

SUPPLEMENT TO THE HANDBOOK
OF MIDDLE AMERICAN
INDIANS



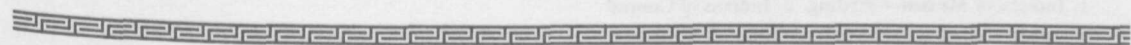
VICTORIA REIFLER BRICKER, General Editor

===== VOLUME FIVE =====

EPIGRAPHY

VICTORIA REIFLER BRICKER, Volume Editor

With the Assistance of Patricia A. Andrews



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN

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Printed in the United States of America

First edition, 1992

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Epigraphy / Victoria Reifler Bricker, volume editor,
with the assistance of Patricia A. Andrews.

p. cm. — (Supplement to the handbook of
Middle American Indians : v. 5)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-292-77650-0

1. Indians of Mexico—Writing. 2. Indians of Central
America—Writing. 3. Mayas—Writing. I. Bricker,
Victoria Reifler, (date). II. Andrews, Patricia A. III.
Series.

F1219.3.W94E65 1992

497'.6—dc20

91-14769

CIP

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3. Mixtec Pictography: Conventions and Contents

MAARTEN JANSEN

AN ANCIENT MEXICAN pictorial manuscript represents a special and unique form of writing. It does not record a number of sentences phonetically, but conveys information more directly through images, with only incidental interference of the language. Nevertheless, the result is a book, made up of a series of figurative paintings which can be read as a text. The possible readings may differ in their phonetic and idiomatic realizations, but, given effective communication, their contents will agree. The high degree of conventionalization of the images and signs certainly contributed to a conventional reading.

A specific group of codices was painted in the Mixtec region, in the southwestern part of Mexico, during Late Postclassic and Early Colonial times. These manuscripts contain unique historical data about the elite lineages that ruled the different kingdoms, or *cacicazgos*, of that region, especially those of Tilantongo and Teozacualco in the Mixteca Alta. The Mixtec provenance and historical character of these codices were firmly established by the works of Alfonso Caso, who laid

the foundation for modern Mixtec studies.¹

The challenge of interpreting the Mixtec codices today is to "read" them, both by relating the pictographic images to the spoken language and its concepts and by relating the contents of the scenes to Mixtec culture. Historical and archaeological studies have to be combined with an understanding of the language and the heritage that is still alive today (Anders and Jansen 1988).

Colonial sources are few, and they are often incomplete and distorted. Mixtec religion is documented by an early Inquisition trial (1544) against nobles from Yanhuitlan (Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera 1940). General descriptions of the region, its customs, and its history can be found in the *Relaciones geográficas* of circa 1580 (Acuña 1984). A first synthesis of this material was written by the chronicler Antonio de Herrera. The Dominican friars Antonio de los Reyes (1976) and Francisco de Alvarado (1962) published a very valuable grammar and dictionary of the Mixtec language in 1593, in which several important traditions and concepts were also recorded. A crucial sacred text about the ori-

gins of the world and humankind was published in an abbreviated translation by Fray Gregorio García (1981 [1607]). Later in the seventeenth century, Fray Francisco de Burgoa discussed several aspects of Mixtec culture and history in his history of the Dominican missions in Oaxaca.

Today the Mixtec region is poverty-stricken and suffering from social injustice and violence, while the environment is threatened with an alarming desertification. In many ways, however, Mixtec culture and Mixtec language show a great continuity, which makes it possible to interpret the data of the past through an understanding of the present, and vice versa. The participation of modern Mixtecs on an equal footing in this study is an essential element and also an ethical imperative: it is *their* history and *their* culture.

On the basis of these various sources—both ancient and modern—one may venture to “read” the scenes, identifying the objects represented and the genre of representation, interpreting the themes and motifs as well as their social and historical context, and evaluating the whole in terms of more general scientific, social, and human principles.

The basic elements of pictography are (often highly) stylized iconic images, in combination with a limited number of arbitrary signs. They may merely represent the objects they depict, indicate an action or something else directly related to the objects depicted, or have either a symbolic or metaphorical significance or a purely phonetic value (“hieroglyphs”). These elements are ordered in scenes and, in most codices, are distributed along horizontal or vertical guidelines, following a reading order of “as the ox ploughs” (*boustrophedon*). *Lienzos*, which do not have the screenfold form but are large pieces of cloth, have a different reading order. Codices are well suited for conveying narrative sequences. *Lienzos*, however, may be better suited for representing a spatial ordering and, in fact, are sometimes real maps, locating toponymic hieroglyphs according to geographical reality and associating historical

personages and events with these places.

Generally speaking, the protagonists of the historical narrative are human beings, the ancient Mixtec lords and ladies. The individuals are identified by their names, which are painted beside them: calendrical names, consisting of the day in the 260-day Mesoamerican calendar on which they were born, and more poetic so-called personal names, which are given in a special ceremony at the age of seven (Herrera y Tordesillas 1947: Decade III, Book 3, Ch. 12). The personal names may also be represented in the clothing. For the men these names often refer to brave animals (eagles, jaguars), fire, blood, or divine beings (e.g., sun, rain, fire-serpent) and other indications of strength, nobility, and courage. For the women they are used to represent beauty and value: quetzal birds, butterflies, cobwebs, jade, flowers, fans, etc. (see Smith 1937b).

The lords usually have short hair and wear loincloths, sometimes in combination with long ceremonial shirts or attire in the form of animals—referring to their names and perhaps also their *nahuales* or *tonales* (animal alter egos). They often wear sandals. The ladies normally wear their hair long and braided and are dressed in *quechquemits* (shawls) and long wrap-around skirts. Both men and women may appear adorned with gold and turquoise or jade jewelry (earplugs, necklaces, bracelets, etc.) and with feather ornaments.

Priests often appear painted black with soot or a hallucinogenic ointment. Sometimes they are represented as elderly persons with beards. Certain long skirts, known as *xicolli* in Nahuatl, are ceremonial garments. They are offered at special occasions (such as marriages) and may also represent the different ranks of the priestly career. Priests may carry on their backs precious gourds, in which the tobacco powder for the offerings is kept. A specific priestly function is indicated by the fire-serpent and the eagle; according to Antonio de los Reyes (1976:79), *yaha yahui* ‘eagle, fire-serpent’ is a title, meaning ‘nigromántico señor’ in Spanish, from which a ref-

erence to a shamanic *nahual* can be inferred. The existence of such a title explains why historical personages occasionally may appear in this outfit (e.g., Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" in *Codex Nuttall*, pp. 44, 50).

A man and a woman facing each other usually represent a marriage. The couple may be shown seated on a mat (*petate*) or just on a band, on top of the toponymic hieroglyph of the place they rule, or in a palace. Sometimes a vessel containing chocolate sits between them and enhances the festive character of the event. The marriage had been preceded by the proposals of a "marriage ambassador," after whose successful mediation the bride was carried off to the house of the groom, as is still the case in traditional Mixtec communities (see the biography of Lady 6 Monkey of Jaltepec in *Codex Selden* 3135 (A.2), pp. 6–8, and the story of Lady 3 Flint in *Codex Nuttall*, p. 19).

A year bearer and a day sign often accompany the couple, giving the date of the marriage. Deer and Eagle, both associated with the West in the mantic system, were considered favorable days. The children are represented as isolated persons, following the couple and looking away from them.

Sometimes the couple is first followed by a provenance statement of the bride or groom moving in, mentioning the names of his or her parents and the toponymic hieroglyph of their *cacicazgo*. The children are sometimes explicitly shown as having been born, by means of umbilical cords attached to them, or by means of footsteps leading from the parents to the children (Fig. 3-1). Their years of birth may be given, the days, of course, being the same as their calendar names.

In a detailed genealogical pattern, a couple is followed by its children. Then one of the children is shown again, on the occasion of his or her own marriage, forming a new couple. In a more condensed pattern, however, one couple just follows another, making it difficult sometimes to determine the relationship between the two, e.g., to ascertain which member of the second couple was the child of the first, and whether he or she was actually their

child and not a brother or sister.

The Mixtec elite, as depicted in the codices, married within their own group. Frequently, the descendants of a couple tried to reunite the divided inheritance by intermarriage, e.g., between cousins, or between uncle and niece (Spores 1974). This practice resulted in an extremely complex web of family relationships, which are portrayed in the codices. To interpret these relationships one should keep to the Mixtec kinship terminology.

In a few instances, the death of the individual is explicitly shown by means of a mummy-bundle accompanied by his or her name and the date of death.

Several people were so important that many more details of their biographies were recorded. The most famous of them is Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw," born in a Year 12 Reed and killed fifty-two years later, also in a Year 12 Reed. His life story is told in the *Codices Colombino-Becker*, *Nuttall* (p. 42-end), and *Bodley* 2858 (pp. 7–14). In such biographies, we read about meetings, rituals, pilgrimages, battles, conquests, etc. They often reveal a dramatic composition: tragedies, ambitions, and intrigues may be reconstructed from the images, as well as the love of beauty and the devout, ritualized respect for the divine powers (see Troike 1974; Jansen and Pérez 1986).

Meetings are represented by two or more people facing each other, often of the same sex (if not, the scene may possibly be confused with a marriage scene, but is generally clarified by the context).

A special gathering is one in which people pay their ceremonial respects and present an offering to one or two individuals. The offering may consist of a decapitated quail, tobacco, a burning torch, and some palm leaves or other plants. Sacrifices to divine beings (such as Bundles in temples) may include *copal* incense with a smoking ladle and tobacco powder, as well as a blood sacrifice involving ear-piercing with a bone perforator and performed by priests and heirs to the throne.

Human sacrifice is rarely depicted. Gener-

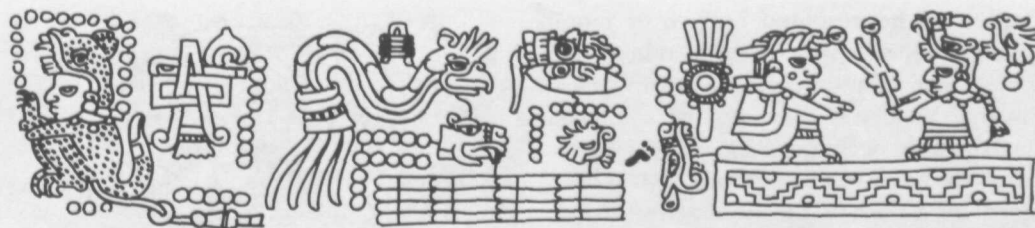


FIGURE 3-1. *Codex Bodley 2858*, p. 17-IV: Lord 2 Water "Fire Serpent of the Mexicans" is married to Lady 3 Alligator "Precious Fan," who has come from the Valley and is the daughter of Lord 11 Water "Rain Flint" and Lady 13 Serpent "Plumed Serpent of Cuilapan." In the Year 8 House, Lord 5 Reed "Twenty Jaguars" is born [the son of Lord 2 Water and Lady 3 Alligator].

Reconstructed Mixtec reading: *Iya Catuta* "Yahui Sami Nu" *ninduvui sihi Iyadzehe Coquihui* "Huichi nisaa Yusi," *nindesi Yodzo*, *nicuvui dzayadzehe Iya Situta* "Dzavui Yuchi" *sihi Iyadzehe Siyo* "Coo Nodzo Saha Yucu." *Nuu cuiya Nacuau nicacu Iya Q huiyo* "Ocoñaña."

ally speaking, it is a form of execution of enemies taken as prisoners in battle. Those to be sacrificed carry a white banner in one hand, have a black stripe painted across their eyes, and have their hair covered with white paper or white down.

Even though the character of the Mixtec codices under discussion is historical or, rather, descriptive and narrative, there are many references to religious beliefs and concise parallels with the religious, mantic, and prescriptive *Codex Borgia* group. The codices show the major Mesoamerican gods in their well-known iconography. A central religious concept is *ñuhu* 'God', which is painted in the screenfolds as a stony being, often colored red, with large teeth and round eyes (Smith 1973b:65ff; Jansen 1982a:Ch. V:4). The *ñuhu* is associated with the Holy Bundle. This Bundle, which is often related to the ancestors of mythological origin who founded the dynasty, is a central element in the dynastic cult: it is carried by priests (cf. the Aztec *teomama*) and adored in temples. The Bundle also appears in combination with the equipment for drilling the New Fire. The New Fire ceremony occurs in detail in the *Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus I* and is related to the foundation of the *cacicazgos*.

Christian churches have since taken the place of the ancient temples as *huahi ñuhu* 'Houses of God', and the *fiestas* of the Chris-

tian calendar have replaced most ancient public cults, but many elements and structures of the ancient worldview and rituals have survived in private life and intimate experience, enriched rather than destroyed by Christian beliefs. This is especially true of humanity's close relationship with nature, as well as of the awe surrounding the *temazcal* (steam bath), traditional curing, and the whole complex of *nahual* experiences.

Mixtec religion today has preserved many ancient concepts and essentially the same divine powers, combined with or translated into Christian saints. The *ñuhu*, which is often impersonated by a special rock or stone, is the spirit of the land: San Cristóbal and Santa Cristina, who provide for the harvest and may be responsible for cases of shock (soul loss, Spanish *susto*). Lord Rain continues to live in "his house" (a cave) and speaks in thunder. Lord Sun is the Eternal Father, who supervises our way and deeds. Lord Maize (Jesus Christ) is our brother and sustenance. Our Grandmother provides strength in the *temazcal* and watches over births, purity, and health. Obviously, these indigenous views and feelings are the background to any sound interpretation of the codices.

Music—an important element in ritual—is seldom represented in the codices; however, we occasionally find someone blowing a conch, shaking a rattle, or playing a drum or a

flute.

Battles are represented by two or more people standing opposite each other and wielding arms (spears, shields, axes, dart throwers). Victory is expressed by someone taking the enemy by the hair, making him a captive to be sacrificed. Conquest is expressed by a dart in the hieroglyph of the conquered place (see also Smith 1973a:33; Troike 1982).

In these scenes, as well as in the marriage scenes, toponymic hieroglyphs (place signs) play a crucial part: they indicate the extension of the power of the lord and the legitimization of the dynasty. These hieroglyphs follow the Mixtec practice of giving names to the diverse features of the landscape and generally consist of two elements (Smith 1973a): (1) a natural or cultural feature—a mountain or river (both conventionally drawn in cross section), a plain (a feather carpet), an altar, a ceremonial precinct (with its characteristic "battlements"), a city (a frieze with a geometrical pattern), a house, a ball court, or a *temazcal*; (2) a specifying element, such as a color, an animal or plant, a structure, or any other object that specifies the name of the geographical feature.

Not only the human beings but also the *cacicazgos* had their "calendar names": place-name hieroglyphs may form separate units with dates that are outside of durational time; i.e., they do not have a chronological function but belong to the place as a ceremonial or founding date, comparable to today's *fiesta del pueblo*. These place-date combinations occur where the beginning of a new dynasty is mentioned and are consequently quite frequent in the initial segments of Mixtec historiography (Jansen 1988b).

In some cases, the toponymic hieroglyphs may be identified through the glosses that accompany them. Other places have to be located in a more indirect way: The correspondence between the hieroglyph and the meaning of the Mixtec name has to be established, but, because individual place names are repetitive, such a procedure should com-

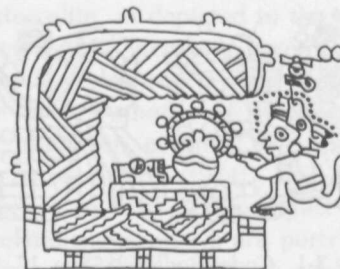


FIGURE 3-2. *Codex Selden 3135* p. 6-II: Lord 2 Rain "Twenty Jaguars" consulting the Jade Heart of the Mixtec People in the cave above the river. After an armed conflict in Jaltepec, Lord 2 Rain "Twenty Jaguars" (Ocoñaña), a prince of Tilantongo, sits in front of a cave, facing a complex sign composed of the *ñuu*-frieze surmounted by a head of the Rain God, a heart, and above the heart a jewel or jade stone, i.e., 'the jade heart of the people of the Rain God', 'the jewel which is the heart of the Mixtec people'.

Fray Francisco de Burgoa (1934:1:319-333) describes the cult of the 'Heart of the People' (*Corazón del Pueblo*), which was an emerald wrapped in a Holy Bundle and adored in a cave in Achiutla, where the Mixtec lords came to hear oracles.

prise a significant *cluster* of place-name hieroglyphs or associated historical personages in order to be convincing. The work was initiated by Alfonso Caso and continued by other investigators, especially Mary Elizabeth Smith (1973a). Obviously, a study of the Mixtec language and topography is a prerequisite for this work. Tonal and dialectic differences sometimes make it difficult to determine the etymology of a place name. It is, furthermore, important to know whether a certain modern town was already in existence in precolonial times or, vice versa, whether certain precolonial towns were eventually abandoned and are now known locally only as archaeological sites. The toponyms associated with rulers and dynasties, one may assume, refer to the main towns of the *cacicazgos*. Others might refer, as well, to

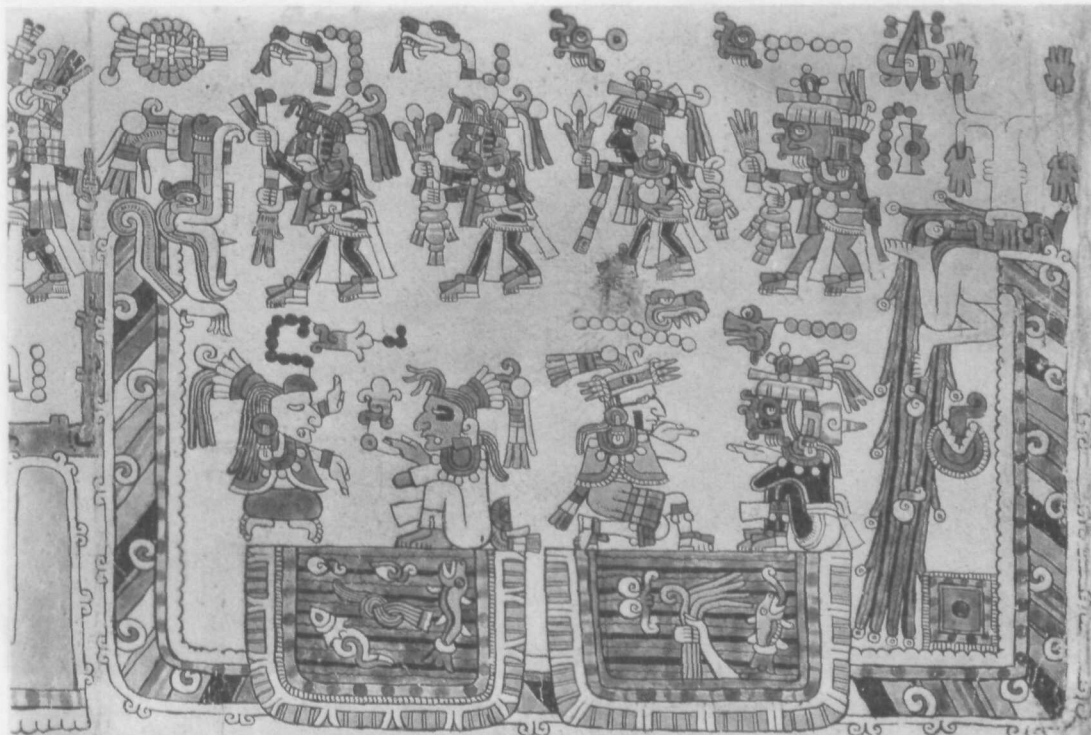


FIGURE 3-3. *Codex Nuttall*, p. 36: the landscape around River with the Hand Holding Feathers. Seated as rulers are Lord 1 Flower, Lady 13 Flower, and their daughter Lady 9 Alligator, married to Lord 5 Wind. Above them are four priestly figures making an offering in front of a cave.

places that were important to the Mixtecs in some other way, e.g., holy places, each with a small temple, but not necessarily settlements (Fig. 3-2).

The Mixtec terms for *cacicazgo*, or "nation," are *ñuu teyu*, literally, 'place of a throne', and *yuvui teyu* 'mat and throne', which do occur in pictography. Rulers may sit on thrones and mats (e.g., *Selden* 3135, p. 5-II); place signs may include the *ñuu* frieze and a throne (e.g., *Bodley* 2858, p. 35-III).

Following are some of the more important toponymic hieroglyphs that have been deciphered:

River with the Hand Holding Feathers (= river that plucks or pulls out) (*Nuttall*, p. 36; *Vindobonensis Mexicanus* I, p. 35): *Yuta moho*, Apoala, the place of origin of the

Mixtec dynasties (Caso 1957: 45; Smith 1973a: 75; Jansen 1982a: Ch. 2; Figs. 3-3, 3-4).

Heaven, Place of the Rising Sun (Fonds mexicain 20; *Vindobonensis Mexicanus* I, p. 13): *Andevui* or *Nuu nicana ndicandii*, East. In some cases, this may be identical with the "Place where Heaven was" near Apoala, which is mentioned in the sacred text recorded by Gregorio García, i.e., *Cahua caandihui*, the 'Rock on which Heaven rests' or 'Rock that rises into Heaven' (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4; Fig. 3-5).

Dark Mountain ("Checkerboard Mountain") (Fonds mexicain 20; *Vindobonensis Mexicanus* I, p. 21): *Yucu naa*, North (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4).

River of Ashes (Fonds mexicain 20; *Vindobonensis Mexicanus* I, pp. 17-16: *Yaa yuta*,



FIGURE 3-4. Apoala as seen from the Mountain of Heaven *Cahua candihui*. To the left is one of the sources of the *Yuta inoho* (locally pronounced as *Yutza tohon*), the cave called *Yahui coo maa*. In the middle of the valley, this river is joined by another small stream coming from the opposite side of the valley. To the right the river drops into a valley below (*yodo maa*), forming an impressive waterfall not seen in the photograph.

West, probably Rio Nejapa (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4).

Temple of Death (Fonds mexicain 20; *Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1*, pp. 15–14; *Andaya*, South, probably the cave near Chalcatongo where, according to Burgoa (1934:1:337–341), the Precolonial Mixtec elite were buried (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4).

Altar of Flowers (*Selden 3135*, p. 5-III; *Nuttall*, p. 5): *Chiyo yuhu*, Santa Maria Suchixtlan (Smith 1973a:79).

Mountain of the Rain (*Nuttall*, p. 2): *Yucñudahui* (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4).

Black Town—Heaven Temple (*Mapa de Teozacualco*; *Nuttall*, p. 42): *Ñuu tnuu—huahi andevui*, Tilantongo (Caso 1949).

Broken Frieze (*Mapa de Teozacualco*; *Bodley 2858*, p. 16-III): *Chiyo cahnu*, Teozacualco. The Mixtec name means 'Big Altar'. The word for 'big' (*cahnu*) is represented by the homonym for 'breaking' (*cahnu*), with a different tone (Caso 1949).

Sand Mountain (*Vindobonensis Mexicanus 1*, p. 42-IV) or Mountain of Mouth with Sand ("Belching Mountain") (*Selden 3135*, passim): *Añute*, Magdalena Jaltepec (Smith 1983).

Fractured Mountain (*Nuttall*, p. 23): *Ñuu ñañuu*, San Juan Tamazola (Jansen 1982a: Ch. 4:13).

Temple of Beans (*Selden 3135*, p. 13-IV): *Yucun nduchi*, Etlatongo (Smith 1988).

Place of Beans (*Bodley 2858*, p. 18-I): *Ñuu*

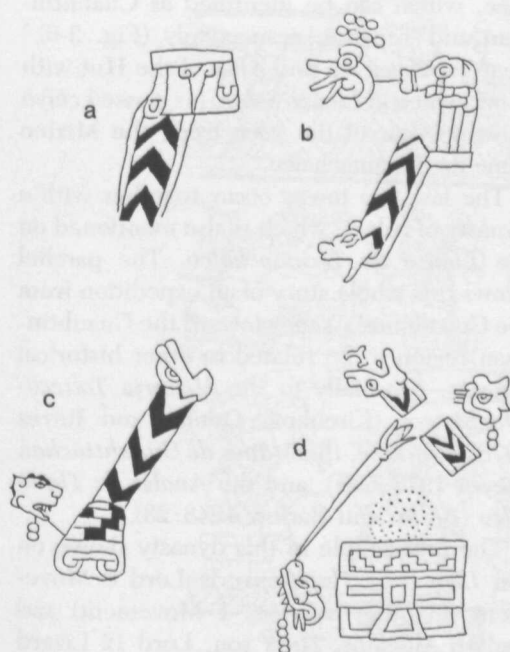


FIGURE 3-5. The hieroglyphs of the four cardinal points in the *Lienzo of Tlapiltepec*, combined with the *yecu* 'war band' (drawing by Ross Parmenter): a, Heaven = East; b, Temple of Death = South; c, Checkerboard Hill = North; d, Altar (elsewhere, River) of Ashes = West.

nduchi, Etla (Smith 1988).

Burning Town (*Bodley* 2858 reverse, *passim*; *Selden* 3135, p. 2): *Ñuu ndecu*, San Miguel Achiutla (Jiménez Moreno in Jansen and Gaxiola 1978: 12).

Place of Flints (*Vindobonensis Mexicanus* I, p. 42-III; *Bodley* 2858 reverse, *passim*): *Ñuu yuchi*, Mogote del Cacique (Jansen 1982a: 276; Byland and Pohl 1987).

Place of the Eye with Crossed Sticks or Crossed Legs (*Bodley* 2858 reverse, *passim*): *Ndisi nuu*, Tlaxiaco (Smith 1973a: 58–59; Jansen and Pérez 1983).

Plain of the Year (*Becker* II, p. 3): *Yodzo cuiya*, Juxtlahuaca (Smith 1979).

Plain of the Eagle (*Becker* II, p. 3): *Yodzo*

yaha, Tecomaxtlahuaca (Smith 1979).

Place of the Axes (*Lienzo de Zacatepec*): *Ñuu caa*, Putla (Smith 1973a: 97).

Mountain of 7 Water (*Lienzo de Zacatepec*): *Yucu satuta*, Zacatepec (Smith 1973a: 96).

Stone of the Bird (with a human chin) (*Bodley* 2858, p. 9-III; *Nuttall*, p. 45): *Yucu dzaa*, Tututepec (Smith 1973a: 67).

Plumed Serpent (*Lienzo de Coixtlahuaca*, *Lienzo de Tlapiltepec*): *Yodzo coo*, Coixtlahuaca (Smith 1973a: 65–66; Parmenter 1982).

Mountain of the Jewel (*Sierra*, pp. 4, 15): *Ñuu ndaa*, Tejupam (Smith 1973a: 60–62) or *Yucu yusi* (*Egerton* 2895, pp. 20, 23, 24), Acatlan (Smith 1973a: 60–62).

Mountain of the *Temazcal* (*Egerton* 2895, p. 15): *Ñuu niñe*, Tonalá (König 1979).

The Mixtecs refer to themselves as 'the People of the Rain', *Ñuu Dzavui*, a concept which is also present in the codices (Fig. 3-2). Other ethnic groups may be indicated by specific attributes. The Nahuatl speakers (Toltecs, Aztecs) were called *sami nuu* 'those with the burned or burning eyes or faces' and consequently were characterized by dark circles around their eyes, flames emanating from their foreheads, or holding a torch with eyes in one of their hands (Smith 1973a: 209). Their capital was Cattail Frieze. The ruler of this town entered into an alliance with the Mixtec prince Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw," on whom the ruler bestowed royal honors in a nose-piercing ceremony (*Colombino*, p. XIII; *Nuttall*, p. 52; *Bodley* 2858, p. 9-II). Caso identified Cattail Frieze as Tula, the Toltec capital.² The Mixtec name for Tula was probably *Ñuu cohyo* 'Place of the Tule Reeds', which was later also used for Mexico City. A later interplay between Mixtecs and Nahuatl speakers is documented by the *Lienzo of Tlapiltepec* (formerly called "Antonio de León"; see Caso 1961). Ross Parmenter (1982) proved that part of the *Lienzo de Tlapiltepec* was actually a map locating the hieroglyphs of the major towns of the Coixtlahuaca Valley on the *lienzo* (upper right section) according to their actual geographical distribution. A study of this geographical arrangement of the *Lienzo de Tlapil-*



FIGURE 3-6. Lower right section of the *Lienzo de Tlapiltepec* (turned upside down).

tepec reveals a consistent orientation (east is in the upper left corner).

The map covers not only the Coixtlahuaca Valley, but also the area extending toward the northwest (lower right section). An expedition or conquest moves from Tlapiltepec (Hill of the Knot) in the direction of the Mixteca Baja and the Valley of Puebla. Given this general geographical framework (and also the interesting parallels in the *Lienzo Seler II* and the *Lienzo de Tecamachalco*), many places can be identified. The towns closest to Tlapiltepec—Stone of the Heron and Mountain of the Arrows, for example—have to be Aztatla and Miltepec (which are also present on the *Lienzo de Tecamachalco*). The expedition ends at House of the Eagle and Mountain with

Face, which can be identified as Cuauhtinchan and Tepeaca, respectively (Fig. 3-6).³ Near Tepeyaca we find Altar of the Hut with Plant, which in *Lienzo Seler II* is glossed *chiyo tnuyaca* 'Altar of the yaca tree', the Mixtec name for Tecamachalco.

The last two towns occur together with a dynasty of rulers, which is also mentioned on the *Lienzo de Tecamachalco*. The parallel allows this whole story of an expedition from the Coixtlahuaca Valley toward the Cuauhtinchan region to be related to other historical sources, especially to the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (Kirchhoff, Odena, and Reyes 1976:205–206), the *Mapas de Cuauhtinchan* (Reyes 1977:59ff), and the *Anales de Tlaxi-lolco* (Berlin and Barlow 1948:23).

The first couple in this dynasty shown on the *Lienzo of Tlapiltepec* is Lord 8 Movement (in other sources, 1 Movement) and Lady 6 Alligator. Their son, Lord 12 Lizard (Cuetzpaltzin), married Lady 5 Reed. They ruled over Tecamachalco, and one of their sons, Lord 8 House (in other sources, 10 House), became ruler of Quecholac, here represented as Mountain with River.

The comparison with the version on the *Lienzo de Tecamachalco* (Burland 1960) shows that this Lord 1 or 8 Movement was the son of Lord 13 Rain, the Mixtec lord who had led Mixtecs and Chocho-Popoloca from the Coixtlahuaca Valley to Cuauhtinchan and had established himself in that region, as the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* tells us (Kirchhoff, Odena and Reyes 1976:205–206). According to the Nahuatl sources, the expedition took place in the fourteenth century A.D.

Probably related to this series of events is the story in the Codex Selden (pp. 11–12) about the military expedition of Lord 9 Lizard from Jaltepec and his ally, Lord 9 House from Tilantongo-Teozacualco (Fig. 3-7). After rituals in River of the Intertwined Plumed Serpents (Coixtlahuaca?) and Mountain of the Arrows (Miltepec?), they became involved in a battle near Valley or Split Mountain (Tepeji?) against the People with Burned Eye-Sockets, that is, *tay sami nuu*, or Nahuatl

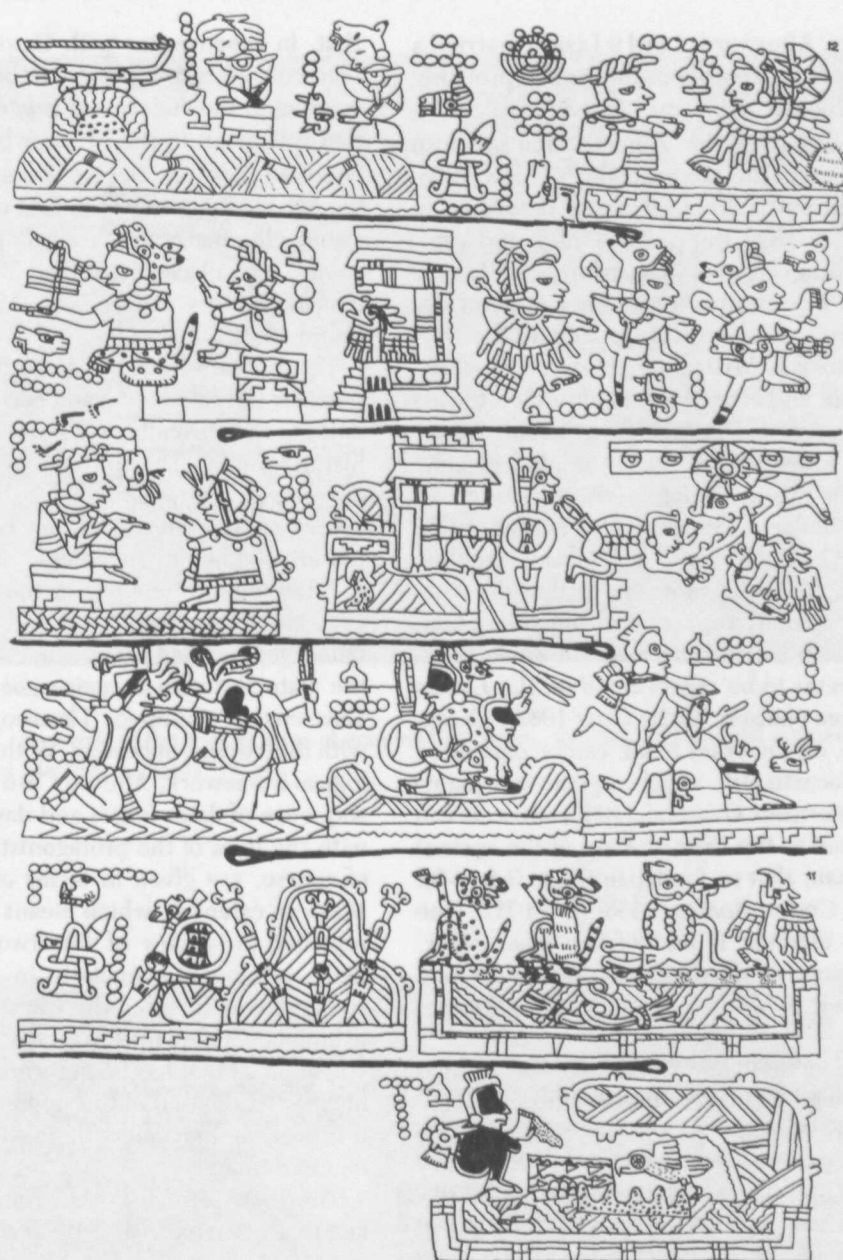


FIGURE 3-7. *Codex Selden 3135*, pp. 11–12: The Ritual of Eagle and Fire Serpent, of Coyote and Jaguar, performed in the River of the Intertwined Serpents (Coixtlahuaca?). The Ritual of the Holy Bundle and the *Ñuhu* of Arms, celebrated in the Mountain of Flowered Arrows (Miltepec?). In an attack on the Valley (Tepeji?), Lord 9 Lizard overcomes the Nahua Lord “Maize Hair,” and Lord 9 House takes the Nahua Lord “Jaguar” prisoner and sacrifices him on the day 13 Deer, during a ceremony in which Eagle and Fire-Serpent (the *nahual* priests) offer human hearts to the Sun God in front of the Temple of the *Ñuhu* of Arms and the Holy Bundle in Jaltepec. Then Lord 9 Lizard marries Lady 12 Deer “War *Quechquemil*,” daughter of Lord 13 Serpent “Jaguar” and Lady 2 House from the Temple of the Eagle (Cuauhtinchan?).

speakers. Afterward, Lord 9 Lizard married a princess from Temple of the Eagle (probably Cuauhtinchan; see Caso 1964:39).

Contacts with the Zapotec area are also mentioned in the Mixtec codices. Caso (1966) observed that a whole dynasty, described in the *Codex Nuttall* (pp. 33–35), shared similar clothing types and attributes with personages represented in Tomb I of Zaachila. He therefore related this so-called “Xipe dynasty” to the Mixtec neighbor of Zaachila, Cuilapan, and consequently identified the associated town Quetzal River–Bent Rock–Tree as Cuilapan. A closely related place is “Cacaxtli Plain,” which is also identified by Caso as Cuilapan (Smith 1973a:64; Caso 1977: I:111–114; Paddock 1983). Closer analysis, however, makes it more likely that the Xipe dynasty actually represented the ruling family of Zaachila itself, because the same genealogy seems to be represented on the *Lienzo of Guevea* (Jansen 1982a; Cruz 1983). Cacaxtli Plain, on the other hand, can be compared to the Cacaxtli Hill, which appears on a painting in Martínez Gracida’s (1986) work. It can be glossed as the Coat of Arms of the ancient Coyolapan, that is, Cuilapan (Figs. 3-8, 3-9). In the *Codex Bodley* 2858 (p. 24-III), the *cacaxtli* element is part of two place signs, the respective destinations of a sister and a brother, both belonging to the Tlaxiaco dynasty:

(1) Cacaxtli Plain, ruled over by Lord 6 Water, who belonged to the Xipe dynasty (see also *Nuttall*, p. 35 and *Selden* 3135, p. 13-I).

(2) Mountain of the Jaguar and the Flowers—Cacaxtli Hill. The second hieroglyph is similar to the Coat of Arms of Cuilapan in Martínez Gracida’s (1986) work, which shows the Cacaxtli Hill together with a Hill of the Jaguar, a place of ancient walls and fortifications (Monte Alban?).⁴

The comparison leads us to the hypothesis

that, in concurrence with Caso, the *cacaxtli* element refers to Cuilapan in both cases. According to the *Relaciones geográficas*, Cuilapan was given to the Mixtecs because of the bonds of marriage between the Zapotec and the Mixtec dynasties. The first of these interethnic elite marriages, according to the *Relaciones*, took place “more than 300 years ago,” that is, shortly before A.D. 1280 (see also Rabin 1982).

These interethnic contacts have implications for the calculation and correlation of the dates in the chronological sequence of Mixtec historiography. This chronology was a theme of research and debate during the 1970’s. It is a very complex problem and is basic to the understanding of the codices.

After telling the story of the dynastic origins, the Mixtec codices depict long and detailed genealogies that connect the rulers of the Late Postclassic *cacicazgos* (Tilantongo, Teozacualco, Jaltepec, Tlaxiaco, and so on) with their divine ancestors. Within this genealogical framework, Alfonso Caso analyzed the sequence of dates (years and days) associated with the lives of the protagonists. The dates, of course, are given in terms of the ancient Mexican calendar, which means that they are repeated in cycles of fifty-two years. The dates are given irregularly in the different codices, which raises the question of establishing how many fifty-two-year cycles are involved in all that has been recorded of Mixtec history. At the end of the sequence of cycles, it is possible to connect them with the Christian chronology.

The basis of such a synchronization is the fact that a Mixtec year 1 Reed roughly corresponded to an Aztec year 2 Reed, as different sources (the Cuilapan Stone, *Codex Sierra*, and others) make clear. These sources contain the equivalents of Mixtec dates for Aztec or Christian years (Jiménez Moreno and Mateos Higuera 1940).



FIGURE 3-8. Drawing of the coat of arms of ancient Coyolapan, showing the *cacaxtli* element, in the work of Manuel Martínez Gracida (1986).



FIGURE 3-9. *Codex Bodley 2858*, p. 24-III: Lady 1 Reed "Jade Sun" married Lord 6 Water "Coloured Stripes" from Cacaxtli Plain, and her brother Lord 3 Reed "Smoking Eye" went to the Mountain of the Jaguar and the Flowers—Cacaxtli Hill.

Some of the last generations of the Mixtec Precolonial dynasties depicted in the codices are also mentioned in Early Colonial Spanish sources. Starting from these dates one can calculate back into the past and establish a complete synchronization, as Caso (1960) did. A number of problems remain, however. Caso himself, stating explicitly that the correlation he proposed was by no means indisputable, was the first to criticize his own work. For the dates in the two centuries preceding the Conquest, he thought a change of one or two fifty-two-year cycles would be possible. For more remote periods, he emphasized, his correlation was merely tentative (1977:1:39).

Following Caso, we may distinguish two main periods in Mixtec historiography for the sake of this discussion: (1) the period between the lifetime of Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" and the Spanish Conquest; (2) the period before Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw," i.e., the period in which the *cacicazgos* were founded and the first generations of Lords and Ladies ruled.

For the period between Lord 8 Deer and the Spanish Conquest, the dates are relatively clear. Caso's analysis follows the dates given in the codices and as such is impeccable. There are, however, some problems regarding the dates themselves. Emily Rabin (1981), who has made a careful and detailed analysis of the chronology problem, has suggested that in the latter part of this sequence of dates an error must have crept in somewhere and one fifty-two-year cycle too many was calculated. Rabin's hypothesis is supported by the possible connections with the above-mentioned Central Mexican and Zapotec data. If we follow Rabin's reasoning, the dates corresponding to the life of Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" would change from A.D. 1011–1063 (as calculated by Caso) to one cycle later, A.D. 1063–1115.

The period preceding Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" is that of the origins of the Mixtec dynasties. Here we also find among the chronological dates a number of dates in nondurational time, i.e., ceremonial founding dates

associated with the place signs of the *cacicazgos* (see Furst 1978; Jansen 1982a; 1988b). Caso, however, calculated those dates as chronological markers in the sequence of fifty-two-year cycles. Consequently, his correlation sequence became much too long here and contained a number of inconsistencies and biological impossibilities. Therefore, in this part of the chronology, Emily Rabin's revision of Caso's correlations is much more extensive and completely changes the picture.

One of the implications is that Lord 8 Deer's father, Lord 5 Alligator "Rain-Sun," cannot have been the successor of Lord 2 Rain "Ocoñaña," the grandson of Lord 12 Lizard "Arrow Legs" and the last descendant of the "first Tilantongo dynasty," as Caso thought. Nor was Lord 5 Alligator the founder of a "second Tilantongo dynasty." In fact, he was a high priest in Tilantongo who must have died fourteen years before this Lord 2 Rain did. It was Lord 5 Alligator's son, Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" himself, who, shortly after Lord 2 Rain "Ocoñaña" died, seized power in Tilantongo (Rabin 1981; Jansen 1982a: Ch. 6).

According to the revised chronology, Mixtec historiography starts with the marriage of Lady 1 Death and Lord 4 Alligator in the Year 6 Flint, Day 7 Eagle, i.e., A.D. 940. This date coincides with the beginning of the Post-classic period.

The interpretation of Mixtec chronology and its correlation with dates in the Christian calendar still raises many problems, as does the overall reading of the codices. Noticeable progress has been made, however. In the fields of history and geography, as well as in those of material and spiritual culture, the study of the codices is moving closer to an understanding of Mixtec reality and, we hope, closer to the Mixtecs themselves.

NOTES

1. A synopsis is Caso's (1965c) chapter in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians*. Many data can also be found in chapters by Glass (1975) and Glass and Robertson (1975).

Later reviews of progress in the field have been published by Troike (1978) and Gutiérrez Solana (1987). For a general consideration of the interpretive practice within this paradigm, see Jansen (1988a). In another *Handbook* chapter, Robert Chadwick (1971) tried to relate the Mixtec codices to Central Mexican sources, but his work contains many unfounded speculations and is therefore of dubious validity.

2. Smith (1973a:71ff) expressed doubts about this identification and instead suggested Tulixtlahuaca, a subject town of Jicayan in the Mixtec coastal area. The importance of the town and its consistent associa-

tion with people wearing the facial painting characteristics of Nahuatl speakers, however, seem to support Caso's original hypothesis.

3. *Lienzo Seler II* (König 1984) contains the same hieroglyphs with Mixtec glosses: *Cahua dzoco yaa* 'Rock of the Eagle Temple'. This gloss must be the equivalent of *Huahi yaha* 'Temple or House of the Eagle', which is the Mixtec name for Cuauhtinchan in the list of place names given by Antonio de los Reyes (see also Codex Mendoza, p. 42).

4. A Hill of the Jaguar, Ocelotepeque in Nahuatl, is part of the configuration of Monte Alban on the 1771 Map of Xoxocotlan. See the discussion by Smith (1973a:205).