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Tiempo, paisaje y líneas de vida en la arqueología de Ñuu Savi: (La Mixteca, México)

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Summary

This work is a proposal that reframes the cultural link between present and past in the archaeological practice of the Mixteca Alta. Through the different examples that are discussed, the importance of the knowledge and perceptions of the contemporary dwellers for the interpretation of the pre-colonial past can be seen. Based on some postulates of the Post colonial Hermeneutics and the Ecology of Life, a different discourse to the one managed from the evolutionism was generated, being this last one dominant in the majority of the archaeological studies in this region.

In the studies on the pre-colonial history of Oaxaca, three lines of research have been followed that derive from evolutionism. Based on these, the present thesis identifies five values that condition archaeological practice and delimit the interpretations of archaeological contexts. These values have been incorporated into the time line and are identified as: evolutionary, fragmented, unidirectional, completed in 1521 and disconnected from the present.

As an alternative to this problem, the Great Line of Life is proposed, which is a line that speaks of time from life itself and which: expresses changes and continuities, is continuous, that is, it is not fragmented or finished in 1521, is in motion and flows in two directions. Furthermore, is happening and shaping the landscape. The main point of this proposal is to start by recognizing the link between the present and the pre-colonial past and retake it in the archaeological work.

This proposal is used to address the issue of the perception that the inhabitants of the Mixteca or *Ñuu Savi* (The People of Rain) have of time in relation to the activities they perform on their landscape. For this purpose, the thesis is divided into two parts: the first corresponds mainly to an anthropological study, in which three interrelated activities of historical depth are investigated and documented: of livelihood, rituals,

and narratives in the landscape. The second part is an archaeological study of the ancient reign of *Ñuu Ndaya* (The Place of Ancestors) in which the perceptions of time in relation to these contemporary activities are projected.

Thus, the first chapters follow a narrative that begins with the present towards the pre-colonial past with the aim of recognizing the contemporary Mixtecos as the makers and heirs of the culture being studied. Likewise, an order is followed in relation to the meanings and values of the landscape (from the everyday to the sacred to the historical).

As part of the livelihood activities, work with the palm tree and work with the cornfields are treated. From these, we can see the rhythms and times of different beings that live in the landscape, who participate in the weaving of the mat and in the growth of the cornfield. In both cases, the objects were out of focus to emphasize the relationships and places generated by these activities. In this way, social time is approached, which is constructed from experiences in a landscape where different beings, including humans, enter into a relationship and have their own rhythms. On an archaeological level, this theme invites us to think of pre-colonial contexts as meeting places that arise from a shared experience, rather than as sequential locations of a process.

The second activity includes three rituals that are celebrated extensively in the Mixtec region as part of a liturgical order structured over a period of one year: Blessing of the Springs, Bringing the Rain, and Petitions. This activity deals with the sacred time lived during the ritual, a time when the qualities of sacred places and beings are highlighted. In addition, the sacred lines left during the processions and pilgrimages are shown, which are interwoven temporally and spatially to give shape to a sacred landscape. These themes are followed towards the pre-colonial past and

correspondences are established with archaeological contexts and elements.

The third activity is oral, historical and sacred narratives, which correspond to the collective feelings and knowledge of communities. The term Narrative Lines in the Landscape is proposed to refer to the lines indicated by the narratives, and that can be followed in the landscape, which unite places, events, people, sacred beings, and experiences. These narrative lines, in addition to uniting, generate emotional links with the storytellers and the audience. Through this activity, the notion of historical time is shown, which for the Mixtecos includes primordial time. Two types of narratives were documented and followed: of foundation and on the *Ndosó* (ancient kings). The first shows the difference between the life lines (stories of the communities) and the death lines (territorial limits), the second shows the historical depth of a current narrative in relation to pre-colonial sites.

The second part of the thesis, which deals with the ancient reign of *Ñuu Ndaya* (The Place of Ancestors), begins with the archaeological data obtained from two survey projects. Later, the information from codices and colonial documents, as well as, the knowledge and perceptions of the contemporary Mixtecos are integrated, that is, what was seen in the first part of the thesis and what was reported in relation to the registered

pre-colonial sites. In this work, it is emphasized that the archaeologist can take advantage of his surveys and stays in pre-colonial sites to learn about the different ways of perceiving the landscape and thus generate multi vocal interpretations.

With the development of the two chapters that make up this second part, an applied example of the Line of Life proposal is shown. The objective was to talk about the formation of this Southern Kingdom in pre-colonial times and the effects caused by colonization. It shows a landscape in movement through different activities and lines that are interwoven, showing the life of its inhabitants.

Finally, this research is presented as alternative archeology, like others that exists, that seeks to decolonize the discipline. This archeology proposes to be flexible, relational, multi vocal and holistic, also, it is not presented as definitive but in construction and growth. This way of doing archeology in the Mixteca is relevant because, on the one hand, it allows the parameters in which this practice has been classified to be broadened and, on the other, it reinforces the identification of contemporary societies with the pre-colonial past. Likewise, its importance lies in the fact that it is based on ethics and respect for Indigenous Peoples and shares the search for a better quality of life.