humans will need food and drink in their journey to the other world, and candles to light their way in the darkness. Food and drinks become symbolic. Since the bond between the mourner and the deceased ancestor is real, a form of communication between the two is sought. There are many ways to speak: with music, food, drinks, prayers, abstinences, kites. And the celebration of the deceased becomes a mixture of mystical devotion where the religious and the mundane are combined. Death is sung to and meals are prepared to be eaten next to the cemeteries or tombs.

It is believed that offerings of food for the deceased were common during the pre-Hispanic era, which explains the archaeological discovery of food ceramics alongside burials. These were affectionate offerings in which the deceased were given what they liked in life, provision for the long journey to the afterlife. For the Maya, death was not the end of the person but a change of state, a different form of life from that between birth and death. In Tak'alik Abaj, an archaeological site located in Zapotitlán, Retalhuleu, funerary vessels with food residues were found in a tomb dating back 2,500 years. Food was also given to the deity: the Maya god of death, Aj Puch, who, as deduced from his iconographic appearance, is also a dead person, eats like everyone else, and is offered food in ceremonies.

As a result of honoring the dead with food, which means feeding ancestors who live in a dimension beyond death, it has become common to affirm a family meal, as the living eat with them. This is reinforced by the fact that, in general, food has always been a significant link between the living and the dead. The origin of this sentiment, with profane roots, is of immemorial antiquity. When very late it is articulated to All Saints' Day, it gives rise to popular beliefs that affirm the symbolic value of food. People in several Catholic countries believe that on the night of that day, the deceased return to the houses where they lived before and eat with the living relatives.

Although other customs take different expressions: in Petén, children go out on the night of October 31, the eve of All Saints' Day, to ask for "ixpasá" for the skull, while in towns in the western highlands, dressed as "souls," they go out that same night to proclaim "we are souls, we come from heaven, we ask for alms, if they don't give us, doors and windows will pay us." The "alms" denote food; they are usually given jocotes in honey, ayote in honey, or any other treat of the occasion.

The headboard meal. Since it is about pleasing the deceased, or their soul, they are invited with what they liked in life, prepared in an appetizing way. The arrangement of the food is usually done on the headboard of the tomb, but if it is in the house, it will be on an altar or on a table. In any case, this arrangement acquires a very significant meaning and is a ceremony of great solemnity. When it is at the headboard, tradition has established that the food should be placed on a carpet of pine leaves sprinkled with "dead flowers," piously mystified with candles and abundantly sprinkled with alcoholic beverages.

Almost always arranged at the headboard of the tomb (not a mausoleum, as in this case it would be at the foot of the crypt), among the indispensable foods are boiled güisquiles, corn, and ayotes; aguardiente is a ritual drink that is spilled on the carpet and into the throat of the mourner; many times there are halves of oranges and small tamales. The living also enjoy the same food, sharing it with the deceased. Women often complete the family menu with beef stew, beans, scrambled eggs with tomato salsa, tortillas, iced coffee, fiambre, and the sweets typical of the celebration, such as ayotes and jocotes in honey. Hence, the term "headboard meal" ends up designating, by extension, the meal eaten by the living, whether in the cemetery or at home when mourners return from the funeral honors. It is not unusual for vegetables that are not intended for sweets to be cooked in the same pot and share their incomparable aromas. Sweets are designated "in honey," the usual term to distinguish them; but "honey" is not honey, but a kind of thick syrup made with panela. An elaborate variation of the ayote in honey results from cooking it with corn. Although its preparation includes spices like cinnamon, cloves, and ginger, the most special touch is given by allspice, our native pepper. This achieves the spectacular delicacy that only competes with jocotes in honey, which, with equivalent procedures but never with incorporated corn, joins it in a sweet exaltation of sacred cuisine.

Fiambre is the most significant dish of the festivity, particularly for the Ladino People who have consumed it since colonial times. In indigenous groups, güisquiles, ayotes, and boiled corn are equally important. However, acculturation has ensured that all social groups eat all the dishes, as part of a national culinary identity specific to the season.

C. Tárano says, "The activity for November 1st begins several days earlier when flower stalls are set up near cemeteries. The fiambre must be ready for lunch on All Saints' Day, when family and close friends gather. It is also customary to bring it as a gift to relatives or friends." Other details are recounted by don José Milla y Vidaurre, a national writer (1822-1882), who says that during the visit that the living make to the cemetery to entertain the dead, the custom is to adorn the tombs with flowers, wreaths, and various iconographic motifs in tissue paper (mostly replaced by plastics today).

The customs accompanying visits to the deceased to share food are very rich. Like the one in which the blanket that preserves the heat of La Cabecera is uncovered, pine and

golden flowers of "dead flower" are sprinkled, candles or votive candles are lit, prayers are said, a part of white aguardiente is spilled and the other part is ritually drunk, and, as with the liquor, portions of food are arranged for the deceased and more for the mourners.

The opulence of fiambre. Perhaps the most distinctive dish of Guatemala, fiambre is not found as such anywhere else in the world. A delicious mix of vegetables, meats, sausages, and cheeses, it is much more than its simple combination. Despite its universality within the limits of the homeland, it is neither an everyday dish nor suitable for profane celebrations. A sacro-profane food in its own right, it represents a lofty expression of spiritual culture materialized in a culinary preparation deeply rooted in Guatemalan traditions of All Saints' Day.

Its origins are lost in the unfathomable past, as it is presumed to be a dish of great antiquity. Some attribute references to it to the historian Celso Lara Figueroa around the year 1595. Between 1625 and 1637, serving as a Dominican missionary, the Irish adventurer Thomas Gage traveled extensively through Guatemala and documented his experiences (many of which should be taken with a grain of salt), but among them, he mentioned it as a cold dish. It is also written that by the 17th century, Gage's time, it already appeared in conventual recipe books of Guatemalan cuisine.

Its antiquity in mortuary rituals of the Day of the Dead in Guatemala is evident when reading José Milla, who in one of the "Cuadros de Costumbres" of the era he lived in wrote: [when] "the moon began to shed its pale light on the tombs, [the crowd] began to move away little by little in search of fiambre and the other dishes that custom dictates the living consume upon returning from the visit to the inanimate remains of the dead." This helps to understand the archaic nature of fiambre in the commemoration of All Saints' Day and the Souls of the Dead in Guatemala, which dates back at least to the 19th century, and also recognizes its symbolic consolidation as magical food for the dead.

There is no doubt that fiambre was born from the religious syncretism that followed the Spanish invasion, forged in the legacy of Mayan, Hispanic, and Arab cuisines. At first, it probably served to be taken to the cemetery as provisions for the visit to the deceased ancestors. But it is also possible that, due to its cold preparation, it was kept to have a pleasant and immediate food once back home after the visit to the dead. It is, therefore, one of those meals of Castilian taste but intense pre-Hispanic heritage that began to be made in Colonial Guatemala, out of the invaders' need to incorporate their foods, enriched by eight centuries of Arab influence, into the available edibles here.

Hispano-Arabic are its cheeses, meats, sausages, sugars, condiments, oils, and vinegar. Guatemalan is the ingenuity of the cooks who imposed their art to achieve a dish of baroque exuberance, as master Celso Lara Figueroa describes it; many of the vegetables that make up its body are also Guatemalan. It is rare for someone to start wondering about the birth of any of their meals. This is not the case with fiambre, given its very special composition. Almost no one is not curious to know how it originated. Without a doubt, it can never be known for certain. Many popular stories try to explain it. They have no probative value, but they are part of oral tradition and that makes them valuable. The fundamental argument is that it is a product of chance, of an accidental event. Various variants have been spun.

First variant: places its creation in the old Convent of Capuchinas, in Santiago de

Guatemala, renamed La Antigua Guatemala. According to this story, on a certain November 1st, the diners were waiting for lunch on the occasion of celebrating All Saints' Day. However, the cook, who was a nun, found her pantry empty. Lacking the essentials for the traditional dish that included hot meat, she used what she had on hand, especially vegetables, eggs, and sauce, which she mixed to prepare a cold dish, like a salad. That's what she served, with the pleasant result that was greatly liked by her guests.

Second variant: very similar to the previous one, explains that it arose from the idea of a maid who served as a cook in a certain house. On one occasion, it happened that her kitchen had nothing to serve her employers. So she came up with the idea of mixing everything she could find and prepared it as a cold meal. Needless to say, this dish was to the liking of the employers, who immediately ordered that the recipe be preserved.

Third variant: in which a domestic cook is also involved, recounts that fiambre arose from a fortunate improvisation that ultimately had a happy outcome. According to the story, the girl should have prepared dinner for the homeowners, but because she spent a long time chatting with her boyfriend, she didn't have time to do so. So she came up with a combination of foods that she served to the diners, who were very hungry. They liked it a lot, and because of the hunger with which they ate it, they called it fiambre. The imagination of oral tradition... it is considered that the name comes from it being a cold dish!

Fourth variant: links the origin to two deeply rooted Guatemalan customs; one, spending a good part of All Saints' Day next to the tomb of the deceased to be able to adorn it, clean its surroundings, and arrange the garden it should have. It is always done in family groups. The custom dictated that each family bring a special meal in honor of the deceased and consume it together. This is where the other custom is manifested: over time, families began to share their dishes and put them together in a single plate. Each one added their favorite seasoning and ingredients, and this culminated in the first fiambre dish. Since then, the custom of mixing foods has remained a tradition every November 1st.

Fifth variant: the least likely one states that a maid, faced with the demands imposed by very demanding employers, in her haste to bring them the dishes prepared for lunch, consisting of cut cheeses, various sausages and meats, and vegetable salad, dropped everything on the floor. She picked it up as best she could, but had to put it together because she didn't have time for more. She brought it like that, and to her surprise, the food was praised.

It is true that in this dish, all the identity of the Guatemalan people is established. Regardless of the origin of its components or the procedures for making it, the creativity of Guatemalan cooks from different social strata has given it its special and national connotation. The legends surrounding it are part of that same identity of the people. The important thing is not to minimize the conscious creativity of national cuisine. In highly elaborate fiambres, one can feel the presence of fifty or more components, while in the more "humble" ones, this quantity can decrease to the minimum required to fulfill the ritual of preparing it. The final number can depend on tastes and costs.

As is the case in Guatemalan popular cuisine, and fiambre is a notable example, there are as many recipes as there are hands preparing the food. Each household, each family, each village, each neighborhood in a big city has its

own recipe, takes pride in it, and practices it with such delicacy that the result is a dish that tastes glorious. So when each person uses their recipe, through which they produce their personal fiambre, they add or remove ingredients, season with certain condiments, add or reduce spices, dress it with their exclusive sauce... in short! It is not unusual to hear phrases such as "my grandmother's was better," or "my mother's is incomparable"... or even "my mother-in-law's is as good as mine." Each family claims to be the producer of the "most authentic fiambre."

Master chefs say that the magic of a good fiambre lies in the sauce. It is prepared with the base of the broths of the meats and poultry that have been cooked, defatted, and strained. It is boiled with aromatic herbs, with preferred spices and condiments, sugar to taste, vinegar, and salt if needed. It is enriched with olive oil. It is mixed very well with the vegetables and sausages, seasoning to taste. It is allowed to rest. Even so, it is possible to recognize two basic types: white fiambre and purple (or red) fiambre, depending on the use or proportion of beets. From the composition of the sauce, acidic, sweet, or sweet and sour fiambres are recognized. In some places, especially in the east (El Progreso, Jalapa, Jutiapa), the fiambre is not served together but in separate dishes: one of vegetables and pickles, another of meats and sausages, and one more of cheeses, so that the diner can mix them at mealtime according to their own taste; it is called "divorced" fiambre. Some people enjoy the addition of fish (dried, sardine, or anchovy), but others dislike it. Garífuna recipes, of course, add coconut.

And it has many touches of art. The artistic arrangement for the eyes of the diners, so that it is devoured first with the eyes. In this part of culinary creativity, there are no established rules or fixed procedures. The multi-colored adornments materialize in strips of pressed meats and cheeses, in asparagus, pickles, heart of palm, pearl onions, asparagus, radishes cut "in flower," strips of jerky, bell peppers, sliced hard-boiled eggs, enough grated dry cheese sprinkled, chopped parsley, and, if desired, a touch of tomato sauce on top of everything.

Self-Identification and Social Cohesion. The preparation of fiambre represents an event of great social significance that brings families together or the members of a family. Everyone participates in this cohesion, without distinctions of social class or economic level. It is no small matter if the dish contains an average of fifty ingredients that must be processed meticulously: cutting the vegetables and cooking them, turning cheeses and pressed meats into strips, cooking meats and sausages as required, preparing the essential broth, making the pickles to be added, having the decorative elements of each plate ready... too much work for one person, not to mention the number of hours invested in it.

Ingredients more or less, different ways of seasoning it, varied times of maturing it, individualized art in the decoration; sour, sweet or bittersweet, predominance of reds or whites... unmistakable smell, unique texture, glorious appearance... sublime creativity in serving it, sanctified protocol in consuming it... everything is summed up in a dish that lacks recipes because everyone has their own. It is born in human dimension and commemorates a supernatural environment uniting families around their deceased relatives. A sacralized flagship meal.

Corollary

In the pre-Hispanic worldview, starting from the "simple" act of eating, people found the

mechanism desired by the divinity to please it, and it was easier for them to articulate their profane world with the sacred one. The accumulation of magical-religious expressions that were unleashed, considered under the common denominator of spiritual culture, have little to do with everyday food. But it cannot be denied that, as sacred food, it is behind the scenes or in the foreground in many rites and rituals of spirituality.

Food still has for the Maya People the extraordinary symbolic connotation signaled by the creator Ajawab. Currently, in order to celebrate the Maya Lunar New Year (Wajxaqib' B'atz') of the sacred short count calendar, the Cholq'ij (Tzolkin in Yucatec Maya), a day when a new cycle of 260 days begins, the K'iche' people of Momostenango perform ceremonies in which the ajq'ijab' renew their commitment (pataan) to serve the community and feed their ruwäch q'ij (nawal in Nahuatl).

Local spirituality adopted other nuances from the Spanish invasion, which brought the cult of Jesus Christ. Around him, Catholicism mixed with indigenous spirituality in a deep religious, cultural, and social ideology. Christianity does not abandon the symbolic-material importance of food, hence a moment of intense importance for its original doctrine, the Catholic one, is the Last Supper. In what to lay eyes might seem like a simple Easter celebration, Jesus makes it a ritual dinner by proclaiming the bread and wine as his body and blood. That night in Jerusalem, Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist.

Many considerations can be made around sacred food. These hurried notes left out celebrations as important as the Conception of Mary, the Assumption of Mary, the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Corpus Christi Thursday, the day of St. John the Baptist, the day of the Lord of Esquipulas, the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the patron saint festivals, all of them with splendid examples of sacred cuisine. I am indebted to the readers.

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The seventh seal of the Maya code, the hidden oxlajuj b'aqtun in food

GUILLERMO BERMÚDEZ

PART I

Given that social anthropologists like Jean Briggs (1970) assert that participant observation enhances understanding and knowledge while preserving scientific objectivity if the researcher is aware of their involvement, and considering that Crapanzano (1980), Kevin Dwyer (1982), and Rabinow (1992) approve of it, and Renaldo Rosaldo (1983) defends it as a positioned subject because they have lived particular experiences, I will approach the truth from the human side based on my field experience with an anecdote, as this allows for specific types of learning, about a strange event that led me to discover an exotic secret ingredient in Maya gastronomy never included in the literary cauldron of the chronicles of New Spain since the late 15th century.

These are symbolisms evidenced in traditional foods with common factors that have gone unnoticed, demonstrable through the method of analogies and, like the Rosetta Stone, they possess a series of keys that I intend to analyze through historiography and, correlating them with the Dresden and Tro-Cortesian codices, reveal a Maya code with which, based on what I learned from the Ajq'ijab (spiritual guides) and K'ämol B'ey (elderly) during the VIII and IX Congresses of Mayan Studies at the Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala, I will discover its connection to the kajtz'uk or Maya quadrant and the Cholq'ij or sacred calendar and, under the cause-effect order, establish their meanings to generate ideas that identify associated underlying agents of their relationship with the Oxlajuj B'aqtun or end of cycle.

I clarify that the citations I include, while not indispensable, are very illustrative and facilitate understanding; that Popol Vuh appears as it is in the cited titles, with Pop Wuj being the one I adopt to refer to the text, as proposed by Mr. Adrián I. Chávez. I warn that to assimilate this innovative work it is necessary to strip away stereotyped criteria and preconceptions to immerse oneself in the refreshing waters of new knowledge, like an initiatory bath, to travel the hidden path to the mysterious world of the Maya.

Esoteric symbols in gastronomy?

I found myself soaked in dew, inhaling the aroma of the humid cloud forest in Baja Verapaz, immersed in silence, only broken by the crackling of a branch breaking among the ancient trees adorned with mosses and vines, absorbed in the waterfall that danced on the enormous rocks as it sprang impetuously from the mountain, when I remembered a mysterious event that had happened to me some years ago.

I then felt a kind of electricity on my skin, like when I was at the archaeological sites of Iximché and Quiriguá, and I decided to return to the hotel to take some notes about what had happened to me on a certain occasion that would completely change my life because, since that experience in 1999, I had dedicated myself to research.

It turns out that during an intercultural seminar, we would spend the New Year in a Tz'utuhil community and celebrate it with a Maya ceremony at midnight; coincidentally, it was a propitious day according to their ritual

calendar. I was eagerly looking forward to experiencing their mysticism because it was the first time I would participate in what I came to consider a kind of initiation because of what happened.

When the time came, we moved to the shore of the magical lake in Santiago Atitlán, Sololá, where there lies submerged in its depths an ancient city from the Preclassic period, submerged over 2,000 years ago, called Samabaj, whose recent discovery had not been revealed until the 2000 Archaeology Symposium, when it was first reported to the scientific community.

I mention this for its importance because it was when I invoked the Maya grandparents for their guidance, unaware that I was just a few meters away from one of the centers where this civilization began. So there, in front of the imposing San Pedro volcano, I discovered the key. The ajq'ij or Maya priest was already waiting for us with his assistants, and after tracing a circle on the ground that we had previously cleaned in the afternoon, the mystical ritual began. With reverence, he recited prayers to the Ajaw, "Heart of the sky" and "Heart of the earth," and to the hills, while placing in the center pom copal, storax, benzoin bark, and other mysterious ingredients.

After the fire was lit, the profound ceremony was performed with the priest's prayers, as has been done since ancient times, lighting candles of the four symbolic colors among flowers and other offerings.

The fragrant incense that billowed from the sacred fire carried our prayers in curls, and little by little, we were immersed in magical mysticism, experiencing a surge of emotion that choked my throat, and perhaps due to the smoke, my eyes moistened slightly.

Now, years later, I remember excitedly when we all fell silent watching the flames dance, wrapped in that spiritual atmosphere under the starry sky, thinking about our requests, while imagining the life of the ancient Maya amid the lushness of the tropical jungles.

At dawn the next day, we were all filled with new hopes from that ceremony, but that joyful dawn would remain etched in my memory forever because of the unusual and curious event that was about to happen to me.

The rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee and steaming tamales filled the air. As breakfast was served, I thought about how exotic the food of the Mayan princes must have been, prepared by maidens with bare torsos dedicated to this art. Sebastián Verti, president of the Patronato Pro Fortalecimiento de las Tradiciones Mexicanas y la Alianza para su defensa (Board for the Strengthening of Mexican Traditions and the Alliance for their Defense), said:

The preparation of dishes was traditionally entrusted to indigenous women, who had a deep religious sense of this duty, considering it a mystical mission. (...) They were instilled with a taste for the art of cooking from a young age, so the care and dedication they put into cooking any dish helped to turn cooking into a ritual.

Now, years later, reflecting on that, I wondered: Could there be esoteric symbols in pre-Hispanic gastronomy as I have thought since that strange day? As I wrote my notes in the hotel, I recalled the figures I had seen at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of Guatemala, because if all Mayan arts have pictographs and culinary arts is also an art, traditional foods should have them too.

And, given that the pictographs on pre-Hispanic foods did not have a decorative

function, they would have to serve to convey a hidden and by definition, esoteric message. Since their staple food was maize, a grain with which humanity was formed and venerated with rituals that have been dedicated to it since ancient times, rigorously, its content would have to be of equal or greater value than that material with which they are made.

"Only corn dough entered the flesh of our first parents." Ruxe'el Mayab' K'aslemal teaches that: "The planting of corn is sacred because it is linked with the life of the human being, who, like corn, is born, grows, flourishes, produces, matures, and dies. Corn is a living being, and there is an established order of how each procedure practiced by our grandparents should be done." (...)

Three days before the planting, the vigil begins by burning pom copal and candles or votive candles at night on the altar where the corn seed destined for planting is placed. (...) The night before (...) the guests who are going to collaborate with the planting gather, play, dance, and live together in great harmony. (...) The elders take the initiative to prepare the offering on the days they should abstain. (...) These are established rules that cannot be changed or altered." Therefore, I concluded that: The gastronomy of Guatemala, derived from the pre-Hispanic era, presents symbols like Mayan art does; that these constitute a message, and that their content is of similar importance to the sacred.

Will there be precedents to corroborate it?

It was from what happened at that breakfast that I began a historiographical analysis of pre-Hispanic cuisine, sure that the renowned chroniclers of the colony would enlighten me about the symbols, but frustratedly, I saw that they had not noticed any evidence, so they made no mention of it.

Not even Fray Diego Durán, nor Bernal Díaz del Castillo describing the banquets of Moctezuma II, nor Bishop Diego de Landa, nor Ximénez studying the Pop Wuj, who qualified all these stories as children's tales. They themselves ate such food without discovering anything. But not even the celebrated Fray Bernardino de Sahagún noticed the existence of pictographic clues, despite having collected interrogations from indigenous sages about their gastronomy and customs.

That is why these contents would go unnoticed for centuries, as I was able to verify, also by relevant contemporary ethnographies on the gastronomic topic such as that of Verti, already mentioned, or of Camelo (1991) from the National Autonomous University of Mexico -UNAM- with a thorough analysis of pre-Hispanic gastronomic customs based on 16th-century chronicles.

(...) shows the different attitudes towards food of members of two human groups with different cultural traditions (...) The importance of food for human beings appears in several contexts to show its cultural value and the meaning it has in relationships (...) and shows that food and its conception as part of a group's history is another facet of the history of man.

Motolinia (1541) mentions the ritual use of food, although without yet realizing the true symbolic meaning that these foods contain, because he was only interested in criticizing customs, instead of delving deeper: (...) they had the custom of making dough buns, and these in many ways, which they almost used in place of communion of that god whose feast they made (...) With corn dough, they made some tamales (...) and while they were being made, some children played with a type of drum (...) and also sang and said that those buns turned into the flesh of Tezcatlipoca. (...)

And they ate those buns instead of communion or flesh of that (...)

But what importance does it have?

It will contribute new knowledge, which is scientifically relevant, with the evidence of symbols in pre-Hispanic gastronomy, used as a means of transmission. The message related to the Oxlajuj B'aqtun is of great significance at a time when humanity reflects on the change of cycle. But even more important is that it will open a new research path, revealing keys to understanding the Mayan code, like a treasure discovered, and will correct a slip in education that overlooks the wisdom of this civilization, giving greater importance to its ruins, without considering that culture is indispensable for development and that if it is lost, it is not replenished because it cost centuries of experience of the people who originated it.

Its human relevance lies in the fact that it will benefit more than fourteen million Guatemalans in their identity, as well as countless other Mayan descendants scattered around the globe, from southeastern Mexico and Central America, who for generations have ignored the greatness of their ancestral culture.

Because interculturality needs to be strengthened, which will contribute to peace and development, avoiding collapse due to not feeling proud of their historical past, since losing their self-esteem, they try to fill their lives with material things beyond their purchasing power, without satisfying them, and psychologically affected, often frustrated, they migrate to developed nations in the north to try to satisfy that existential void that keeps them anxious and overwhelmed.

It is a priority, then, because many migrants copy harmful counter-cultures and when they are deported back to their countries, they often join gangs or "maras," or get caught up in crime and drug addiction. Meanwhile, knowledge of their own culture enriches internal growth to have the stability that will give them their roots like the tree, with which they stand firm, as a man must be to be able to erect himself, his family, and his nation. Thus, they will be able to grow as citizens of developed countries like Europeans, Jews, Asians, Arabs, or of any nationality that stand out for their culture, which they carry everywhere and which is reflected in what they undertake and sow like a great tree that will be there forever, so they are successful in their activities and businesses wherever they establish themselves. It will promote peace among all those who have nourished themselves with the same gastronomy - creoles, mestizos, ladinos, and natives because, by knowing the cultural contents of what they have been eating for generations, class divisions that have caused so much harm will be minimized.

Finally, it is important because it will bring understanding and tolerance, benefiting everyone from their ancestral heritage, improving interrelation and coexistence, avoiding living stagnant or getting tangled up in violence and death, as they have been doing judging by the headlines.

Then they will live as one people without any discrimination, which will undoubtedly contribute to the progress of countries that share a similar culture and therefore similar gastronomies, so they will be stronger and better predisposed to achieve the millennium goals and, therefore, overcoming underdevelopment caused by absurd class separatism.

And I saw a hidden symbol

After the Maya ceremony, we would have breakfast with traditional "colorados"

tamales, named for the red color of their filling, cooked by authentic Tz'utuhil women. It's a reward, I thought, as if the ceremony had been a form of initiation for me. Sahagún said: "Others ate tamales that are colored."

Due to haste, they were served still tied in their leaves, and the North Americans burned their fingers trying to open them; I helped them and blessed mine, and amid the steam that fogged my glasses, something caught my attention. The sauce or "recado" formed clouds or "celajes" over the white masa. It could be due to the cooking process, but it seemed to me as if it were a hidden symbol that was revealing itself to me for something. But it would be Imbelloni, when cited by Villacorta, who confirmed the mysticism enclosed in everything Maya, and Girard, who ultimately initiated me into the depths of pre-Hispanic esotericism.

Dr. Luis Recasens Siches affirmed in this regard: Through more than twenty years of living among K'iche' Maya in the territories of Honduras and Guatemala, Girard managed to gain the trust of some of their priests; and he managed to soften them and get them to reveal the esoteric meaning of many of their symbols, rites, and beliefs (...) a way to interpret the esoteric meaning of many passages of the Popol-Vuh, which before seemed an impenetrable mystery (...) the only way to a deep understanding of the Popol-Vuh. That's why I embarked on a historiographical search throughout the conquest chronicles, and when I was completely lost amid the whirlwind of symbolism in the codices, dizzy and about to despair, I finally found a light with Ruxe'el mayab' k'aslemäl because it says:

The grandparents and grandmothers of the Maya spoke of science using Maya terms and concepts, where a knowledge process was developed to become divine science, explaining that the interpretation is not done in a strict, tacit sense, but in its divine sense which is the relationship that exists in everything around us because everything is important.

I discovered the key with the emotion of one who finds a treasure. It was for me like finding Champollion's Rosetta Stone, because in the Pop Wuj it says: "There existed the book of things hidden, things covered up, things kept secret; they came from the Maker, Modeler." Or (...) "their face is hidden from the observer, the surveyor." Then the path began to clear; a hidden path to penetrate into what was hidden (...) as if the grandparents had guided me to see there the clues that would lay the foundation of my research, the starting point of my fascinating adventure, because the word "hidden" indicates the esoteric nature, without whose key I would never have understood the code.

However, a doubt assailed me: Will Recinos' and Raynaud's interpretations be correct? Because from K'iche' it was translated into Old Spanish and from this into French, to then pass into Spanish again, with each translator's point of view. How many distortions has the original suffered over the centuries? I then ran to compare the ancient translated version of the manuscript from Chichicastenango by Friar Francisco Ximénez, originally written by Popol-Vinac in the 16th century, hand-painted in codices systematically destroyed. And yes, there it was! "Here we shall show what has been hidden, what has been concealed, what has been kept secret, for the unveiling, for the opening." (...) And then: (Paragraph 6): "This is the ancient book that was painted long ago and only hides its face from the view of the thinker; great is its emergence, its content." It mentions again "it hides its face from the view of the thinker."

(Emphasis added) Here it is necessary to consider Imbelloni's words:

"The ideal translator will not be the one who translates expressions charged with esoteric meaning into everyday phrases, but the one who ensures that the old cloth painted with forbidden figures does not retain prohibitions or limitations for our intellect."

This clearly establishes important elements that will come into play throughout this analysis, namely: the secret, the forbidden, and the hidden, which unmistakably indicate an esoteric sense and the risk of altering it, which is precisely what Saravia claims to have done by saying: "I fixed some phrases to make it more understandable." This is where the esoteric meaning of a subtext that speaks of what is found (or can be found) in the deepest depths begins to blur; far beyond the literal translation of a glyph language. Thus, the differences in the text are clarified, as each chronicler translated according to their own interpretation of subtle Maya metaphors. Villacorta, referring to the Spanish used by Francisco Ximénez, adds: "(...) the Spanish spoken by Popol-Vinac when he wrote his poem in K'iche' between 1554 and 1564 in the 16th century, is better than that of Bernal Díaz del Castillo and most of his contemporaries."

Brasseur de Bourbourg says: The narration of what was hidden (...) its view is hidden from the investigator and the thinker.

However, Mr. Adrián Inés Chávez introduces something hopeful, which arouses enthusiasm to clarify the mysteries, saying: So here we will take to teaching it, to revealing it, that is to say, to narrating it, what was left and illuminated by the Architect, the Former (...)

The Esoteric

It is pertinent here to clarify something about esotericism, a term uncommon and strange to many young people, but omnipresent in pre-Hispanic gastronomy. Esoteric knowledge is understood to be that which remains hidden within a small internal circle of sages or guides, partially taught as mandates or norms to an intermediate circle, called mesoteric.

This, in turn, transmits these precepts to others, converted into traditions and rituals, thus spreading them among the large external circle called exoteric of a social or sectarian conglomerate who, for generations, assimilate them as legends, ignoring their intrinsic meaning that has been hidden.

The so-called "philosophers or alchemists" of the Middle Ages communicated it among "initiates" through a code composed of clues or symbols. Something similar is semiotics or semiotics, which studies signs that communicate messages such as traffic signs, for example, telephone signs, no smoking signs, or others that are already very common as a universal language in images.

The same happened with the Ah Kin -a caste of Maya sages- who communicated knowledge of eclipses and celestial movements that would occur over time, drawing pictographic symbols in all their arts, such as codices, frescoes, lintels, stelae, ceramics, textiles, and others, so that they would not be lost, foreseeing the spiritual darkness that would cloud humanity in a future foreseen by them, but which is actually our present.

These knowledge painted with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures were misinterpreted by obscurantism, unable to see in those pictographs the magnificent artistic system of semiotic communication, labeling them as "deceptions of their

religion", distorting their "hidden" meaning as astronomical maps, sentencing them to systematic destruction.

Bishop Diego de Landa declared: "We found a great number of books of these letters, and because there was nothing in them that was not superstition and falsehoods of the devil, we burned them all, which they felt greatly and it caused them much sorrow." This event occurred in Maní (Yucatán) on July 12, 1562, similar to that of Friar Juan de Zumárraga, who is attributed with having, in Texcoco, burned hundreds of thousands of Nahua codices. Although it is said to have been a plan of the conquerors to annihilate the culture of the indigenous peoples. At that time, there were very few who could interpret symbols, so they were transmitted orally and through rituals that, when mixed with hegemonic customs, gave rise to a forced syncretism as a stratagem to which the ancient Maya, recently colonized, were forced to protect their wisdom, so that it could reach now, giving rise to the rich folklore of Mesoamerica as a system not exactly cryptographic, but rather semiotic, thus ensuring that knowledge could withstand the passage of history but which must be decoded in order to understand it.

That is to bring to light what was formerly hidden or to unveil the secret.

After the keys

We arrive here at the most exciting stage; that of finding the keys with which it will be possible to decipher the code, raising the following questions: How important will the message planted there be to disguise it in such a way? And how could it have gone unnoticed? The clarification of these enigmas is that, due to its importance, it was necessary to cover up said message in such a way that it would surpass censorship and persecutions, but that it would endure through the centuries in the collective imagination. That is why, born in a mystical land, pre-Hispanic gastronomy transmits encrypted content under a code, which is why, to decipher it, keys must be sought by analyzing both the external forms of the samples and their internal components, making consequent analogies with the ideographs of the codices and in the light of the Mayan cosmovision, traditions, and legends, which will reveal their true meaning and not in literal translations. It is necessary to consider that in the 16th century, foods captivated the taste of Spanish nun cooks who added ingredients, both from their land and from the Moors, so they underwent transformations and, also, due to the religious syncretism that has already been explained.

Ceremonial dance: It takes place during the night to share (...) it is part of the joy that is experienced because it brings balance to the maize plant.

The burial of maize: At the time of sowing, as the K'atol mayej says, we ask forgiveness from our God for burying the maize seeds (...) This prayer is said by the elder (...) The place where it is sown: It is not simply the space where it will be sown but it is something sacred where the creators and formers of the universe must be remembered.

Tradition of cleansing: Before starting the clearing [or slashing], permission is requested (...) burning copal and placing a cross. [kajtz'uk N. a.] 38

(...) This ceremony is done a month before, then, when the forest is burned, the cross is brought to the house (...) During the activity (of clearing) one does not speak of any subject because one does not play with the hill or with the valley, because they have life (...)

The tradition of abstinence: The direct responsible for the activity must commit to taking care and avoiding (...) directly affecting the quality of the maize (...) one must comply for 3, 9, 13, or 20 days (...) This indicates that there is a depth of knowledge about life itself and (...) maintaining balance, harmony with the cosmos, because we depend on it.

Preparations beforehand: Prepare the planting place (...), the offering, (...) the instruments that will be used. Even the people who are going to sow (...) to shell the seed because of its value (...) an elder or chief of the sowing is sought.

The sowing ceremony: (...) the elder (...) positions himself in the center of the land and gives thanks and asks (...) copal and candles are burned (...)

According to 16th-century chronicles, tamales were a ritual food for princes, kings, and gods. Therefore, it is interesting to see what historians describe: They also ate tamales in many ways (...) they are called cuatecuicuilli tamalli; (...) Others (...) called íztác tlatzíncuitl; these are very white and very delicate (...) Another way of eating tamales was called íztac tetamalli (...) Others ate tamales called nexyo tamalli cuatecuicuilli (...) Others ate tamales called tamálatl cuauhnextli. (...) The lords ate these ways of bread already mentioned (...) they always brought to the lords' house many ways of food, up to a hundred meals, like hot tortillas and white tamales (...) Note the esoteric etymology of the Nahuatl ending that Sahagún carefully transcribes in his narration: Cuatecuicuilli tamalli, íztac tetamalli, nexyo tamalli, a term that all chroniclers of the time, without exception, defined as "wrapped" or "covered," symbolizing the hidden and that in Fray Alonso de Molina's dictionary of pre-Hispanic roots is defined as "tamal," being a first key and by definition an esoteric revelation. It is traditional to offer tamales in the Q'eqchi' area and also to give them as gifts: Food on the altar: (...) they bring the best to the altar table: incense, candles, meats, tamales (...) and share the sacred food (...) in a container specifically used for the altar (...)

Lunchtime: The farmers arrive directly at the altar (...) for lunch (...) and they are given mox leaves to wrap and take (...) to share with their families at dinner, they also bring tortillas and tamales, if they bring plenty it's better (...) Everyone (...) must make their xeel to share with their children at dinner, everything that is prepared must be shared because what is being done is sacred (...)

The universe on the plate

During that breakfast in Santiago Atitlán, I noticed that in the "recado" of my colored tamal, scattered in the sort of sky that had been drawn, there were stars that stood out made of pieces of chilies, giving the impression of some large and small bright stars. Because it had been processed in a traditional way, on a grinding stone, and still feeling the emotion of the ceremony that was for me like an initiation into that mystique, I offered it to the Mayan grandparents.

At that moment, I felt a shiver down my spine because something would happen as a response from the ancestors, and with amazement, I realized that the wrapping and its tying formed a powerful symbol because, although its shape has become rectangular, perhaps due to market demands, the tradition in indigenous communities of making them square or rather cubic is still preserved. Note a curious aspect of the Mayan cosmovision:

The Maya's universe was a cube—the perfect shape for Plato—horizontally divided into three planes: astronomical, physical, and

spiritual, which is the triple nature of Hunab-Ku, and vertically sectioned by the four cardinal points, singularly colored and producing a wonderful stereoscopic sensation exalted by J. Imbelloni.

The universe's simile was there on my plate! Its shape symbolizes the planes or worlds. If it is an offering, it is to the supernatural world; if served at a wedding or celebration, to the natural life, and if at the wake of a deceased person, to the underworld. But because of its binding with strips of cibaque (the heart of the tul plant), dividing it into four on both sides, it carries the message further. Of course, it could be justified for practical reasons, such as not unraveling during cooking, but that would not happen because they are cooked tightly packed on top of each other, being a symbol as the one enclosed in the ancient q'eqchi' tradition of wrapping and, above all, tying the "xeel" (ritual food offered on altars). The xeel has its way of wrapping and tying the food. All the farmers and the women who helped in the kitchen must make their xeel to share with their children at dinner (...) what is being done is sacred and has been gifted to us (...). The remaining leaves are stored in a box placed near or under the altar (...)

The binding goes unnoticed due to its simplicity, ending with a knot, imparting an extraordinary symbolism: The sign of the cross. But not the Roman, torture cross, but the pre-Christian one. The mayab' kajtz'uk, quadrant that reiterates the cosmogonic interrelation; the four directions, four paths, or four corners and four corners of the universe that were determined with the measuring rope. Having thrown the lines and parallels of the sky and earth, everything was perfectly finished, divided into parallels and climates. Everything was put in order, squared, divided into four parts as if with a rope everything had been measured, forming four corners and four sides.

The cibaque lines of the tamale's binding also represent the measuring rope of the universe's former. (...) Great was the description and the tale of how everything in the sky and earth was finished forming, how it was formed and divided into four parts, how it was marked and the sky was measured and the measuring rope was brought and stretched in the sky and on earth, in the four corners, in the four corners, as was said by the Creator and the Former, the mother and father of life (...) And the longitudinal and transversal strokes of it converge at the central point of the tamale, transmitting a multiple meaning: God, the ceiba tree, and the being. The center of the cube is Hunab-Ku, the unique or supreme being, bisexual to engender everything, from whom the other divinities, forces, and forms would emanate, heart of the sky, of the earth, and of the depth, corresponding to the Kabagüil of the Quichés and to the three manifestations of Kakulhá, Chipi Kakulhá, and Raxa Kakulhá. The central axis is symbolized with a ceiba tree (Yaxché, Bombax Pentadrum):

The great mother ceiba, in the midst of the memory of the destruction (of the world), stood upright and raised its canopy, asking for eternal leaves, and with its branches and roots called its lord. (Chilam Balam de Maní) The knot that tops the tied center of the cross in its simplicity also indicates the center of the quadrant with which, according to legend, the universe was measured. In the center of the quadrant lies the essence and life (...), it is the duality of woman and man, the point of balance where the life of the being must be maintained. The white color of the center of the quadrant represents the path of light, the white path that expresses its positive energetic capabilities and skills, reflects

happiness, harmony, love, tranquility, peace, and the blessing of the being Utz Kaslemal. The dark color represents the black path (...) Wuqub' qak'ix

With candles and corn cobs of four colors in the corners, the quadrant is reproduced in ceremonies, and it even governs the life of the Winäq, the being, when combined with the Cholq'ij or sacred calendar that determines the uwach q'ij (the type of day on which the person is born, by the energy of the day), indicating the vocation, gift, qualities, virtues, or abilities that the person brings from birth. Of these four paths, one was red, another black, another white, and another yellow. (...) it balances the load of the spiritual and material columns of the being. Each corner is identified with a color and points to the directions of the universe. East corner, red color (...) west, black color (...) south, yellow color (...) north, white color (...)

The relationship between the tamale and the kajtz'uk is demonstrated, with the same colors representing the universe, corroborating the Hermetic maxim that: "as above, so below," (The Kybalion) the macro universe being identical to the micro universe.

The strange event

These Maya tamales called "colorados" are made from white or yellow corn and are served with red sauce or "recado" made from achiote (Bixa Orellana), a vegetable dye that gives them their name. When spread inside the wrapping, it forms whimsical patterns representing blood or the sun, because they are eaten hot and because the chili pepper produces heat, or both, as it is a characteristic of indigenous thought to express different related concepts in a single allegory.

I place them in the eastern corner of the Kajtz'uk. Sun element, it is life, it is the red blood, it is the red corn. (...) At this point in the ceremonial rite, Our first parents B'alam K'itze' and the grandmother Kaja Paluna Birriel (2006) - Agroecologist - says: (...) I was able to verify the current use (...) of red corn, a variety mainly produced in the U.S., and which is not traditionally used (...) This fact represents an important threat to the biological and cultural diversity surrounding the traditional Milpa (Corn) system in the area (...) and Pérez already said since 1813: Very little red is planted, and only as is killed for some remedy (...) I have observed that birds do not touch this grain when thrown to them; if they have something else to eat. This makes the red tamales even more significant because the red cob is not cultivated, but is spontaneous, called "the soul of the harvest."

I was reminded of when I was showing Americans how to unwrap tamales at breakfast, when another strange event occurred, because I noticed a curious note from Sahagún, which I rushed to confirm: (...) the white tamales have on top a snail painted with the beans with which it is mixed (...) Other tamales they ate that are red and have their snail on top (...) the simple tamales, (...) have on top a snail like those mentioned above.

I immediately realized that the knot in the center of the cibaque cross of the binding replaces the aforementioned snail and, although the friar in the 16th century had no suspicion that it was a symbol, it confirmed to me the hidden mysticism in every detail of the tamal, even in the knot that now represents the old snail. Ma Juk'utaj (Maya zero): It is the Xamalil Kaslemal the spirit of being, something that is not seen but is in time and space, therefore it has life. The spirit is also represented by the sound of the T'ot' or snail. The sound of the snail shell is used in Mayan ceremonies to invite the spirits of time and space to connect with the life of being. Do the

tamales speak? Yes; their voice is found in the message. Clearly the symbol is saying that there is something to listen to and that is the voice of the characters they represent. Or maybe they are invoking their spirits? Surely the snail symbol from the inside will have migrated to the knot on top of the wrapper because Maya tradition differs somewhat from the Aztec one observed by the friar. It is also logical that the snail disappeared due to the current high demand for tamales, much greater than what was required in the time of Moctezuma, hastening the production that, being massive, causes the mentioned variation in the aspect of the produced units. However, now it is symbolically found in the knot in the center of the cross. Inside, what I could observe was the sunrise - life-giving star - as the exalted presence of the civilizing brothers of that culture, the wise twins Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké, because it was they who, like suns, illuminated the cultural firmament of the Maya, or as a sun with dual attribute, as presented in the "Kiché myth-historical poem" or Book of Time. Jun Aj Pú, Shbalanké (two names of the same being) A Blowgunner, Shbalan-what was God. But there is still more, the explicit mention of the birth of Hunahpú in the early morning is not arbitrary, since it is the advent of the solar hero that arises with the Aurora. On the other hand, the story of Hunahpú reproduces in the astronomical plane the course of the sun, both in its diurnal trajectory and in its annual journey that (...) symbolizes the cycle of human life.

That is why he is born with the Aurora and dies when descending to the underworld (Xibalbá) to resurface triumphant in the east. (...) He humanizes himself to elevate man to the plane of the divine, exemplifying the guidelines of the great True man (Halach winik in Maya; Achi' in Quiché). (...) Because Hunahpú is the paradigm of all the virtues and qualities that all the great Maya leaders must have, he is the wisest among the wise (...)

By the time the festivities resumed in the dining room where we were gathered with our seminary companions, I was smiling because I felt that it had been like a kind of enlightenment, between sips of perfumed coffee to mitigate the spiciness that, by tradition, they put in tamales in rural communities.

Could it be that the burning effect of the chili is a simile of the sun? I thought during that cold morning whose mist still obscured the beautiful view of the San Pedro volcano on the other side of the lake; because that's exactly how I felt, while it was cold outside, I was sweating from the heat that the chili causes. But the best was yet to come! In the center, where there is the most sauce of the tamal, called "recado," I would be discovering another important clue, like a hidden sign left there by the Maya grandparents.

Tears moistened my cheeks, caught in a rapturous mystical feeling. "Are you crying?" the companion next to me asked, puzzled. "It's because of the chili," I replied, disguising my momentary emotional disturbance. But that strange event would remain etched in my consciousness forever. Only I knew why.

The message

The Maya had to adapt the concepts to communicate them in the Spanish of the 16th century, where "message" was called "recado," and this sauce or "recado" of the tamal was the key to emulate the sun because of its color, its cloud-like shapes, the spiciness, and, enriching the symbol of the twins Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké or dual solar hero who illuminates that culture with the light and heat of his wisdom and his example. And to make this analysis exhaustive, it will be shown how the hero speaks from his heart of

triumph over the lords of the underworld (evil), perpetuating it in the tamal leaves.

- "Now tear yourselves apart, because truly our hearts desire it," they told them. And immediately they tore each other apart.

Hunahpú was torn apart by Ixb'alamké (...) One by one, he tore off his legs and then his arms, when he removed his head, he went to place it far away, he tore out his heart, which he wrapped in leaves, which greatly pleased all those in Xibalbá. Only one of the dancers was then visible: Ixb'alamké. "Rise up!" he said to Hunahpú and immediately he returned to life. This later led to the victory over the lords of Xibalbá. (The emphasis is ours).

This places the hero's heart wrapped in leaves in the red tamal dramatically emphasized by the piece of meat in the red recado like blood, symbolizing his love, desire, his will, and therefore, all the associated attributes. With his own example, Hunahpú sets the rules of worship and cultivation of the milpa and gives the astronomical, chronological, and ritual norms inseparable from those. He also gives the guidelines of law and natural morality understood in the religious morality of a utilitarian nature, based on the preservation of the individual, the family, and society, on the principle of authority and economic guarantee for the sustenance of humanity, exemplifying also the ethical actions of the ideal human type. Could there be something that would dissipate what is exposed, when said message is also implicit in Mexican tamales, described by Verti? Is it possible that even so there is a way to contradict what is exposed? However, Hunahpú's heart does not appear in leaves in Recinos's version, but it says; (...) "on the grass." But this is explained by the successive translations where what meant leaves for one translator, another interprets it differently and when translated into Spanish, it was translated as grass, which, in a different language, could be taken as a synonym for leaves. Then, others have copied it thus perpetuating the same discrepancies for entire generations. Not just because of the imagination and personal interpretation of its authors, but because of a bad translation, or a fallacy due to the lack, not only of a minimum linguistic or historical knowledge necessary of a culture and an era, but of an excess of stereotypical and simplistic caricature of other cultures. To preserve scientific objectivity, another expert opinion that cannot be refuted is analyzed here, what Girard said, as an authority on the subject: Some translators have tried to "improve" the style of the Quiché text, according to Western literary taste. But in the architecture of the indigenous language, as in that of its monuments, each word or sign has a very precise meaning and the modification or misinterpretation of a single word can completely distort the meaning of a sentence.

From Ximénez who described "all these stories as boys' tales" to Imbelloni, the most substantial part of Quiché mythology has remained ignored.

That, precisely, is what has happened to date. Emphasizing Girard's sentence: "The modification or misinterpretation of a single word can completely distort the meaning of a sentence." Probably it is for this reason that in other versions of the Pop Wuj, Hunahpú's heart appears with a slight variation. In reality, each version presents a different lexicon. This shows that the mentality of the indigenous people has not been deeply penetrated nor the depth of their religious conceptions and therefore of their culture understood. Because these "childish" legends, transmitted orally from time immemorial, contain the entire evolutionary process of religion, society, and economy, that is, of Maya-Quiché culture. They

constitute an epitome of laws or religious dogmas still in force and that were given to man by God, before the Viejo Mundo code of Hammurabi.

With the previous clarification, any doubt about the relationship of the heart between leaves or grass, with the similarity of the tamal, which means wrapped, is dispelled. On the other hand, a great variety of tamales from Guatemala show signs of this symbolism, in addition to those from Mexico and other places, which constitutes conclusive evidence that is verified by the comparative method, demonstrating that this food, despite coming from different geographical points, has undeniable similarities in terms of symbolism. Therefore, once the analyzed elements are established as conclusive evidence, the test of two opposing syntheses is overcome, and consequently, the thesis is upheld that:

The recado and the piece of meat in tamales are symbols, like being wrapped in leaves, which allude to the heart of Hunahpú; that these constitute a message whose content refers to what the dual or twin hero leaves to posterity, as the most relevant, being of transcendental importance, the same symbology that is verified when analyzing other varieties of tamales. Other eloquent symbolisms will be analyzed by the method of analogies that reiterate it, also clarifying interesting aspects of the message of the Oxlajuj B'aqtun in tamales for the end of the cycle on December 21 of this year 2012, which we will see in the second part of this work.

Conclusions of the first part

It was verified that tamales have served as support for a pictographic form because they contain implicit a semiotic-esoteric symbology that turns them into a pictogram themselves, being evidence of being used as a means of transmission, determining, consequently, that they are bearers of messages, with the following symbols being among the most relevant: That all red tamales, whether they are made of corn, rice, or potato, are packed in leaves with a triple meaning: 1. That, according to the meaning of their name "wrapped," implies that the content is hidden. 2. To emulate the shape of the cube in similarity to the Maya universe, and 3. Representing the passage of the Pop Wuj, of Hunahpú's heart between the leaves and his attributes, metaphorically, as a paradigm victorious over evil and civilizer of the people to follow his example.

That all tamales of this variety are presented tied in the same way, emulating the Maya cross or quadrant, complementing the symbolism of their cosmic relationship by the meaning of the measurement of the universe; that they are all tied with a knot, indicating the point where a snail was formerly located in tamales, as a symbol of sound or word; that their recado contains annatto as a coloring, in addition to the red provided by chilies, tomatoes, and other ingredients, a color related to the eastern corner of the kajtz'uk quadrant, as a mythographic form of blood or the sun. As a symbolism of special importance, it is highlighted that all contain two pieces of meat, whether from pork, chicken, or turkey, representing the twin brothers, and that when they are presented with a single piece, they have some other complement like bacon, a slice of chili, or an olive, to symbolize the pair of twin brothers; that all evidence points to the center of the kajtz'uk, as an indication of a message about a cosmic event that concerns humanity, figured by the being, and also that the same symbology is also present in other varieties of tamales such as chuchitos and cambray tamales, and that some have similarities with several of Mexican origin.

Its scientific relevance was thus demonstrated by providing new knowledge and opening a new research path for understanding the Mayan code. But perhaps its greatest importance lies in its human relevance, as it has vindicated Mayan culture against historical detractors, benefiting more than fourteen million Guatemalans and other descendants of the same lineage spread throughout the world, by reaffirming their cultural identity.

Recommendations

Its study and dissemination are recommended, as well as the second part of this analysis, as a recovery of an ancestral legacy that contributes to strengthening the roots of Latin America's historical past, because it provides cultural values from gastronomy that, cultivated within the family, will foster love for the land and traditions of a culture that is eminently agricultural and that knew how to remedy the food problem that is now being threatened by the consequences of climate change, and because it counters acculturation, which leads to crime and other disastrous consequences for Latin American socio-economic life .

Part II

Because there are other realities to embark on paths never before traveled, with the opportunity to see a broader horizon, which can catapult humanity to new and better states of consciousness. The author. So here we will take to teach it, to reveal it, that is, to narrate it, what was left and illuminated by the Architect, Formator... Book of Time Adrián Inés Chávez.

The conclusions of the first section of this work were based on field experiences and, based on historiography, it was deduced, in accordance with the Mayan worldview, that the "colorado" tamale of Guatemala is a simile of the universe because of its shape and that it presents evidence of the symbol of the Kajtz'uk quadrant, due to its binding, whose knot is topped by a knot that represents the ancient symbol of the snail indicating sound or the word that, analyzing the filling and the sauce, was attributed to the twin heroes, on a message related to the heart of Hunahpú and his attributes as a paradigmatic example to be emulated in this era. In this second part, tamales will be analyzed in relation to an important astronomical event awaited by the Mayan descendants for 5,200 years, known as the Oxlajuj B'aqtun, which represents the end of the cycle and the end of the Mayan calendar count initiated in 3114 BC.

But do tamales have pictographs of the climax, when the long count ends?

To find out, analogies between various varieties of tamales related to the plates of the codices will be analyzed.

-emerged from the very heart of the mysterious jungles of Guatemala-, with which the secret code of the Maya that confirms the brothers Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké as the transmitters of the message about an astronomical moment that could refer to the mentioned event will be unveiled.

This would be vindicating the Mayan people as a mature civilization, for the capacity of its astronomers and mathematicians, in the face of retrograde criteria that have subliminally shaped the collective subconscious, incapacitating it to see that every day there are discoveries that make old concepts obsolete and that not everything has to be labeled according to the stereotyped and already obsolete. Evidence will be shown in tamales and their correspondence in the codices, traditions, and legends, based on proving the thesis that asserts that: Tamales were a means used by the ancient Maya for

pictographic communication with a message that speaks to us, with a wealth of clues, about the mythical sacred dual hero Jun Aj Pú-Shbalanké, as defined by the "Libro de los Tiempos", with the most important message of the era, the 13 B'aqtun, 13 Ajaw, whose energy-astronomical influence increases and is increasingly evident from December 21, 2012.

The Seven Seals of the Book

According to Johansson - a researcher from UNAM - knowledge in the pre-Hispanic era was memorized and transmitted either through oral tradition or through images, which led to the elaboration of codices based on pictographs, which would determine "the indigenous conceptual formalization."

The verb and the image were closely linked in the production of meaning without the pictorial discourse being completely subjected, however, to the "tyranny of its lordship, the word." The image produced a specific meaning with its own resources that, although it could be "read" partially and reduced to words, did not petrify into a specific verbal text.

In turn, according to the pictorial genre, a specific relationship was established between the referred sense and the sense produced by the image; between history and discourse, between surface levels and the deep structures of pictographic configuration. Iconic mimesis, ideographic symbolism, and phonetic mediation were combined with size, stroke, position, colors, the spatial "tension" of forms on paper or fiber, and their composition to generate a partly infra-liminal sensible meaning.

The image was also integrated into the graphic entirety of a book whose own materiality was an important factor in the structuring of meaning, and more generally, to the specific circumstances of a "reading" which ultimately determined the relationships between the image, the painter, the reader, and other potential recipients of the pictorial message.

By using gastronomy as a support, the parts of the "book" are replaced by the material, the sense of the message, and the circumstances of sustenance, since it was through Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké, the wise brothers, that the people learned agricultural techniques to tame corn, the basis of their diet, and these civilizers also provided them with the sustenance of knowledge.

(...) the amoxtli or amatl book determines numerous semiological aspects of indigenous writing. The sacred or magical character of the object, its relationship with the contained text, its specific texture, its form, its size as well as the modalities of its manipulation in the act of reading, constitute important "contextual" elements for an adequate perception of the signs.

It is then deduced that tamales, in the function of a "book," represent another semiotic communicative reality containing a pictographic message to be "read" contextually in each and every one of its characteristics, from its wrapping and its form, to the fact of having to unwrap them, as a ritual symbol of discovering or unveiling the content of a wealth of color, warmth, and nourishment to be ingested, consubstantial with the sustenance provided to culture by the civilizing brothers, wrapped or hidden, as affirmed by the Popol Wuj, from its preamble: "Their sight is hidden from the investigator and the thinker." This suggests that it is a sealed book.

Therefore, as tamales are analyzed, the seals of that strange book are being broken, which according to Mayan custom could be thirteen.

In what we have analyzed, we have managed to open up to the seventh seal.

Of course, it has never been said that the Mayans used this system of seals in their books, but the fact that the preamble of their main text specifies the sentence "their sight is hidden" suggests that it is implicit. An analogy of the seals can be seen in the construction of pyramids, as an upper stage used to be built on the initial structure, which was sealed underneath the second one, or hidden. The procedure was repeated every so often, resulting in monumental complexes of several superimposed constructions, leaving the first ones sealed. According to archaeology, these monuments are like books, as they have meanings.

Similarly, when analyzing tamales, it is discovered that one element is inside another that wraps it, completely hiding it, much like Russian nesting dolls "matryoshkas," one inside the other. Hence the comparison with the seals of the book, since to uncover the interior elements of the tamal it is necessary to break the layers, as if they were seals, to penetrate towards the interior and be able to understand its surprising message in its entirety.

But there is another interesting symbolism revealed there, which could be an allegory about time, meaning that what is found in the center refers to a time much earlier than that of the upper layers, which could even refer to future times, based on the example of the construction of pyramids that have a sealed core from an earlier time than what is on the surface.

One very popular type of tamal in Guatemala, which serves as an excellent example for analyzing the seals, is called "chuchitos" and can be classified among the "colorados," although much smaller, they are made using the most traditional artisanal methods. They consist of a ball of white or yellow corn dough, looking just as Motolinia found them in the 16th century: In many of their feasts, they had the custom of making dough balls, and these in many ways (...) but they had one that more properly seemed like communion, and it was that (...) with corn dough, they made tamales, which are round buns, and these were cooked in water in a pot (...)

In the "General History of the Things of New Spain," it says: They also ate tamales in many ways. Some of them (...) are white and shaped like a lump, not completely round or quite square (...) Another way they ate tamales (...) like the ones above, somewhat harder.

The description fits exactly, as their shape is the one indicated and indeed, they are much harder than the so-called colorados, establishing that the tamal, due to its utility as a means of transmitting pictographic messages, acquires the attributes of a book, and the tamales called "chuchitos," like all classified as "colorados" and their opposites, the black tamales, have the indispensable knot in their tie, which has already been analyzed in the first part. Could this knot be the first seal that needs to be broken?

Probably this has been done only out of tradition, as it is not indispensable, since it would be enough to fold the end of the cob leaf called perhaps for that same reason properly "folder" (totomoxtle in Mexico) which are the leaves of the corn cob, since it is the way they usually wrap the small sifted tamales in Mexico, or in Guatemala, the so-called "elote" tamales that will be analyzed later.

And here is where the first seal is opened, since in order to access the interior of the book or tamal and know its contents, it is necessary first to untie the knot of the tie,

which constitutes the symbolic act of breaking the seal. When it is very tight, they usually cut it with scissors or a knife.

The presence of the knot in the wrapper of the chuchitos is important since symbolically it replaces the snail analyzed in the first part, being another sign of a message, since for the ancients said snail also symbolized the sound or the word as Johansson explained.

(...) the male breath of Ehecatl Quetzalcoatl penetrates, in the sexual sense of the word, into the female snail and fertilizes it. The culturally configured sound is born whose representation will be precisely the form that the god's breath took as it passed through the snail's spiral. (...)

According to the myth, it was Quetzalcoatl who tore apart the darkness of the primordial silence in illo tempore, and produced the first sound light by blowing into his snail. (...)

(...) it is confirmed in the myth when the sound materiality produced by Ehecatl enters in turn into the ear of the lord of death who hears it (quihualcac). Let us remember here the etymology of caqui, "to hear" which is composed of the verb aquí, "to enter, to penetrate", and of the pronominal morpheme. Literally, to hear is "to make enter".

From the sender Quetzalcoatl to the receiver Mictlantecuhtli, the musical breath gestated by the snail in turn fertilizes the silence of death to establish culture.

That is to say, in the order of appearance of the constitutive entities of the human being, the spirit precedes the configuration of its physical materiality, and that this spirit, product of a hierogamy, in turn has a "fecund" character as visually expressed by the spiral that manifests it.

The second seal that is broken is the wrapper of the "chuchito" because without opening it, it is not possible to see its content, therefore, it is necessary to unwrap it first after untying the knot. The third seal is found in the leaf wrappers of the "colorados", "negros", and the so-called "paches" tamales, because they present a greater degree of difficulty or obstacle to overcome to reach the desired object, as under the first layer of maxán leaf, there is another wrapper of a thinner banana leaf, which must be opened to eat the tamale, there is no other way to do it, so the third seal is broken.

In the "chuchitos," the wrapper is made of tusas or dobadores, but the act of unwrapping them symbolizing seeing the hidden, implies discovering new knowledge, being another parallel with literature, but at the same time, it relates to the teachings of the Mayan books as will be seen later. The fourth seal to be broken - which is properly said, because once it is dismantled, there is no way to rebuild it - is the tamale dough that wraps the filling completely covering it. Some tamales have the filling somewhat exposed, but since the dough of the "chuchitos" is harder, it practically traps the filling; it encloses it completely.

The fifth seal that is opened is the "recado" that, like a protective layer, covers the meat filling.

The "chuchitos" must be consumed hot, because when they cool down, they harden, reiterating the symbolism of the sun or blood, due to the temperature at which they are kept from the moment they come out of the cooking pot until they are consumed and by the color of their recado made of tomato and achiote.

Regarding colors, before their semiotic discrimination function is "activated," they

have their own materiality, tactile and visually apprehensible. The different phases of their elaboration constituted a ritual propaedeutic that consecrated both the object itself and the content that would emerge from the culturally ordered application of pigments. The animal or mineral origin of the colors and their mixture with water probably determined a sacredness that permeated the signs. The fact that a specific painting could be used as medicine for certain diseases probably gave a specific value to said painting in the semiotic context of pictography. There is a whitish red color called chiotl that is made in hot lands; it is a flower that is ground and is medicinal for scabies; and if mixed with the ointment called axin, it becomes vermilion. It must surely be the red vegetable dye called achiote used for the recado of the colorado tamales, which coincides with the description, note the similarity of the name by combining the two terms cited from Nahuatl: axin + chiotl achiote (Bixa Orellana), a product that has healing, stomachic, and other properties.

Here I include another small anecdote as my experiential testimony, and it is that there was a magical moment when, analyzing the enigmatic "chuchito," suddenly a passage from my childhood came to my memory. It turns out that many years ago, my mother, being a devout person, made me accompany her to the prayers and other traditions to return with the sweets that were exhibited in the churchyards in those times.

In practically all the image books of Mesoamerica, the spirit, ihiyotl, the word tlahtolli, and the song cuicatl will be represented by the volute, the formal product of the penetration of a female snail by a male breath.

It is demonstrated that the knot has a symbolic relationship with speaking, hearing, and penetrating culture because: If the spiral constitutes the visual semantic core of spiritual emanation, its formal modalities determine specific meanings.

It is then necessary to break the seal to "read" or eat the "book," introducing knowledge into the being. The link established between pictography, the word, and the act of speaking is visually manifested in the glyphs representing writing. And said glyph, the volute, comes from the snail represented by the knot of the tie.

So, I consumed my steaming "chuchito" with gusto, only to find in the center two tiny pieces of meat, hot and seasoned with the red recado, somewhat spicy from the ground chilies.

Of course, back then I couldn't imagine that it was imbued with enormous symbolic significance, like the two suns of the Mayan cultural firmament - the resurrected twins Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké, or in the case of being one, symbolizing the heart of the dual hero Jun Aj Pú-Shbalanké. I speak of this as a "positioned subject" among the few who remember the customs of half a century ago when everything traditional was still preserved in tamales, which always had not one, but two pieces of meat. So much so that as children we used to say that what we liked most about the "chuchitos" were "the little meats." We always said it in the plural, never in the singular; it was already a habit in our speech. As Rosaldo would say: "they are particular experiences that can allow specific types of learning." Of course, young people will be unaware of these traditions that have gradually faded away due to mass production, given the demand.

It would not be strange if the translators of the Pop Wuj had interpreted the tusas or corn husks as the herbs mentioned in which,

according to Recinos' version, Hunahpú's heart was placed. J. Villacorta makes no mention of either; he says, "He was presented with the movements, the intoxication of the entire Xibalba nobility."

Regarding why the heart of this character would be so important, we can easily deduce it from his greatness, described by Girard as follows: "Hunahpú -the civilizing hero of Maya-Quiché culture is a redeemer god, son of the Supreme Being; he is born parthenogenetically like the great religious leaders and sacrifices himself for humanity, many centuries before the distinguished figure of Jesus Christ emerged on the panorama of human history. He proclaims the doctrine of the immortality of the soul before the doctrines of Plato, when the Greek mythology created by Homer and Hesiod did not yet exist. Hunahpú and Ixbalamqué become human beings, they have the same substance and lead the same life as man to set their patterns of behavior." (...)

In the first part of this work, it is explained that it starts from the name "tamal," which in Nahuatl means wrapped, and Pop Wuj tells about the magical dance of the twin brothers in Xibalbá, where Ixb'alamké, after dismembering Hunahpú, placed his brother's heart in leaves.

Is it a coincidence that the pictographic symbols of the "chuchitos" are similar to those analyzed in the colorado tamal? Because a contrary synthesis could arise arguing that they are similar tamales and, therefore, are made in a similar way.

But... Is it then just a coincidence that the two pieces of meat resemble the semiotic significance of the twin brothers or the allegory of Hunahpú's heart in leaves, as the legend of the dance relates?

To overcome the test, analogies with traditional legends will be demonstrated, starting from the curious name of these small tamales, which is a diminutive of the name given to small dogs and puppies, disproving any contrary thesis, as there would already be too many coincidences. María del Rosario Molina, a Guatemalan columnist, says: "Chucho," in Spanish, "is a name we usually call dogs familiarly" (...) Already in 1892, Mr. Antonio Batres Jáuregui, an academic (...) clarified in his Dictionary (...) "Chucho: As a familiar name for the dog, it is Spanish (...) Mr. Vicente Salvá, a Spanish philologist (...) specifies, in a dictionary dated 1853, that chucho is the name given to the dog (...) The Essential, the latest publication by the RAE says: "Chucho" as a derogatory term for dog. It is noteworthy the religious importance of the dog, associated with the figure of the Camé, and which appears as a mythological motif during the protohistoric cycle, but is not mentioned again during the period corresponding to the Maya-Quiché cultural era, also disappearing by then the mythical coyote.

We find the key to decode the message of the "chuchito" in passages of protohistory in Pop Wuj, where the dog is cited in a very enigmatic way at the end of an "age".

(...) And behold, their dogs spoke and said to them: - Why did you not give us our food? We were barely looking and you were already throwing us from your side and casting us out. You always had a stick ready to hit us while you ate. That's how you treated us. We couldn't speak. Maybe we wouldn't kill you now; but why didn't you reflect, why didn't you think of yourselves? Now we will destroy you (...) Note that it says: "We couldn't speak," but it speaks. Another version: Why did you not look out for us? Illustrates a "chuchito" from plate XX of the Troano Codex.

And, in Chapter XIII, Part II of the Pop Wuj, it reappears, without being taken into account, except as Xolotl, the twin of Quetzalcoatl, guiding the dead to Mictlan, or the 10th day dogs of the Maya zodiac. Pop Wuj says: "Tear apart my dog and let it be resurrected by you" Note the parallel between the dog dance and the name of the "chuchitos". When the brothers Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké had been resurrected, the Lord (of Xibalbá) told them - Tear apart my dog and let it be resurrected by you, he said. It's okay, they answered and tore apart the dog. Then they resurrected it. The dog was truly full of joy when it was resurrected." And according to Villacorta: Then they sacrificed their dog, which revived before them and they truly rejoiced over the dog. Girard recounts: After having resurrected, they danced before the lords of Xibalbá and, at the request of the great lord, they tore apart their own dog and immediately resurrected it.

Saravia, quotes: And an Ajaw said to them: Tear apart this my dog and resurrect it again. Taking the dog, they tore it apart and resurrected it, and the dog wagged its tail, very happy to have revived". He accompanies the text with the figure of the friendly puppy from plate 13 of the Dresden Codex. Note the volute in its snout, a symbol identified by cryptographers as speech.

The link between verbal expression and image begins with the graphical formalization of the spirit emanating from the being: the volute. Before describing in semiological terms the pre-Columbian Nahuatl writing, it is interesting to consider the formal gestation of the ideographic signs that represent generically the word and the image.

And from this symbol, two curious little balls emerge. Could they be two suns? The twins? The brothers Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké illuminated the Maya people like the sun with wisdom, and the little dog points to a twin element in space, highlighted by the sound of an equally twin drum, details that are represented as pictographs in the tamale called "chuchito," keys to the mysterious message.

But if "The modification or misinterpretation of a single word can completely distort the meaning of a sentence," a bad copy can make a figure go unnoticed, like the dog in the Dresden Codex, the spheres not appearing in the Kinsborough, and it is because the Italian Agostino Aglio, who made the copy around 1880 or 1825, ignoring the great importance that detail would have in 2012, simply omitted it, which does appear in Ernst Förstemann's version.

It is presumed that the same error is reproduced in later versions such as those of W. E. Gates (1932), Lips and Deckert (1962), Thompson (1972), and the electronic version of Fuls (2002). This is an extreme that would need to be corroborated. The sixth seal constitutes the revelation of the Mayan secret, for which it is essential to analyze a few more tamales, such as the no less enigmatic twin tamales, which are the key to opening this seal.

But do twin tamales exist? Yes; that's right. Such is the exoticism of pre-Hispanic gastronomy and the sophistication of Maya art that it created this culinary delicacy of exquisite and mild flavor, confirming the reiterated importance of the clues analyzed in case there were still traces of doubt. These small tamales, so well known in Guatemala, called "De cambray," are different from the Mexican ones but as eloquent as the chuchito from the codices, because they indicate the same thing very clearly, like a book painted by the ancient sages.

Guatemalan "cambrayes" are an enigmatic set of two twin balls of dough carefully wrapped in a single husk, with a knot in the center that prevents them from coming together. But they still present a greater esoteric symbolism that makes them more eloquent, because these balls are invariably painted red on the wrapper, emulating two suns, as can be allegorized to the wise twins.

Of course, the name is not pre-Hispanic, having emerged from miscegenation, like that of the chuchitos. It is no coincidence that it is the name of a canvas invented long ago, and the Diccionario de la lengua española 2005, Espasa-Calpe, defines it as: Very fine cotton fabric of white color, because the pictographs had to be painted on the tamales, which were made of white dough.

Perhaps some Spanish nun intuited back in those years that these little tamales were like a canvas on which the Maya wanted to paint something, and the smoothness of the dough reminded her of the best fabric she knew in the 13th century, so she decided to call them that, because that religious woman knew that there would be no better support for painting than the canvases of that newly invented fabric, and she herself would have wanted to make the backgrounds of her habits with it. They could be called "the twin suns," because they are painted red, and like all tamales, they are always eaten hot. There are several semiotic keys there: The red of the sun; the vegetable dye that speaks of something from nature, and the heat to taste them, but, as a requirement, they must always be eaten in pairs. The question is: Why do these tamales have to be twins? If it were because they are very small, it would have been better to make them larger, like chuchitos, for example, and they could be eaten in threes or as many as desired, but no; the elders' sublime wisdom was not subject to mere whims or market demands, and if it was decided that they should be made that way, it was because that exactly coincided with an important and perfectly defined purpose of continuing to harbor the key: The secret code. So, the elders decreed that the little "cambray" tamales should be twins, and that's how they have been made since time immemorial, until now. Two together, attached to each other, in the same wrapper.

Yes; they are made and sold in pairs without exception. But what is the importance of this detail? It is because it is telling us about two suns and, according to Girard, about the "protohistory" of the Maya. If one of the balls is cut in half, the small anise seeds of the local variety resemble the stars in the sky.

Opening the seventh seal

Once the seventh seal is broken, the entire secret code will be revealed; the complete content of the tamale is then visible.

I have had the privilege of deciphering the interesting evidence of the chuchito from the Dresden Codex because, with its jaws raised pointing to the little spheres, it gives an identical message to the one shown by the tamales being analyzed here.

If there were still any doubts, it can be fully confirmed by analyzing the engraving corresponding to plate XX of the Trozortesian or Madrid Codex, which, for some important reason, was selected by National Geographic to illustrate one of its magazines showing the cute puppy playing a twin drum.

The eloquent figure of the chuchito with its head up and its mouth open as if howling appears to be singing, which is why it has been called the "singing dog." It would be preferable to call it "the wise dog," because of the knowledge it contains, as it seems to be speaking, as two dotted lines lead from its

mouth to those two enigmatic and tiny spheres floating high above.

However, from another perspective, the dog rather shows its amazement at the sight of the two spheres suspended weightlessly in the firmament.

Furthermore, it is drawing attention to them, as dogs bark when they want to warn of an event or howl if it is something very spectacular or that causes them special excitement.

Therefore, it would not be surprising if this attitude is precisely the intention of the plate: to draw attention to these spheres; to speak about them.

But why assert that the dog is talking to us about the twin heroes, symbolized here by both spheres in space?

What clues could there be that they are such characters? Is it a mere conjecture born of senseless assumptions? Or are there grounds for such an assertion? Note that the dog is playing a drum that speaks to us of sound; but not just any drum, because it is a twin drum. So far, no one has paid attention to the small double drum that the dog is playing. This is a drum made from a curious gourd with two protrusions; a twin that forms two drums in one body. The outstanding thing about the detail is that it is unusual, since the engravings of the codices that represent drums commonly are of a single body, as seen in other plates. If it were a fable, it would not be strange for it to speak, but this is a sacred book. Girard says it is history.

So it's as if it really speaks in the subtext, about the voice of the twins and their teachings, with the interpretation being: "Be amazed by the word of the heroes" (The message, its message), which links this puppy with the two pieces of meat of the tamales called chuchitos and similarly with the two balls of the tamalitos called "De cambray". Now we are at the historic moment of being able to decode those details that have gone unnoticed and that can be very significant, like everything concerning the other enigmatic figure of the small dog, with all its canine characteristics, hidden in plate XX of the old Troanos codex in the Museum of America in Madrid, holder of the code hand-drawn by the wise Maya ancestors.

Here again, the same ideography is repeated as represented in plate 13 of the Codex Dresden, with the dog speaking of two objects in space. Why use the figure of the dog if this were not of great symbolic significance? It was not going to be purely for pleasure to include the modest puppy alongside its central figures of great importance such as the civilizing characters of that culture. It is curious that the original narrators of the text used this simple animal in a moment of great drama in the Pop Wuj when the heroes faced their victimizers and lords of the underworld, and even more curious is the appearance of two little spheres above the symbol representing the word.

Both in the Dresden Codex and in the Madrid Codex, the little spheres in space are indicated by dotted lines, reaffirming that it is about speech because: When the characters do not speak Nahuatl, the volute is often represented with dots inside to indicate that they speak "sandily."

But the truly interesting thing about this point is that: In case the song or speech is of a sacred nature, volutes are generally alternated oriented respectively to the right and to the left. Just as the dotted lines appear in the speech of the dogs.

It is a dog that besides resurrecting speaks, and therefore, it is necessary to investigate

what he is saying about those two spheres. That dog is the key. He is the one who points to those two suns and... There is the hidden Maya code! There is the key to the relationship of the tamales with the heroic brothers, which has always been in the Popol Wuj, the sacred book of that culture.

Because they were like the benefactors who nourished the Maya with wisdom, just as the corn tamale was the food of the people and, judging by the ceremonies cited in the ancient chronicles, also of the gods.

But are there any other clues that support this thesis? Yes, there are many, which are still pending analysis, and all of them are related implicitly in the tamales of Guatemala and come from the traditional gastronomy of the ancient Maya.

Continuing with the range of tamales from the eastern corner of Kajtz'uk, corresponding to the message of the red color of the sun, life, or blood, they are also well represented by the already famous ones called "de arroz," attributed to the highland area of Quetzaltenango in Guatemala, a department very close to Mexico, so they could have been influenced by traditions of Aztec origin or vice versa, since they are also found in that country, although different. These tamales in their wrapper are the same as the "colorados" and very similar on the inside, but they differ slightly because the coloring stands out more for its whiteness, being made of rice dough that can contain a proportion of corn or dispense with it entirely, but due to the softness to the palate, they carry the symbolism that their message is pleasant, like "good news."

They can present either one or two pieces of meat indistinctly, since, like the ones already mentioned, another piece was usually placed next to it in order to form the inseparable set of two elements; one large, with another of smaller size that, among the boiling and spicy filling, simulated the two suns. In modern versions, a small piece of bacon or pork skin serves as the second element that will make up the pair, and due to the trends to avoid the consumption of pork, these meats are replaced by chicken, which, being more difficult to cut due to the bones, for greater speed they put only one piece, changing the second for an olive or a slice of bell pepper, thus reconstructing the symbolism of the two elements in the same set: the twins.

However, it is often the case that in some rural communities, although they have not yet been influenced by modernity and are careful with traditions, nevertheless, their tamales do not present the meat separated into two parts as in the past, and authentic elderly Guatemalans cannot remember that the tamales of their childhood had two pieces of meat, mainly in the eastern region of Guatemala. But this is because there the Ladino influence and the Xinca ethnicity predominated, which is now almost extinct.

However, it should not be forgotten that a single piece is related to the legend of Hunahpú's heart, analyzed in relation to the red tamale, so, in one way or another, the tradition and the semiotic message are preserved despite the passage of time and modifications, which can be seen in the remaining varieties that will be analyzed, according to the varieties of corn indicated by the Maya quadrant used as a means of classification for their study.

It is not surprising that the details of the recipes are ignored; however, they are still processed similar to how they were made in ancient times due to custom and to maintain a good presentation, thanks to which their pre-Hispanic characteristic features are preserved, at least in the most essential

aspects, with countless varieties, with the samples being narrowed down to the most representative ones based on the symbolism they possess, and some being omitted for being similar. Like the "de arroz" tamales, the ones called "paches," which are usually consumed on Thursdays, are classified as red due to the annatto content in the sauce, which in this case dyes them completely—being made like the previous ones, also with a mixture of corn dough, but in this case with a higher content of potato instead of rice or just with potato. They are called "paches," perhaps because they do not take the cubic shape that used to characterize the original "colorados," but they are somewhat flattened, which probably derives their name from the Guatemalan "pache" or low height, hence more suitable for simulating the horizontal planes of the Mayan universe, as explained earlier.

In some rural brotherhoods with a long tradition, community rituals are celebrated in which, after certain protocols are completed, the attendees are gifted with this rich dish accompanied by bowls of chocolate and the famous "pan dormido" or egg yolk bread, which is a delight. Nowadays, almost all "paches" have a single piece of meat, either chicken or pork, and, coming from a cold region, the spiciness is not lacking, forming here the second element of the twins, a long green chili, whose aroma and flavor are very unique, perpetuating the tradition.

There are those who cannot tolerate spicy food, such as children, so some make them without the chili. Thus, the passage of time covers with the dust of oblivion the old traditions, risking the loss of symbolic meanings. However, in attention to their deteriorated appearance, to compensate, they usually put a slice of sweet pepper instead of the spicy chili.

Fortunately, for the preservation of the cultural values enclosed in this type of tamales, they still retain their natural green layer of banana and maxán leaves. It is important to note that the capes of Maya kings, princes, and priests used to be of that color when the rituals to be performed referred to nature or were directed to the deities ruling over it.

In addition to these sensitive aspects of the structuring of meaning, the materiality of the book could refer to a religious context in which the aquatic tenor of the amoxtli, the amate tree, the maguey, the deer, etc., would establish distinctions that semiotically permeated the adduced tale.

This confirms that the message of the tamal refers to nature, as all its elements are natural, such as the leaves, the dye, etc.

If the colored tamales belong to the eastern corner of the Mayab' Kajtz'uk, the black ones are from the opposite corner, that is, the west, which:

Represents the element earth, where the spirits of being inhabit (...) identifies the place where our first parents are located: B'alam Aq'ab' and grandmother Chomija' in spiritual celebrations. Black also means night, it also means rest, it is for recovering energy, that's why it is hope.

There are no black corn tamales, although there are "purple" tortillas because the dough loses its color. There are some very significant ones in rural communities that use black beans mixed with white or yellow corn dough wrapped in strips of green corn leaf; then they flatten them and rotate them as they wrap, resulting in a disc with seven, nine, or thirteen sides, which may be casual, or who knows if deliberate.

Perhaps these were the ones the chroniclers referred to when they said: "not entirely round or well square." Although for the number of turns of the wrapper, there seems to be no fixed rule, but it depends on the length of the corn leaf, which is elongated; however, it would be throwing out kabbalistic numbers that may correspond to the loaders of the days of the sacred calendar. Its symbolism is multiple because, apart from the number of sides, there is the significance of the wrapper as the long feathers of the quetzal, like the plume of Kukulkan or Gucumatz (Quetzalcoatl).

When observing them unwrapped, they show the starry sky that is seen when cutting open a "tamal de cambray" ball, only larger, as this one has anise seeds for stars, and the other has large ones due to the beans. Their meaning would then be the same, only varying in size. While in some regions they are called "tayuyos," in others they are called tree bean or "camaguas," depending on the place and the type of bean used.

An interesting anecdote arises from the conversation with the elderly Ajq'ijab Cirilo Pérez Oxlaj, whom I had the honor of interviewing on February 27 this year, who, regarding this variety, pointed out a peculiarity in the so-called "xepes" or "chepes," depending on the region, which have one side smeared with red seasoning.

In my interpretation, they present a duality in the sky: one side for day and the other for night as an allusion, both to the duality of the hero Jun Aj Pú, Shbalanké, and because he is born with the dawn and dies when descending into the underworld. During that interesting interview with "Grandfather" Cirilo, from a providential morning that extended beyond noon, I had the opportunity for him, as he reminisced about his distant childhood, to remember the curious "Seven-Layer" tamale that was made in his own homeland.

- "This one is made by spreading a black bean dough already seasoned on a sheet of dough which is then rolled and cut into segments with which the small tamales will be made, and as they are eaten, the spiral becomes visible. They are delicious, my mother used to make them on her grinding stone," he said nostalgically. Nothing less than the enigmatic snail that I have analyzed! I thought to myself. This information confirmed to me the symbolism that relates tamales to the word or message, not only from the 16th-century chronicles, but also from the personal experience of a genuine representative of ethnic traditions, today an Extraordinary Itinerant Ambassador of the Indigenous Peoples, like the "Grandfather."

The festive tamale called "negro" is large in size, generally consumed on special occasions like New Year's or Christmas, filled with turkey or pork meat, its color due to the chocolate added to the seasoning, similar to mole, and inside, the stars of the sky are complemented by raisins and almonds. The symbol of the wise brothers Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké could not be missing, composed of a piece of meat and its smaller companion of bacon or, failing that, a prune that will never be missing.

Its wrapping and tie are identical to those of the colored ones, so they could be taken as the reflection or negative of these, of equal meaning but opposite in color - black, the antonym of white, emphasized because the ones from the eastern corner are salty and the black ones from the western corner are sweet, and because "Hunahpú is born with the dawn and dies when descending into the underworld." So, they repeat the meanings, but inversely.

The tamales from the southern corner of the Mayan universe quadrant are the yellow ones called "elote tamales." The word "elote" is derived from the Nahuatl "elotl," commonly used in both Central America and Mexico, or "choclo" in South America. Although the yellowish hue is very light.

The south of Kajtz'uk: Represents the element of water and where the rain comes from, the skin that covers the body of the being, also represents the yellow corn, a basic Maya food (...) In spiritual ceremonies, our first parents Ma juk'utaj and grandmother Tz'ununija are located." Yellow: It is Q'anil, maturity, it is the nucleus, the seed, the wealth.

All tamales are made from traditional masa of dried corn, but these are not like the others, but are made from grains of tender corn; that is, from the cob with the corn still immature.

That's why these rich sweet tamales are yellowish; their shape is somewhat cylindrical, elongated, and with a flattened tip produced by the wrapper, similar in style to that used popularly in Mexico. Sahagún says:

"They also ate some rolls, not round but long, called tlaxcalmimilli; they are chubby and white, and the length of a palm or a little less." (...) (It was already said that in appearance they are white, slightly yellowish). There is a great variety of similar tamales in Mexico that, due to the Aztec influence, present differences from the traditional styles of Guatemala but, nevertheless, retain similarities, still observing in many of them the same wrapping system of millenary tradition, whether sweet or savory, although somewhat larger. The aforementioned Verti mentions several of tender corn like the "de cuchara", originating from the state of Mexico, similar to the so-called "uchepos" from Michoacán, which are sweet, and the "colados" from Nayarit, like those from Córdoba, Veracruz, and the tamales de pictes, from Yucatán, among others. But the clue that underlies the theory of this analysis is its wrapper, which has never been modified and which presents, like those already mentioned, evidence of two elements in a single set, which due to its everydayness goes unnoticed.

It is formed by placing the tender corn masa in a channel of still green corn husks, which is closed in a tube shape and then folded at the ends, which, when hardened by cooking, imparts a more or less cylindrical shape but with the end flattened. The key lies precisely there, since by observing them from the tip cut in half - something no one does - you can see the end of the cylinder with a line dividing the circumference into two equal parts, because the fold of the wrapper has molded them: two equal elements in a single tamal, emphasizing the theory of twins.

Following the color code of Kajtz'uk, all white tamales correspond to the north corner of the universe quadrant or corner; these are made with white masa. The chroniclers of the 16th century gave an account of these: "They also ate tamales in many ways. Some of them (...) are white and in the form of a lump".

It is important to remember that this ordering based on the Maya quadrant or cross does not follow any rule, but rather this model has been taken because it establishes an order to classify the different varieties of corn by their color and, since tamales are made with said grain and carry the same amount of colors, it has been decided to do it this way for study purposes. Although truth be told, it is not known if it was arranged in pre-Hispanic times and the chroniclers did not realize what would be a method of logical and reasonable ordering, as were all the Mayan sciences.

However, this mathematical instrument, as explained in the first part, not only emphasizes the cosmic nature of the message contained in tamales but also has other implications that will be seen later. The white color of the Kajtz'uk represents the element of air, the color of the bones of the body, identified with white corn (...) place where our first parents are located: Iq' B'alam and our grandmother Kaqixaja. It is purity, the color of life, the color of semen, egg white, the seed, the air, the breath of life, the bones, the whites of the eyes.

White tamales constitute a huge variety and all are presented with their respective wrappings respecting the symbol of wrapped as an indication of the hidden, as has been explained, although all of these are not square or cubic like those analyzed at the beginning.

The whites called "masa" or "traveling" are a spherical or ovoid ball wrapped in corn husks with tie and knot, which can be with salt or with cheese. They are cut into slices that are usually reheated on a comal or in the embers to be distributed among several diners during long journeys in the countryside, from which their name derives.

There are other smaller whites, somewhat flattened, made of dough with lard called "Pochitos", used as a substitute for tortillas or bread to eat with soups or sauces.

The other delicious specialties that have been given according to the elements that can be obtained in the different regions from which they come are wrapped in corn cane leaf, without tie or knot; among these are those that have the dough mixed with different herbs, such as the aromatic chipilín, the loroco, the izote flower and others. In Mexico there is also an uncountable variety but whose symbolic meanings do not stray from what constitutes a deliberate communication system based on analogies by their shapes and colors, transmitting a message with their components, which can be either explicit or incognito.

The oxlajuj b'aqtun

Now that the seventh seal has been broken and the contents of the book have been opened, the word of the dual civilizing hero Jun Aj Pú-Shbalanké or twin brothers can be scrutinized. However, if their metaphors remain confusing, here are some elements of interest to be analyzed in order to generate ideas that identify underlying agents associated with their relationship to the Oxlajuj B'aqtun or end of the cycle.

We then return to the aid of the mathematical quadrant for the better interpretation of important aspects to be emphasized: According to the ancestral Maya practice, the Ajq'ij have been accustomed since time immemorial to interpret the Patän Samäj, or sacred wrapping of the Winäq (the being), to determine the mission, both material and spiritual, of the being's life, based on the characteristics of the energies of the day of their birth in relation to the sacred calendar or Cholq'ij, using the quadrant or Mayab Kajtz'uk, as seen in the first part of this work. Now, an extremely interesting question arises: While it is true that the deepest part of the tamal, like the most hidden part, represents the heart of the dual hero as has been explained, it is also true the aforementioned sentence by Girard that "it is a characteristic of indigenous thought to express in a single allegory different related concepts" so, right there in the central nucleus of tamales, there may be something of an even more hidden meaning than the previous one and that, if in the colored tamales the third seal was placed in the second wrapping consisting of the thin

plantain leaf under the thick layer of maxán leaf, in other varieties of tamales that seal could well be discovered by locating the point where all the signals converge.

Analyzing again the most relevant symbols, it is discovered that the knot, previously alluded to, falls exactly in the center, both of the large tamales and of the small "chuchitos" placed in a vertical position, as well as in the middle of the two small balls of the "cambray" tamal, if they are horizontally positioned and on the central axis, placing the "twin" tamal in a vertical position, which is reiterated three times, because there are three knots; one in the center and the other two at both ends. But it turns out that, in the cross tying of the cibaque, the longitudinal and transverse lines also converge exactly in the center, both of the front and the back of the tamal and that, in the diagram of the Maya universe, the central point is prioritized as the axis of the cube, where Hunab-Ku resides, "Heart of the sky, Heart of the earth and of the depth," also falling, in this case, in the center of the tamal. It is inferred, therefore, that everything points to the central point of the cosmos. Given that in the center of the Kajtz'uk lies the essence and life of the being, that would be, in the context of the universe, what would be revealed upon opening this seal of the book.

In other words, it would be indicating that the universe itself will fulfill some kind of mission indicating that the cosmic Patän Samaj has already been calculated, represented by the Maya universe through the wrapping of the tamales, which is equivalent to saying that its prognosis has been made, indicated as sacred, both by the characteristics of the calendar, and the sacred attribute of corn and the dotted volutes towards the right and left of the speech of the chuchitos in the codices, according to what Johansson explained in the paragraph already cited regarding the symbol of the word when referring to the sacred. The preamble of the Pop Wuj says: "This is the first book, painted in ancient times" (...) Note that it says "painted." Now; if the pictographic message of the tamales and inherent symbols point to the universe, it is a prognosis of the cosmic event already mentioned elsewhere in this work, distorted by mercantilist purposes but which, nevertheless, occurs, because astronomical events cannot be avoided just because their reality is not accepted, as in the cases of Galileo and Giordano Bruno. However, skeptics and detractors of Mayan civilization in the face of such an event will have come to a contrary synthesis questioning the aforementioned thesis despite the evidence provided because, being so innovative, it could be seen as adventurous and even extravagant or the result of unhealthy speculation.

In truth, this conclusion is very innovative but, nevertheless, it would have already been foreseen by those two legendary heroes Hunahpú and Ixb'alamké, whose origin is attributed to the gods as clearly stated in Chapter V of the first part of the Popol Wuj, their message being of utmost relevance for this era and will be so for the next 5,200 years of the new cycle.

Then one must ask: Was the Mayan culture a civilization with enough scope to foresee future astronomical events and even issue an alert in the most everyday aspects such as gastronomy, to reach this point when these predictions are being fulfilled?

And to overcome the test of contrary synthesis, demonstrating the truth beyond all doubt in order to maintain scientific objectivity and considering skepticism positive when it leads to a deeper investigative understanding, for the sake of knowledge, we will confirm it by saying that:

The observation that the Maya had a perfect ability to make astronomical measurements is pertinent. A curious fact: It turns out that the Maya had units of time of 23 billion days. Starting from the unit of the Maya calendar, which is the day or kin, at the eighth order we reach the 20 kinchiltunes, equivalent to 1 alautún, which is those 23 billion days. In the year 3114 BC, the long count of the Maya calendar began, more than 25,000 years representing the journey of our solar system around the center of the galaxy and in each period of 5,200 years, a new "age" begins, like those mentioned in the Pop Wuj. This leads to thinking about the changes of ages mentioned in the text that, according to Girard, are not myth but history.

(...) the Maya-Quichés define their own conception of history, by stating that their mythical tales are, at the same time, historical narratives, that is, a myth-history (...) articulated in four historical series or Ages, of which the first three correspond to concluded periods, that is, to the past, and the fourth to the present time that departs from the last creation.

(...) Popol Vuh constitutes a document of retrospective history, unique in human history; (...) that faithfully records the events that occurred in various epochs or ethnological cycles. (...) First age. After the formation of the earth (Family of Gugup Cakix) (...)

Second age. Faced with the failure of the first creation, the gods try to form new beings. (Family of Camé) (...)

Third age. Following the destruction of the second creation, the divine quorum gathers again to consult and discuss how to form better beings (Family of Ixmucané) (...) "They had no heart or feelings" (...) During the third age - or third katún - humanity was imperfect from the point of view of Mayan ethics, and the vices of the era, stereotyped in the character of Hun Bátz and Hun Chouén, caused their ruin. (...) In the fourth age, family of the hero-civilizer and the first four true men (...) Grandfather Wacatel Utiw Cirilo Pérez Oxlaj, tells us:

Our ancestors studied, among other scientific branches, astronomy. This allowed them to explore the cosmos and control time through the Cholq'ij, which repeatedly counts the periods of the sun that the planet Earth has experienced.

The Oxlajuj B'aqtun or Thirteen B'aqtun is the end of the fifth period of the sun, which takes 5,200 years in our sacred Mayan calendar and is called Choltum. However, it should be clarified that this event will not signify the end of the world (...) It is the arrival of the sixth period of the sun.

Without apocalyptic intentions, however, it should be noted that the global situation has been worsening, both in terms of violence and socioeconomics, and it cannot be denied that tensions in international politics could be heightened, as well as famines due to the consequences of climate change. Although the conscious world longs for improvement, this will depend on how cosmic energies are channeled by human beings, the only ones capable of modifying their social behavior, for better or for worse.

Thus, in this year 2012, on December 21st, humanity culminates the most critical period of its history, the climax of the end of the cycle in which, according to experts, an influx of energy impacts our system, marking important changes and a new cycle begins that will gradually unfold, much like the sun warms the new day.

General Conclusions

It is relevant scientifically, bringing to light new knowledge about tamales as the hidden treasure of the ancestors and opens a new path in research for the interpretation of the Mayan code hidden in the codices, such as the speech of the dogs about two suns, whose message with symbols reveals cosmic-temporal relationships, also relevant to humanity by supporting culture and identity for development and peace.

Esoteric semiotics allowed reading in the tamal as in a pictographic book where the theme of nature is discovered in the leaves of the wrapping and the coloring of the recado expresses a message about blood, heat, fire, and the sun; that the meat of the filling represents the heart of Hunahpú with all its implications and its cubic shape and quadrant speak to us of the Mayan universe, saying that its message is universal. That is the value of this avant-garde essay, because it does not start from stereotyped interpretations by distortions reproduced from text to text, but is based on a fresh source, never before tampered with, such as the traditional tamal to, deductively, start from there to find the evidence of the proof.

Having established that tamales represent the universe and demonstrated the existence of hidden symbolism that places a center and, being under the influence of the Kajtz'uk, which establishes the reading of the Patän Samäj of the Winäq or prediction of the mission of the being, it is concluded therefore, that it refers to a prognosis of the cosmos itself and, being the most important event of the era the Oxlajuj B'aqtun, or end of the cycle, it is deduced, consequently, that it refers to this event.

And just as a book nourishes the intellect, the tamal feeds with the culture of the ancestors and, evoking the universe, its message impels us to nourish ourselves with the energy of the cosmos, taking advantage of the change of cycle, the most important event of all time and of great transcendence due to its repercussions in various aspects of life, which concerns world society - to be enlightened with the light of a renewed consciousness. And there lies the foundation of why the ancients planted this message in gastronomy, because we can strengthen ourselves with the qualities of being.

Therefore, the thesis has been proven that: Guatemalan cuisine, derived from the pre-Hispanic era, presents symbols like Maya art, which are: that these constitute a message and that their content is of similar importance to the sacred and that: Representing the tamal as the universe, the kajtz'uk, indicates the Patän Samaj, which would be the future destiny of the cosmos or an astronomical event, since the Mayans were expert astronomers.

Finally, it shows us that there are other realities that, although different, will serve to undertake paths that we had never dreamed of traveling and teaches us to see a broader horizon and that humanity can catapult itself to another state of consciousness because: The prophecies of our Maya ancestors indicate that the 13 b'aktun, 13 ajaw, is the return of the grandparents, the return of the wise men.

Final Recommendations

Editions should be sponsored and presented in educational establishments with institutional assistance and included in school programs for being avant-garde and original, supporting culture and national identity by bringing to light genuine hidden contents, without starting from stereotyped interpretations influenced by distortions reproduced in all versions because, if the misinterpretation of a text changes its

meaning, the same happens with figures from the codices, causing the message to go unnoticed or be incomprehensible. A study of the complete range of pre-Hispanic gastronomy and its hidden messages should be sponsored, for its cultural value and for the following reasons:

Sponsorship allows for long-term sustainability, expansion, and replicability of dissemination, and sponsors benefit from tax benefits and brand or product presence. Its support and dissemination are contemplated in the National Cultural Policies and Strategies of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Guatemala. It is in line with Guatemala's Long-Term National Cultural Development Plan: "The human being also discovers that reality is changing and that he can modify it when he becomes aware of his capacity to transform his environment and critically and creatively takes responsibility for his actions, at that moment he creates culture and becomes the unique agent of development".

It is applicable in the integrated areas of the National Base Curriculum and several new programs of the Ministry of Education of Guatemala, such as: The mandatory reading program, education in values, environmental conservation, and promotion of peace. And, if the message of the Maya in the tamales is about the Oxlajuj B'aqtun or end of the cycle and if that is what is allegorized with the return of the ancestors, being what the little dog in the codices talks about, then it concerns all the peoples and nations of the world.

Oh, our children!

"We are leaving, we are returning, clear truth, clear order, wise advice we leave you... do not erase us from memory, do not forget us, you will return to see your homes and your mountains. Establish yourselves there and so let it be. Continue your path and you will see again the place from where we came."

Popol Wuj.

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The Invention of Indigenous Music from Mexico: Anthropology and History of Cultural Policies in the 20th Century.

ALFONSO ARRIVILLAGA CORTÉS

It's a challenging task to summarize a well-achieved effort, yet it's a pleasure because it reveals discoveries, thanks to the researcher's pedagogical and enlightening style. The title itself is suggestive: "The Invention of Indigenous Music" leads us, following Hobsbawm's notion of the invention of traditions (invented, constructed, or instituted), which "seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of conduct through repetition, which normally attempt to establish continuity with a past" (cited by Alonso, 2008:35), to the constitution of Mexican indigenous music.

Divided into two parts, the first part brings us closer to the formation of phonographic collections, the institutions in charge, and the researchers who carry out the collection work, some of whom disseminate data that later became cultural policies starting from the post-revolutionary period, within which precisely, as an expression of that national spirit, Mexican national music was established. The accounts of phonographic editions as well as bibliographic production have a rigor and coverage that make it a source of consultation at the same time. Following the policies of the Mexican revolution, what is called musical indigenism is established, which struggles between the "vicissitudes of the Indian-indigenous" and those marked by a clear integrative aim; a review that extends until January 1, 1994, with the Zapatista uprising.

It was not exclusively the nationalist composers like Manuel M. Ponce, Carlos Chávez, Candelario Huizar, Silvestre Revueltas, Julián Carrillo who bore the responsibility of creating the national soul. Although they contribute to creating a sound imaginary, missionaries, school teachers, and the very practitioners who, from the grassroots of the political arena, as actors,

construct their own musical signifiers also play a role. Cultural missions simultaneously achieved important community benefits that did not go unnoticed, as evidenced by Genaro Vásquez giving lectures on the importance of folklore in 1930, proving its significance as a medium. Between 1920 and 1930, with the idea of assimilating the indigenous through mestizaje, a selection with Europeanizing stereotypes and a modernizing and unifying criterion of Mexican national music was applied. This reading is reached through the speeches of officials from the Ministry of Public Education, reports from teachers, cultural missions, collectors of traditional music, and the testimonies of musicians themselves. The result was that the "Indigenous past and contemporary aesthetics became nationalized as symbols, objects, and artifacts" (Alonso, 2008:50). With a new calendar of civic celebrations (anniversaries of feats, birth of heroes, and exaltation of national symbols, among others), the national anthem emerged, patriotic songs accompanied by ensembles such as choral societies, bands, and philharmonic societies that reinvented the nation, in dialogue with existing local forms and established cultural policies.

After the revolution, cultural policies were placed under the direction of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia “National Institute of Anthropology and History” (INAH) and the Instituto Nacional Indigenista “National Indigenous Institute” (INI), which were responsible for the collection of phonograms. They viewed indigenous people as capable of progress through their status as the dominated, who needed to be incorporated through mestizaje. Although a pre-Columbian legacy was recognized, the lack of well-being and development was seen as something for which indigenous people themselves were responsible. Bolaños concludes by referring to the tension between "the Indian" and "the indigenous," definitions that guided Mexican anthropology, which viewed indigenous people as a cultural reserve in contrast to national society. The account of phonograms edited up to the creation of the Musical Testimony of Mexico series in 1979 is accompanied by editions from the National Indigenous Institute, which, with an important network of radio stations, expanded the possibilities for dissemination. While this was an indigenism that promoted indigenous people as the protagonists of their own destinies, other forms of pressure were shaped for musical standardization with criteria driven by central authorities that hindered this development.

The second part focuses on four "protagonists" of musical research from different moments and schools that shape the data they produce, which often, without them realizing it, becomes cultural policies. Parallel to the scrutiny of these authors and the cultural policies derived from them, there is a reflection on ethnomusicology from its origins with comparative musicology of the Berlin Phonogrammarchiv (Carl Stumf and Erich M. von Hornbostel, among others) and its development in the United States with Boas and the currents assisted by Alan Merrian on the Anthropology of Music, and Mantle Hood with more emphasis on musical analysis. It continues this journey through the history of the discipline with the approaches between the sixties and eighties of Alan Lomax, John Blacking, Ruth Stone, Gerard Behague, and Bruno Nettl, Steve Feld, who advocated for the use of new tools for sound and film recording and the fusion of both disciplines. Blacking says that music is a response to different perceptions, values, and beliefs that mark a boundary between what is one's own

and what is foreign in societies (quoted by Alonso, 2008).

Gabriel Saldívar y Silva initiated the first thinking and historical study of Mexican music with his History of Music in Mexico (pre-Columbian and colonial times). Despite its repeated editions (initially published in 1934, with the fourth in 1987), the work has not brought him out of anonymity. His articles "El Jarabe. Baile popular mexicano" and "Mariano Elízaga y las canciones de la independencia" (1942) manifest the first serious reflections on music within the framework of the post-revolutionary period, which glorifies the pre-Columbian past but firmly believes in modernity and its incorporation into the nation through mestizaje. He recognizes in the corrido or jarabe different cultural charges and traditions: the pre-Columbian, the European, and the African. He places the formation of a musical style between the 17th and 18th centuries, which during the 19th century takes on a national character from Mexican popular music itself, which, based on its musical and lyrical characteristics and its instruments, seeks to interpret.

Continuing with new criteria, Vicente T. Mendoza (1894-1964) seeks to channel musical diversity into new classificatory criteria, something that derives from his studies in the Mezquital Valley in 1936 (a complex classification of Otomi songs that other authors consider the basis of Mexican music). His Panorama of Indigenous Music of Mexico is a profound treatise that marks a new vision of indigenous music in Mexico, where the Hispanic character of mestizaje has a marked presence, as demonstrated in the Pastorelas and the Passion cycle that subject his classificatory proposals. At the end of this section, Henrietta Yurchenco (1916), the American who arrived in Mexico in 1942, is mentioned. From then on, she began a series of compilations that continued in subsequent visits. These recordings became part of archives in the Library of Congress in Washington and the Inter-American Indian Institute, institutions with which she was associated, and later in other national collections such as those of the SEP and the IIN. Yurchenco also had extensive radio and record company coverage, such as Folkways, which were interested in her compilations. Her work with Mexican institutions, her strong presence, and great contributions led to the naming of the sound library of the National Indigenous Institute in her honor. Her mere presence helped the discipline acquire an institutional rank.

As part of the new generation, from the second half of the last century, in ethnomusicological practice, Thomas Stanford (1929) is situated. Trained in North American academia and knowledgeable about Mexican reality, he participates in a disciplinary vision that privileges on-site recording and, by extension, fieldwork. In addition to this field recording, he conducted extensive studies in cathedral archives, pointing out the importance of understanding sound as a generic expression with its own local variants, while also carrying out important educational work. Much of his recordings helped shape the sound archives of the INAH, INI, popular cultures, and the almost extinct sound library of the ENAH, where he worked as a professor.

The final considerations provide a critical view of the discipline in Mexico and the new directions to follow in the establishment of a new research practice, as well as the need for a critical reading of past and present intellectual support. With a pedagogical vocation and methodological rigor, the account presents some key axes such as: the

anachronistic vision, the search for purity and reinvention through institutions; the absence of interpretation of contexts, the conflict between tradition and modernity; classifications limited to sacred and profane, traditional and commercial, rural and urban, a whole sound taxonomy of the noble savage that marked the developed research. It is regrettable how these collections have ended up after so many years, money, and effort, but particularly due to their significance as part of Mexico's sound history heritage. Their conservation and management are deficient, and little is done to give them new values of use and expand their records from a conceptual perspective.

A valuable surprise is the last section: Toward an Anthropology of Music, where a critical reading of the anthropology and musicology bipolarity is made, the prevalence of evolutionary perspectives, and the lack of a critical view of the discipline within the perspective of its development. As pointed out, there is a need for a historization of each of these intellectual expressions and their affiliations. Sound collections should no longer be seen as a way of preserving, but rather as a way of explaining, and separating research from promotion and dissemination so that, with the construction of: "...a new order, different from that stated by the otherness, where the factual fact becomes a theoretical abstraction and turns the common sense of the interlocutors into the ability to produce meaning from a scientific perspective" (Alonso, 2008:137), a challenge that also extends to indigenous ethnographers, a kind of authorized evaluators. As Sperber points out, the goal is to "interpret the context from symbolic phenomena" (Alonso, 2008:138).

It concludes with the necessary paths for this takeoff, accepting a Mexico with an intercultural musical universe in constant dynamic and creative process that crosses spaces of social life and updates that musical discourse, among other mechanisms activated by collective memory. Also, the need to undertake regional studies that encompass diverse categories, rid oneself of the view of an immutable Indian, and consider commercial music, social phenomena such as migration.

The Garifuna Presence in New York: A Reference in the Diaspora

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ALFONSO ARRIVILLAGA

The Garinagu arrived in New York in the early 20th century, their mobility was more a response to the opportunities offered by merchant marines to stevedores in ports throughout the insular and continental Caribbean. Always in search of monetized economies and new possibilities, they enrolled in this new realm of mobility. Between the two world wars, these opportunities expanded, and the number of migrants grew, as was also the case with other residents from the larger and smaller Antilles. Up to that point, migration was a kind of rite of passage and was more about seeking autonomy than for economic reasons.

By the mid-20th century, migration was an unavoidable reality, even in the readings that ethnographers made of local communities. In all cases, one way or another, reference was made to the migrants, their relationships with them, and the news about their organizational achievements. In a few

decades, this phenomenon began to be called by scholars as recurrent migration with a trend that marked a high percentage of absence, especially among the male population. A new model of household was adjusting to traditional matrilineal structures, but this would later undergo further transformations. By then, the earlier warning of ethnographers was evident, and the relationships established between both communities took on greater significance, although the analytical phenomenon still presumed the acculturation of the Garinagu.

In the second half of the 20th century, the trend continued, and young women also joined, by then the practice of sponsoring, which the Garinagu, like other communities, also put into practice, was beginning to wane. Similarly, the motives that left the sense of rite of passage to become an escape from the lack of prospects in local communities, which seemed to be systematically abandoned and plundered by the nation-state of their resources. By then, some families already had up to three generations of residence in the United States, and even those born here continue to identify as Garifuna.

What happened then for the Garinagu to not lose their culture, to give permanence to their identity among a complex world of overwhelming modernity to which they seemed to subscribe like any African-American? The ancestors took control and gave meaning to the circular dynamic to which they have adhered since the second half of the 20th century, which provides a sense of correspondence between a here (the local) and a there (the migrant).

The Garinagu, upon returning home, continued to speak their language, prepare their meals, listen to their music, prepare dances and social gatherings, organized in parishes where they celebrate their own masses, and in associations, among other actions, they allowed to continue with their adscription and cultural practices. Today, they have a level of organization that is highly recognized by other identities. The mayor of New York has held meetings with them, some of their members run for public office, and places like the one near the "Vapuru" building are spaces they have made their own, as recalled by the monument to the victims of Happy Land, that nightclub located on 8th Avenue frequented by this community.

Today, the Garinagu, echoing the call of their intelligentsia, present themselves to others as an active nation. They proudly showcase their musical and dance groups, develop important musical proposals, attend events in their traditional attire, and participate in local festivals under their own flag. From here comes their coat of arms, the more intense exploration of relationships with Saint Vincent, which they consider their homeland. Here, their anthem, Yurumein, which recalls their journey across the waters in search of land, gives meaning to their own notion of a nation in diaspora, which can only be understood for now as a transnational citizenship.