

POPOPOL

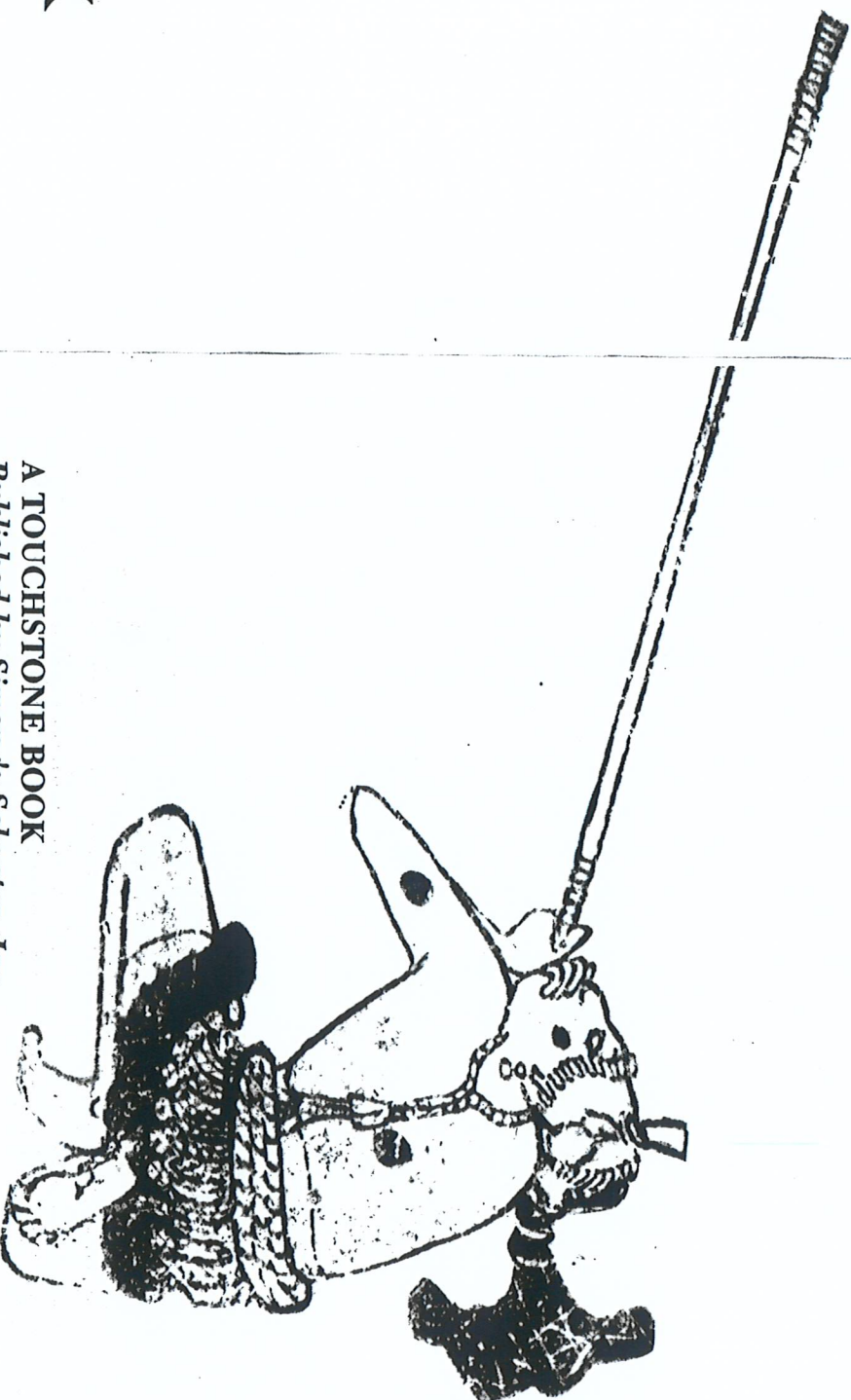
VUHH



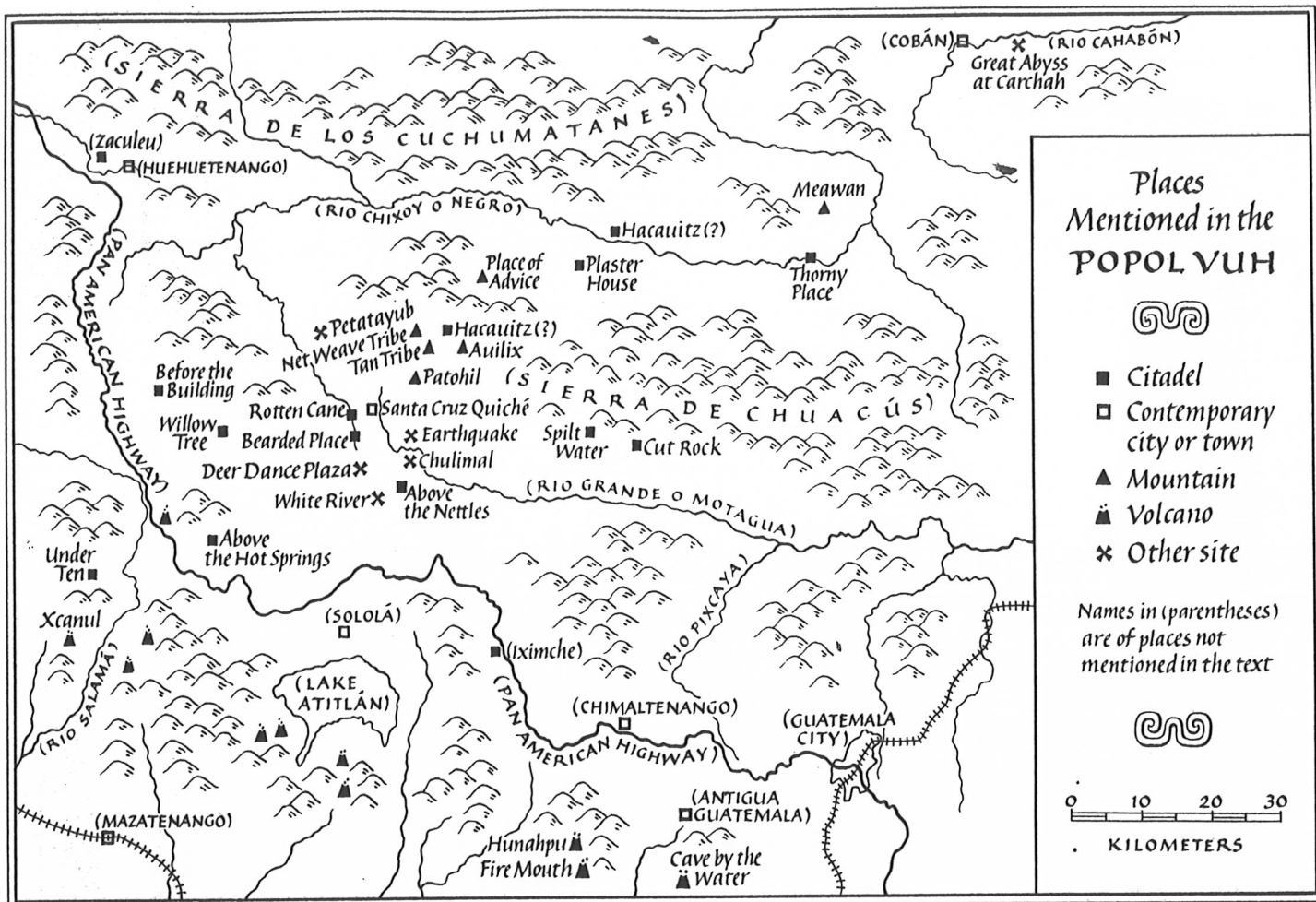
The Mayan Book
of the Dawn of Life

Translated by
DENNIS TEDLOCK

with commentary based on the
ancient knowledge of the modern Quiché Maya



A TOUCHSTONE BOOK
Published by Simon & Schuster, Inc.
NEW YORK



NOTES AND COMMENTS

Quiché words in brackets are corrections of the spellings in the Popol Vuh manuscript. Popol Vuh is abbreviated P.V. throughout. Sources for the meanings of words, here and in the Glossary, are cited by the following letter code (see the Bibliography for the full citations):

- (A.) Miguel Alvarado López, *Léxico médico quiché-español*.
- (B.) Domingo de Basseta, "Vocabulario en lengua quiché."
- (C.) Lyle Campbell, "Préstamos lingüísticos en el Popol Vuh."
- (D.) Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*.
- (E.) Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Gramática de la lengua quiché*.
- (F.) Floyd G. Lounsbury, "The Identities of the Mythological Figures in the 'Cross Group' Inscriptions."
- (G.) Pantaleón de Guzmán, "Compendio de nombres en lengua cakchiquel."
- (K.) Terrence Kaufman, "Common Cholan Lexical Items."
- (L.) Robert M. Laughlin, *The Great Tzotzil Dictionary*.
- (M.) Antonio de Ciudad Real, *Diccionario de Motul*.
- (P.) Pedro Morán, "Bocabulario de solo los nombres de la lengua pokoman."

- (Q.) Munro S. Edmonson, *Quiche-English Dictionary*.
- (R.) Adrián Recinos et al., *Popol Vuh*.
- (S.) Linda Schele, *Notebook for the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop*.
- (T.) Fernin Joseph Tirado, "Vocabulario de lengua kiche."
- (V.) Francisco de Varela, "Calepino en lengua cakchiquel."
- (X.) Gail Maynard and Patricia Xec, "Diccionario preliminar del idioma quiché."
- (Z.) Dionysio de Zúñiga, "Diccionario pocomchi-castellano y castellano-pocomchi."

INTRODUCTION

- 24-25 My account of Mayan archaeology is based largely on Michael D. Coe, *The Maya*, and Norman Hammond, *Ancient Maya Civilization*.
- 27 For a general discussion of pre-Columbian books in the Mayan region, see J. Eric S. Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex*, chap. 1; the hieroglyphic book now in Dresden is reproduced in color in this same source. For a color reproduction of the fragment that was found more recently in Chiapas, see Coe, *The Maya Scribe and His World*; for a demonstration of the authenticity of this fragment, see John B. Carlson, "The Grolier Codex."
- 28 For a comparison of the towns of Quiché and Chichicastenango during the colonial period, see Robert M. Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas of Utatlan*, pp. 76, 106, 304, 328.
- 28-30 For a longer account of the odyssey of the Ximénez manuscript, see Adrián Recinos et al., *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya*, pp. 32-45.
- 30 For the Vienna volume see Francisco Ximénez, *Las historias del origen de los indios de esta provincia de Guatemala*; for the Paris volume, see Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Popol Vuh: Le livre sacré et les mythes de l'antiquité américaine*. The title chosen by Scherzer for the Vienna volume is the one used by Ximénez; Brasseur was the first to call the alphabetic version of the ancient book by the name of its hieroglyphic predecessor. His version of the Quiché text leaves much to be desired; by far the best version ever published is

that of Leonhard S. Schultze Jena (*Popol Vuh: Das heilige Buch der Quiche-Indianer von Guatemala*). A highly legible facsimile of the manuscript (easier to read than the original) was published in 1973 by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education (Francisco Ximénez, *Popol Vuh*).

For evidence that the manuscript Ximénez worked from contained at least a few hieroglyphs, see the notes to pp. 211 and 224 of the present translation. Maya writing, like Egyptian and Chinese, was both logographic and phonetic, which is to say that a given word could be written with a single sign all its own, but could also be spelled out with glyphs that stood for the sounds of its individual consonants or syllables; see David Humiston Kelley, *Deciphering the Maya Script*, chaps. 6 and 9. The monkey patrons of writing and painting and the close relationship between these arts are discussed in Coe, "Supernatural Patrons of Maya Scribes and Artists."

32 The four corners in question here are not the four cardinal points, but the four places marked out by the solstitial rising and setting points of the sun; see Eva Hunt, *The Transformation of the Hummingbird*, chap. 6.

32-33 See Alfred M. Tozzer, *Landa's Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, pp. 153-54, for a description of the reading of a hieroglyphic book in Yucatán. At present there are public readings of alphabetic manuscripts in the Yucatec Maya ceremonial center of Xucal, in Quintana Roo; see Allan F. Burns, "The Caste War in the 1970's," and *An Epoch of Miracles*, pp. 22-23, 71-72.

33 For a further discussion of the Ancient Word and its relation to the preaching of God, see Dennis Tedlock, *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*, chap. 12.

33 In holding open the possibility that the authors of the alphabetic P.V. had access to the hieroglyphic version I am in agreement with Munro S. Edmonson, *The Book of Counsel: The Popol Vuh of the Quiche Maya of Guatemala*, pp. 6-7. For a discussion of the role of dialogue in the Quiché story of the origin of the world and the contrasting monologue of Genesis, see D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word*, chap. 11.

34-35 Contemporary Quiché daykeepers and their practices are fully described in Barbara Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*. The 260-day cycle daykeepers divine by is made up of two shorter cycles, one consisting of an endlessly repeating sequence of thirteen day numbers and the other of an endlessly repeating sequence of twenty day

names. Since 13 and 20 have no common factor, the interaction of 13 numbers with 20 names produces a larger cycle consisting of 13×20 or 260 days, each with a unique combination of number and name. If we begin with the day that combines the number 1 with the name Queh, the list of successive days proceeds as follows:

QUICHÉ DAY NAMES WITH NUMBERS

(Yucatec names in parentheses)

1 Queh	(Manik)	12 Tihax	(Eznab)
2 Janil	(Lamat)	13 Cauuk	(Cauac)
3 Toh	(Muluc)	1 Hunahpu	(Ahau)
4 4:ii	(Oc)	2 Imox	(Imix)
5 Ba4,	(Chuen)	3 I3	(Ik)
6 E	(Eb)	4 Agabal	(Akbal)
7 Ah	(Ben)	5 4at	(Kan)
8 Ix	(Ix)	6 Can	(Chicchan)
9 4:iquin	(Men)	7 Came	(Cimi)
10 Ahmac	(Cib)	8 Queh	(Manik)
11 Naoh	(Caban)	etc.	etc.

From 8 Queh the count goes on to 9 Janil, 10 Toh, and so forth, returning to 1 Queh after 260 days.

Andrés Xiloj, the daykeeper introduced in the preface to the present work, insists that the period of human pregnancy is the basis for the length of this cycle; medically speaking, 260 days is indeed a sound, average figure for the period lasting from the time when a woman first misses her menses to the time when she gives birth. It should also be noted that the growth cycle of one of the varieties of corn used in highland Guatemala is such that it is harvested 260 days after planting, though it is necessary to hasten the ripening of the ears by bending the stalks over; see B. Tedlock, "Earth Rites and Moon Cycles: Mayan Synodic and Sideral Moon Reckoning."

35 For more on the ball game, see Theodore Stern, *The Rubber-Ball Games of the Americas*, and Stephan F. de Borhegyi, *The Pre-Columbian Ballgames: A Pan-Mesoamerican Tradition*.

36 For a full exploration of the astronomical dimensions of the P. V., see D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning of All the Sky-Earth: Astronomy in the Popol Vuh." The sources for the astronomical identifications of Seven Macaw and Chimalmat are given under their names in the Glossary. Claude Lévi-Strauss states that the Big Dipper is identified with the hurricane (rather than opposed to it) in the mythology

of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean (*From Honey to Ashes*, pp. 115-16), but he bases this statement on the work of R. Lehmann-Nitsche, who presents not a single concrete ethnographic example of such an identification and even passes over evidence that would place the stellar aspect of the hurricane close to the ecliptic rather than near the pole star ("La constelación de la Osa Mayor y su concepto como Huracán o dios de la tormenta en la esfera del Mar Caribe").

37 The symbolism of the Pleiades is discussed in B. Tedlock, "Earth Rites and Moon Cycles." The sexual symbolism of the Zipacna story was pointed out by Andrés Xiloj, whose full comments will be found in the notes to p. 98 of the translation.

37 Together, Zipacna and Earthquake probably correspond to the two-headed "Caucac monster" of classic Maya iconography (see Dacey Taylor, "The Cauac Monster").

38 The falcon who serves as the messenger for Hurricane, or Heart of Sky, may correspond to the planet Jupiter, for reasons that are given in D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning."

38 The Great Abyss at Carchah (see the Glossary) is probably near the town of Cobán; an independent colonial source on that region, Bartolomé de las Casas, has a god named Exbalanquen entering the underworld through a cave near Cobán (*Apologetica historia de las Indias*, pp. 330, 619).

39 The movements of the messenger owls, here and elsewhere, fit those of the planet Mercury; see D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning."

40 The Maya Venus cycle, as given in the Dresden Codex, is discussed at length in Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex*, pp. 62-71. A given Venus cycle (lasting 584 days) is divided into four stages, with Venus appearing as the morning star (for 236 days), then disappearing (90 days), then reappearing as the evening star (250 days), and finally disappearing again (8 days). During a given 584-day cycle the 20 day names will repeat fully 29 times, giving 580 days and a remainder of 4; this means that a new Venus cycle will always begin 4 days later in the sequence of 20 day names than the previous cycle. And since 4 divides evenly into 20, giving 5, only 5 of the 20 day names can ever begin a Venus cycle. In the Dresden Codex the chosen days (here given their Quiché names) were Hunahpu, 4at (or "Net"), Janil, E, and Ahmac, followed by Hunahpu again. Starting from 1 Hunahpu (as the Dresden Codex does) and running through the five complete cycles so as to show all of the possible day names, the

beginning dates for the four stages within each Venus cycle work out as follows:

DAY NUMBERS AND NAMES
FOR FIVE SUCCESSIVE VENUS CYCLES

	FIRST CYCLE	SECOND CYCLE	THIRD CYCLE	FOURTH CYCLE	FIFTH CYCLE
Appears as morning star:	1 Hunahpu	13 4at	12 3anil	11 E	10 Ahmac
Becomes invisible:	3 Ahmac	2 Hunahpu	1 4at	13 3anil	12 E
Appears as evening star:	2 Carne	1 4,ii	13 Ix	12 Tihax	11 13
Becomes invisible:	5 Ahmac	4 Hunahpu	3 4at	2 3anil	1 E

After five complete cycles totaling 2,920 days, the movements of Venus fill exactly 8 years of 365 days each and come within hours of filling 99 lunar months. At this point Venus is also close to completing 13 of its sidereal periods, which run a little under 225 days each. In the present context this means that when Venus begins its cycle for the sixth time, an event that will fall on 9 Hunahpu, it will have the same relationship to the fixed stars that it had 2,920 days earlier, when its appearance as morning star began on 1 Hunahpu. The date for this appearance will not return to 1 Hunahpu until all five of the possible day names have combined with each of the 13 day numbers, by which time Venus will have passed through precisely 65 cycles of 584 days each, 104 cycles of 365 days each, and 146 cycles of 260 days each.

The divine names One and Seven Hunahpu and One and Seven Came (or "Death") point directly to the Venus calendar, and specifically to the first of its five cycles. Andrés Xiloj pointed out that combining the numbers 1 and 7 with a given day name is a conventional way of indicating all 13 days bearing that name. The reason is that when one traces a single day name through all of its occurrences in a given 260-day cycle, the accompanying numbers fall out in the sequence 1, 8, 2, 9, 3, 10, 4, 11, 5, 12, 6, 13, and 7. This means that if the divine names in question here refer to astronomical events, these should be events whose day names remain constant but whose day numbers are variable, which is indeed the case. By the same argument, the names One Ba4, (or "Monkey") and One Chouen (or "Artisan"), both of which refer to the same day (see the Glossary), point to an event that varies neither as to number nor as to name and must therefore occur each 260 days or a multiple thereof. The only astro-

nomical events that fit this description are those pertaining to Mars, whose synodic period is 780 (3 X 260) days. For example, if Mars made its first appearance in a given cycle on the day 1 Ba4, the return of this same event would again fall on the day 1 Ba4.

⁴² The falcon who serves as the messenger for Xmucane may correspond to the planet Saturn, for reasons that are given in D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning."

⁴² It was Andrés Xiloj who pointed out that the ritual performed with the ears of corn in the P.V. is the same as a contemporary ritual; his detailed comments on this and other connections between the P.V. and contemporary practices may be found throughout the notes to the P.V. translation itself. For an account of contemporary sound plays on day names, see B. Tedlock, "Sound Texture and Metaphor in Quiché Maya Ritual Language," and *Time and the Highland Maya*, chap. 5.

⁴³ The macaw's tail and the two fireflies that glowed all night may correspond to the stars Procyon, Castor, and Pollux, for reasons that are given in D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning."

⁴⁴ Ideally there should be a total of five test houses, corresponding to the second stage in each of the five types of Venus cycles; these would be Dark House, Razor House, Cold (or Rattling) House, Jaguar House, and Bat House. They may correspond to locations along the Mayan zodiac, since Venus begins to repeat the pattern of its relationship to the fixed stars after five cycles. In the second of two passages naming the houses, the P.V. seems to add a sixth house, a "house of fire," but this may be a secondary elaboration on the part of the narrator (see the notes to p. 143 of the translation).

⁴⁴ In a given 365-day period the 20 day names repeat themselves completely 18 times, giving 360 days with a remainder of 5; this means that the next solar year will always begin with a day name that comes 5 days later in the cycle of 20 than the name that began the previous year. And since 5 divides evenly into 20, giving 4, only 4 of the 20 day names, evenly spaced within the name cycle, can ever begin a solar year. For the Quiché, these new year's day names were and are Queh or "Deer," E or "Tooth," Naoh or "Thought," and I3 or "Wind," followed by Queh again. As for the new year's day number, the cycle of 13 numbers repeats itself completely 28 times in a given solar year, giving 364 days and a remainder of 1; this means that a given solar year will always begin with a day number that comes a single place later in the cycle of 13 than the number that began the previous year.

The year as a whole is designated by the number and name of its beginning day; starting with a year bearing the name 1 Queh, the reckoning of successive years proceeds as follows:

QUICHÉ YEAR DESIGNATIONS

1 Queh	6 E	11 Naoh
2 E	7 Naoh	12 I3
3 Naoh	8 I3	13 Queh
4 I3	9 Queh	1 E
5 Queh	10 E	etc.

Note that two of these day names, E and I3, also have a potential for events pertaining to Venus (see the Venus calendar in an earlier note). They occur in the fourth and (more markedly) in the fifth and final cycle of Venus, just as the solar dimension of the story of Hunahpu and Xbalanque begins to manifest itself in the final episodes.

44-45

In Mesoamerican iconography the evening-star Venus is a death's head (see Carlson, "The Grolier Codex"). Even the ball game played with the squash fits into place when we consider the report of Ruth Bunzel that in at least one contemporary Quiché town, an excess of large squashes in a field means that the senior male of a family may die, since the squashes are a sign that his head is rotting (*Chichicstenango*, p. 54). The vine shown growing out of the head of a ball-player in one of the ball-court relief panels at Chichen Itza may well be a squash vine; note that the ball in this panel is shown as enclosing a skull (see p. 139 in the present book).

The morning-star and evening-star episodes should total five each, corresponding to the five types of Venus cycles. The morning-star episodes are brought up to five if we count the period when One and Seven Hunahpu were on the surface of the earth as the first episode, with the four above-ground adventures of Hunahpu and Xbalanque following. The first evening-star episode is of course the one in which One Hunahpu's head is placed in the tree at the Place of Ball Game Sacrifice, followed by the three ball games with literal or figurative heads; the fifth head will be Hunahpu's again, when he loses it in a future episode.

45

The appearance of Hunahpu and Xbalanque as catfish recalls that the purported equivalent of Hunahpu among the classic Maya, the god designated G-I in the epigraphic literature on Palenque, has cheeks with appendages that sometimes look like catfish barbels and sometimes like spiny fins (see Floyd G. Lounsbury, "The Identities of the Mythological Figures in the 'Cross Group' Inscriptions at Palenque,"

and the notes to p. 149 of the present translation). The appearance of the twins as vagabond actors is a further sign, beyond the earlier appearance of the "old man" or possum, that the sun will soon rise. Among the roles of classic Maya year-bearers was that of wandering actors (Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, p. 277).

46

The similarities between the sun and full moon were also pointed out by the Aztecs (Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 7, p. 3).

47

Contemporary Quiché mother-fathers are discussed in B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, pp. 74-85.

48

For a general discussion of the subject of Tollan, see Nigel Davies, *The Toltecs*, chap. 2. Tulan (Tulapan in Yucatec sources) and Zuyua (often Holtun Zuyua in Yucatec sources) are mentioned in various Mayan alphabetic writings, including Recinos et al., *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, pp. 44-53; Ralph L. Roys, *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, pp. 74, 132, 139, 153; and Eugene R. Craine and Reginald C. Reindorp, *The Codex Pérez and the Book of Chilam Balam of Mani*, pp. 80, 138, 166, 167.

From a Yucatec point of view (see the Chumayel book), Holtun Zuyua occupied the western position in a four-directional group of towns whose leaders converged on Chichen Itza (a fifth and central town) in order to receive lordship; it may have been at the place now known as Puerto Escondido in Campeche (Thompson, *Maya History and Religion*, p. 23), though Edmonson (without giving any evidence) locates it near Motul in Yucatán (*The Ancient Future of the Itza: The Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin*, p. 38). As for Tulapan, that was the place where the Tutul Xiu lineage traced its origins; it was even farther west than Zuyua (according to the Mani book), which could mean that it was the primary Toltecán Tollan near Mexico City. The Cakchiquel book uses the name Tulan in this narrow sense when it has the Qutché's and Cakchiquels coming to Zuyua from a western Tulan, but it also uses the name in a broader sense that takes in the Yucatec system of directional towns, speaking of a Tulan for each of the four directions and of a convergence on what appears to be a central Tulan. In effect, the authors of the P.V. apply the name Tulan specifically to the western town in the Yucatec system, producing the name Tulan Zuyua. When they say Tulan Zuyua is in the "east," they are reckoning its position not in the context of the Yucatec system but relative to the Tulan or Tulapan that is west of Zuyua in the Mani and Cakchiquel books.

49

The main cave at Teotihuacan and its relationship to a Nahuatl tradi-

tion concerning seven caves are discussed by Doris Heyden in "An Interpretation of the Cave Underneath the Pyramid of the Sun in Teotihuacan, Mexico." The existence of a god named Tahlil at Palenque and his relationship to Tohil have been pointed out by Linda Schele (*Notebook for the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop*, p. 114) and Floyd G. Lounsbury (personal communication). For more on the Yagui see the Glossary; they are not to be confused with the Yagui tribe of Sonora and Arizona.

50 The reference to the body of water crossed by the Quiché forefathers as a "sea" is a hyperbole; it is called both a "lake" and a "sea" in "Historia Quiché de don Juan de Torres," in Recinos, *Crónicas indígenas de Guatemala*, pp. 24-25. The causeways at Potonchan and Tixchel are noted in France V. Scholes and Ralph L. Røys, *The Maya Chontal Indians of Acalan-Tixchel*, p. 81.

51 For more on the Zaki 4oxol or "White Sparkstriker," see the Glossary and B. Tedlock, "El C'oxol: un símbolo de la resistencia quiché a la conquista espiritual."

51 In Quiché theory, at least, the reckoning of the 260-day cycle should have been in synchrony everywhere in Mesoamerica. We do know that Cuauhemoc, the successor of Moctezuma, surrendered the city of Tenochtitlán to Hernán Cortés on an Aztec day whose name means "One Snake," falling on August 13, 1521, on the Julian calendar (Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, p. 303). Tracing the contemporary Quiché calendar back to that same Julian date, we come to a day whose Quiché name, Hun Can, also means "One Snake." In other words, when it was One Snake in Tenochtitlán, it was One Snake a thousand road miles away in the town of Quiché. Lounsbury argues, in "The Base of the Venus Table of the Dresden Codex," for a lowland Maya calendar correlation that would move the classic Maya 260-day cycle two days out of synchrony with the Quiché and Aztec calendars, but the astronomical basis of his argument could easily be two days off, according to the astronomer John B. Carlson (personal communication).

52 If the Quichés timed their attacks on their rivals in the same way as the classic lowland Maya, they favored periods when Venus was the evening star (see Lounsbury, "Astronomical Knowledge and Its Uses at Bonampak, Mexico"). The "road" onto which they rolled the head of a sacrifice victim may have been symbolic of the zodiacal path within which Venus is confined, and the head may have been thought of on the model of the severed heads that appeared as the evening-star Venus in the story of Hunahpu and Xbalanque and their fathers.

53-54 It took 52 years of 365 days each for all four year-beginning day names to occur in combination with all thirteen day numbers ($4 \times 13 = 52$). The seniority given by the Quiché to Queh or "Deer" among the year-beginning day names is noted in B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, p. 99.

54 Alternative accounts of the names and generational positions of the Quichés who went on the pilgrimage, and of the titles that were given to them, may be found in Adrián Recinos et al., *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, pp. 176-79. Tulán, the place where the Quiché founding fathers had spent some time in an earlier episode, may have been left completely empty by the time they and the other tribes mentioned in the P.V. had departed from it. In the Quiché language the word for this place, in the form *tolan*, came to figure in such phrases as *tolanic tinamit*, "abandoned city," and *tolan ha*, "dark, uninhabited house" (B.).

55 A long list of the citadels settled by the Quichés between Hacautitz and Thorny Place is given in Recinos et al., *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, pp. 180-83. For a description of Thorny Place, now known as Cauinal (the name given to one of its four divisions in the P.V.), see John W. Fox, *Quiche Conquest: Centralism and Regionalism in Highland Guatemalan State Development*, pp. 243-50, and Alain Ichon, "Argueología y etnohistoria en Cawinal."

56 For a full discussion of the buildings of jumarakah (Rotten Cane) or Utatlán (the Nahua name for the same place), see Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas*, chap. 9.

57 The military exploits of Quicab are discussed in Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas*, pp. 134-37. The citadels that made up the town of Quiché, in addition to Rotten Cane, were Bearded Place to the south, which now belonged to the Tams; Mukwitz Plocab to the north, belonging to the Ilocs; and Resguardo, or Atalaya, to the east, whose Quiché name and lineage affiliation are unknown (Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas*, chap. 8).

59 For the full story of Alvarado's conquest of the Quiché kingdom, which was resisted by a large military force, see Victoria Reiffer Bricker, *The Indian Christ, the Indian King*, pp. 39-41. The events at Rotten Cane itself are further described in Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas*, pp. 143-47. According to Spanish sources, Three Deer and Nine Dog were burned at the stake and it was Tecum and Tepepul who were hanged.

In dating the writing of the alphabetic P.V., I follow Recinos, *Popol Vuh*, pp. 22-23. For a description of *titulos* contemporary with the P.V., see Carmack, *Quichean Civilization*, pp. 19-71. The calculations correlating a year-beginning day bearing the name One Deer with June 2, 1558 (Julian) are my own. The fact that a calendrical event of the same kind fell on April 10, 1818 (Gregorian), may help explain why the years 1816 to 1820 saw a Quiché revolt against tribute payments to the Spanish crown, climaxing in the coronation of Atinasio Tzul, the mayor of Totonicapán, as King of the Quichés. For a description of this revolt see Bricker, *The Indian Christ*, chap. 7.

60 For more on the Spanish journey of Juan Cortés and the warning sent to Philip II, see Pedro Carrasco, "Don Juan Cortés, cacique de Santa Cruz Quiché."

60 The lineal descendants of Juan de Rojas and Juan Cortés continued to litigate well into the eighteenth century. The Cortés line died out by 1788; the de Rojas line still lives, but its members lost all remaining vestiges of their lordly privileges with the coming of liberal reforms in 1801 (Carmack, *The Quiché Mayas*, pp. 321, 362).

61 In translating the *nim choochib* of the P.V. as "Great Toastmasters" or "Great Conveners of Banquets" I take my cue from Ximénez, who has "grandes combites" (*Popol Vuh*, p. 265); see also *Great Toastmaster* in the Glossary. For more on contemporary matchmakers (or "road guides"), see B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, pp. 74, 110, 117, 156.

61 The name Cristobal Velasco may be found in Recinos et al., *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, p. 195.

62 The Dresden Codex page that begins an otherwise torn-off section is discussed in Thompson, *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex*, pp. 78-80.

62-63 My discussion of the Palenque inscriptions is based on lectures given by Linda Schele in the spring of 1984; their contents are partially available in Schele, *Notebook for the Maya Hieroglyphic Writing Workshop at Texas*.

63-64 For more on the dialectical nature of Quiché thought see B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, pp. 145-46, 176-77. The role of myth in Mayan thinking about history is explored by Bricker in *The Indian Christ*, chaps. 1 and 14.

PART ONE

71 *the beginning*: This is *uxz*, literally "its base" or "root"; it is as if the writers were starting at the bottom of something vertical and working their way up.

71 *this place called Quiché*: That "Quiché" is meant as a place name here is confirmed at the very end of the P.V. (p. 227): "everything has been completed here concerning Quiché, which is now named Santa Cruz." See the Glossary for more on Quiché and Santa Cruz.

71 *And here*: The paragraphing of the present translation is largely based on two considerations. The first is the occurrence of what Dell Hymes calls "initial particles" ("In Vain I Tried to Tell You", pp. 318-20). Examples in Quiché are *are qut*, "And here" (or "And this is"); *qate qut*, "And next"; and *quehe qut*, "And so." The second consideration is the occurrence of quotations. In contemporary Quiché speech there are deliberate pauses both before and after phrases consisting of initial particles, and immediately before quotations. For more details, see D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word*, chap. 4, and "Hearing a Voice in an Ancient Text."

71 *how things were put in shadow and brought to light*: This is *ewaxibal zaquiribal* [*zakiribal*], "being-hidden-instrument becoming-light-instrument." The first word is built on a passive (-x) form of *ewah*, which V. glosses as "to hide" but then explains that it has to do with shadows or dark places. The second word is built on an inchoative (-ir) form of *zak*, "be light," which it shares with *zakiric*, "to dawn." The two words together describe the activities of the gods at a very general level. As will be seen, the gods not only bring things to light but can also darken what was once in the light.

On the other hand, the two words could also be translated as "the hiding place, the dawning place," since *-bal* can either be instrumental or indicate place. The "hiding place" would be *ewabal ziam* or "Concealment Canyon" (see Glossary), where the gods were hidden away before the dawn (p. 178); the "dawning place" would be the place (or places) where the founding ancestors of the ruling Quiché lineages were keeping vigil when the morning star and then the sun rose for the first time (p. 180), places which are referred to as *zaquiribal* [*zakiribal*].

71 *the midwife, matchmaker*: This is *iyom, mamom*. Andrés Xiloj immediately identified *iyom* as the modern term for "midwife" (*iyom* is

given the same meaning in B.). He knew of *manom* only as a term addressed to a matchmaker in the ceremonial language of a bride-asking ceremony; ordinarily the matchmaker is referred to as *amnal be*, "road guide."

⁷¹
defender, protector: This is *matzanel chuquenel*. B. lists *matzanel* (under *matzo*) as "defender," which fits the role of the Quiché day-keeper as the maker of prayers and offerings on behalf of clients. As Andrés Xiloj pointed out, the daykeeper who takes this role today may be called, among other things, by the Spanish word *abogado*, "lawyer, advocate," and may be thought of as presenting the case of the client before a divine tribunal. The translation of *chuquenel* rests on the entry in B. for *chukonal* (under *chugu*), "protector." The two terms are very similar in their root senses; for *matzo*, B. gives "to shelter after the manner of a hen," and for *chugu*, "to cover over."

⁷¹
as enlightened beings, in enlightened words: "Enlightened" is my translation, for the present context, of *zaquil [zakil]*, "lightness" or "whiteness." This insistence that the aforementioned Quiché deities and their words have the properties of light is directly juxtaposed to a mention of God and Christendom in the sentence that follows; it can thus be read as a direct and deliberate contradiction of the missionary teaching that the pre-Conquest gods were all devils.

⁷¹
amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now: After the *Dios* and *christianoil* in this phrase, there will be no more Spanish or Spanish-derived words until p. 210 (see the note for the *lord bishop*). The "preaching" is *qhabal*, literally "manner of speaking" or just plain "talk"; the phrase *uqhabal Dios*, "talk of God," came to be the standard Quiché way of referring to Christian doctrine and is still used in that sense by both Quichés and missionaries, but the original choice of these words to translate "la palabra de Dios" must have been made by a Quiché rather than a missionary. The proper Quiché term for an authoritative and abiding "word" was and still is *tzih* rather than *qhabal*; the writers of the P.V. refer to their own manuscript as containing *ohertzih*, "the Ancient Word," but neither they nor contemporary Quichés use *tzih* as a way of referring to "la palabra de Dios." In choosing to translate *uqhabal Dios* as "the preaching of God" in the present context, I have tried to combine the "Christian doctrine" sense of this phrase with the more general sense of *qhabal* as an act of speaking.

⁷¹
a place to see it: The original pre-Columbian P.V. is referred to here and much later (p. 219) as an *ibbal re* (written *ibbal re* in the later place), "an instrument (or place) for the seeing of something." What

was "seen" there included "how things were put in shadow and brought to light" by the gods (p. 71), together with future events such as war, death, famine, and quarrels (p. 219). B. has an entry for *ibbal re* (under *ilo*) glossed redundantly as "figura de dibujos," which could variously mean "figure," "drawing," and even "picture." Today *ibbal* or *ilobal* (without the *re*) refers to crystals used for gazing by diviners and to eyeglasses, binoculars, and telescopes.

⁷¹
There is the original book and ancient writing, but he who reads and ponders it hides his face: Edmonson is correct in interpreting the phrase *ewal uwach*, "hidden his-face," as pertaining to the reader of the P.V. rather than to the book itself (*The Book of Counsel*, p. 7). "There is" is my translation of *40*: some translators have used the past tense here, the usual treatment for Quiché verbs inflected for the complete aspect, but that would call for *xqo*. "He who reads" translates *ilol*, literally "one who sees." B. gives *ilol* as "seer" or "prophet," and *ilol uwil* (literally "book seer") as "reader"; an English translation built on "read" does quite well at covering the full range of *ilol*, since "read" still retains divinatory usages that go all the way back to its Germanic root. ["He who] ponders" translates *bizol*, an agentive form of *biz*, "sad" or "pensive." The emotional dimension of *bizol* is made quite clear in later passages, where we hear again and again how the Quiché forefathers wept at the thought of having left the mythic city of Tulan and having become separated from other tribes.

⁷¹⁻⁷²
performance: This is my translation of *peoxic*, which I read as a passive and nominalized form of *peyoh*, "to hire" (V.), probably meaning something like "service rendered."

⁷²
the fourfold siding, fourfold cornering, / measuring, fourfold staking, / halving the cord, stretching the cord / in the sky, on the earth, / the four sides, the four corners: The "fourfold siding" and "cornering" are *ucal tzucutuc* and *ucal xucutanic*; the "four sides" and "four corners" are *cah tzuc* and *cah xucut*. *Xucut* was and is "corner," and *cah xucut* is still in use as a way of referring to the four directions, most frequently in prayers in the line, *cah xucut cah, cah xucut ulen*, "four corners of sky, four corners of earth." *Tzuc* is more difficult to translate. Andrés Xiloj suggested "sides" on the basis of context. B. gives *cahzuc* as "a square thing," and although he gives *cahxucut* as a synonym for *cahzuc* under the entry for the latter, he elsewhere glosses *cahxucut* as "four angles of the world." The notion that *tzuc* means "side" in the present context, in contrast with "corner" or "angle," is based on *zugu*, "to go somewhere straight, without straying" (B.), and on *zucum*, "straight" (X.). Under *zucube*, which would mean "straight (direct) road," B. lists *tzucu be* as an alternative spelling;

[see Haviland]

this supports the relationship between the *tzuc* of the P. V., with its *tz.* and the dictionary entries for *zu3* and *zu4um*, with their *z.*

The "fourfold staking" is *ucah cheaxic*; Andrés Xiloj understood this to be four sticks or poles driven in the ground at the four corners. The "measuring" is *retaxic*, literally "its-being-measured," translated on the basis of *etah*, "to measure, to mark out" (B.), and the reading offered by don Andrés. The measuring in this passage is done according to a unit still in use among the Quiché, the *qaam* or "cord" (a length of rope). Don Andrés was familiar with the phraseology used here, *umeh camaxic [qaamaxic]*, "its-folded cording," and *uyuc camaxic [yuyuc qaamaxic]*, "its-stretched cording." He explained that the "folded" measurement is done with the cord folded back upon itself to halve its length, and that the "stretched" measurement is done with the cord pulled out to its full length. His reading of *qaamaxic* (which has a passive ending) is confirmed by an entry in B., *caamaah* (with an active ending), "to measure lands." He observed that the P. V. describes the measuring out of the sky and earth as if a cornfield were being laid out for cultivation. The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel also describes the setting up of the earth and sky as an act of measurement, carried out not only in space (by footsteps in this case) but in time (through twenty consecutive days from the 260-day divinatory cycle) (Rois, *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, pp. 116-118). The Chumayel document makes a passing reference to a celestial cord (p. 155); Yucatec Mayas near Valladolid told Alfred M. Tozzer that a cord suspended in the sky once linked Tulum and Coba with Chichen Itza and Uxmal (A *Comparative Study of the Mayas and Lacandonas*, p. 153).

The present passage offers one of the clearest examples of parallel verse structure in the P. V.; it may be scanned as follows:

ucah tzucuxic,	fourfold sidling,
ucah xucutaxic	fourfold cornering,
retaxic,	measuring,
ucah cheaxic,	fourfold staking,
umeh camaxic,	halving the cord,
uyuc camaxic	stretching the cord
upa cah,	in the sky,
upa uleu	on the earth,
cah tzuc	the four sides,
cah xucut	the four corners

Note that the first two lines actually form a quatrain, with a slight variation in the third part; such quatrains occur elsewhere in the P. V.

and in Yucatec texts as well (see D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word*, chap. 8). Edmonson presented the entire P. V. in couplets (*The Book of Counsel*), ignoring triplets, quatrains, and passages in which the horizontal movement of prose strongly modifies the vertical movement of parallelism (see the fifth note to p. 73). In the present work I have chosen a verse format only where the parallelism is both strongly marked and sustained.

In contemporary Quiché discourse with parallelism like that of the passage under discussion, the formation of lines in oral delivery would depend on considerations of audience. If this were a prayer meant only for the ears of the gods and if the wording were well known to the speaker, the whole thing might be run off on a single breath, with the end of each phrase marked by a slight drop in pitch. In a slower rendition meant to be heard by humans, or near the beginning of a performance, there might be a pause after each of the lines as they are given on p. 72 of the translation, though the opening quatrain might well be run together as a single spoken line rather than divided between two lines (see D. Tedlock, "Hearing a Voice"). In any case, the two parts of a couplet are seldom divided between lines.

⁷² *giver of heart, . . . upbringer*: These are respectively *qaxlanel* and *qaxlaay*, both built on the stem *qax*, "heart," which in its *qaxla*-forms has to do with thought in the sense of "memory" and "will." Andrés Xiloj defined *qaxlanel* as follows: "One who raises us and has a good reputation for doing this." In the translation I have tried to preserve the full range of *qaxla*- by staying literal for its first occurrence ("giver of heart") and translating for sense the second time around ("upbringer").

⁷² *in the light that lasts*: Here I have tried to preserve in English the relationship that exists between the corresponding words of the text, *zaquil amaquil [zakil amaxel]*. These two Quiché words are linked by assonance and alliteration, giving them a parallel sound, but they are not properly parallel in their morphology—in fact, the latter word *modifies* the former. *Zakil* is composed of *zak*, an adjective meaning "light" or "white," and *-il*, which makes it into an abstract noun; *amaxel*, on the other hand, whether in classical or modern Quiché, is a unitary, unanalyzable form (at least where proper morphology is concerned). As an adverb it means "always" or "all the time"; as an adjective it means "continuous" or "eternal." In rendering *zakil amaxel* as "the light that lasts," I change parts of speech as the original phrase does (though not in precisely the same way), while at the same time linking the two halves of the phrase through alliteration.

⁷² *Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still*

burns, and it is empty: The full sound pattern of this passage can only be fully appreciated in the original; I have corrected *ca* to *4a*, *-oc* to *-ok*, and *tzini-* and *tzino-* to *4ini-* and *4ino-*; *4a caq, ininok, 4a cacha-mamok caq, inonic, 4a cazilanic, 4a calolnic, catolona puch, 4a is* "still, yet"; *ca-* is the incomplete aspect; and *-ok* has the effect of "now"; nevertheless, translators have generally put this passage in the past tense! What we are hearing here is the performer's effort to make the primordial state of the world present for his listeners, setting a scene rather than recounting a past event; the mood is a lyric rather than a historical one.

Translators have rendered the first five verbs here with adjectives like "quiet" or "silent"; the problems with such a treatment only begin with the fact that the Quiché words in question are, after all, verbs and not adjectives. To translate these verbs as referring to mere silence and the like misses the fact that the stems *4inin-*, *chamam-*, *4inon-*, and *lolin-* all contain reduplicative alliteration (together with reduplicative assonance in two cases) and are therefore onomatopoeic. Colonial and modern dictionary entries for the stems of this passage do indeed include some of the glosses translators have chosen, but B. gives "ring" for *4ino-*, and V. explains that *zilan-* (under *zilae*) refers to the (audible) process through which windy weather is calmed. Further, Andrés Xiloj identifies *lolin-* as the standard Quiché way of rendering the sound of a cricket. In translating this passage I have chosen quiet sounds that can be expressed as verbs; my "ripples" are derived from the fact that there is nothing but sky and water in this opening scene, as will be seen further on; for the same reason I have avoided obvious animal sounds. The "quiet" in question here is not so much a complete silence as it is a "hush" (note the onomatopoeic quality of this English word), the kinds of sounds one hears when there are no other sounds—or in this case, the "white noise" of the primordial world itself.

⁷² the first eloquence: Ximénez translates *uchan* as "eloquence," the same gloss given it by B. (under the entry for *chan*).

⁷² It is at rest; not a single thing stirs: Some translators have made the first half of this sentence negative by joining it to the negative clause that precedes it, but in fact what we have here is the last in a series of three sentences with the same positive-negative clause structure. The negativity of the second clause of the present sentence is marked by *hunta*, "not one thing" (B.), which is not to be confused with *hatak*, "each one." The entire sentence is perfectly intelligible, just as it is, in modern Quiché; Andrés Xiloj gave it the same reading I have.

⁷² It is held back: This is *camal cabantah*, which is difficult to translate. I

find my clue in the entry for *camalo* in B., which is glossed "late, not quick"; the entire phrase might be read as, "it is made to be late (or slow)."

⁷³ a glittering light: This is *zactetoh [zaktetoh]*, which B. glosses as "the brightness that enters through cracks." If this is the central meaning of this word rather than an illustrative example, then the light in question must be escaping between the feathers with which the Bearers and Begetters are covered (see the next two sentences). Note that the first light in the primordial scene is not up in the sky, but down at (or in) the level of the water. Its "glittering" corresponds, in the sensory domain of light, to the soft and repetitive nature of the primordial sounds described earlier.

⁷³ in their very being: This is *chiquiqoheic*, "at-their-being-there." I have translated it as "in their very being" because the writers of the P.V., wherever they add *chiquiqoheic* (or a similar form based on *qoheic*) to a statement in which the verb "to be" is already present or understood, are making a pointedly ontological statement. Some translators have softened the ontological abstractness of these statements by using such phrases as "by their nature," but *qoheic* has no aura of the natal or the biological hanging about it the way "nature" does, and in fact I know of no Quiché concept that corresponds to "nature." If I were translating *qoheic* into German, I would choose *Dasein*.

⁷³ the name of the god: The word I have translated as "god" here is *cabaul [qabauil]*. The primary reference of *qabauil*, through most of the P.V., is to the patron deities of the ruling Quiché lineages and to the sacred stones that were the material embodiments of these deities. But the present passage—given that *qabauil* is linked specifically to the Heart of Sky, and given that the Heart of Sky will shortly hereafter be described as a trinity—must be read as an allusion to Christian teachings. Note carefully that when the passage is read literally rather than as an allusion, it contains nothing that directly contradicts indigenous Quiché theology; Heart of Sky is among the names uttered before *qabauil* stones in a prayer given much later (pp. 221–222). For a general discussion of biblical allusions in the P.V., see D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word*, chap. 11.

Looking into the etymology of *qabauil*, we find *qab*, "to have the mouth open"—for example, in admiration and in death (V.); B. and T. have *caba*, "to open," with the mouth given as an example. *qabauil*, then, could mean something like "open-mouthed." The ancient stone *qabauil* were given drinks of sacrificed blood through their mouths; their modern counterparts in the eastern Quiché area, called

Sunder
man
amauil, are given drinks of liquor (and sometimes chicken blood) through their mouths.

73 *in the early dawn*: This phrase constitutes the P.V.'s first allusion to the day names of the 260-day divinatory calendar. Instead of the ordinary word for "early dawn," *agabil*, the text has *agabal*, an archaic form that is also the proper name of a day. Like other day names, *Agabal* is often given a divinatory interpretation by means of sound play, and one of the words used to play on it today is in fact *agabil*, an allusion to the fact that the rituals scheduled for days named *Agabal* are best carried out during the time of day known as *agabil*. The rituals in question, appropriately enough, involve the first steps toward the negotiation of new social relationships that will last a lifetime (B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, pp. 77-81). One *Agabal* is an appropriate day for a daykeeper with the office of mother-father to go to the pair of shrines dedicated to the welfare of the human inhabitants of the lands of his patrilineage, in order to discuss (in prayer) the fact that a family in his lineage wishes to propose a marriage between one of its young men and a woman from another lineage. A later day named *Agabal* may be chosen for the making of the actual proposal at the house of the prospective bride.

On One, Eight, and Nine *Agabal* a mother-father who has taken on the responsibility of training and installing the successor of his deceased counterpart in a neighboring lineage will go to the shrines of that lineage to discuss the fact that one of its members wishes to become its new mother-father. In both the marriage and the installation the negotiation has two levels: it is not only the living who must give their approval to the bond between husband and wife or between the new mother-father and the foundation shrines (which is thought of as a spiritual marriage), but the ancestors and the gods. In the case of the Heart of Sky's discussion with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent in the P.V., the problem is a more fundamental one. When, by their joint efforts (and those of other gods) they eventually succeed in making four different mother-fathers, each of them married to one of four different women, these will be the first human mother-fathers and the first human married couples who ever existed.

73 *He spoke with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent... they joined their words, their thoughts*: This passage offers an example of what happens when the Quiché tendency to parallel verse is modified by the forward thrust of prose (see D. Tedlock, "Hearing a Voice"). The result is a diagonal trajectory:

xchau ru4 ri tepou auncumatz
xépha cut, ta xenaohinic

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W
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ta xebizonic,
xerico quib
xquicuch quitzih
quinaoh

He spoke with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent,
and they talked, then they thought,
then they worried.
They agreed with each other,
they joined their words,
their thoughts.

It is passages such as this that move the action forward in narratives, with the balance sometimes swinging more toward the verticality of verse than in the present example and sometimes more toward the horizontality of prose. The more a passage in contemporary Quiché discourse swings toward this horizontality the less predictable—and, potentially, the more dramatic—its pauses become, except for the paragraphing discussed in the notes to p. 71. As in the present case, I have kept such passages in a prose format in the translation proper.

73 *the generation*: This is *uinaquitic* [*uinakitic*]. Others have translated this as "creation," but it has to do with such processes as the seasonal rising of springs in places that would otherwise be dry, and the growth or formation of algae or larvae in still water (V.). The word "creation" is too heavily laden with an implied ontological priority of the spiritual over the material to be imported into the present account of origins, which contains no word quite like it.

73 *Thunderbolt Hurricane comes first, the second is Newborn Thunderbolt, and the third is Raw Thunderbolt*: There may be an allusion to the Christian trinity here, but the pre-Columbian Quiché pantheon did include at least one trinity, whether that trinity was the same as the present Thunderbolt trinity or not. The principal gods (*gabauil*) of the ruling Quiché lineages are listed again and again as Tohil, Auihix, and Hacauitz (beginning on p. 171 and ending on p. 222), though there is occasional mention of a fourth god (pp. 171 and 219). The P.V. never directly links the three Thunderbolts with the three lineage gods, but it is at least suggestive that the dwelling place of the latter threesome is described as shrouded in a rainstorm (p. 188).

On the basis of fieldwork, Barbara Tedlock and I can confirm Lowy's report that *cakulha* not only is the Quiché term for thunderbolt but is also the Quiché name for the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom (Bernard Lowy, "Amanita muscaria and the Thunderbolt Legend in Guatemala and Mexico," p. 189). We must hasten to add that although Quichés are indeed what Gordon Wasson would call "myco-

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philes" rather than "mycophobes"—they are very fond of the *Amanita caesaria*, for example—they generally regard the *muscaria* as a poisonous species best avoided. But we cannot rule out the possible presence of a *muscaria* cult in the P.V., whether in the form of a symbolic residue of something long past or a highly coded allusion to something still under way at the time Europeans first arrived, nor can we rule out the use of *muscaria* by some present-day highland Guatemalan shamans.

As to the stone and pottery mushroom effigies discovered in Guatemalan archaeological sites (Stephan F. de Borhegyi, "Pre-Columbian Pottery Mushrooms from Mesoamerica"), these pertain to the hot Pacific lowlands rather than to the high, cool evergreen forests where the *muscaria* grows, and there is the further problem that the ruling Quiché lineages trace their origins to the Gulf coast rather than the Pacific. Moreover, de Borhegyi dates the effigies no later than a thousand years ago, leaving a gap of several centuries before the Quiché kingdom expanded into the Pacific lowlands during the reign of Quiché. Of all the arguments for a mushroom cult among the highland Maya the archaeological one is the weakest.

The case for *Amanita muscaria* in the P.V. itself is somewhat stronger, though we must begin from the fact that mushrooms as such are never mentioned. Far beyond the present passage there occur the words *holom ocox*, literally "head of a mushroom" (p. 186), translated there as "yarrow", but Duncan Maclean Earle ("La etnoecología de un quiché en el Popol Vuh") has found this to be the Quiché term for a common herb, named (like a great many other Quiché plants and mushrooms) for its resemblance to an anatomical part of another biological species (see *yarrow* in the Glossary). What is more, the *holom ocox* of the P.V. is not eaten but rather burned as incense, along with another common herb called *iyá* (see *marigold* in the Glossary); according to Earle, both these herbs are still used as incense today in the region east of Santa Cruz Quiché, and Andrés Xiloj attested the use of *iyá* in Momostenango. The flowers of *iyá* are yellow and those of *holom ocox* are white; the P.V. mentions the two plant names in this same order (p. 186), which fits with the yellow/white order of corn colors in the P.V. and the color pairings in the couplets of contemporary prayers (see B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, Appendix B).

Whatever the problems with finding a clear reference to mushrooms in the P.V., the evidence for the *Amanita muscaria* is not limited to the fact that *cakulha* could refer both to a literal thunderbolt and to the mushroom named for the thunderbolt. First of all, the stipe of a mushroom (like the trunk of a tree) is called *rakam*, "its leg," in Quiché, and of course a mushroom with a stipe has only one "leg," which recalls that the name translated "Thunderbolt Hurricane"

here could also be glossed as "One-legged Thunderbolt" (see *Hurricane* in the Glossary). This leaves the way open to the *muscaria* but does not settle the matter, since there are plenty of *literal* thunderbolts that also have a single "leg." The rawness (or freshness) and youthfulness ascribed to the *cakulha* in the P.V. work in the same way: there *could* be an allusion to the suddenness of the growth of mushrooms, but these same qualities are also possessed by thunderbolts.

The single most suggestive bit of evidence for the mushroom theory lies in the fact that a later P.V. passage gives Newborn Thunderbolt and Raw Thunderbolt two further names: Newborn Nanhuaac and Raw Nanhuaac (p. 170). As Schultze Jena pointed out (*Popol Vuh*, p. 187), Nanhuaac would appear to be the same as the Aztec deity Nanhuahtl (or Nanhuahtzin), who throws a thunderbolt to open the mountain containing the first corn. *Nanhuahtl* means "warts" in Nahuatl (D.), which suggests the appearance of the *muscaria* when the remnants of its veil still fleck the cap.

73
 "How should it be sown, how should it dawn?": "Sowing" (*aux-*) and "dawning" (*zakir-*) are frequently paired throughout the portion of the P.V. that deals with the predawn world. The meanings of these two words, which run through them several different threads when they are paired, have something of the structure of a Möbius strip. If we start with the literal meaning of sowing in the present context, the reference is to the beginning of plants; but if we trace that idea over to the other side of our strip, the sprouting of those same plants is expressed metaphorically as "dawning." If, on the other hand, we start from the literal meaning of "dawning," the present reference is to the first of all dawns; but if we trace that idea back over to the other side of the strip, the origin of that dawn is expressed metaphorically as a "sowing," referring to the fact that the Quiché gods who eventually become Venus and the sun and moon must first descend into the underworld. The head of one of these gods becomes the fruit of a calabash tree (p. 113), while another has his head replaced by a squash (p. 145)—that is, at least two of them acquire plant characteristics in the underworld before the coming of the first literal dawn.

The pairing of sowing and dawning receives a further meaning when it is taken to refer to human beings, whose perfection is the principal goal of the world-making gods of the present passage. To trace out this meaning, we must have recourse to ethnography. In Momostenango a mother-father or patrilineage head "sows" and "plants" an unborn child in certain shrines of his lineage by announcing its mother's pregnancy there (B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, p. 80). On the "dawning" side of this process, the woman who gives birth to the child *cuya ri zak*, "gives it light" (*Ibid.*, p. 211). This

particular tracing remains metaphorical on both sides of the "sowing" and "dawning," but it retains a twist in that it is specifically built on the model of the literal sowing and metaphorical "dawning" of vegetation. A second human tracing, also metaphorical on both sides but twisted in that it seems to be built on the model of the metaphorical "sowing" and literal dawning of heavenly bodies, is followed out in death and its aftermath. Here the body is put in the earth, but the deceased "becomes light" or "dawns" (both *zakiric*) in two different senses: the body itself is reduced to plain white (light-colored) bones, but the spirit becomes a spark of light, something like a star.

⁷³ *provider, nurturer*: This is *tzucul cool* [*tzukul cool*]: both words broadly refer to sustenance, but the latter seems to refer more overtly to actual food than the former (at least in B.), and the only word that resembles it today is *jobic*, "to get fat" (X). The providers or nurturers ultimately intended here are human beings, who will one day sustain the gods through prayer and sacrifice, but for the time being the gods will succeed only in making animals. Eventually deer and birds will indeed be among those who nurture the gods with their blood, but only when there are humans to sacrifice them (p. 185); these same sacrificers will also provide their very own blood to the gods, drawing it from their ears and elbows (p. 187), and will ultimately offer the blood and the hearts of human captives (foreordained on p. 175 and carried out beginning on p. 187).

⁷³ *But there will be no high days and no bright praise*: The paired words here are *uq'ihlabal* [*uq'ihlabal*] and *ucalabal* [*ucalabal*]. The first is literally "its-day-ness-instrument," referring to the keeping or setting aside of a specific day on the calendar for ritual purposes; I chose "high days" because the notion of "holidays" has become so secularized, in English (despite the etymology of that word). The second is "its-brightness (or manifestness)-instrument"; it could even be translated as "publicity," but that term, unlike the Quiché one, is strictly secular, includes unfavorable attention, and does not involve a visual metaphor.

⁷³ *just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming, unfolding. Then the mountains were separated from the water*: The "unfolding" here is *upupu-hetic*, which for both B. and Andrés Xiloj describes the way in which clouds form around mountains. "Separated" is my translation of *xtape*, tangentially based on *tappo*, "to pick out" (B.). On reading this passage don Andrés immediately commented: "It's just the way it is and right now, there are clouds, then the clouds part, piece by piece, and now the sky is clear." It is as if the mountains were there in the pri-

ordial world all along and were revealed, little by little, as the clouds parted. But don Andrés complicated this interpretation by saying, "Haven't you seen that when the water passes—a rain-storm—and then it clears, a vapor comes out from among the trees? The clouds come out from among the mountains, among the trees." This lends a cyclical movement to the picture: the clouds come from the mountains, then conceal the mountains, then part to reveal the mountains, and so on.

⁷³ *By their genius alone, by their cutting edge alone*: The paired terms here are *naual* and *puz*. The former term, although it is a Nahua borrowing, does not have the narrow meaning in Quiché that it has in central Mexico, but rather covers a very broad notion that may be glossed as "spirit familiar" (see *genius* in the Glossary for more detail). The latter term, *puz*, carries one central literal meaning from its Mixe-Zoque (and possibly Olmec) origins right down to its use in modern Quiché: it refers to the cutting of flesh with a knife (see D. Tedlock, *The Spoken Word*, p. 265). At the time of the conquest it was the primary term for sacrifice. In the present context, it implies that "the mountains were separated from the water" through an act resembling the extraction of the heart (or other organs) from a sacrifice. As if to confirm this allusion, the text goes on to refer to the earth as the "mountain-plain," or *huyub tacah* [*taçah*], which is today the principal Quiché metaphor for the human body.

When don Andrés read these lines, he shifted away from the idea that the preceding lines about cloud formation and dispersal referred to something happening in the atmosphere around the mountains, moving toward the idea that this process was a simile for the formation and differentiation of the mountains themselves. That the mountains under discussion were made by means of *naual* rather than physical labor suggested a certain insubstantiality to him, and he commented: "Then these mountains are for no other reason than representing that there are hills or volcanoes." That is to say, he interpreted the mountains not as hard realities but as mere "signs" (*retal*), unfolding themselves "just like a cloud, like a mist."

⁷⁵ *it was brought forth by the Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth, as they are called, since they were the first to think of it*: Andrés Xiloj took this to mean that the formation of the earth was an act of self-revelation on the part of the Heart of Sky and Heart of Earth. He compared them to the present-day *uqur puuak* or "Heart of Metal (or silver or money)," which reveals itself to the fortunate. As he explained it, "When one has luck, one picks up some kind of rock, but in the form of an animal; this is the Heart of Metal. When the moment comes, suddenly it appears." Such rocks may be volcanic concretions that

happen to resemble animals, or they may be ancient stone artifacts. They are properly kept in the indoor half of a pair of patrilineage shrines called the *mebil*, which consists of a wooden box placed on a family altar (B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, p. 81). Don Andrés continued, "This is where one prays, this is where the fortune, the money, abounds. Here in the Popol Vuh, the Heart of Sky and the Heart of Earth appeared, and this is where the earth was propagated." The objects in a *mebil* should multiply of their own accord, and that, as don Andrés would have it, is what happened to the object or objects from which the earth began.

The notion of a "Heart of Sky" might seem out of place where something as substantial as earth or stone is concerned, but don Andrés' interpretation is supported by a much later passage in which the names Heart of Sky and Heart of Earth are both addressed to gods whose bodies have been petrified. The connection between these gods and the sky lies in the fact that they were petrified when the sun first rose and burned them. The objects called "Heart of Metal" today also have their celestial dimensions: volcanic concretions with animal shapes are said to have been formed at the first sunrise, just as the stone gods of the P.V. were, while ancient stone artifacts are said to have been formed where thunderbolts struck the ground. The P.V. does not mention the latter process, but it does include thunderbolts among the attributes of the Heart of Sky. The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel takes the question of celestial stoniness home to the sky itself, declaring that the "Heart of Heaven" is a bead of precious stone (Rois, *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, p. 91).

76
all the guardians of the forests: Andrés Xiloj commented: "The animals are the caretakers of the woods. They [the gods] thought, 'There is a need for animals, so that people won't be able to enter the woods. The animals will frighten them.'" For the contemporary Quiché, wild animals are (in effect) the domestic animals of the Mundo, or earth deity. One cannot take a deer in the hunt without first asking permission of the Mundo. When a family is in arrears in its offerings, the Mundo may send a predator from out of the woods to raid its flocks or herds.

76
deer, birds, . . . yellowbites: On the basis of meaning this list might be organized into couplets and triplets:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| quieh, | deer, |
| tziquin, | birds, |
| 4oh, | pumas, |
| balam, | jaguars, |

- | | |
|----------|---------------|
| cumatz, | serpents, |
| zochoch, | rattlesnakes, |
| canti | yellowbites |

But whatever the groupings according to meaning, a list of this kind would be orally delivered today without any more marking of the transition between jaguars and serpents than that between pumas and jaguars; each individual word would retain its integrity, as marked by a stress on its final (or only) syllable, but there would be no pause until the run of parallel nouns came to a halt, or until the breath of the speaker ran out. On this basis I have chosen not to break such lists into lines of verse in the translation, but have run them on as prose.

76
"Why this pointless humming?": The "humming" and "rustling" referred to in this passage are the *lolin-* and *tzinin-* sounds discussed earlier (see notes for p. 72). What the gods are ultimately looking for here is the sound of articulate human speech, but they will not succeed in hearing it until p. 165. In the present scene, all they can hear on the earth is sounds that are indefinitely repetitive or vibratory and therefore without meaning, just as sounds were without meaning when there was only the sea.

78
"You, precious birds": This is *ix ix 4:iquin*, in which the second *ix* might be treated as a scribal error, but it is essential to the full understanding of the phrase. The first *ix* is plainly enough "you," in the familiar and in the plural, but the second one has a double meaning. At one level it is diminutive, making the whole phrase translatable as "You, precious (or little) birds," but at another level it is the day name *Ix*, which immediately precedes *4:iquin* or "Bird" in the sequence of twenty day names. These are the two days devoted to the contemporary rites of the patrilineage shrine called the *mebil*, specifically Seven *Ix* and Eight *4:iquin*; indeed, this shrine is often referred to simply by naming these two days.

78
a place to sleep: This is *warabal*, and it alludes to patrilineage shrines, which are called *warabaltha*, "foundation of the house" or, literally, "sleeping (or resting) place of the house" (see the illustration on p. 256 for a present-day shrine of this kind). The animals that are given places to sleep in this passage, *quieh* or "deer" and *4:iquin* or "birds," give their names to two of the days used for *warabaltha* rites today. The human mother-father or patrilineage head uses a low-numbered day bearing the name *Queh* or "Deer" to go to the parts of the *warabaltha* dedicated to people in order to announce that a woman married into his lineage is pregnant and to pray for the child she bears. This ritual is called a "sowing," just as is the long process in

and birds deer

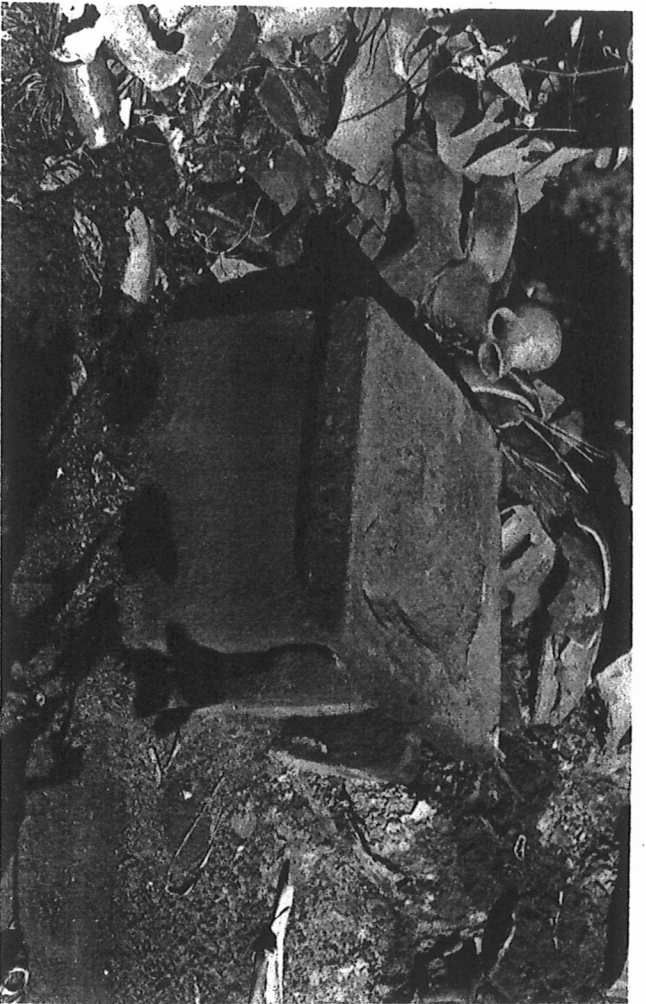


PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

SLEEPING PLACE OF THE HOUSE: A foundation shrine belonging to a patrilineage in Momostenango. The stone slab that covers the shrine marks it as a place of worship that is private rather than open to the public; only the head of the patrilineage that owns this particular shrine may pray and burn copal here.

which the divine mother-fathers of the P. V. speak of making humans and prepare for their coming long before they actually succeed in making them a reality. Deer result from one of their four attempts to make humans: these animals are, in effect, an approximation of real humans, their fault being that they walk on all fours and lack articulate speech. The implication here is that in visiting his shrines to announce a child on the day named after the deer, the human mother-father commemorates the process whereby properly walking and talking humans were spoken of and approximated by the divine mother-fathers (the Maker and Modeler) before they were realized.

The most startling link between shrines and deer—deer as animals rather than days named Deer—manifests itself in dreams. On this point I can give firsthand testimony. During the period of my formal apprenticeship as a daykeeper in Momostenango, I told Andrés Xiloj

of dreaming that I was followed along a path by a series of large deer. After a laugh of immediate recognition he told me that I had been followed by shrines! He explained that outdoor shrines have spirit familiars that frequently take the form of deer—and, these days, of horses and cattle. The path, of course, was that of the days of the calendar, along which each shrine had its proper place in a sequence. The deer were following me in anticipation of the time when I would end my apprenticeship and feed them—that is, make offerings of my own.

⁷⁸“Talk, speak out. Don’t moan, don’t cry out.” Here again (as on p. 76) the gods express their desire for articulate human speech, this time contrasted with moans and cries rather than humming and rustling. Not only that, but they want to hear their own names and praises, and they ask the animals to “keep our days.” This last idea is expressed by *cohiq’uñila* [*cohiq’uñilaq*], literally, “to-us-you (plural familiar) day (transitive imperative);” analogous to the form rendered as “high days” on p. 73. If English permitted “day” to be a verb, one could translate *cohiq’uñila* as “dayify us,” with the pun on “deify” being appropriate enough. A less direct translation would be “calendarify us.”

⁷⁸they just squawked, they just chattered, they just howled. New sounds have been added to the world here. They are not yet the sounds of speech, but neither are they like the rippling, murmuring, and humming of the world that had only a sea (see p. 72). Those sounds tended toward vowel harmony and repeated consonants—*4, inin-* and *chamam-*, for example—whereas the verb stems here retain vowel harmony but do not repeat their consonants: *uachela-, canala-, and uho-*.

⁷⁸It wasn’t apparent what language they spoke: The text has *maui xua-chinic uach quihabal*, literally, “not faced-out its face their-talk-instrument.” The active verb *uachinic*, built on *uach*, “face,” is used primarily with reference to the bearing of fruit by plants. The implication is that the sounds made by the animals contained a potential for articulate speech, but that this potential was never realized.

⁷⁹It talked at first, but senselessly: The person of mud is unique among all the creatures made by the gods in that it not only lacks sensible speech, but is not even quoted by means of onomatopoeia. Note also the correlate lack of articulation of its body. But the subtlest point here is that the only creature made of mud is also the only one made in the singular, which makes this episode an allusion to the Adamic myth. What the writers of the P. V. have to say about Adam, in their indirect way, is that a singular creature of mud could neither have

made sense nor walked nor multiplied. If there ever was such a creature, there is no way it could have left a trace of itself; it must have dissolved.

80 "a counting of days, a counting of lots": This is *uqubhnic* [uqubhnic] *ubhnic*, "its-being-dayed (or timed) its-being-modeled (or shaped)". As daykeepers, Xpiyacoc and Xmucane will divine by means of counting the day numbers and names of the 260-day divinatory cycle, dividing or "shaping" a fistful of seeds of the coral tree (see the Glossary) into lots.

80 *the human mass*: "Mass" is *anom*, which is given this gloss in B.

81 *master craftsman*: This is *aholtecatl*, in which *ah-* is occupational; the rest is from Nahuatl *toltecatl*, "master of mechanical arts" (D.).

81 "Run your hands over the kernels of corn, over the seeds of the coral tree": The verb stem here is *mala-*, "to run the hand over something" (V.). The contemporary Quiché daykeeper first pours the seeds out of a small bundle into a pile on a table and mixes them, moving the right hand over them with palm down flat and fingers spread, and then grabs a fistful. The remaining seeds are then set aside; those from the fistful are sorted into lots of four seeds each, arranged in parallel rows so that the days can easily be counted on them, one day for each lot. When seeds are left over from the division into fours, a remainder of three seeds is made into two additional lots (with two seeds in one and one seed in the other), while a remainder of one or two seeds counts as one additional lot. Once the clusters are complete the diviner begins counting the days of the 260-day cycle, starting in the present (the day of the divination itself), the past (the day the client's problem began), or the future (the day of an action contemplated by the client). The augury is reckoned from the character or portent of the day that is reached by counting through to the final lot of seeds.

The alphabetic P.V. does not give the numbers and names of the days counted by Xpiyacoc and Xmucane in this earliest of all divinations, but the ancient P.V. may have been like the Chilam Balam book from Chumayel, which treats the first counting of days as nothing less than the origin of the 260-day calendar itself and gives not only numbers and names but day-by-day interpretations, running through twenty consecutive days (Rois, *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, chap. 13).

81 *the borrowing*: This is *ukahic*, a term that Andrés Xiloj, as a daykeeper, recognized immediately. When today's daykeeper speaks the

opening prayer for a divination, invoking the sheet-lightning, clouds, mists, and damp breezes of the world, he or she is said to be "borrowing" these forces from the days themselves, each of which is ruled by a lord, and from the mountains of the world, each of which has a spirit familiar (B. Tedlock, *Time and the Highland Maya*, pp. 155, 157, 162). Xpiyacoc and Xmucane are not as modest as this human daykeeper in their own borrowing of lightning, moisture, and air currents: they name the Heart of Sky, whose electrical aspect ultimately manifests not as far-off and silently flickering sheet-lightning but as close-up thunderbolts, and who is also known as Hurricane, the bringer of rains and winds of world-destroying proportions. Meteorological forces, large or small, serve to connect the cosmos at large, both temporally and spatially, with the microcosmic scene of the divination, transmitting information about distant places or times through the counting of days and through lightninglike sensations that occur in various parts of the diviner's own body.

81 *the lots*: This is *bit*, possibly the same as the stem in the name *bitol*, "Modeler" (see *Maker, Modeler* in the Glossary). My guess is that it refers to the clusters of seeds that are made up from the random fistful taken up by the diviner (as described above); in effect, the diviner is giving shape to a chaotic mass. I translate *bit* as "lots" because that word both fits the groups of seeds, which are arranged in lots of four, and figures in English-language divination terminology. "Diviner" (on p. 83) is a translation of *ahbit*, in which *bit* has the occupational prefix.

82 *who stands behind others*: This is *chirucan*, which Andrés Xiloj identified as part of a phrase used today by daykeepers: *chirukan uqab*, "at-his/her-legs his/her-arms" (in which "legs" and "arms" include "feet" and "hands"). To be at someone's feet and hands means to give assistance, as a daykeeper does when praying and giving offerings on behalf of a client, or a midwife does when assisting a birth.

83 "may you succeed, may you be accurate": Like Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, the contemporary daykeeper speaks to the seeds while arranging them, asking for a clear outcome.

83 "Have shame, you up there... attempt no deception": Andrés Xiloj was not surprised to hear the Heart of Sky addressed in this manner. He pointed out that today's daykeepers (including himself) also ask that the gods not deceive their divinatory clients. The praying diviner may say, for example, *ma ban la ri mentira*, "Do not make a lie." In the case of the P.V. the client in question is none other than the god Sovereign Plumed Serpent.

83 *manikins, woodcarvings*: Andrés Xiloj remarked, "Then these will only be *representations* of humans."

83 *They just went and walked wherever they wanted*: Andrés Xiloj commented: "Then they're like animals." In Quiché thinking one of the major differences between animals and humans is that humans must ask permission of the gods to go abroad in the world. To pray that nothing bad happen to one in the road is to ask permission to pass; the need for such permission is more acute in the case of visits to powerful shrines or distant towns. In prayers that prepare the way for a long trip, one asks not only that there be no robbers in the road, but that policemen, soldiers, and customs officials look the other way.

84 *The man's body was carved from the wood of the coral tree*: The body of the god presently called Maximon in the Tzutuhil Maya town of Santiago Atitlán is made of this wood (Michael Mendelson, "Maximon: An Iconographical Introduction," p. 57).

84 *the pith of reeds*: This is *zibac*; B. gives *zibaq* as "the pith or insides of a small reed."

84 *a rain of resin*: Andrés Xiloj commented: "This was turpentine that fell, and it was burning as it fell."

84 *the black rainstorm*: This is *quecal hab* [*ʒekal hab*]. As Andrés Xiloj explained, this does not mean that the rain itself was black, but refers to the darkness created by a very intense rainstorm.

84 *Into their houses came*: This is *xoc ula* [*xoc ulaa*], "entered as visitors." Today any invasion of the house (including its patio) by a wild animal is viewed as a sign sent by the earth deity, whether it is a fox or possum that attacks domestic animals or, say, a bird that happens to fly indoors. Andrés Xiloj pointed out that such animals do not speak (*phawic*) but rather give signs (*retal*) by their cries or movements. Note that even under the cataclysmic conditions of the present episode the speaking is done by domestic animals and by artifacts; it is not attributed to wild animals.

84 *turkeys*: This is *ac* [*aq*], which became the term for the Old World chicken during colonial times. A number of colonial dictionaries give the term for turkey as *kitzih aq*, "true *aq*" (T. and V.), or *mazual aq*, "Indian *aq*" (G.), which makes it plain enough that the pre-Hispanic term for turkey was *aq*. Today the turkey is called *noz* (X.), a term

that had already appeared by the seventeenth century (listed in B. as *noz*).

85 *r-r-rip, r-r-rip, / r-r-rub, r-r-rub*: This is *holi, holi, huqui, huqui*, onomatopoeic for the sound of a handstone (mano) rubbing against a grinding stone (metate). If the performance of the present Quiché story was anything like that of North American Indian tales, these lines were probably sung. It must be kept in mind that *h* in Quiché is rough, like Spanish *r* or German *ch*. This roughness would probably be exaggerated in a dramatic oral rendering, hence my suggestion in the translation that the *r* be trilled. When judged by the fact that the verb for "rub together" is *hukuruc* (X.), *huqui, huqui* should probably be *huki, huki*. Andrés Xiloj immediately heard a sound play in these lines, which he rendered as follows:

*hoo ali, hoo ali,
hukuwic, hukuwic*

meaning something like this:
Let's go girl, let's go girl,
rubbing together, rubbing together.

85 *their hearthstones were shooting out*: Andrés Xiloj remarked: "It's like a cataract of stones from a volcano!" This incident may be the origin of the stars Alnitak, Saiph, and Rigel in Orion; today these three stars are said to be the three hearthstones of the typical Quiché kitchen fireplace, arranged to form a triangle, and the cloudy area they enclose (Great Nebula M42) is said to be the smoke from a fire (B. Tedlock, "Earth Rites and Moon Cycles").

86 *wood alone was used for their flesh*: Andrés Xiloj remarked, "They lacked blood, or quickening, which is what corn gives." As it turns out later, real human beings are indeed made of corn.

86 *"I am their sun . . . their months"*: "Sun" is *quih* [*ʒih*] here, which could either be "sun" or "day," but "months" is *iquil* [*iq'il*], which is definitely "months," rather than *iq*, "moon."

86 *"I am the walkway and I am the foothold of the people"*: "Walkway" is *binbal* and "foothold" is *chacabal*; *-bal* is an instrumental suffix. Andrés Xiloj explicated Seven Macaw's statement as follows: "Binbal is to give light for walking, or to go out on a somewhat clear road; and *chacabal*—now we say *chacanalbal*—is the same. These words are in the prayers we say at the *ugabalha* [patrilineage shrines], to ask permission for anyone who goes out of the house to whatever place. They

can walk, they can crawl—*chacantbal* is to crawl on all fours. Seven Macaw is saying that he is a person's feet, since he knows that he has light [to show a person where to step], but in fact the person sees darkly, it isn't very clear."

86 *"they stand out"*: This is *cauacoh*, translated on the basis of *cauacuhic*, "to have big teeth (so as to be unable to close the mouth)" (X.).

86 *the scope of his face lies right around his own perch*: Seven Macaw, as the Big Dipper, is restricted to a path that lies close to the pole star, unlike the sun and moon (see Glossary and D. Tedlock, "The Sowing and Dawning of All the Sky-Earth"). The classic Maya equivalent of Seven Macaw is shown perched atop a northern tree at Palenque, in the central panel of the Tablet of the Cross and on the lid of the sarcophagus beneath the Temple of the Inscriptions (Linda Schele, *Notebook*, pp. 66-67).

PART TWO

89 *the mountains . . . are softened by him*: "Softened" is my translation of *nebonic*; X. glosses this as "overcooked," but Andrés Bello read it as "soaked." He commented: "When the earth is completely soaked it can be destroyed by the water. When there are rains of forty-eight or sixty hours, there may be destruction. Landslides are the work of such rains."

92 *Then he went up over the tree and fell flat on the ground*: When birds are shot they fly upward in a spasm before falling from a tree. But Seven Macaw's movement here also suggests that of the Big Dipper; assuming that his head and body correspond to the bowl of the Big Dipper and his tail to its handle, his climbing of the tree to eat his nances, his going up over the tree when shot, and his fall to the ground all follow the pattern of the Big Dipper, which rises with its handle down, goes up over the North Star (counterclockwise) in a momentarily horizontal position, and then sets with its bowl end down. The period when all seven stars may be seen in ascendancy, from mid-October to mid-May, corresponds approximately to the dry season; the period when the Big Dipper is already in steep descent by twilight and when all seven stars may become invisible for as much as half the night, from mid-July to mid-October, corresponds to the hurricane season.

92 *"tricksters"*: This is *qaxtoq*; it is glossed as "the devil" or "liar" in colonial dictionaries (B. and V.), but that is a missionary view of the

matter. In the P.V., where the word is used ten different times, it is usually obvious from context that the person or persons labeled by it have done something tricky or are accused of trickery. In the present case Hunahpu and Xbalanque have ambushed Seven Macaw while he was at his meal. In other cases the Four Hundred Boys suspect Zipacna of being tricky, which he indeed turns out to be (p. 95); Xmu-cane accuses Blood Woman of trickery (p. 118), but (ironically) Blood Woman's ability to work magic apparently comes from the fact that she carries Xmu-cane's own grandchildren in her womb; Hunahpu and Xbalanque accuse a toad of trickery (p. 133), and sure enough it turns out that the toad never swallowed what he claimed was in his belly; X'tah and Xpuch are accused of trickery when painted wasps turn into real ones (p. 192); and the Quichés are called tricksters by their enemies for making it look as though the people they've seized for sacrifice were attacked by wild animals (p. 194). Except for the cases of Zipacna and the toad, the trickery works on the side of the protagonists in a given story. Translating *qaxtoq* as "trickster" rather than "devil" puts the matter in a more general American Indian context, where the exploits of trickster figures are simultaneously disapproved and enjoyed.

92 *"they've dislocated my jaw"*: This is obviously the origin of the way a macaw's beak looks, with a huge upper mandible and a much smaller and retreating lower one.

92 *"All my teeth are just loose"*: "Loose" is *chu*, translated on the basis of a reduplicated form in B., *chuyuchua*, "to rattle."

92 *"Do forgive us"*: The addition of "Do" to this phrase is my way of translating *qui* [ki], which, according to V., carries a sense of exaggerated politeness.

93 *with great effort*: This is *nimac ua chih* [nimak uaa qhin], "great this effort," in which *qhinh* is translated on the basis of *qhinhinic*, "the strength to do something" (X.).

93 *"What sweets can you make, what poisons can you cure?"*: The "sweets" and "poisons" are both *qui* [quii], a word that carries both these meanings to this day (for an explanation see *sweet drink* in the Glossary).

93 *"We just pull the worms out of teeth"*: There is a contemporary Mopán Maya myth in which Lord Kin ("Sun" or "Day") causes the chief of the vultures to have a toothache and then is begged to come and cure it (Thompson, *Ethnology of the Mayas*, pp. 129-32). But in