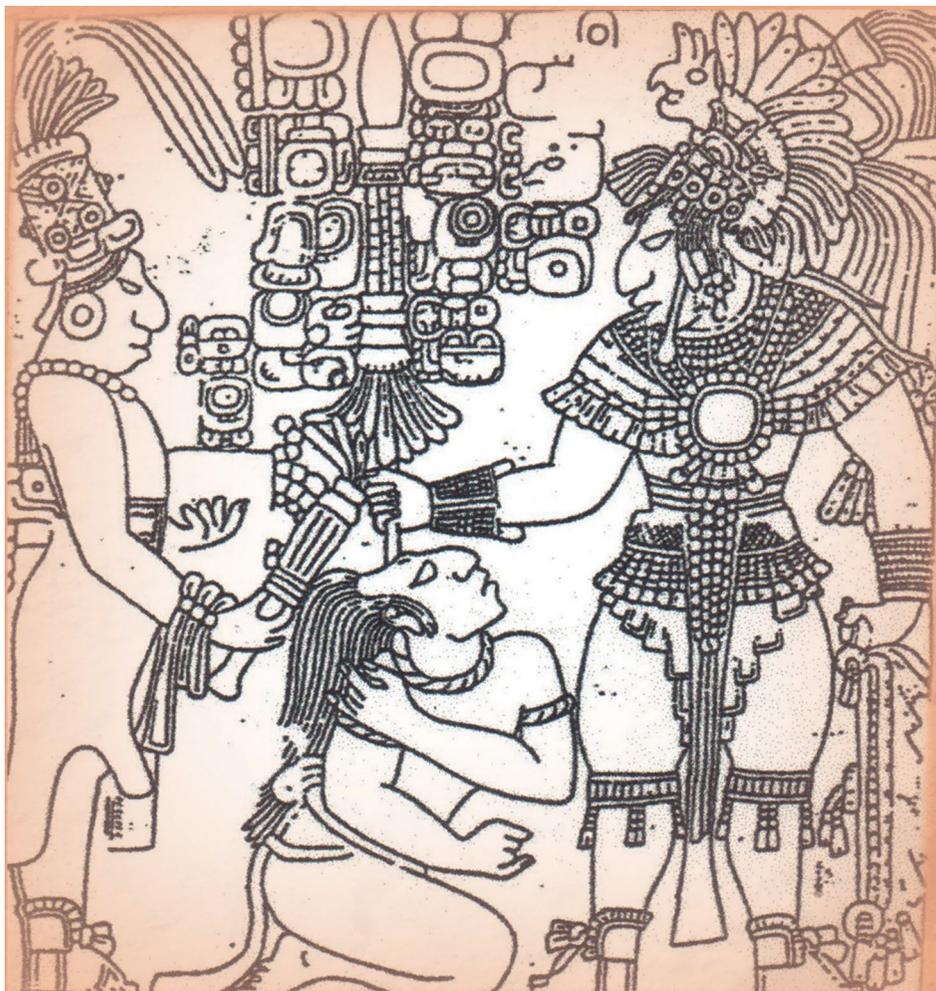


The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Cultural Glyphs



Martín Gómez Ramírez

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Meaning of
Oxchuc in
Mayan Cultural
Glyphs**

By

Martín Gómez Ramírez

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English translation of the book *El verdadero significado de Oxchuc en glifos de la cultura maya* by Martín Gómez Ramírez. Translated by Larry Richman

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Table of Contents

Recognition	3
Prologue	5
Preamble.....	7
Introduction	9
CHAPTER 1	
Monograph of the municipality	14
CHAPTER 2	
The True Meaning of Oxchuc.....	26
CHAPTER 3	
The Writing of Ancient Mayan	40
CHAPTER 4	
Modern Mayan Glyphs of Family Relationships in Oxchuc	61
CHAPTER 5	
Chronology of Historical Events of Abasolo, 1549–2021.....	81
Conclusion	109
Appendices	112
Bibliography	159

Dedication

To the people of Oxchuc, on its 85th anniversary as a free municipality, a place where I have served such complex communities, learning over time and in the proper manner their history, their daily life, and the organization of their traditional authorities. Their desire for immortality, for continuity, their desire to be respected and admired, and to possess that something they once had; that desire to transcend time. To the Unidad de Escritores Mayas-Zoques A.C. on its 30th anniversary of reclaiming the worldview of our Indigenous peoples.

Recognition

To all those who were kind enough to read the draft of this work and offered insightful explanations and comments; in particular, to *Ajpub'* Pablo García and Héctor *Xol Ch'ok*, for their unique perspective on contemporary Maya glyphs, and to the wise insights regarding hieroglyphic decoding shared by INAH archaeologist Juan Yadeun Angulo, responsible for the research and conservation of the Toniná Archaeological Zone. Special thanks to the Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project Foundation and the Mayas for Ancient Mayan, and to Rafael Landívar University at the Fourth International Congress of *Ojer Tz'ib'*, July 2018, a momentous and memorable event held at the San Roque González de Santa Cruz, S.J. Campus in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, Central America, for their suggestions and meticulous review of the contemporary Maya glyphs now presented in this book.

I also thank Víctor Reinaldo Gutiérrez Martínez for all the practical support I received in putting this volume together and for dedicating so much time to developing the chapters.

Likewise, I acknowledge Mónica Judith Herrera Gómez, from the State Center for Languages, Arts, and Indigenous Literature, a woman of Mayan and Zoque letters, for her execution and work on the design and layout of the interior.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Also, to *Xmaruch K'ulub*, mother of my children who flows with the blood of Oxchuc. Welcome the rain in the sacred lands of *Ik'al Ajaw* and *Luchubaltik*. Having said this, I take the liberty of presenting to my readers of the present and future generations.

"Until the Indian walks, America will not walk."

José Martí

Prologue

The Tseltal language is one of the living treasures of ancient Mexico, as is the Mayan writing system; both contain the cosmogony, art, history, and knowledge of the universe of this ancient civilization.

Understanding and deciphering Mayan writing took generations of researchers, and today it is possible to do so with the help of dictionaries, catalogs, syllabaries, and above all, a broad knowledge of Mayan languages.

One way to contribute to its preservation and dissemination is through the work of Professor Martín Gómez, who offers this book.

Since the first systems for transcribing Mayan glyphs from Spanish to English were developed, the current names of places and people began to be written with Mayan inscriptions, just as Arabic letters are used to write in Spanish and English.

Professor Gómez proposes writing the names of the Mayan towns and their lineages in Mayan hieroglyphic inscriptions.

In accordance with this proposal, the chronicler of the city of Ocosingo has suggested that one of the ancient names of this municipality be commemorated with a ceiba tree planted in the town square in a large pot with the inscription *Yax bite*, which is the ancient name of both the ceiba tree and the town.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Professor Gomez's work has identified and translated into Spanish the hieroglyphic inscriptions of countless names of the peoples of Chiapas and their political lineages, an exceptional and extravagant work that deserves the attention of sculptors and painters, as well as the educational and cultural authorities of the state of Chiapas for the greater glory of the Mayan peoples and their heritage.

Archaeologist Juan Yadeun Angulo Toniná
Ocosingo, Chiapas

Preamble

Oxchuc is one of the towns organized under a system of municipal offices, with a blend of traditional ceremonies in the *jtuuneletik* festivals, “religious rituals that emerged after colonization.” For nearly 35 years, since 1986, I have been in communities throughout the territory of Oxchuc, documenting and participating in these festivities. I have witnessed and supported rituals at ceremonial sites, water wells, and celebrations such as the Santa Cruz and the *Xel* mill in Huixtán, Chiapas. I have also participated in ceremonies and rituals on the sacred mountain of *Ik'al Ajaw*, dedicated to my ancestors.

This document addresses the town of Oxchuc, whose origins lie in the ancient Mayan language. First, I wish to correct the meaning of the word *Oxchuc*, which has been interpreted by previous researchers as “three knots.” During international meetings on Mayan epigraphy, in collaboration with Dr. Bruce Love, we discovered that the true meaning of Oxchuc is found in the Paris Codex on page nine and should be translated as “three captured (captives).” This research, adapted to the reality of the Tseltal variant of Oxchuc, aims to ensure that our children and adolescents, as they grow and study, use this variant as distinct citizens of the future of humanity.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Today, words of wisdom flood my mind. These are my sacred words, flowing from the arteries of my heart. If anyone asks you about my stories, tell them I wrote them. Want to know how the story ends? You must read the book and then share it.

Introduction

Our ancestors discovered the sacred meaning of everything around them, finding in God the daily connection with Mother Nature. Therefore, they were very fortunate to refer to *Ajaw*, who is God in the Mayan worldview. They used names taken from nature itself: Mother Earth, water, fire, wind, mountains, as well as the celestial bodies, the sun and moon. And so, today, we, the Indigenous peoples, revere and care for Mother Earth, *Ch'ul Jme'tik*, keeping in mind that what we do to her, we do to ourselves. Therefore, we must care for and protect her. When we carry out agricultural activities such as clearing land or cutting down a tree, we must ask her permission and forgiveness. She is enduring all the harm we, as humanity, are causing her.

Thus, over time through observation, the signs of writing, *ts'ib*, emerged from drawing and writing on wood, stone, shells, as well as on leather or amate paper. Thus, the ancient Maya excelled in the creation of thousands of sculptures and engravings on stone, in addition to the codices on vessels.

The Toltecs were the ones who named many of our towns, giving them a Nahuatl name in addition to their existing Mayan or Zoque names. Most of these towns still retain those names to this day, as is the case with the municipal seats that currently exist in the state of Chiapas; half of them still bear the name of Mexico given to them by the Toltecs. For example,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

our state capital, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, derives its name from the Spanish adaptation of *Tochtla* or *Tuchtla*, which is of Nahuatl origin and means “place where rabbits abound” (Camacho, Patricia, 1985). The Mexica called hares and the common rabbit *tochtli*.

From this perspective, I propose the use of Mayan glyphs, emblems, and logograms for the municipal capitals of Chiapas, as I consider it necessary and important, given our pride in speaking an indigenous language and the importance of preserving and transmitting the true origins of our Mayan peoples. Therefore, the use of Mayan glyphs will be addressed in a separate section. In this regard, there are different levels of hieroglyphic writing depending on the era and location of settlement. That is to say, being an epigrapher is not only about knowing how to draw, engrave, paint, and write glyphs, but also about understanding the periods of the ceremonial centers, memorizing, reading, and thoroughly understanding what the ancient Maya, “our ancestors,” created.

In this effort, we declare the intention to recover and reuse the sacred glyphs in everyday life, at least to record lineages, sacred places, or the place names of our peoples, and thus revive the origin of the writing of our Mayan ancestors. Therefore, it is not my intention here to delve deeper into the discussion of this topic due to the complexity it entails in reading glyphs. I only intend to address a small part of this ancient knowledge of the resistance, persistence, and existence of our peoples, comprised of ceremonial

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

practices, incantations, metaphors, narratives, stories, lineages, place names, histories, and flowery words—in short, all this wealth of cultural tradition that is revealed to us. It is like an endless task for writers, Indigenous researchers, and progressive Spanish speakers.

Likewise, there is a section related to sacred spaces or consecrated objects, such as the *Kajwaltik*, which is considered a sacred book by the traditional authorities of Oxchuc. It is an ancient document made in manuscript by the authorities of Guatemala, written on September 10, 1674, entitled “The Ordinance of the Colony of 1674,” translated by Manuel Gómez *K’ulub*, promoter and actor of the daily life of the town of Oxchuc. (I consider these texts to be fundamental to this work.)

“Among the most important religious and festive ceremonial events, with clear colonial roots, that take place in the Tzeltal community of Oxchuc, the traditional ritual that takes place on December 31, for the change of government and the transfer of the *Kajwaltik*, stands out even today” (Valverde, María del Carmen, 1992).

Due to the political and administrative complexity of this municipal capital, the celebration of the reverence and consecration of the thirteen days of each year mentioned in the *Kajwaltik* by the main actors *ch’uy k’aaletik* is no longer carried out, hence sooner or later this honorable ritual ceremony fell into disuse, as well as the worship of *Ik’al Ajaw*.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

This chapter concludes with a chronology of historical events in Teoltepeque—a name derived from the Nahuatl language meaning “Place of the Sacred Mountain,” a name adopted by both towns—now known as Abasolo. Therefore, a people who do not know their history are a people who repeat the same mistakes and injustices. “A people without history is like a tree without roots. That is precisely what the epigraphy means for the Mayan people” (Cuxil, Antonio, 2012).

In this work, therefore, we will analyze and present the sacred *ts'ib* script of our ancestors, as a proposal to recover the origin of the names of towns and proper names, such as lineage, in Tseltal, contemporary Mayan. We, the Mayan children, as heirs of this great culture, have the responsibility to leave a legacy to continue resisting and promoting this sacred hieroglyphic writing. The final pages of this volume include supplementary appendices describing the buildings of the Catholic churches of Santo Tomás in Oxchuc and San Martín Obispo in Abasolo, as well as two outstanding figures from that period.

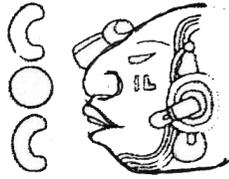
I hope this book can be useful in helping us to responsibly influence current and future generations, because, as we know, the contributions of researchers from outside our culture only offer a partial view based on information from specific instances in our history. We come from an ancient culture and will continue to resist tenaciously in harmony with

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Mother Nature. The poet and ally of *Sna Tz'ibajom*, Francisco Álvarez, told me:

“Martín Gómez *Kontsal*, your text is academically well-structured, with excellently crafted illustrations. I continue to recall those moments when Don Erasto Urbina’s elderly friend, Don Juan Méndez *K’ana*, from the Bumilja’ area, rose from his bed when he was ready to depart for the Mayan Emyrean, as he was turning 113 years old, when we took him on a safari from the Center for Ecological Research of the Southeast, as if he were the Holy Father, to preside over a meeting that lasted three days and three nights in which all the elders of Oxchuc and surrounding communities participated. It was then that the stone containing the three snails, which were interpreted as knots, remained in the church. Your research seems to me very well-founded and supported by compelling linguistic and archaeological elements. It thus stands as the only and excellently well-supported research on the toponymy of the name Oxchuc.”

Ajts’ib Martín Gómez Ramírez,
Luchubaltik, Abasolo, Ocosingo,
Chiapas, June 24, 2021



CHAPTER 1

Monograph of the municipality

Territorial extension and population

The municipality of Oxchuc is located between the Central Highlands and the Northern Mountains in the state of Chiapas. The general map of the Mexican Republic indicates that the municipality of Oxchuc borders San Carlos Altamirano and Ocosingo to the east, the municipalities of Ocosingo and San Juan Cancuc to the north, San Idelfonso Tenejapa and San Isidro Huixtán to the west, and finally the municipalities of San Pedro Chanal and Huixtán to the south.

The territory of Oxchuc has a total area of 72 square kilometers, representing 0.1% of the state's surface area. It is relatively small compared to the other Indigenous municipalities. The municipal territory is regulated as “communal lands” with 33,833 hectares. The ceremonial center is situated on a relatively flat plateau that covers 10 to 12 square kilometers.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Regarding the population of Oxchuc: In 1774, the population of Santo Tomás Oxchuc was 350 inhabitants (García de Vargas y Rivera); in 1777-1778, 1,079 inhabitants (Francisco Polanco y Carrera); in 1838, 3,712 (Emeterio Pineda); in 1909, 6,000 souls (Bishop Leonardo); and in 1985, 28,322 inhabitants (General Population Census X). The municipal seat has 4,953 inhabitants, of whom 1,937 are mestizo—although there is no longer such distinction within the population. In 1986, the total population of the municipality was 30,000 inhabitants; in the year 2000 it rose to 34,321 inhabitants (Román Carlos). In 2008, the population was 41,423 (Catalog of Localities, SEDESOL), and in 2010, it was 43,350 inhabitants (Planning Support System of the PDZP). According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), in 2020, the population of Oxchuc was 54,932 inhabitants (51.1% men and 49.9% women). The ancient inhabitants of the municipality actively participated in the Indigenous uprising of 1712.

The town center and the rest of the municipality are divided into two neighborhoods (capules) separated by an imaginary line recognized by its inhabitants that runs east to west and begins at a point between the church and the municipal hall. It is made up of 25 neighborhoods (wards).

The northern part of the line corresponds to the neighborhood of Santo Tomás Oxchuc, with the following places: Plaza Yochib, Yochib, Tsuib, Lejlemchij, Chikpomilja', Tejkabalchen, Ts'unun, Bajch'en, Pak'bilna, Jutuba, Kistolja', Linda Vista,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Media Luna, Lic. Benito Juárez, Santo Tomás, Zona Urbana, San Juan, Jolton, Jobilton, Balaxil, Chakamuk, San Miguel, Cruz Ton, Tsonte'alja', Tialil, Gloria Tiakil, Ts'ay, Santa Cruz, Naja', T'olbilja', Nueva Esperanza, Tsajalch'en, San Juan del Valle, El Calvario, El Mirador, Bumilja', San Marcos, Corralito, Saklumilja', Ch'aonil, Ch'olol, Mesbilja', La Palma, Ch'enchawuk', La Providencia, Ts'utilja', Guadalupe, Puilja' and Ch'ulna.

In the southern part we have the neighborhood of the Holy Trinity Oxchuc, with the following settlements: Piedra Escrita, El Retiro, La Cumbre, Stenlejt'ul, Pozo de Piedra, Buena Vista, Santísima Trinidad, El Porvenir, Nueva Betania, Tsopilja', Pamal Nabil, Nabil-tabja', El Max, Paxtontikja, El Paraíso, Tuxakilja', Las Cañadas, Vista hermosa, Chalam Jatate'al, Mantsanailja', Rancho El Cura, R. Buena Vista, Guadalupe Bacja', San Ramón, El Niz, Benito Juárez, Biquitlejlem, Kanoilja', El Porvenir Newits, Guadalupe Xoixmal, Jamk'ox, San Rafael Jolja', Silailja', and Pilalch'en.

In 1985, there were 36 settlements. In 1991, there were 88 settlements, and by 2010, both neighborhoods had grown to 155, including the locality codes. In my opinion, this increase in the number of settlement names is due to the need to apply for various municipal programs; for example, the community of Tsonte'alja' has had five names (Ya'alwakax, Tenmax, Ch'aykak', Ya'alkots, Santo Domingo), but it remains the same community because it has the same people

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

who live in Tsonte'alja'. The Indigenous authorities representing the Calpul of Santo Tomás live in the northern calpul; the officials of the calpul of Santísima Trinidad live in the southern calpul. However, the way traditional positions are filled in both calpules is gradually changing, no longer taking these ancestral teachings into account.

Geographical Location

The municipality of Oxchuc is located in the Highlands of Chiapas and is one of the nine municipalities in this region where the Tseltal language is spoken. The municipal seat, or *jmuk'ulum*, is located fifty kilometers from San Cristóbal de Las Casas, the most important city in the Highlands of Chiapas.

To reach this municipal seat from San Cristóbal, take the international highway towards Comitán. After about eleven kilometers, turn left onto a secondary road that leads to various towns in the Chiapas rainforest region. Further along, after approximately 30 minutes, you will pass the municipal seat of Huixtán, which borders the municipality of Oxchuc. This road is paved. Intercity freight and passenger transport services are provided by shared taxis and other public transportation lines. These services take about an hour to reach the municipal seat of Oxchuc, unlike the trip by private vehicle, which takes only forty-five minutes or slightly longer depending on driving conditions

Climate

The municipality of Oxchuc is located at an altitude between 1,000 and 2,000 meters above sea level, so truly high temperatures are rare. Therefore, it's difficult to accurately classify the areas as either cold or hot. Only during the dry months of March and April does the highest daytime temperature reach 30 degrees Celsius, and in winter, nighttime frosts occasionally occur in open areas. Even in the territory located northwest and north of the *jmuk'ulum*, or municipal capital, there are temperate and even semi-warm humid climates with abundant summer rains as in the places of *Mesbilja'*, Corralito, and *Tsonte'alja'*.

Hydrography

Regarding its hydrography, the municipality's surface is irrigated by the Huixteco River, known as the *Tsakoneja'* or *Ts'ak'obilja'*, which further downstream forms the boundary between Oxchuc and Chanal; the *Yaxanal* River, which borders Tenejapa and disappears deep underground at its boundary marker, becoming known as the *Yochib*, meaning sinkhole. The *Mesbilja'* River is notable for its waterfall near the Corralito area, now a natural bathing spot with crystal-clear waters, declared the *Ch'ayja'* Ecotourism Center and managed by the local residents. In these last two rivers, there are small fish that children enjoy catching.

Land

The topography of the municipality consists mainly of mountainous terrain with very rocky hills; therefore, not all the land in Oxchuc is suitable for various crops. There may be several limestone deposits in Oxchuc, but studies would be needed to determine if lime could be extracted. Much of this land is naturally poor, with a clay texture of varying colors overlying rocky soil. The organic matter layer is thin, and the soil is prone to frequent landslides due to the heavy daily downpours from May to September. Oxchuc is known as a region rich in rainfall, which favors the growth and production of crops. The highest quality oak tree, or *k'antulan*, grows in this area.

Flora and Fauna

In the municipality of Oxchuc, the forest is of great importance, as it provides the only materials most people use to build their homes. However, as a result, the forest is in danger of disappearing, with few trees remaining: pines, oaks, firs, palms, among other species. Fortunately, each family is now organizing itself on their plots of land to try to prevent the forests from being destroyed. This type of vegetation is also home to animal species such as badgers, raccoons, squirrels, opossums, weasels, armadillos, rats, gophers, and, near the community of Guadalupe, the occasional red deer, birds, and wild bees.

Education

Regarding educational services, there are preschool and primary schools in all the villages, and in support of the most needy children of Oxchuc, there are shelters in the villages of Mesbilja', Ch'aonil, and Media Luna. For those young people who do not have the possibility of leaving home to continue their education beyond the primary level, there are nine distance learning secondary schools strategically located in the villages of El Ts'ay, Bumilja', Corralito, T'obilja', Tsonte'alja', Ts'ay, Yochib, Pach'tontikja', and Ch'ulna; General Secondary School number 53 in Lejlemchij; three Technical Secondary Schools in the communities of Mesbilja', Ts'unun, and in the municipal seat; in addition to CECyT number 11 and CECyT number 38 in Mesbilja' and Community Telebachillerato number 03 in Rancho El Cura. Young people who cannot travel to the town of Oxchuc for their secondary education, especially those from the communities of Kanoilja', Calvario, Ch'ulna, Max, Guadalupe, Puyilja', T'olbilja', and Tsonte'alja', can go to Technical Secondary School number 70 and COBACH campus 105 in Abasolo, municipality of Ocosingo, to satisfy their desires for self-improvement.

Health

There are seven IMSS Bienestar Rural Medical Units, which address some of the many health needs affecting the communities of Ts'ay, Ts'unun, Yochib, Tuxakilja', Jowilton, Corralito, and the municipal seat;

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

seven Health Centers of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (SSA), located in the municipal seat and the towns of Ch'aonil, Mesbilja', Guadalupe, El Niz, Lejlemchij, and Tsonte'alja'; seven Health Posts located in the communities of Pakbilna, Ts'ay, Cruz Ton, T'olbilja Tiakil, Tsopilja', Ch'ulna, and Kanoilja'; and two mobile unit brigades operating in El Max and Pakbilna. Most of the communities lack running water. There are still places that must obtain this vital liquid from the springs found in the territory, making it necessary to walk several kilometers to reach it on many occasions.

Communication and Services

Most of the communities in Oxchuc are connected by dirt roads and trails. Transportation is by bus lines and truck lines *Yaxnichil*, Corralito, Cascada Corralito, Santo Tomás, Calvario, *Mesbilja'*, and Unidos de Oxchuc, managed by local inhabitants.

Most of the communities (155 in total) have electricity. The municipal seat also has a drainage system, post office, radio communication, Teléfonos de México network, Telcel, and internet access, thus enabling residents to exercise their right to access and use information and communication technologies (ICTs). The following offices are also located in the area: the Communal Property commissioner's office, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Civil Registry office (office 01), and the House of Culture through the State Center for Indigenous

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Languages, Arts, and Literature. There are also twenty-five religious associations.

According to INEGI, in 2020, 58.96% of the population of Oxchuc lacked access to sewage systems, 69.9% lacked a water supply network, 4.84% lacked a bathroom, and 11.7% lacked electricity.

Economy

There is a supply warehouse located in the Santísima Trinidad neighborhood, which supplies (corn, beans, maseca, soups, and more) to the stores strategically located in the communities.

Due to the rugged topography and stony soils, the land is unsuitable for regular animal-drawn or manual farming, so many of its inhabitants migrate to earn money on farms during the coffee harvest and cleaning seasons. They go to Playa del Carmen, Cancún, northern states of the country, and especially to the United States of America. However, every family works the piece of land they own to plant corn, beans, peanuts, vegetables, and other crops. Planting is seasonal only; in some areas, fruit trees such as apples, plums, pears, oranges, limes, peaches, platanos, avocados, passion fruit, and coffee are planted around the houses for consumption and as an additional source of income. Another way to earn some money is by raising domestic animals. Every family owns ten to fifteen chickens, one to four turkeys, one or two pigs, or a young bull to fatten using the persoga system. There are also grocery

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

stores, clothes shops, hardware stores, tortilla shops, and bakeries in the municipal seat. Another source of family income is the organization of local trucking groups.

Handicrafts

Clothing is very important among Indigenous people because it distinguishes them from other towns and is a source of pride as it represents their own creations. The traditional dress of men from Oxchuc consists of a red tunic with embroidered long sleeves, tied at the waist with a red sash, and a hat, mostly in the Ladino style, as the regional style is becoming extinct. Women wear long blue skirts of Ladino manufacture, tied with sashes, and huipiles (blouses) woven in white with colorful fringes that reach to the knees. Their long hair is braided and tied with colorful ribbons. Boys and girls wear long shirts with colorful fringes. It is now common to see both men and women wearing shoes made of leather or plastic, or sneakers. The production of handicrafts is a staple for the population and could be increased through loans or revitalization projects.

Politics

Since 1936, Oxchuc has ceased to be a municipal agency. Belonging first to Sitalá and later to Ocosingo, it became a free municipality with the rights and obligations assigned to it by the Honorable Congress of the State. Before this time, only traditional authorities guided the town's destiny and maintained

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

order. The minds and hearts of the town's elders have not forgotten that era. Now, the Municipal Council is responsible for fostering the development and progress of the entire population.

Below is a list of the municipal presidents of the town of Oxchuc from 1936 to the present.

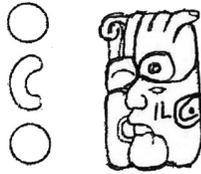
President	Lineage	Period	Political Affiliation
Vicente Encinas	Entsin	1936	PRI
José Pérez Liévano	Pale	1937	PRI
Emilio Luna	Luna	1938	PRI
Marcos Encinas	Entsin	1939	PRI
Calixto Tomás Sántiz	Murino	1940	PRI
Juan Gómez	Nich	1941	PRI
Isidro Encinos	Entsin	1942	PRI
Juan López	K'ana	1943	PRI
Isidro Bartolo Gómez Morales	Molox	1944	PRI
Calixto Sántiz	Murino	1945	PRI
Isidro Encinos	Entsin	1946	PRI
Alfonso Gómez	Ichilok	1947	PRI
Mariano López	T'iw	1948	PRI
Esteban Gómez Encinos	Entsin	1949	PRI
Sebastián López	Ch'ijk'	1950	PRI
Juan Gómez	Nich	1951	PRI
Antonio Rodríguez Gómez	Pom	1952-1953	PRI
Pedro Sántiz Gómez	Yemuk	1954-1955	PRI
Agustín Méndez Gómez	Ch'ixna	1956-1957	PRI
Cristóbal Sántiz	Solel	1958-1959	PRI
Alfonso Morales Gómez	Mulex	1960-1961	PRI
Juan Sántiz Gómez	Lek'	1962-1964	PRI
Manuel Morales Díaz	Mulex	1965-1967	PRI
Marcelo Sántiz López	Soten	1968-1970	PRI
Manuel Gómez López	K'ulub	1971-1973	PRI

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Antonio Morales Sántiz	Mulex	1974-1976	PRI
Antonio Gómez López	Nich	1977-1979	PRI
Mariano Sántiz López	Koj'tom	1980-1982	PRI
Domingo Sántiz López	Yemuk	1983-1985	PRI
Juan Sánchez Gómez	Pe	1986-1988	PRI
Alberto Sánchez Gómez	Yuba	1989-1991	PRI
Emilio Gómez Sántiz	K'o	1992-1995	PRI
Sebastián López Sántiz	Balte'	1996-1998	PRI
Miguel Sántiz Gómez	K'aal	1999-2001	PRI
Norberto Sántiz López	Soten	2002-2004	PRI
María Gloria Sánchez Gómez	Yuba	2005-2007	PRI
Jaime Sántiz	K'aal	2008-2010	PRI
Cecilia López Sánchez	Ch'ijk'	2011-2012	NVA. ALIANZA
Noberto Sántiz López	Soten	2013-2015	PRI
María Gloria Sánchez Gómez	Yuba	2016	VERDE
Oscar Gómez López	Pul	2017-2018	CONCEJAL
Alfredo Sántiz Gómez	Yuba	2018-2021	USOS Y COSTUMBRE

SOURCE: *Diccionario Enciclopédico de Chiapas*, volume III, CONECULTA-UNICACH. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2000 and own contribution.

After 70 years of male administration in the municipal capital, the first Indigenous woman was named as the new president of Oxchuc for the period 2005-2007, C.P. María Gloria Sánchez Gómez, and three years later, Cecilia López Sánchez, entrepreneurial and political women in their native towns, generators of authentic development as a symbol of resistance and the talent of the native peoples.



CHAPTER 2

The True Meaning of Oxchuc

In memory of jtatik Manuel Gómez K'ulub

The works mentioned below are part of the meaning of Oxchuc, which are reference tools whose purpose is to support and defend our claim to our linguistic roots, standardizing to ensure their continuity so that they can be offered to the people of Chiapas, especially children and young people, to contribute to their lifelong learning. In this regard, we referenced as a primary source the four volumes of the *Diccionario enciclopédico de Chiapas* (2000), coordinated by the writer and educator José Carlos Román García and collaborators, and inscribed and transcribed by authors, historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists. This dictionary addresses, in part, the translations and interpretations of the meanings of proper names that designate places so that they can be distinguished from those of the other states of the Mexican Republic.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

This is because the toponymic meaning of some Indigenous place names can be a subject of debate. For example, Chilón or *Chilum* means “Land of Deer,” while other authors interpret it as “Sweet Land.” Therefore, I propose this collaboration as an accessible, understandable, persistent, and up-to-date resource, because there are terms of Nahuatl, Purépecha, Zapotec, Maya, Totonac, and other origins whose linguistic roots are unknown. This makes understanding their meanings difficult unless we conduct in-depth linguistic research. Generally, the aim is to respect the original toponyms of each language. In this regard, there is a vast number of publications on the toponymy of the town of Oxchuc and its meaning, which we present chronologically for your phonetic analysis. In addition to the similarities within the Oxchuc terminology, we can also observe marked differences among the authors cited here.

The town of Oxchuc has its historical origins from the colonial era. It is one of the Indigenous towns in the state of Chiapas where Tseltal is still spoken daily and is also one of the Mayan languages of the state of Chiapas.

There are several published anthropological works about the meaning of this municipality in Chiapas, which we make available to you to enrich your knowledge about it.

Kajwaltik: Ordinance of the Colony of 1674. This historical book addresses aspects of life in this

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

municipality, which was initially called Tehultepec, from the colonial era. The book explores the life of this town through the ceremonial acts that the town's traditional authorities performed for thirteen days each January.

Friar Francisco Núñez de la Vega may have collected or destroyed some of the famous notebooks of Cancuc, just as he did in the town of Oxchuc during his parish visit in 1687; these documents may have given an account of many experiences of this town.

Since 1936, Oxchuc ceased to be a municipal agency belonging to Ocosingo and became a free municipality, with the rights and obligations that this entails. (Henning, 1969: 51). In this sense, Henning Siverts, in his book on Oxchuc, cites notes on the ethnography of the Tseltal Mayans of Oxchuc.

In the 1984 Chiapas almanac, the former constitutional municipal president, Domingo Sántiz Gómez, in the period 1984-1985, mentions that the name of Oxchuc is derived from the Nahuatl words *Osh-chu-uk*, which means "thirteen deities."

The town of "OXCHUJK'/Three Knots," according to my own opinion published in the book "*Xlimoxna neel jme'tatik ta Oxchucjk'*/Ofrenda de los ancestros en Oxchuc," 1988 and 1991, indicates that a clear characteristic of the clothing of the people of Oxchuc is that the men's long shirt must be wrapped three times around the waist and tied with three knots. However, other writers from the aforementioned

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

municipality have also written about this, as is the case of Francisco Javier Sánchez Gómez in his book “*Sociedad y Educación en Oxchujk*” or also as mentioned in the document by Manuel Gómez K’ulub, Oxchujk’. *Xjajch’ibal yej, Oxchujk’ sbiilyotikto. KAJWALTIK. Mantalil yu’un Kajwaltik*, published by the National Indigenous Institute in 2002.

Esponda Jimeno, Víctor Manuel (†), also in the book *La organización social de los tzeltales, Oxchuc*, addressed the topic of the three or thirteen knots, in addition to mentioning that Santo Tomás Apóstol, Teultepec, is one of the Tzeltal towns, whose history was full of misfortunes. (Government of the State of Chiapas/DIF/ICHC, 1994: 103).

Similarly, Carlos Román García wrote in the *Diccionario enciclopédico de CHIAPAS*, volume III, CONECULTA/UNICACH, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2000: 164-165. There he states that Oxchuc means (Thirteen deities, from the Tseltal *oshalajún*: thirteen; *chuc*, saint and *uk*: superlative ending).

We also found that in the restoration of the church of Santo Tomás Oxchuc, those who were carrying out the work discovered on the wall of the south side of the colonial building a plaque of the three snails; which has no relation to the stone sculpture of Sebastián Sántiz Gómez, nor with the tourist walkway of Cecilia López *ch’ijk*.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Photograph: Arturo Lomelí. The three snails

The book *Sk'op Bats'il Winiketik, Gramática Básica de la Lengua Tsel'tal*, published by several authors, also gives an account of the aforementioned.

In the sculpture "Thirteen words, thirteen powers and thirteen days" *Oxlajuneb yip*, by Sebastián Sántiz Gómez, which is featured in the cover design of the book: Armando Sánchez Gómez, *Sk'op ajawetik, Palabra de Ajawes*, CONECULTA/CDI/UNEMAZ, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, 2005, we also find references to it.

Thus, we find that according to Enrique Fernández, in a publication of the Chiapas Institute of Handicrafts, Bulletin number 5, "the most generally accepted meaning of its name is that it derives from the Mayan words Ox-chuc which means 'three knots,' however, there is the version that it comes from Nahuatl osh-chu-uk which translates as thirteen deities. In both cases the magical significance of the numbers is evident."

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Politicians Also Favor the OX Symbol

OXCHUC. “Three knots” is used with modifications in the presidential emblem of Lic. Norberto Sántiz López, constitutional municipal president from 2002-2004, Oxchuc, Chiapas, and in that of C.P. María Gloria Sánchez Gómez *Ch’elab*, constitutional municipal president from 2005-2007.



Emblem of the tourist walkway (photograph 2014)

The wooden sculpture of the *mamtik* Manuel Gómez *K’ulub* (+), showing the image that INALI

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

made in the year 2012, the Mayan glyph stands out regarding the ancient snail that is a head or skull which means zero, which is the beginning or end of a period, this representation is also found in the images of the three knots of Oxchuc.

Also noteworthy are the “CARACOLES,” or the five snails created by EZLN in August 2003: the first snail, Mother of the Snails of the Sea of Our Dreams, La Realidad, Lacandon Jungle; the second snail, Whirlwind of Our Words, Morelia, Altamirano; the third snail, Resistance Towards a New Dawn, La Garrucha, Ocosingo; the fourth snail, which speaks for all, Roberto Barrios, Palenque; and the fifth snail, Resistance and Rebellion for Humanity, Oventic, San Andrés Larraínzar. These five Good Government Councils were created to regroup the 28 Zapatista Autonomous Rebel Municipalities of the Marez, whose tasks include coordinating aid and support among communities and distributing external aid more effectively. (Consultation made in the SEMANARIO PROCESO, August 9, 2013.)

It should be mentioned that I began this research at the congresses of Mayan epigraphers and at the Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project (PLFM) in Antigua, Guatemala, in 2010, as well as at the First International Congress of Mayan Epigraphers, at the University of the East, Valladolid, Yucatán, in 2012. This was reaffirmed at the Second International Congress of Mayan Epigraphers, organized by Maya Antiguo para los Mayas (MAM), which brought

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

together the 31 Mayan languages of Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico. This congress was held at the Technological University of the Ocosingo Jungle, Chiapas, in 2014. Previously, I also conducted local workshops with young people at technical secondary schools, preparatory schools, and at the Intercultural University of Chiapas, where lectures were held regarding the true meaning of Oxchuc, as well as lectures about the concept of the three snails, which does not coincide with the research that refers to the shell.

The publications found since 1969 have been faithful copies of the word ox-chu-k, which translates as “three knots.” Reviewing an essay on the weavers of the codices (Ciaramella 1999: 29-48), no concepts related to knots are found, because the Mayan word for knot is *Mok*. The Cordemex dictionary contains an extensive list of Yucatec terms related to the Spanish word “net” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980: 296). One of these is *mokk’aan*, which means “to make a net” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980: 527). *Mok* simply means “knot, to knot.” *Mokk’aan* means “knotted thing” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980: 526); there is no correlation with the word *chuk*. There is an approximation with the term *nok’* and *nok’el* which means, ‘to knot, knot’; *nok’*, to count acts of knotting, *nojka’a*, knotted thing, then I would say *ox-nok’*, that is, ‘three knots.’ Another example is *nok’a jilel ta te’*, ‘leave knotted or tied to a tree.’ Semantically, it is interpreted as a metaphor *nok’olon sok jtatik Ajlux*, ‘I am married [tied] to Alonso’.

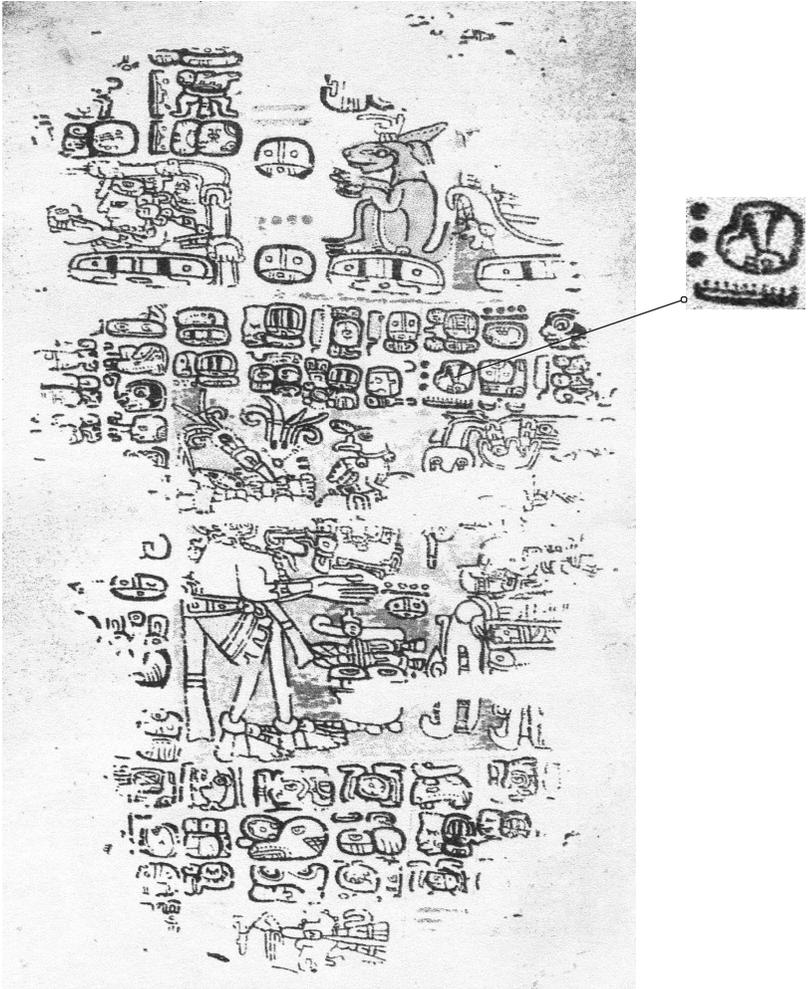
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Therefore, previous writings or interpretations such as ox-chuk, “three knots” or *osh-chuk*, “thirteen deities,” these translations or transliterations do not correspond to the meaning.

The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chiapas, volume III, by Román García (2000), records Thirteen Deities, from the Tseltal words *oshalajún*, thirteen, *chuc*, saint, and *uk*, superlative ending. However, in the monolingual dictionary by Torres Sánchez (2007), we do not find records of the words *chujk* or *oxchuc*.

In one of my many lectures of ancient Mayan glyphs during encounters with Mayan brothers and sisters from Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, and southeastern Mexico, I discovered the true meaning of Oxchuc for the Mayans of Chiapas, Mexico. It is inscribed in the Paris Codex (11 leaves, 22 pages, found on page 9).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Copy of the Paris Codex, page 9 (Provided by Bruce Love, 1994).

This magnificent Mayan manuscript is related to the mural painting of the East Coast, or perhaps of some significant urban center, such as Mayapán.

The date of preparation. It can be placed in the Late Postclassic, since according to the Mayan-Christian correlation, the *katunes* wheel that best

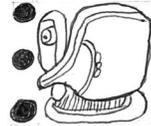
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

corresponds with the style and content is the one that corresponds to the years 1244-1500 AD (Arqueología Mexicana, number 54, pp. 14-17).

The true meaning of the town of Oxchuc, in ancient Mayan is *Ox-chu[h]-k[a]* *Ox-chu-k*, the translation is *Ox-* “three,” *chujk* “to capture,” that is, ‘three captured.’



Ox-chu-k[a] Oxchuc



Ox-chu-k[a] Oxchuc

Left: “three captured.” Copy of page 9 of Paris Codex (according to Love, 2013). Right: “three captured” (according to drawing and adaptation, Marin Gómez, 2014)



Chu-ka-ja



chu-ka-ja

Chuk, root of the verb “to capture.” Chul[j]kaj[a] Captured

Translation “He or she was captured Ja’ chujkaj.

The glyphs represent in their translation ox “three” *chu[h]-k[a]* “capture,” which means three captured. Therefore, this glyph cartouche means three captured.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Analysis of the verb *CHUJK*, to capture, to
imprison

Voice	Active	Passive	Mediopassive (Reflexive)	Antipassive
Transliteration	Ja' la chujk	Ja' Chukot	Chukaj	Ja' chukaja
Translation	He captured	He was captured	He got captured	He is the captured

Examples of active verbs in this section: *chujk skaj syakubel*, 'he was caught for his drunkenness,' *chujk skaj yelek' ajan*, 'he was caught for stealing corn,' *cha' chujk yu'un yelek' chenek'*, 'he was caught again for stealing beans,' *ajk'ubey bayal mach'a chujk yu'un syakubel*, 'last night many people were caught for their drunkenness,' *Jpetul bayal ya x-elk'aj maba chujk*, 'Pedro steals a lot, but they don't imprison him anymore,' *ja' la chujka yu'un syajmul*, he was caught for adultery, and if it is an animal or object one says: *chujk jilel jk'altik te tat ts'i'e*, 'the dog was left tied up in our cornfield,' *chujk jilel te ijk'al me'wakaxe*, 'the black cow was left tied up,' *la xchujk xch'ujch'ut te antse*, 'the woman tied her sash,' *ya jchukbey xch'ujch'ut te ach'ixe*, 'I'm going to tie the girl's sash.'

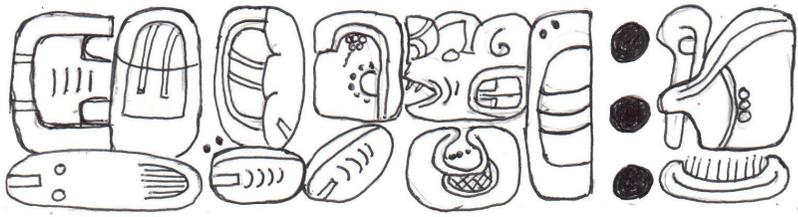
The dialect variant in Oxchuc and Tenejapa—glottalized *chujk'* and non-glottalized *chujk*—both mean, 'to be tied up or to be captured' in San Juan Cancuc, Chanal, Sitalá, Guaquitepec, Petalcingo, San Jerónimo Bachajon, and Abasolo.

And for the House of Culture of Oxchuc in contemporary Mayan glyphs, it is like this:

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Plaque installed and inaugurated by CELALI in June 2019.

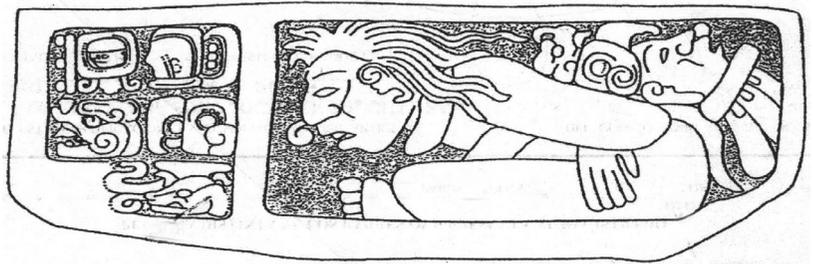


*Na-i-l[i] ta-le-l[e] ku-x[u]-le-ja-li-l[i] Ox-chu-[j]k[a] Snail talel kuxlejalil
Oxchuc (plaque installed in June, 2019).*

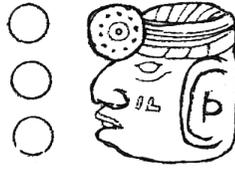
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



*Figure 4: Lintel 8, Yaxchilan, Mexico (after a drawing by Ian Graham).
Note that the names of the captive individuals are written both on the thighs
and in the two main clauses of the inscription.*



Dzibanche Escalera 17.



CHAPTER 3

The Writing of Ancient Mayan

Origins of the Mayan Writing System

The Mayans were neither the first nor the last to develop a writing system in Mesoamerica. By the time the earliest known Mayan hieroglyphs appeared (in the 1st century BC), writing systems already existed in at least three cultural areas of Mesoamerica: the interior of the Olmec area—in the southernmost region of the Gulf of Mexico—, the Valley of Oaxaca, and the valleys of Alta Verapaz, in the southern highlands of Guatemala.

Writing in Mesoamerica developed during the later stages of the Olmec culture, around 700 to 500 BC. It likely originated from Olmec iconography itself, the immediate predecessor of the first written forms, and then evolved into a writing system through a gradual process of abstraction. This early writing system appears to have given rise to two writing traditions in two distinct areas: the Mexican highlands on one hand, and the highlands of Guatemala and Chiapas, along with a nearby region on the Guatemalan Pacific coast, on the other. (Cases Martín, 2003: 13)

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

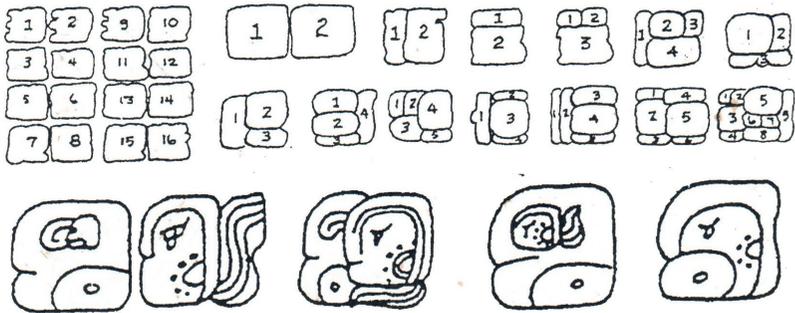
Reading Order

Regarding the level of analysis for reading Mayan glyphs, it should be noted that statements or clauses are typically composed of two or more hieroglyphic cartouches. These are also usually read from left to right, top to bottom, and in pairs of columns.

Various types of reading orders



Reading order of the lower text of Stela 11 of Yaxchilan



Linda Schele drawings

CHUM[*mu*] TUN-*ni*
 [*mu*/ affix; *ni*/ in phonetic complementation]
 (Independent glyph blocks)
 CHUM[*mu*]-TUN-*ni*
 [*mu*/ affix; *ni*/ in phonetic complementation]

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

(Composition of glyph blocks with concealment of the left-hand sign)

CHUM[TUN-ni]

[/TUN-ni/ affix on the CHUM glyph] (affixation)

CHUM-TUN

[Combination of both signs]

(Combination: fusion of two signs into a single sign)

Any of these combinations may appear in a certain text, and even more than one of them at the same time, for reasons of both graphic economy and aesthetics. On occasion, the scribe may find himself lacking space. (Cases Martín, 2003: 18).

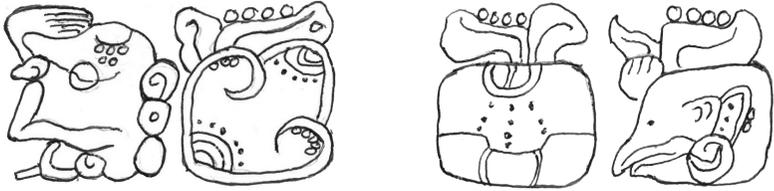
Comments by Florian Mast, German. Egyptian epigraphy is read like this: left face and vice versa, right hand and vice versa. (2-08-2013)

Logograms

The Mayan writing system is a mixed, or logosyllabic, system that uses both logograms and phonetic signs. Logograms are signs that represent phonemes in complete words, and, therefore, contain their meaning. In the following examples, the term for 'mountain,' *wits*, appears written in two different ways, although in both cases the reading is *wits*. The glyph on the left is a logogram (in its head-shaped variant), while the one on the right is a logogram along with a phonetic complement (Cases Martín, p. 19, 2003). And the third adaptation by the author with the appendix: glyph syllabary. Thus, the word 'mountain', *wits*, can be written phonetically using

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

two syllables, *wi* and *tsi*. Since the last vowel is omitted, it becomes *wi-t[s]* *wits*. And so on, as a phonetic complement.



*Left: WITS wi-wits “mountain.” Right: WITS wi-t[s] [i] “mountain.”
(Drawing by Martín Gómez, 2013)*

Now, it is necessary to know and read the Mayan glyph syllabary in order to write or paint the glyphic version, *ts’ib*, sacred writing. Ancient Mayan writing is composed of many signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are called hieroglyphs or simply glyphs. Glyphs that represent syllables.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

SYLLABARY

TABLE 1: Sound of the Mayan signs (Modified by Aj Xol Ch'ok).

aj-a-´	e-´	i-´	o-´	u-´
b'a	b'e	b'i	b'o	b'u
cha	che	chi	cho	chu
ch'a	ch'e	ch'i	ch'o	ch'u
ha	he	hi	ho	hu
ja	je	ji	jo	ju
ka	ke	ki	ko	ku

The glyphs ch'e, ja, and ju were added (drawing and contribution by Martín Gómez Kontsal).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

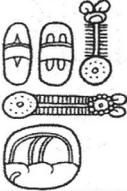
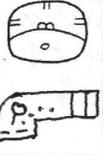
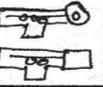
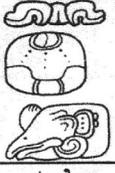
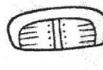
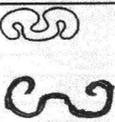
TABLE 2: Sounds of the Mayan signs (syllabograms).

k'a	k'e	k'i	k'o	k'u
la	le	li	lo	lu
ma	me	mi	mo	mu
na	ne	ni	no	nu
pa	pe	pi	po	pu
sa	se	si	so	su

The glyphs k'a, me, ni, and se were added (drawing and contribution by Martín Gómez Kotsal).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

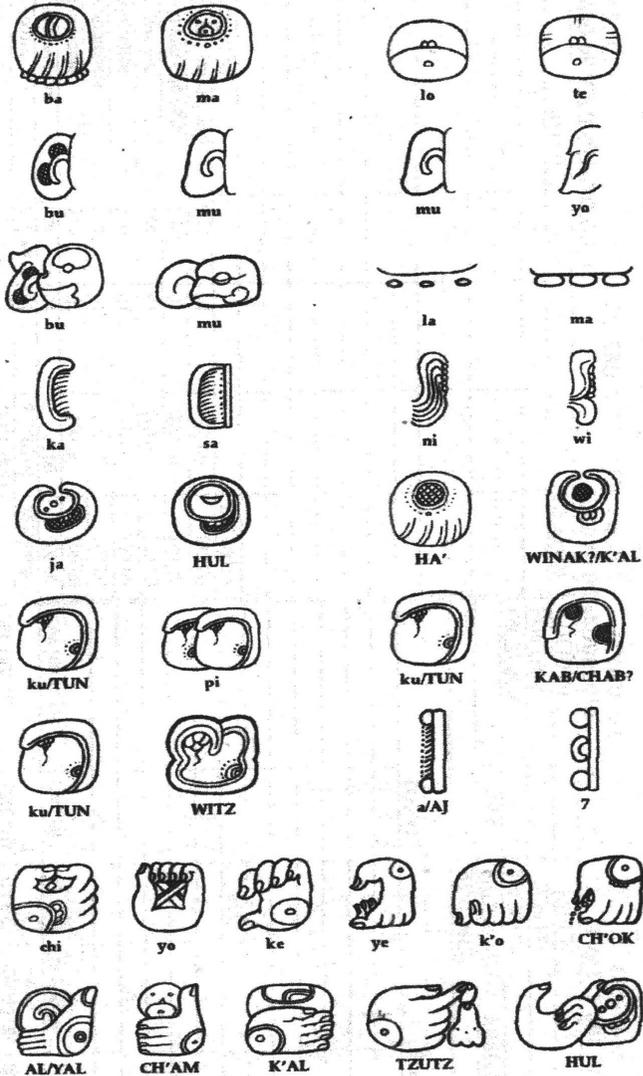
TABLE 3: Sounds of the Mayan signs (syllabograms).

ta	te	ti	to	tu
				
t'a	t'e	t'i	t'o	t'u
				
tza	tze	tzi	tzo	tzu
				
tz'a	tz'e	tz'i	tz'o	tz'u
				
wa	we	wi	wo	wu
				
xa	xe	xi	xo	xu
				
ya	ye	yi	yo	yu
				

The glyphs te, t'e, t'i, tze, we, wi, wo, and xa were added (drawing and contribution by Martín Gómez Kontsal)

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Signs that can be easily confused.



How To Write Proper Names with Mayan Glyphs

Mayan writing is a combination of glyphs that signify syllables called “syllabograms” and glyphs that signify complete words, called “logograms” or “logos.”

Mayan syllables always end with a vowel. Therefore, you must divide your name into syllables that end with vowels. You may have one or more extra syllables when you write your name with glyphs. Also, remember that when you need a syllable with a silent vowel, the silent vowel must be the same as the one that precedes it.

Let's divide some names into Mayan syllables. If your name is Ana, the task is easy. You can write Ana as A-na. Both syllables end with vowels. If your name is Abel, the task is a little more complicated. But using the silent vowel rule, Abel can be written as A-be-l[e]. Here, the last /e/ is silent. Therefore, it is correct to write A-be-l[e]. Notice that we chose /le/ as the last syllable (instead of la, li, lo, lu) because the silent vowel must be /e/, the same as the vowel that precedes it.



The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

When the silent vowel is in the middle of the name, it's a bit more complicated. However, if your name is in a language of the Mayan family, it's much easier. To write names in Mayan glyphs, you simply divide the name into syllables. For example: Xe-l[e] Xu-n [u], Si-l[i] Xa-p[a]; Pe-tu-l[i], Ni-ko-l[o], Xo-chi-l[i], and so on. Remember that the vowel in brackets is silent. For example, if we write Anastasia or Sebastiana in Mayan syllables, we have A-na-s[a]-ta-si-a and Se-ba-s[a]-ti-a-na. What if the syllables you need are empty, that is, without glyphs? If the syllabary chart is blank, it means that the Mayan glyph for the syllable is unknown. For example, if you need the syllable /wu/. There is no glyph for /wu/ in the syllabaries, but it can be substituted with the syllable /bu/. The syllable /so/ is also still unknown, but this can be resolved by substituting it with the syllables /ts'o/ or /xo/, and so on, thus indicating a borrowed syllable. Now, what if your name has a consonant that isn't in the syllabary? Let's say your name is Cecilia. Then the syllables are Ce-ci-li-a. But you can see that the letter /c/ doesn't exist in the syllabary. This is because the ancient Maya didn't have words with the letter /c/.

In this case, we must use a similar sound. For *Lucía*, we would use Lu-sí-a; this may seem inaccurate, but it is correct. We are simply changing the name slightly to pronounce it as the ancient Mayans did.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Consonant substitutions that can be used in proper names and 12 examples.

C	(Soft C, like Cecilia) Use S plus a vowel: Cecilia = Se-si-li-a
C	(Strong C, like Carina) Use K plus a vowel: Ka-li-na
D	Use T plus a vowel: Damián = Ta-mi-a-n[a]
F	Use P plus a vowel: Faustino = Pa-u-s[u]-ti-no
G	(Strong G, like Gilberto) Use J plus a vowel: Gilberto = Ji-l[i]-be-l[e]-to
G	Use K plus a vowel: Guillermo = Ki-ye-l[e]-mo
H	Non-aspirated consonant, like Humberto = Hu-m[u]-be-l[e]-to
LL	Use Y plus a vowel: Castellano = Ka-s[a]-te-ya-no
Q	Use K plus a vowel: Quiroga, Eustaquio = Ki-lo-a, E-u-s[u]-ta-ki-o
T	Use L plus a vowel: Regina = Le-ji-na
V	Use B plus a vowel: Victoria = Bi-k[i]-to-li-a
Z	Use Ts, Tz', or X plus a vowel: Zoila =Tso-i-la, Xo-i-la

SOURCE: Escribir con glifos Mayas, Pitts, Mark, 2008. And my own contribution.

If your name has more than five syllables, use the designs by Linda Schele from the chart of various types of spelling order.

Apply your creativity however you see fit, maintaining a pleasing aesthetic with different glyph blocks. Create your personal glyph and write it however you like. Once you have created the glyph for your first and last names, think about how you want to represent the glyphs that signified the proper names of the towns and how to form paragraphs or phrases in Mayan glyphs.

All modern Mayan languages, including Kiche, Kaqchikel, Jakalteko, Mam, Tojolabal, Tsotsil, Tseltal,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

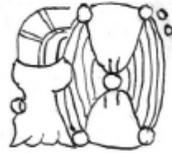
Kanjobal, Chol, and others, share the same roots as the language of the ancient Mayans. Part of the Tselal vocabulary is composed of monosyllabic roots (CVC, consonant -vowel-consonant), for example, *pik*. There is *pik*, to touch with the fingers, to desire, to use; *pik ti'bal*, to touch the flesh; *pik ch'ich'* or *pik k'abal*, to press a button; *pik chu'il*, to caress the breasts; *pik xchikil ants*, caressing or tickling a woman; *pikbey*, feeling her; *pikbot choj yit bats'il ach'ix*, they touched the young lady's buttocks. The root *pik*, when written glyph by glyph, becomes disyllabic. When they needed a syllable ending with a consonant, they combined two glyphs. For example, if they wanted to write a sound like the syllable *pik*, they arranged the syllables *pi* + *ki* and did not pronounce the final /i/. An easy way to write this is *pik[i]*. In this example, the brackets indicate that the final vowel /i/ is silent or not pronounced.

There are diacritical marks; the only instance of this type of sign in Mayan writing is a pair of dots attached to some glyphs, indicating that these phonetic graphemes should be read as if they were written twice. In the word *mamale*, old man, for example, *ma-ma-le*, ²*ma-le*. Another word, *ts'unun*, hummingbird, should be written *ts'u-nu-n[u]*, *ts'u-nu²*. Or the word *mamlal*, husband, should be written with two pairs of dots *ma-m[a]-la-l[a]*, *ma²-la²*. In this way it can be written like this:

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Ma²-le .ma-ma-le



ts'u-nu² ts'u-nu-n[u]



ma²-la² ma-m[a]-la-l[a]

Now that you have had the opportunity to learn to write your name with glyphs, you will learn more about the construction of contemporary Mayan glyphs regarding the importance of writing the name of each of your towns.

This section aims to reveal the intention of recovering and reusing the sacred glyphs in everyday life, at least to record sacred places or the toponymy of our towns and thus revive the origin of the writing of our ancient Mayan ancestors. Therefore, to demonstrate the long history of the native peoples, it is suggested to create, record, and engrave glyphs to give validity and richness to the *ts'ib* hieroglyphic writing. I must clarify that the meanings written in quotation marks are taken from other authors, while those without quotation marks are my own.

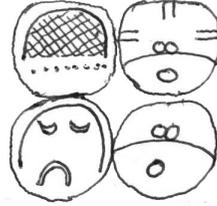
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Glyphs, Emblems of the Mayan-Speaking Municipalities of Chiapas

(Drawings and adaptation by Martín Gómez Kontsal, 2014).



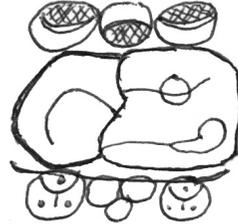
*Wits-ta-n[a] witstan
Limestone mountain*



*Pa-n[a]-te-lo Pantehló
"River Bridge"*



*Jo-be-l[e] Jobel
Grass*



*Cha-mu-la Chamula
Chamo' "The water died"*

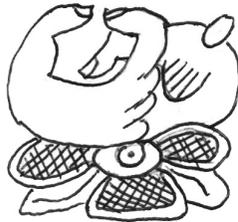


*Ch'en-[a]-lo Chenaló
"Water well"*

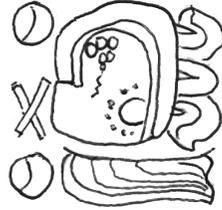


*Tsi-na-ka-n[a]-ta-n[a]
Tsinakantan "Murciélagos"*

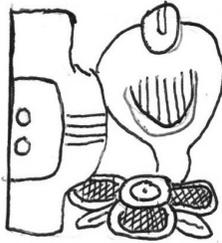
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



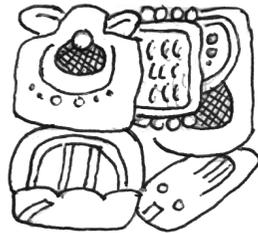
*Chi-lu-m[i] Chilum
Deer land*



*U-ku-tsi-n[i] Ukutsin
His turkey*



*Yax-lu-m[i] Yaxlum
"Green land"*



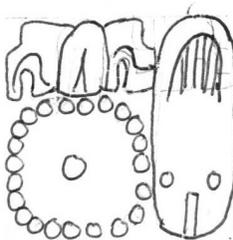
*Tso-n[o]-ta-ja-l[i] Tsontajal
Pine roots*



*K'an-[na]-k'u-k[i] K'ank'uk
"Yellow shirt"*



*Te-ne-ja-pa Tenejapa
"River of lime"*



*Tsi-mo-l[i] Tsimol
Bitter friend*

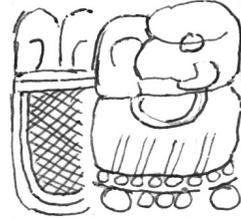


*Si-ta-la Sitalá
"Land of hares"*

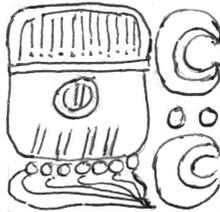
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



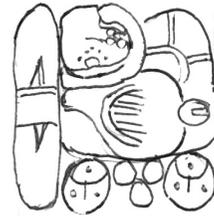
Ti-la-Tila
"Blackened"



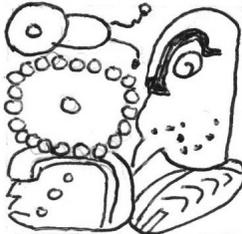
Tu-m[u]-ba-la Tumbalá
"Phallus carved from stones"



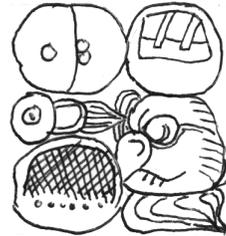
Sa-ba-ni-ya Sabanilla
"Fast stream"



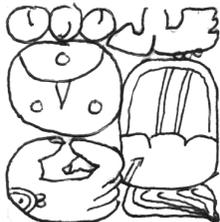
Ta-pi-lu-la Tapilula
"Hanging place"



Tsi-mo-jo-bel Tsimojobel
"Meadow of Ants"



[H]u-i-ti-u-pa-n[a] Huitiupán
"Big temple"



Cha-l[a]-chi-wi-ta-n[a]
"Place of jade"

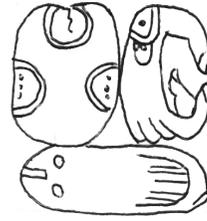


Sa-na-na]-te-de-ti-k[i]
Sanantexetik
"Saint Andrew"

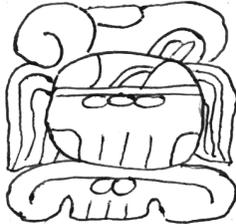
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



*Mi-to-n[o]-t i-k[i] Mitontic
"Embraced Stone"*

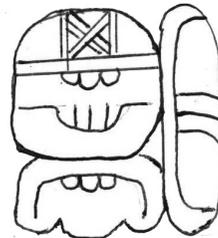


*Bo-chi-l Bochil
"The gourds"*



*Chanal Chanal
"high, celestial, of the sky"*

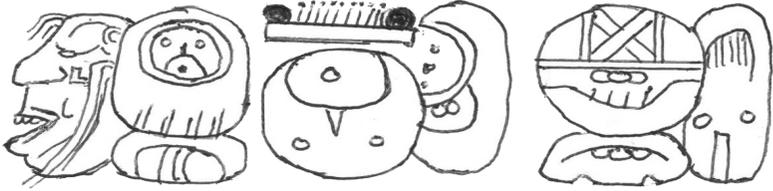
*Copy from page 22 of the manual
Hieroglyphic Workshop (according to
Esperanza, 2012)*



*Cha-na-l[i] Chanal
/Snake offspring or four children/
(according to drawing and adaptation
by Martín Gómez, 2014).*

The town of Chanal is of Mayan origin, belonging to the Tseltal language family: *chan*, meaning snake or four; and *al*, meaning offspring or child. Therefore, it means "snake offspring" or "four children." Using the glyphs already known in sentence construction, we have:

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



*Jme'-ti-k[i] Xma-l[i] a-la-j[a] chan-al. Jme'tik Xmal alaj chanal /Lady
María had four children/.*

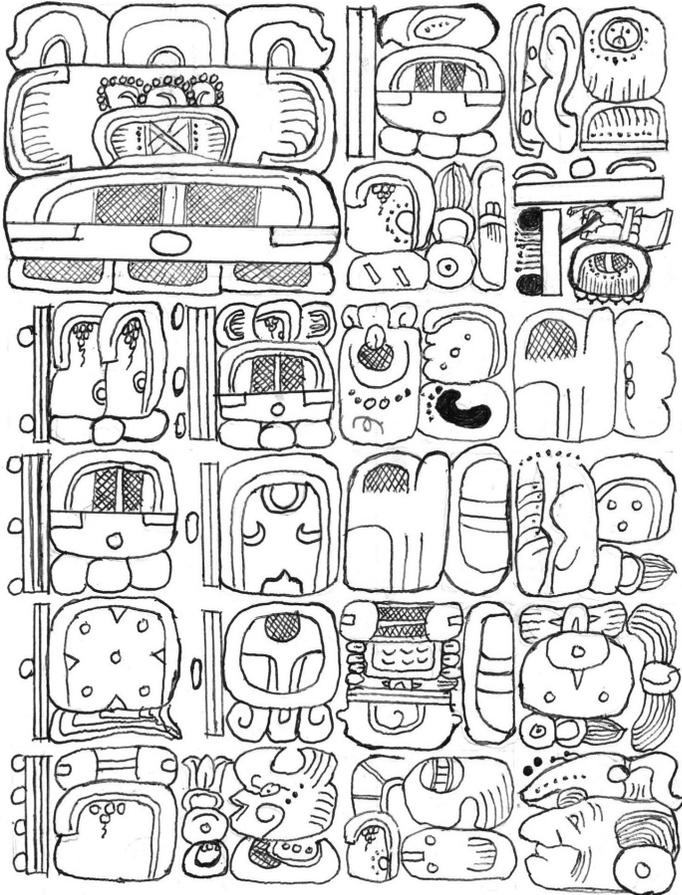
Generally, ancient Mayan texts are read from left to right and from top to bottom, in two columns (if there is a last column, it is read from top to bottom), and to read the rest follow the traditional path, zigzagging between the two columns.

Date on the founding of the so-called Unit of Mayan-Zoque Writers A.C. (UNEMAZ), converted to the Mayan calendar and glyphs in a simple way, and the lineages in contemporary glyphs of the six writers still alive on the thirtieth anniversary (drawing and adaptation *Ajts'ib* Martín Gómez *kontsal*).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Date of foundation in the Gregorian calendar
Tuesday, December 3, 1991

Long Count Date	Calendar Wheel	
12.18.18.11.11	11 Chuwen	19 Chi



SOURCE: Converter to the Mayan calendar and my own contribution.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

- 1 G I S I Introductory Glyph of the Initial Series
- 2 12 bak'tun
12 x 144,000 days = 1,728,000 days (400 short years)
- 3 18 katun
18 x 7,200 days = 129,600 days (20 short years)
- 4 18 tun
18 x 360 days = 6,480 days (one short year)
- 5 11 winal
11 x 20 days = 220 days (one month)
- 6 11 k'in
11 x 1 day = 11 days (one day)
- 7 Tzolk'in Date: 11 Chuwen or Bats' "monkey"
- 8 Haab Date: 19 Chij or Kej "deer"
- 9 Ts'akaj ts'a-ka-j[a] (fulfilled)
- 10-11 Lajuneb cha'winik ja'wil yu'un UNEMAZ (30 years of UNEMAZ)
- 12-13 Kuxatik ku-xa-ti-k[i], wakeb ajts'ib (six writers still living)
- 13-15 Sojob, Tso.jo-b[i], K'ana, ka-na[j] (Jacinto Arias, Josías López)
- 16-17 K'aal, k'a-l[i], Huet, [h]u-e-t[i] (Javier Sánchez, Nicolás Huet)
- 18-19 Kontsal, ko-n[o]-tsa-l[i] maltih, ma-l[a]-ti[h] (Martín Gómez, Baltazar)
- 20-21 P'ijil, p'i-ji-l[i] chichmam, chi-ch[i]-mam. (wise ancient ancestors)

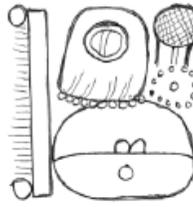
	1		10	11
			12	13
2		3	14	15
4		5	16	17
6		7	18	19
8		9	20	21

Finally, when I give a presentation, I end with this rubric.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Lu-chu-b[a]
Luchub



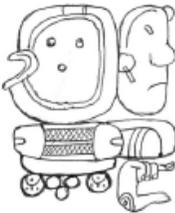
A-ba-so-lo
Abasolo



U-ku-tsi-n[a]
Ukutsin



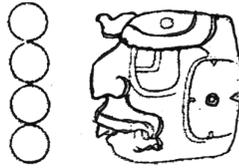
Chi-a-pa-s[i]
Chiapas



Wo-ko-la-wa-lik
wo-ko-la-wa-li-k[i]
Gracias



Ko-n[o]-tsa-l[i] K'a-l[i]
Ajts'ib/Martin Gómez Ramirez



CHAPTER 4

Modern Mayan Glyphs of Family Relationships in Oxchuc

Text published in the book: Oxchujk', xlimoxna neel jme'tatik; Oxchuc, Offering of the ancestors. ICHC, 1988.

“...Saint Thomas came from Guatemalan lands accompanied by some men. Our Lord God commanded them to come here to look for any trace of this town. The only sign they found was the ruins of the Church of Calvary, and upon finding them, these pilgrims began to build a replacement for that church and to construct their houses. The last name of these Guatemalan men was Morales. They were the ones who began to worry and wonder how they should marry since they were all from the same family—father, mother, son, daughter, sister, and brother. They wondered where they could find other men since they were the only ones in this town, as all the inhabitants of the land, or *muk'ulum*, had been exterminated by the great flood that occurred long ago.”

After much deliberation, they decided to arrange marriages between siblings; the children of siblings

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

called each other cousins; the cousins, in turn, called their mother's or father's siblings uncles or aunts, and these in turn called their siblings nephews and nieces. This is why we still distinguish ourselves in our family today. But to make the separation of one marriage from another clearer and to avoid confusion among their descendants, these first men devised a system of surnames such as Gómez, which comprises 40 lineages; Sántiz, 42; Méndez, 10; López, 16; Encino, only two; and Rodríguez, one. The last two were not very well received, and that is why the first four are the most common in Oxchuc.

These men procreated quickly and, therefore, were concerned about the surname they would leave to their offspring.

On one occasion, an angel flew across the sky shouting, "Where has it ever been seen that a brother embraces his sister like a bride? If this has happened before the gods, it must not happen again." This is what the angel said, and all the men, surprised, began to pray and ask for God's forgiveness. Having obtained the gods' forgiveness, they began to study the positions of the moon and the sun; these served as a guide for surnames. For example, if a child was born on a bright day, they named him *K'aal*. Some dreamed of animals or objects to give their children as surnames. It is also said that at the moment of a child's birth, the parents examined the placenta with great care and patience to see its shape and the color in the center.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

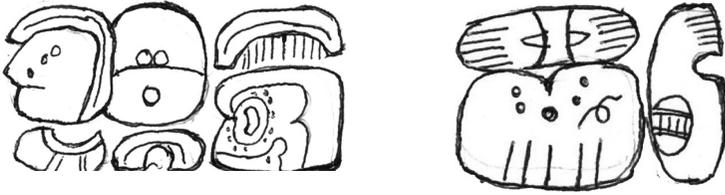
One of the narrators said: “According to my parents, they told me that when my grandfather’s parents were born, they examined the placenta and saw that it was speckled green, and that’s why they gave him the surname *K’ulub*, which means grasshopper, because it was the exact same color as a grasshopper. I am still *K’ulub*, even though my surname is Gómez.” Other women dreamed during their pregnancies of an animal, plant, or object, according to their beliefs. What they dreamed was what they should give their children as their paternal surname. For example, if a woman or man dreamed of a part of the human body, say *Chimbak*, knee, that would be the surname of the newborn. But it should be clarified that the Gómez family of Oxchuc not only owns the surname *K’ulub*, but also a list of plants, animals, and objects because they dreamed or imagined them.” (Gómez, Martín, 1988: 192-194)

This addition seeks to reveal the intention to recover and reuse the sacred glyphs in everyday life, at least to record lineages, sacred places, or the place names of our towns, and thus revive the origin of the writing of our Mayan ancestors, which are presented below in contemporary Mayan glyphs.

From the list of lineages, you must write the phonetic complement of two consonants with an immediate vowel and the last vowel [i], JOLWAKAX, that is, JO-L[o]-WA-KA-X[i] or jo-lo-wa-ka-x[e] and while TS’EJ is written in glyphs TS’E-J[i] or ts’e-j[e] and all is written with the phonetic complement of

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

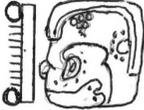
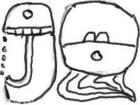
the vowel [i] because it is a Mayan Tseltal dialectal variant of Oxchuc. Since the last vowel is omitted, it results in ts'e-j[i] ts'ej. Examples of phonetic complementation:



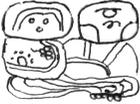
Left: JOLWAKAX, Jo-l[o]-wa-ka-x[i], cow's head. Right: TS'EJ, Ts'e-j[i], mountain mouse

Gomez Lineage in Mayan Glyphs

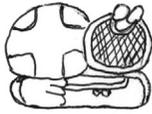
Based on adaptation and drawings by Ajts'ib Martín Gómez
Kontsal, August 2018.

Glyphs	Transcription	Glyph-by-glyph transcription	Translation
	Akux	A-ku-x[i]	Agustín
	Alon	A-lo-n[i]	Alonso
	Bet	Be-t[i]	Debt

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

	Chabin	Cha-bi-n[i]	Wax
	Che	Che	“Che” meaning unknown
	Chimbak	Chi-m[i]-ba-k[i]	Knee
	Ch'ilub	Ch'i-lu-b[i]	Arrow
	Ch'ul	Ch'u-l[i]	Sacred
	Expin	E-x[e]-pi-n[i]	Thorn
	Ichilok	I-chi-lo-k[i]	Tomatillo
	Jolchi	Jo-l[o]-chi	Deer head
	Jolwakax	Jo-l[o]-wa-ka- x[i]	Cow head

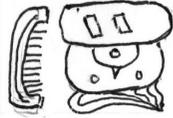
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



K'ank'ujk'

K'a-n[a]-k'u-
[j]k'[i]

Yellow shirt



Kaxlan

Ka-x[a]-la-n[i]

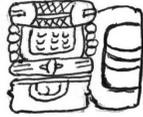
Ladino or
stranger



K'o

K'o

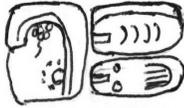
Mask



Kontsal

Ko-n[o]-tsa-l[i]

"Kontsal"
meaning
unknown



Kulel

Ku-le[i]

Chayote leaf



K'ulub

K'u-lu-b[i]

Grasshopper



Kulus

Ku-lu-s[i]

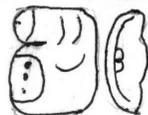
Cross



Luna

Lu-na

Moon

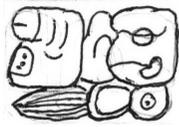


Me'na

Me'-na

Housewife

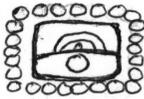
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Me'mut

Me'-mu-t[i]

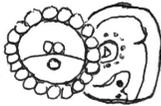
Hen



Molo

Mo-lo

Friend



Molox

Mo-lo-x[i]

“Molox”
meaning
unknown



Mulex

Mu-le-x[i]

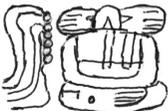
Morales



Nich

Nich
In the context
of Mayan
numeration

Flower



Ni'mail

Ni'-ma-i-[i]

Chilacayote tip



Owa'

O-wa

“Owa”
meaning
unknown



Peres

Pe-le-s[i]

Pérez

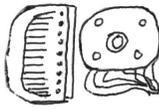


Pul

Pu-l[i]

To sprout or to
burn

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Sabin

Sa-bi-n[i]

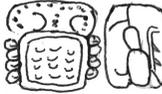
Weasel



Sakjol

Sa-k[a]-jo-[i]

Old man's head



Tonchan

To-n[o]-cha-n[i]

Snake egg



Tuluk'

Tu-lu-k'[i]

Turkey
For Julio César
López



Ts'ej

Ts'e-j[i]

Wood mouse



Tsimá

Tsi-má

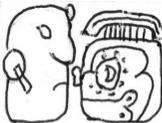
Gourd



Wajch'

Wa-j[a]-ch'[i]

Branch



Wakax

Wa-ka-x[i]

Livestock
For Abasolo
Wakaxna
"Pesebre"



Waskie

Wa-s[a]-ki-e

Vázquez

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Wen

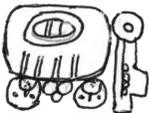
We-n[i]

“Wen”
meaning
unknown

If the woman or husband had dreamed of a non-wild plant like cilantro or *Kulanto* before their child was born, that would be the child’s surname. That's why some of the López family in Oxchuc bear this surname along with those mentioned below.

López Lineage in Mayan Glyphs

Based on adaptation and drawings by Ajts’ib Martín Gómez
Kontsal, August 2018.

Glyphs	Transcription	Glyph-by-glyph transcription	Translation
	Balte'	Ba-[a]-te'	Piece
	Bartolo	Ba-[la]-to-lo	Bartolo
	Bel	Be-[i]	“Bel” meaning unknown
	Ch'ijk'	Ch'i-[i]-k[i]	Put in or cover

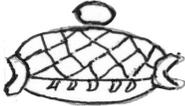
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Ch'ikoj

Ch'i-ko-j[i]

Insert



Junak

Ju-na-k[i]

Turtle



K'ana

K'a-na

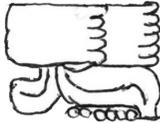
Old house



Karkoma

Ka-[a]-ko-ma

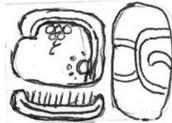
Scribble



K'iw

K'i-w[i]

Tend



Kukay

Ku-ka-y[i]

Firefly



Kulanto

Ku-la-n[a]-to

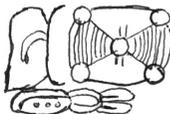
Cilantro



Mucha

Mu-cha

"Mucha"
meaning
unknown

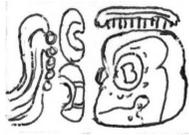


Munus

Mu-nu-s[i]

"Munus"
meaning
unknown

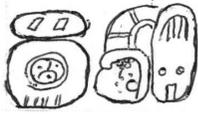
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Ni'wakax

Ni'-wa-ka-x[i]

Cow snout



Xampil

Xa-m[a]-pi-l[i]

"Xampil"
meaning
unknown



Yewan

Ye-wa-n[i]

Her mouth

But if the newlywed couple had dreamed of having six cents, then they would name their offspring *Waketak'in*, that is, "Six Cents."

Below we will present a list of Tsel'tal surnames belonging to the Méndez family.

Méndez Lineage in Mayan Glyphs

Based on adaptation and drawings by Ajts'ib Martín Gómez
Kontsal, August 2018.

Glyphs	Transcription	Glyph-by-glyph transcription	Translation
	Ba	Ba	Tuza
	Chichol	Chi-cho-l[i]	Green tomato

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

	Ch'ixna	Ch'i-x[i]-na	Long house
	Konkixtal	Ko-n[o]-ki-x[i]ta-l[i]	to go or to come
	Lawux	La-wu-x[i]	Nail
	On	On	Avocado
	T'ul	T'u-l[i] In context, the eighth Mexican month	Rabbit
	Tsemen	Tse-me-n[i]	Tapir or danta for Miguel Sánchez
	Waketak'in	Wa-ke-ta-k'i-n[i]	Six cents
	Xuchib	Xu-chi-b[i]	Spinner

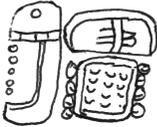
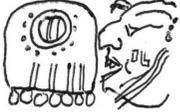
But all of this applied to the firstborn son, not to subsequent children. For example, if a family gave birth to a child during the day, the child was called *k'aal*, meaning day. If the child was born with the

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

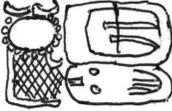
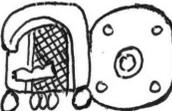
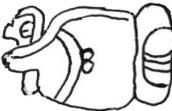
umbilical cord wrapped around its neck, signifying a long life ahead, it was called *Murino*, meaning tadpole. Below, we will list the Tseltal surnames belonging to the Sántiz family.

Sántiz Lineage in Mayan Glyphs

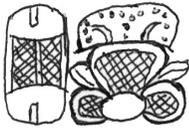
Based on adaptation and drawings by Ajts'ib Martín Gómez
Kontsal, August 2018.

Glyphs	Transcription	Glyph-by-glyph transcription	Translation
	Akino	A-ki-no	Aquino
	Antun	A-n[a]-tu-n[i]	Little fish
	Bana	Ba-na	Easel
	Barsin	Ba-l[a]-si-n[i]	Pinto
	Bobil	Bo-bi-l[i]	To cut

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

	Bok	Bo-k[i]	Vegetable
	Ch'ail	Ch'a-i-[i]	Smoke
	Ch'elab	Ch'e-la-b[i]	Trunk
	Chitam	Chi-ta-m[i]	Pig
	Chul	Chu-[i]	“Chul” meaning unknown
	Ch'ulit	Ch'u-[u]-i-t[i]	Sacred anus
	Ijch'in	I[j]-chi-n[i]	Heron for Migel Sánchez y for Abasolo Jolin, “garza”
	K'aal	K'a-[i]	Day
	Kituk	Ki-tu-k[i]	My anus

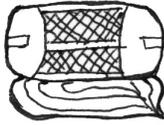
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Koj'tom

Ko[jj]-t'o-m[i]

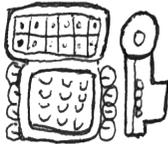
Badger



Kon

Ko-n[i]

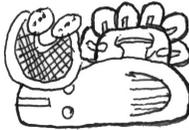
My avocado



Konte'

Ko-n[o]-te'

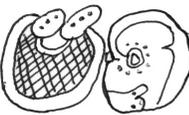
Avocado tree



K'ujul

K'u-ju-[i]

Hunchback



K'ux

K'u-x[i]

Pain



Lek'

Le-k'[i]

to lick



Murino

Mu-li-no

Tadpole

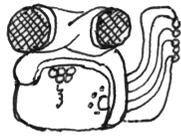


Muxan

Mu-xa-n[i]

Ocelot
for Julio César
López

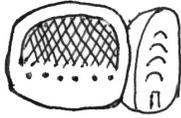
The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Nukni'

Nu-k[u]-ni'

Crooked nose



Pale

Pa-le

Priest



Pe

Pe

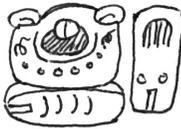
Mecapal



Poket

Po-ke-t[i]

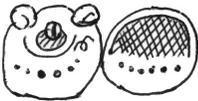
Saucepan



Solel

So-le-l[i]

to pass



Sopa

So-pa

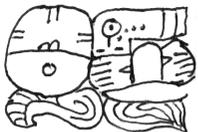
Soup



Soten

So-te-n[i]

Rattle

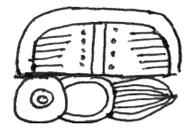
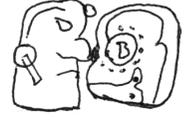
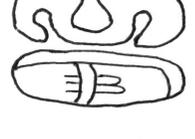


Tenteman

Te-n[e]-ma-n[i]

Blacksmith

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

	Tentsun	Te-n[e]-tsu-n[i]	Goat or kid
	Ts'it	Ts'i-t[i]	To lick
	Wax	Wa-x[i]	Wildcat
	Werkix	We-le-ki-x[i]	Velázquez
	Wok	Wo-k[i]	Foot for Julio César López
	Xakima	Xa-ki-ma	Hitch for Julio César López
	Xejt'na	Xe[i]-t'[e]-n[a]	Half house
	Xulik	Xu-li-k[i]	Reed
	Akilan	A-ki-la-n[i]	Grass

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Yemuk

Ye-mu-k[i]

Bulb



Yol

Yo-[i]

“Yol”
meaning
unknown



Yuba

Yu-ba

Yucca

Those with the surname Encino also have the Tseltal surname *K’antulan* and *Entsin*, which means goat; the Rodríguez family is *Pom*, which means incense. Very few people currently bear this last surname.



Left: *K’an-tu-la-n[i]*, oak.

Center: *E-n[e]-tsi-n[i]*, Encino.

Right: *Po-m[i]*, incense

If a family with the surname Gómez dreamed of a weasel or Sabin upon having their first child, that child and their descendants will be named *Sabin*, even if they dream or observe something in the placenta or in the position of the moon during other pregnancies. If a Sántiz dreamed of a pig or *Chitam* before the birth of their firstborn, then that will be the child's surname and the name of their lineage.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

All these lineages have a very ancient origin, as they are the ones that the first fathers and mothers left to their offspring, and which fortunately have been preserved until this century, despite the influence of modern life.

Both the man and the woman say to their children or grandchildren: “Son, I am two people. I am also like other men of flesh and blood, but I differ from them because my body belongs to two surnames. From my stomach to my feet, I am Gómez *Wakax* ‘Cattle,’ and from my stomach to my head, I am López *Ni’wakax* ‘Cow’s Snout.’ This is because the surname *Wakax* is found in both the surname Gómez and the surname López. When the first ancestors dreamed of a *Wakax* and at the same time a *Ni’wakax*, they could marry, since a Gómez *Wakax* could very well marry a López *Ni’wakax*, even though they belonged to the same *Wakax* lineage.”

The origin of the Spanish surname Morales is now distinguished from the surnames Gómez, López, Sántiz, Méndez, Encino, and Rodríguez. These surnames include several of the Tseltal surnames, hence all those who bear the paternal surname Gómez are aunts or uncles and cannot marry each other. For example, a *K’ulub* or grasshopper and a *Ch’ilub* or arrow cannot marry, but they can marry within the *K’ulub* and *K’aal* families because they belong to different paternal surnames, Gómez and Sántiz. This was the origin, the beginning of the family. Currently, the elders say that young people no longer respect

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

these laws and marry among themselves even if the surnames belong to the same family, as our first Mayan fathers and mothers did." (Gómez, Martín, 1988: 198-200).



CHAPTER 5

Chronology of Historical Events of Abasolo, 1549–2021

“History is the mother of life, because if we don’t know where we came from, we wouldn’t have an identity.”

López Obrador, July 27, 2019

- 1549 It acquired its first name, *Teoltepeque*, of Nahuatl origin, meaning “Place of the sacred mountain,” and the first founders were from the *Kom*, *Kontsal*, *Tselkel*, and *Xilom* family lineages. The other lineages arrived later.
- About 1570 The colonial temple of San Martín Obispo de Tours was built by the Dominicans.
- 1772 In November of that year, the Jews of Ciudad Real burned down the straw and wattle-and-daub houses of San Martín for participating in the insurrection of the Tseltal, Tsotsil, and Ch’ol peoples in San

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Juan Cancuc against the province of Chiapa.

- 1774 This year a census was conducted of the Tseltal villages, which numbered 61 inhabitants in San Martín, based on the work of García de Vargas and Ribera (Ms. 1774).
- 1777–1782 According to Bishop Francisco Polanco and Carrera (Bulletin of the Diocesan Historical Archives, 1985: Vol. II. No. 1:54-58), the population of the Tseltal area was 251 inhabitants.
- 1838 The census of the inhabitants of the Tseltal area, adapted according to the comparative table of Ernesto Pineda, was 572 inhabitants.
- 1847 On November 5, 1847, it reached the category of town, “San Martín Mitontic,” by the Argumentator Secundino Orantes in the Department of Chilón.
- 1856 On the old map of the state of Chiapas, 19th century, San Martín is registered as a town, belonging to the Department of Chilón, D. Ángel A. Corzo. Cno. Gober. of the State of Chiapas.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

- 1870 The population of the Tseltal area of San Martín, according to the census, based on the work of Paniagua (1876), was 1028 inhabitants.
- 1919 The inhabitants lived on the side of the *Luchub* or *Luchubaltik* hill, which translates as “ornament or ornaments,” also from the root *luch*, which is to embroider, *luchub*, embroidery, *luchubaj*, her embroidery, “embroidery of the blouses of the women.”
- 1920 On August 2, 1920, the third birth, Mariano Pérez Jiménez, was registered in the book of Office 01 of the Civil Registry, by the municipal agent *kaxlan* Cristóbal Ramírez, San Martín, Department of Chilón. 1 and 2 are detached from the birth registry, and the first official of San Martín was Nicolás Gómez Sántiz, term 1954-1958.
- 1928 Installation of the telegraph line to Oxchuc-Ocosingo. Closed in 1976. Mr. Martín Sántiz Jiménez *Wakaxna* was the telegraph operator. He is now deceased.
- 1934 Name changed from “San Martín *Mitontic*” to Abasolo, in honor of the compatriot Mariano de Abasolo, who

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

participated in the Mexican War of Independence.

1941 On July 29, 1941, the Municipal Agent of Abasolo received orders from C. Manuel Castellanos, Acting Municipal President. He issued an agreement with the Local Board of the Locust Campaign to exterminate the locusts, and agreed to divide the municipality into ten zones, encompassing the jurisdiction of the second zone, which was under his charge, comprising the towns of Sibaca, Abasolo, and the Virginia colony.

1954– On October 24, 1954, *jtatik* Nicolás Gómez
1958 Sántiz was appointed as the first Municipal Agent in San Quintín, Ocosingo, Chiapas. He is now deceased. It also established the current streets in Abasolo.

1955 Mr. Secundino Hernández Ramírez *Tsekel* (†) was appointed as the first promoter of Spanish language education by the National Indigenous Institute (INI).

The first ejidos (communal landholdings) in the municipality of Ocosingo were: Abasolo (presidential resolution dates 1926-1941) with 2,800 hectares and 120

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

- ejido members; Colonia Virginia (presidential resolution dates 1931-1951) with 1,970 hectares and 40 ejido members; and Tenango (presidential resolution dates 1931-1934) with 3,332 hectares and 218 ejido members.
- 1961 Construction of the municipal agency with adobe and tiles by the National Indigenous Institute (INI), with Mr. Gabino Méndez Pérez as municipal agent.
- 1966 On April 7, 1966, Mr. Mariano Liévano (†) and his younger brother Francisco emigrated in search of new lands. They went to the Selva Lacandona and finally founded the ejido of San Quintín, Ocosingo, Chiapas, on April 20, 1966.
- 1968 The road from San Cristóbal to Ocosingo, Chiapas, reached Abasolo.
- 1971 *jtatik* Pedro López Sántiz Xilom (†) was appointed as the first municipal judge. He did not complete the year of his term. He was replaced by the professor Manuel Morales López *Mulex* (†) for two more years.
- 1972 The petition, first submitted by Professor Manuel Morales López *Mulex*, requested

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

that Abasolo, Chiapas, be elevated to the status of a Free Municipality.

On August 30, 1972, electricity was introduced, with Mr. Martín Gómez Ramírez *Suka* serving as the community leader and *jtatik* Manuel Morales López *Mulex* as the municipal judge.

- 1974 Introduction of piped water from the Chuchum spring by the INI, with *jtatik* Alonso Gómez Velázquez *Kontsal* (†) as the patron, who migrated to the sugarcane area to establish the New Ejidal Population Center Abasolo, municipality of Socoltenango, Chiapas.
- 1978 A group of ejido members migrated to the sugarcane area of San Francisco Pujiltic, led by Mr. Alonso Gómez Velázquez, Mr. Pablo Gómez Sántiz, Mr. Agustín Gómez and Mr. Nicolás López Velázquez. The New Ejido Population Center Abasolo, municipality of Socoltenango, Chiapas, was founded on September 28, 1978.
- 1980 On December 2, 1980, five people died in a rollover accident on the slopes of the hill Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas, enroute to a presidential event. Mr. Isidro Velázquez

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

López *Kom* was serving as municipal agent, also a Dominican deacon.

1981 On October 3, 1981, the Civil Registry Office 01 was closed, with Mr. Nicolás Gómez López *Chimbak* as municipal agent. The municipal presidency of Ocosingo requested the concentration of the birth and death certificate archives, but the population resisted.

1982 The construction of the municipal agency began, through the Municipal Community Development Agreement (CODECOM), with Mr. Isidro Velázquez Hernández *Kom* as the municipal agent.

On October 12, 1982, the ejido members took possession of a portion of the lands of Campo Virgen, according to a resolution of the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, with Nicolás Gómez López as ejido commissioner, advised by the OCEZ.

1984 In March 1984, Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez's first article, "GOAT BREEDING," was published in the quarterly magazine "La Chacona," Secretariat of Rural Development (SDR), Agricultural and Forestry Dissemination Body, March 1984, pp. 30-31, Spanish

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

edition. Directorate of Rural Research and Extension, State Government, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. It was subsequently translated and published into Tzeltal, Tsotsil, Tojol-ab'al, Ch'ol, Zoque, and Spanish in booklet No. 28, 1985, Sub-Secretariat of Indigenous Affairs (SUBSAI), Directorate of Strengthening and Promotion of Cultures, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas.

1986 In February 1986, the first book by Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez, co-authored with Enrique Pérez López, was published. It was titled *K'op a'yejetik sok xkuxinel te muk'ul lum tzeltal Tenejapa*/Relatos y tradiciones de un pueblo tzeltal Tenejapa. 1st ed. bilingual, Secretariat of Rural Development, SDR/SUBSAI/ Directorate for Strengthening and Promoting Cultures, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, February 1986, pp. 322.

July 1986, unpublished research by Galicia García Verónica and other authors, "Functioning of the peasant economy and its forms of relationship with capital in the town of Abasolo, Chiapas, 1985-1986." "Final research report in Rural Sociology." (I, II, III) UAM Mexico, D.F.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

On November 9, 1986, the Bilingual Bicultural Secondary School No. 70 was created. Now an agricultural technical school. Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal* was the manager and Alfredo Jiménez Sántiz *Tsuj* as the municipal agent.

1988 On June 6, 1988, the second book by Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was published, entitled *Xlimoxna neel jme'tatik Oxchuc/Offering of the ancestors in Oxchuc*, 1st bilingual ed., SDR/Subsecretariat of Indigenous Affairs of the State of Chiapas, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, June 1988, pp. 462.

1989 Ordination of the proper consecration formation of deacon Mr. Isidro Velázquez López *Kom*, Catholic Church of San Martín Obispo de Tours, to further the alignment of the autonomous church, *k'op te Yos*, assisting the *Jtatic* Bishop Samuel Ruíz.

1990 A rustic park was built using roundwood materials by the timber company of the state of Chiapas.

On July 5, 1990, Lic. José Patrocinio González Blanco Garrido, Governor of the

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

State of Chiapas, arrived. During this discreet visit, he came to offer his personal support as governor. Official aid arrived shortly thereafter in the form of the construction of a central park, classrooms, and productive development projects for the region.

On October 12, 1990, work began on the construction of the Central Park, with Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal* as municipal agent, Professor Antonio Gómez Sántiz *Ni'mail* as municipal judge, and Mr. Nicolás Gómez López as ejido commissioner.

1991 On March 21, 1991, the Municipal Library, "Benito Juárez" No. 5049, was established. The manager was Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal* and Martín López Sántiz *Xilom* was the founding librarian.

In April, the reissue of the book *Xlimoxna neel jme'tatik Oxchuc*/Offering of the ancestors in Oxchuc was published, Chiapas Institute of Culture ICHC, State Council for the Promotion of Research and Dissemination of Culture DIF/Chiapas, 2nd bilingual ed., Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, April 1991. pp. 462.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

On May 24th and 25th, San Martín Abasolo hosted the First State Indigenous Marimba Festival through the Department of Ethnic Cultures of the Chiapas Institute of Culture. Dr. Jacinto Arias Pérez introduced the participating groups from nine ethnic groups in the state. Eighteen marimba groups attended. At that time, the Central Park was inaugurated by José Patrocinio González Blanco Garrido, Governor of the State of Chiapas, with Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal* serving as municipal agent, and Professor Antonio Gómez Sántiz *Ni'mail* as municipal judge. A video recording of the event exists.

July 11th was the last total solar eclipse of the century, darkening a large part of the American continent/Abasolo.

On August 1, 1991, possession was taken of the La Esperanza farm from Mrs. Elizabeth Calvo, as a result of servitude for several years, in recognition of the recovery of the former lands, with Mr. Nicolás Gómez López *Chimbak* as ejido commissioner.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

September 1991. The audiocassette recording “La fiesta grande de San Martín” by Gustavo López Ramírez and others was released as part of the Voces Indias de Chiapas collection, published by the Chiapas Institute of Culture (IHC), the State Council for the Promotion of Research and Dissemination of Culture DIF/Chiapas, through the Department of Ethnic Cultures. 1st bilingual edition. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas.

1992 On February 9, 1992, Mr. Nicolás Gómez López *Chimbak*, Mr. Gregorio López Velázquez *Ch’ijk’*, and Mr. Martín Sántiz Jiménez *Wakaxna* were captured and imprisoned for 65 days, stemming from the takeover of the “La Esperanza” farm of Mrs. Elizabeth Calvo.

Mr. Mariano Velázquez Hernández *Kom* joined a commission in the Great March of the *Xinich’* Organization, in which Tseltal and Ch’ol people from the northern zone to the capital of the country, protested against repression, corruption of the authorities, and reforms to article 27 of the Constitution.

Kaxlan José Barragán Navarro, a landowner from Ocosingo, was

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

imprisoned in Abasolo for his overbearing behavior during negotiations for the release of three people captured at the CERESO prison in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. During the negotiations for his release, he brought the federal army with him to intimidate the population. We resisted through dialogue mediated by the priest from Ocosingo, Chiapas.

The rural clinic was established by the State Indigenous Council of Solidarity, using resources transferred from the construction of the municipal agency, currently a family medical unit of the IMSS Bienestar program.

On October 12, 1992, they participated in the protest march commemorating 500 years of resistance in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. Who mutilated the leg? Where is the statue of the conquistador Diego de Mazariegos? Brought in an ixtle net! ANCIES, Abasolo, Ocosingo, Chiapas.

1993 Arrival of *Jtatic* Bishop Samuel Ruiz at the temple of San Martín Obispo de *Tours* for the Christian baptism and confirmation ceremony for the evangelization of the Tseltal region.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

- 1994 On January 1, 1994, a group of residents participated in the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). Creation of the Autonomous Municipality of El Che Guevara, *Sots' Choj*.
- In March 1994, the first story by Professor Manuel Morales López *Mulex* was published, entitled *Ta yolil jun tokal bat jun ach'ix/En medio de una nube se fue la virgen, cuento y relatos indígenas, volumes 2-3, 1st bilingual ed., CIMECH/DIF/ICHC/UNAM, México, 1994, pp. 259-269.*
- 1995 On April 12, 1995, the facilities of the Civil Registry Office 08 were established, with Mr. Nicolás Gómez López *Chimbak*, now deceased, as the official.
- 1996 On August 8, 1996, the project for the integration of the new free municipality was presented through the State Council and Commission for the Remunicipalization of the State of Chiapas. Three years later, it was not approved due to internal conflicts in the region. Enrique Gómez Ramírez was serving as municipal agent and the late

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Professor Tomás Gómez Sántiz *Molox* was the municipal judge.

Audiocassette recordings *Muk'ul Kín* and other titles, authored by Gustavo López Ramírez and others, collection Raíces Floridas de Chiapas, recording "La voz de la Frontera Sur," Secretariat for the Attention of Indigenous Peoples, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. 2nd ed. CD, Música tseltal de San Martín Abasolo. CONECULTA/CELALI, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, 2010.

From November 23 to 25, 1996, San Martín Abasolo hosted the Seventh Maya-Zoque Festival, sponsored by the Secretariat for the Attention of Indigenous Peoples (SEAPI). On that occasion, 46 Indigenous municipalities participated, with Mariano Velázquez Hernández *Kom* serving as the municipal agent. A video recording exists.

1997 On February 19, 1997, in San Jerónimo, over disputed lands, the municipal agent Mr. Mariano Velázquez Hernández *Kom* was murdered by paramilitaries from the OCEZ of Chulna, Oxchuc, and La Florida, Ocosingo, Chiapas.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

On October 7, 1997, Abasolo refused to belong to the new autonomous municipality in a rebellion called "Ernesto Che Guevara" of the Moisés Gandhi community.

- 1998 In October 1998, the article on "Experiences and Ancestral Resistance, San Martín Abasolo, Ocosingo" was published by the author Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal*, Jabil-Jame 1997, Yearbook of the State Center for Indigenous Languages, Arts and Literature, 1st ed. CONECULTA-CELALI/Government of the State of Chiapas, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, October 1998, pp. 84-92.
- 1999 On June 5, 1999, electricity rates were waived in anticipation of the scheduled visit to Abasolo of Roberto Albores Guillén, Constitutional Governor of the State of Chiapas. In addition, an ambulance was loaned and support was provided for productive development projects in the region. The official speaker was Fredy Gómez Velázquez, a student at Agricultural Technical Secondary School No. 70, along with Tomás López Sántiz, the ejido commissioner.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

On July 20, 1999, the signatories and seals of the following localities signed a statement of disagreement regarding the creation of the free municipality based in Abasolo and not registering it in the Civil Registry Office 08: Cuxulja' Chalam del Carmen, San Agustín, Nuevo Centro Linda Vista, Carrizal, Río Florido, Nuevo Jatate', El Progreso, Edén del Carmen, and Sacrificio Buenos Aires.

- 2000 In March of this year, the third book by Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was published, *AWASOLO, Wolwanej j-a'tel patanetik/ABASOLO*, system of municipal offices, prologue by Professor José Luis López Solórzano, 1st bilingual ed., March, CONECULTA/CELALI/UNEMAZ. San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, 2000, pp. 228.

On November 23, 2000, the inspection of zone 015 was established, bringing together 8 Agricultural Technical Secondary Schools, with Professor Manuel de la Torre as inspector.

- 2003 Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez's fourth book was published, *Lo'il k'op a'yejetik yu'un Ch'ul Jme'tatik/Los Cuentos del Ciclo Lunar*, coordinator and co-author of the

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

anthology, 1st bilingual ed., Mexican Youth Institute, IMJ/UNEMAZ/PACMYC/CONACULTA, Mexico City, 2003, pp. 110.

- 2004 On September 16, 2004, the Distance Higher Education 105 was launched, now the Chiapas College of Bacalaureate, campus 105 Abasolo, with the managers for three years being the professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal* and Javier Hernández Sántiz, the latter being president of the ejido commission.

The TELMEX Unefon network was installed, beginning with the number 9194881100 in the name of Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal*.

- 2006 In March 2006, the fifth book by Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was published, *Sk'in jme'tatik ta Awasolo/Fiestas de San Martín Abasolo*, prologue by the poet Francisco Álvarez Quiñones, 1st bilingual ed., CONACULTA/FONCA/CDI/UNEMAZ, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, 2006, pp. 229.

In June 2006, the reissue of the book, *Oxchuc; offering of the ancestors/Oxchuc; xlimoxna neel jme'tatik*, was published.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Prologue by the anthropologist Arturo Lomelí González. Preliminary note by Ma. Luisa Garza/Juan José de Giovannini, 1992. Updated and corrected in the 3rd bilingual edition, CDI/CONECULTA/CELALI, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2006, pp. 430.

- 2010 In April 2010, the sixth book by Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was published, *Syomel si'bak j-abat jkawiltoetik/Ceremonias del cabildo cohetero*, Prologue by Licenciado Armando Molina Nango, 1st bilingual ed., FONCA/CONACULTA/-PRODICI, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, 2010, pp. 187.

Began the installation of the sanitary drainage system, which is still not operational. Nicolás Gómez López was the ejido commissioner and Carlos Gómez Velázquez was the municipal agent. The project has been under construction for ten consecutive years. It was poorly planned and experienced corruption by SUBCOPLADEM, the administration of the H. Municipal Council of Ocosingo, Chiapas.

- 2011 The second presentation of the Remunicipalization Project of the Abasolo Town. The construction of an alliance or

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

coalition headed by the town of Abasolo was not approved. (*Kuxulja'*, Virginia colony, and Tenango resisted.) Silverio Méndez Gómez was the municipal agent.

2013 The Lázaro Cárdenas A.C. Higher Institute was closed, not registered with the SEP. Professor Jorge Velázquez Hernández *Akino* was the municipal judge and Elías Velázquez Hernández was the municipal agent.

2014 In February 2014, the first contemporary poem in Mayan glyphs was published, *XIKITIN/CIGARRA*, authored by Martín Gómez Ramírez, in *La Ojarasca Suplemento cultural de La Jornada*, a publication dedicated to Indigenous Americas, Mexico City.

On October 26, 2014, the writer Martín Gómez Ramírez was honored for his 30 years of writing poems in Mayan literature, narratives, and essays about nature by the Honorable Constitutional City Council of Ocosingo, Chiapas.

2016 On July 27, 2016, the remodeling began of the roof with galvanized tiles of the San Martín Obispo de Tours temple began. It was without government support. It was

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

dedicated on October 15 of that year by the local deacon Mr. Isidro Velázquez López.

2017 On June 14, 2017, Bishop Felipe Arismendi Ezquivel arrived at the Catholic church of San Martín Obispo de Tours for the sacrament of confirmation.

On December 21, 2017, the consecration of Deacon Pedro Gómez López *Kontsal* took place at the Catholic Church of San Martín Obispo de Tours. His area of influence included 15 Catholic communities, and with this, two deacons were added.

2018 On July 14, 2018, the radio station 95.1 FM Radio *Ji'tontik "Sk'op stalel jlumaltik"* was established.

In August 2018, was the first satellite TV broadcast via a cable network with twenty channels.

2019 On January 8, 2019, the management of the University was rejected by the ejido authorities led by Samuel Gómez Díaz, ejido commissioner, meeting scheduled by a commission of the municipal presidency, through the Education Coordination, Ocosingo, Chiapas.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

From August 8 to 10, 2019, as part of the XXIX Maya Zoque Chiapaneca Festival, The Great Celebration of Indigenous Peoples, Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was recognized for his outstanding work and contributions to the development of *Bats'il K'op* language literature and the celebration of the "International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples," along with the Tseltal poet Adriana del Carmen López Sántiz. The event was held in Ocosingo, Chiapas.

In August 2019, the reissue of the book *Awasolo wolwanej aĵbat patanetik/ Abasolo, sistema de cargos municipales* was published, authored by Martín Gómez Ramírez *Kontsal*, prologue by Professor José Luis López Solórzano, and preliminary note by the poet Francisco Álvarez Quiñones, updated and corrected 2nd bilingual edition, CONACULTA-PRODICI/ELIAC/ UNEMAZ, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, 2019, pp. 302.

On November 3, 2019, the evangelist radio station 91.5 FM "Evanecer" was established.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

2020 October 12, 1990, to October 12, 2020, commemorated the 25th anniversary of the creation of the central park. Key figures in its establishment included Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez as municipal agent, Professor Antonio Gómez Sántiz as municipal judge, and Nicolás Gómez López as ejido commissioner. A new commemorative plaque was installed on August 4, 2021. 30 YEARS OF TRANSCENDENTAL CHANGE AND ABSOLUTE SUCCESS.

From August 2, 1920, to August 2, 2020, another chapter closed in the Centennial Office 01 of Civil Registry, now number 08, under the direction of Lic. Magui del Carmen Estrada Martínez, with Sebastián Velázquez Jiménez serving as municipal agent, and Professor Juan Diego Gómez López as municipal judge, in Abasolo, Ocosingo, Chiapas.

100 YEARS OF AGREEING AND WALKING TOGETHER THROUGH LIFE.

From 1570 to 2020, marked an estimated 450 years since the construction of the colonial temple of the Catholic church of the patron saint San Martín Obispo de

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Tours, an historical jewel of the Christianization of the Abasolo-Ocosingo region of Chiapas. 450 YEARS OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE AND RECLAIMING HER HERITAGE.

This year approximately 60 deaths were recorded among the inhabitants due to various diseases (file of the Civil Registry Office 08).

2021 The community officers were elected: Mr. Lorenzo López Ramírez as municipal agent and Engineer Moctezuma Eduardo Gómez Gómez as municipal judge, for a period of one year, Abasolo, Ocosingo, Chiapas.

On January 31, 2021, the first debate on the problem of alcoholism and drug addiction was held to combat and/or reduce this silent disease that so greatly harms the lives of many people, especially young people. For this purpose, an analysis was made and an internal regulation was developed that governs the town of Abasolo.

On March 29, 2021, the internal regulations of the ejidos (communal lands) were unanimously approved at the

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

general community assembly: Ejido Abasolo Histórico, Ejido San Luis La Gloria, and Nueva Esperanza. The ejido commissioners were Agustín Díaz López, Carlos Velázquez Hernández, and Tomás López Hernández. The oversight councilors were Mariano Hernández Ramírez, Juan Jiménez Velázquez, and Martín Gómez Díaz. The municipal agent was Lorenzo López Ramírez and the municipal judge was Moctezuma Eduardo Gómez Gómez. The assembly had 1,759 signatories, including ejido members, residents, and others. Five debates were held to analyze this final document.

On April 30, 2021, the call for dialogue began on media blockades by sub-leaders in Oxchuc. Attended by four communities from the region, with Mr. Lorenzo López Ramírez as municipal agent and Moctezuma Eduardo Gómez Gómez as municipal judge.

On May 4, 2021, construction by the Abasolo Region SUBCOPLADEM began on the domes for the Bilingual Primary School “Jaime Nunó,” the Agricultural Technical Secondary School No. 70, and the central park.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

On May 17, 2021, construction began on a key project for the Banco del Bienestar administration. The Banco de los Mexicanos, mission accomplished "Together we will make history." President of the Republic, Lic. Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

On July 18, 2021, internal regulations were formally presented publicly and before the assembly of ejido members. They were entitled "Ejido Commission of the Historical Ejido." Ejido Commission of the Abasolo Ejido (formerly San Luis and La Gloria), Ejido Commission of the Abasolo Ejido (now Nueva Esperanza), Municipal Agency of the Abasolo Ejido, "Internal Regulations of the Abasolo Ejido Part I." The regulations, which include the phrase "Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace." Abasolo, Ocosingo, Chiapas, March 28, 2021. The official presentation was conducted by the following individuals: Tomás López Sántiz, Pedro Gómez Sántiz, Martín Gómez Ramírez suka, and Antonio Gómez Sántiz. The regulations will be in effect from this date forward and will be

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

applied by the ejido authorities in coordination with the municipal agency.

July 28, 2021, the first application of the Covid-19 vaccination, a canine-type vaccine, was poorly accepted by the population due to religious reasons.

On October 16, 2021, during the presentation before the general community assembly, the following authorities were captured and imprisoned for twenty-four hours due to a dispute over the program *Sembrando Vida*: Lorenzo López Ramírez, Cesar Martín Jiménez López, and Nicolás Hernández López, municipal agent and historical ejido commissioner, respectively.

From November 9, 1986, to November 9, 2021, marked the 35th anniversary of the Agricultural Technical Secondary School No. 70. Professor Pascual Álvarez Promoter was the founding director, Professor Martín Gómez Ramírez was the founding manager, and Professor Luis Esparza Pérez was the current director and a native of San José Tepehene, in the municipality of Arenal, state of Hidalgo.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

“35 YEARS OF LEARNING BY DOING,
EDUCATING BY PRODUCING”

The first Sunday of December each year is the day the community general assembly is held for the elections of the people who will occupy the position of traditional authorities and of the Municipal Agency. On this occasion, Mr. José Díaz Gómez and Professor Efraín Velázquez López were appointed Agent and Municipal Judge respectively for the year 2022.

A people united in dialogue without blockades.
Luchubaltik, Abasolo, Ocosingo, Chiapas,
December 10, 2021.

KAXLAN. This concept arose when the bearded men arrived –the Spanish invaders– and were considered outsiders, strangers in the Mayan communities. As a gesture, they were called *k'axan*, meaning, come in. But they did not understand or pronounce well this courteous word. Over time, the syllable *Xa* was changed to *La*, leaving the name *Kaxlan*, which means foreigner, stranger.

Conclusion

Our Mayan people established themselves in large cities and developed across a vast region encompassing the Yucatán Peninsula, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco, Chiapas, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Our Mayan ancestors developed a highly progressive culture. They domesticated and cultivated numerous agricultural species and varieties. Some of these, such as corn, beans, cacao, and avocado—corn being a symbol of our existence—are now staples in the diets of humanity.

They built immense structures, great pyramids, and ceremonial centers with astronomical observatories, which allowed them to predict eclipses and achieve highly advanced knowledge and mathematical calculations. They understood the concept of zero and created a vigesimal (base 20) numbering system, unlike the Western world's base 10 system. The concept of zero is inscribed in glyphs dating back to 31 B.C. on Stela C, Tres Zapotes, Veracruz, Mexico (as presented in a 2011 lecture by José Mucía Batz). The invention of zero revolutionized Mayan knowledge.

The arts and crafts also flourished. Particularly noteworthy is the stucco work and panel carving in Palenque, extraordinary stelae and lintels, as well as the mural paintings found at archaeological sites, and writing. They possessed a hieroglyphic writing system, which allowed them to record their history on

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

monumental stelae, in magnificent architecture, and in handwritten codices.

History has been erased by several factors, such as the establishment of Catholic religious doctrine, a single language, the abandonment of our own ritual spaces, the harmonious relationship of the community with nature, the burning of different shapes and sizes of vessels and codices with hieroglyphic signs, as well as the destruction of large buildings, our temples, and in their place the building of large colonial architectural centers. However, the great Mayan scribes and priests still preserve the sacred *ts'ib* script. Now it is up to the firstborn to give strength and vitality to the cosmogonic elements and the right to our ancestral knowledge. It is no longer just essential to write down the mother tongue of Indigenous peoples. I stress the importance of recovering and using the sacred glyphs in everyday life, at least to record names of towns, proper names, lineages, two- or three-syllable announcements, and remnants of ritual or poetic language, or metaphorical words related to sacred objects, colors, and natural beings. This is necessary and important, out of pride in being speakers of an Indigenous language, for the preservation and transmission of the true roots of our ancestral tongues. And of course, we are made of corn and speak words of freedom—people of corn.

I want to end this section with a contemporary poem in Mayan glyphs that has inspired me so much in writing on this topic.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Ch'ul ja'

Talemon ta ya'al luchub
ya xbeenon ta xaalchan ja',
ja' wayib kuch'ib ch'ul ja'
ja'me yu'un ley kuxulon
junax ko'tan bina ay ku'un.

Sacred water

I come from water of *luchub*
and I walk of water of *xaalchan*,
my cradle is of divine water
and that is why I live here
happy with what I possess.

Glyph-by-glyph transcription

Ch'u-l[u] ja'
Ta-le-mo-n[o] ta ya'a-l[i] lu-chu-b[i]
ya xbe-no-n[o] ta xaa-l[i]-cha-n[a]
ja',
ja' wa-yi-b[i] ku-ch'i-b[i] ch'u-l[u] ja'
ja'-me yu'-un[i] ley ku-xu-lo-n[o]
ju-na-x[a] ko-ta-n[a] a-y[a] ku'-u-n[i]



APPENDICES

**Rituals and Sacred Texts of
Language from Suyúa to the
Kajwaltic of Oxchuc¹**

*María del Carmen Valverde Valdés,
Center for Mayan Studies, IIFL, UNAM*

The various strategies and methods used by the Mayans to preserve the memory of the community during the long process of acculturation that occurred after the Conquest, with the consequent destruction of pre-Hispanic documents of all kinds, have been the subject of multiple studies and exhaustive academic works. Therefore, it is not my intention here to delve deeper into the discussion of this topic due to its inherent complexity. I only intend to address a small part of this rich corpus of “resistance,” comprised of stories, tales, and ritual practices. In short, fragments of that rich cultural tradition which are seen by researchers today as a crucible, revealing different facets and aspects of what the Maya considered important to preserve, depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

¹ Publication of the S.E.E.M. No. 9 “The ritual in the Mayan world: from the private to the public,” Spanish Society of Mayan Studies, Research Group, Andalusia-America: Cultural Heritage and Artistic Relations (PAL: HUM-806) Peninsular Center in Humanities and Social Sciences, UNAM, Madrid, 2010.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

We know that part of the strategy in learning of the Latin alphabet, and as a mechanism of resistance, and within the very process of resistance, traditions, stories, and myths were recorded using this new code of communication. This presented significant difficulties for the Indigenous world in attempting to translate and adapt an entire cultural universe to a foreign system. However, there is no doubt that, despite its shortcomings, alphabetic instruction was one of the few European innovations used by Indigenous peoples against the Spanish themselves. In this sense, the Maya's ability to write their own language in Latin characters was, in a way, symbolic of the degree of "independence" they achieved within the colonial regime.

In any case, the result was the creation of new sacred books.

Mercedes de la Garza (1980: XXIII) points out that in some way all these texts were community books, such as the *Popol Vuh*, the Annals of the Cakchiquels, and the Title of the Lords of Totonicapán. They were jealously guarded by a principal family of the town and inherited from parents to children. Therefore, they had various custodians.

Thus, this corpus of Mayan literature was developed over centuries of colonial domination and reinterpreted over time. Due to its characteristics, we can easily classify it as sacred texts. It is complex, heterogeneous, and highly valuable. This is not only because it is a fundamental source for analyzing

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

topics such as the intricate network of symbols that form part of the Mayan worldview—elements that allow us to gain knowledge of the communities, or of historical processes and forms of acculturation, and even as literary works—but also because they are valuable in themselves as books as well as objects of worship. In this way, we can distinguish two levels, so to speak, of sacredness in the works: one that refers to the content of the texts and another to the book itself as a sacred object.

In this brief work, I will attempt to present some examples. That is, I will address specific ritual practices linked to these two levels of sacredness in a text. On the one hand, I will allude to a distinct practice contained in some of the books of *Chilam Balam*, which the pre-Hispanic Maya of the late Postclassic and early Colonial periods used to legitimize the authorities they elected. Then, in a second part, I will present a complex ritual that revolves around a specific document whose character or content clearly does not correspond—one might even think that at some point it contradicts—the celebration itself. Let us begin, then, by analyzing what is known as the Language of *Suyúá* in some of the books of *Chilam Balam*.

Analysis of the Language of Suyúá

Suyúá, or *Zuyva*, is mentioned in colonial Mayan literature and colonial historical sources as the place

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

of origin of several ethnic groups. For them, *Zuyva* referred to a site “from which the sacred and legitimate governorship comes” (Okoshi 2003: 1). Taking this concept as a basis, Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján (1999), in their book *Myth and Reality of Zuyúa, Feathered Serpent, and the Mesoamerican Transformations from the Classic to the Postclassic*, identify this specific period of Mesoamerican history and the “revolution of thought” that occurred within it with the term *Suyúa*, based precisely on colonial texts from the Mayan region that refer to the mythical city, the place of origin and pilgrimage from which the insignia of authority came, as *Tulan Zuyvan*.

We know that towards the second half of the 16th century, the descendants of the great Mayan lords felt the need to legitimize their political power before the new authorities. This was to maintain, as far as possible, their former recognition and to try to preserve, in some way, the honors and privileges of past eras. It was then, to demonstrate the long history of their lineages, that this mythical place *Zuyva* was mentioned as their place of origin. Okoshi (2003) points out that in this case, it is not important to search for the specific site referred to by name. The intention of the Mayan rulers was to show that their origin was in a place “beyond,” in the East, a direction precisely associated with the sunrise, with the beginning of time.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Not necessarily unrelated to this idea, but rather part of the same symbolic complex, in which “a common usage concerning the legitimization of Maya governance” (Okoshi *ibid*) was maintained, *Suyúa*² was also a type of esoteric language used to examine the authenticity of Indigenous rulers under the Spanish regime. This practice, likely inherited from earlier periods, had the primary objective of preventing upstarts from gaining access to power. Thus, in a section recorded in the *Chilam Balam of Chumayel of Maní, and of Tusik*, this term is used to name a specific type of “riddle,” an enigmatic text, as a tool to test the legitimacy of the power of the governors of the Indigenous councils. Sergio Quezada explains it this way:

“It is well known that the mechanism they used to prevent intruders from accessing the former positions was knowledge of the Language of *Suyúa*. This was a set of riddles and puzzles that served to interrogate the successors of those officials, and their knowledge, transmitted from father to son. It allowed them, as related groups, to monopolize power and become a kind of bureaucracy” (Quezada, 1993: 46–47).

Roys (1972: 191) points out that the interrogation, a firmly established tradition, was carried out at the beginning of each *katún* (period of 7,200 days), and that this authenticity check was a knowledge base

² It is not my intention to enter here into the discussion about the term *Suyúa* and its implications, but to take the texts that are known as “the language of *Suyúa*.”

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

inherited from father to son in families chosen to occupy such positions.

Among other things, it is clear then that, due to their content, right after the Conquest, these sacred texts continued to have, like the ancient codices, the meaning of affirming the power of local rulers within the traditional Mayan political system. When the Spanish authorities began the process of organizing the republic's bodies, they took advantage of the Indigenous hierarchical structure as a practical requirement by appointing the chiefs, that is, the *bataboob*, as governors. These chiefs sought, among other things, as already noted, to preserve their rights. These people were integrated into a *tzucub*, and as kinship groups, they monopolized power and access to it, precisely through the *Suyúu* language (Quezada, 1993: 143–144).

The book *Chilam Balam of Chumayel* describes the function of the *Suyúu* language as follows:

“The kaat naat, the questioner, comes within the katun that is now ending. And he comes at the time when one must “ask for understanding” from the princes of the people if they know how their lineages and their lords came in ancient times, the order in which their princes and kings come, and if they are of the caste of princes or of kings. And have them prove it” (Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel 1973: 38).

We provide here some of the riddles from the Language of *Suyúu* that had to be solved by those aspiring to hold a political office.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

“Bring me the Sun, my children, to have it on my plate. The spear of the high cross must be planted in the center of his heart, where Yax-Bo-Ion, the green jaguar, sits drinking blood. This is the saying of Zuyúa. This is what is asked. The Sun is a large fried egg and the spear with the high cross planted in its heart is the blessing. The green jaguar sitting on top drinking blood is the green chili when it begins to turn red. This is the saying of Zuyúa” (Book of the Books of Chilam Balam 1983:132).

The second riddle they are given is to go in search of the brains of the sky so that the Halach Uinic, Tefe, can see them and know their size. “I want to see them, I must look at them,” he tells them. The brains of the sky are copal, that’s how Zuyúa speaks.

[...]

The seventh riddle posed to them is to say: “Go and gather for me food from the bottom of the cenotes, two white and two yellow, I want to eat them.” The food from the cenote that they are asked for are jicamas, two white jicamas and two yellow jicamas. This is understood in Zuyúa.” (Book of the Books of Chilam Balam 1983:132, 134).

As can be seen, we are here with this series of requests before a ceremony that is more political than religious. It is a ritual of access to power. It is private in that it must have included a restricted audience in a place with limited access—a practice that in another time might have been classified as “dynastic,” separate from public spaces. It uses a language to guide newcomers, highly symbolic and polysemantic, in which objects, colors, and natural things such as

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

flowers, animals, trees, stones, and even food are metaphorically mentioned to express ideas, experiences, and actions. It uses a method of repeating the same thought in different terms or verbal forms. The parallelism of the phrases, in addition to redundancies and reiterations, reveals a complex meaning, making it difficult to understand the text. On the other hand, it reflects the spoken nature of the ritual itself. The aim is to hide its true meaning from the uninitiated. (Actually, the whole point is that not just anyone could understand it.) Also, it gives it a symmetrical, peculiar rhythm suitable for being recited or even sung in clandestine ceremonies. This corroborates the claims of the chroniclers that the sacred texts were learned by heart based on what was recorded in codices, which were an invaluable support for the oral tradition, very likely richer than the often meager data that writing offers.

It was then an initiatory process, a rite of passage that Mayan candidates had to go through to rise to power. But, sooner or later, it fell into disuse. As in other times of crisis, the “dynastic cult” became irrelevant, until the ritual was completely forgotten and all that remains of it are the fragmented riddles contained in the heterogeneous books of *Chilam Balam*. Insofar as the ceremonial practices were confined to a specific group within the population, they likely lost their significance when the former chiefs of the Yucatec Maya lineages ceased to have a “presence” in their communities, or were eventually

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

appointed by the Spanish authorities. It is true that, even today, the fondness for riddles persists among these same Yucatec Maya, and it is, in some way, inscribed in their worldview, undoubtedly due to their everyday practice of representing the part for the whole. However, it is clear that the ritual, linked to power, is no longer practiced.

When referring to the second example, which is the subject of this work, it will be necessary to change geographical location, and move to the Highlands of Chiapas.

Analysis of the Kajwaltik Ritual

Among the most important religious and festive ceremonial events with clear colonial roots that take place in the Tseltal community of Oxchuc, the traditional ritual performed on December 31st, marking the change of government and the transfer of the *Kajwaltik*, stands out even today. According to the written testimony from around the 1960s by the Tseltal Martín Gómez Ramírez (1991: 138–139), it is done “following the teachings of the firstborn, the first fathers and mothers,” in honor of *Kajwaltik* (supreme and sacred God of the earth, Our Lord, or “the Sacred Book”), whom, according to Gómez Ramírez, they honor and revere, bowing before him as a sign of respect, since he provides well-being and protection to the people. To him they raise prayers with words “that emanate from the heart and spirit.” “They light candles for him, place a small pot of pilíco, copal, and crucifixes before him; they burn

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

incense, and kneel to pray and revere him; they drink pox; they fast to purify their souls.” I quote a testimony from this resident of Oxchuc:

Our Lord or Kajwaltik is a sacred book that has been jealously guarded from generation to generation by the traditional authorities of this town. The “ch’uy k’aal” says that the sacred book came from Guatemala, that the ancestors have recounted that it contains the history of the founding of the town, but that to date they have not been able to learn the whole truth about this “Kajwaltik” (Gómez Ramírez 1991: 139).

The *Kajwaltik*, considered the most important sacred symbol of the traditional authorities, has been the object of attention of several anthropologists who have worked in the town of Oxchuc.³ Thus, Víctor Esponda (1992) informs us that the first modern news we have of it is due to Marcos Becerra, who studied it and partially copied it in 1926; Villa Rojas saw it—after delivering skyrocketes and candles to the custodians of the document—in 1938. Later, Siverts gained access to it in the 1960s, although previously, in 1958, the historian Luis Reyes García was allowed to make a handwritten copy. In 1984, Thomas Lee, Ray Schippa, and Víctor Manuel Esponda were able to examine and photograph it, and as a result, Esponda published the aforementioned 1992 article, in which he describes both the document's content and the complex ceremonial process that had to be

³ See, for example, the now classic Tzeltal ethnographies of Villa Rojas (1990) and Cámara Barbachano (1966).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

carried out to perform the task. Esponda notes that those in charge of the *Kajwaltik* at that time had to implement a whole ritual protocol to move it from its location, since failing to follow this strict procedure “would greatly displease the *Kajwaltik*, as well as bring misfortune.” Thus, this document was first carefully placed on a perfectly white and clean cloth. Next, one end of the cloth was tied around the first *extul* so that the *Kajwaltik* could be transferred—without touching it directly (Esponda, 1992: 189).

If there are no extraordinary events like the one described, the festivities surrounding the book are limited, as we have noted, to the traditional change of government.

Within the complex hierarchical structure of the town's traditional authorities, those in charge of the *Kajwaltik* occupy the highest position. They are the *alkales* (community leaders) of the two neighborhoods, responsible for this celebration, which takes place during the transfer of the staff of office, after the first 13 days of the new year. At the end of this period, the “book” of one neighborhood (*kalpul*) is handed over to the other for its protection, safekeeping, and care. Thus, in a procession with a clear ritual character, the *Kajwaltik* was taken from the sacred house⁴, wrapped in a white cloth. When the group of people arrived at the house of the *alkal* who

⁴ The house acquired a sacred character due to the presence of the object of worship and reverence.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

would be in charge of the book, it was put away again, where it would remain throughout the year. The ancient manuscript was reviewed in the middle of each year in the chest known as the "*Kajwaltik house*," where it was kept. At this time, the small pouch containing the tobacco powder, the crucifix, and the bundle of candles was refreshed.

Depending on whether the weather is good or bad, or "whether the sun shines brightly," the ceremony is accompanied by music from the harp, guitar, drum, and flute, and takes place during the festivities in honor of Saint Thomas. These festivities celebrate the "rest" of the *Kajwaltik*, and during this time, those in positions of authority (*alkales* and *extules*) must observe exemplary conduct, fast, and abstain from sexual activity. Only the first and second *alkal* of each *kalpul* had the right to see and touch the sacred book, since if any intruder wished to observe or leaf through it, it would immediately begin to rain as a sign of transgression against the established norm (Gómez K'ulub, et al. 2002:82).

I will return to the book's content later, but first I would like to describe, using the Tselal people's own narrative, some of the steps of the ritual surrounding it. Despite the drastic changes that have occurred in Oxchuc in recent years, this complex ceremonial tradition of colonial origin, deeply rooted in the community's collective memory, has withstood the onslaught of modernity and refuses to die. This undoubtedly demonstrates that it is one of the most

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

important sacred objects in the community, sometimes even considered on par with the town's patron saint.

As we noted, the ceremony of handing over the book from one neighborhood (or *kalpul*) to another takes place by way of a procession, a ritual journey, from the private residence to the public square, and towards the new residence of the sacred object:

Once the "*ch'uy k'aaletik*," musicians, "*kornal*," and "*ex'tul*" are present, they sit at the table in the middle of the mayor's house. There, they are served the sacred food prepared by the mayor's wife. This food consists solely of "*koesan*," as these officials are not to eat meat because it is believed that consuming it will bring them no protection during their term of office. After the gathering, a drink is served so that their hearts will be merry when it is time to depart for the procession.

[...]

...then they go to the "*kawilto*," where the *Kajwaltik* has been for thirteen days. Upon arriving at the "*kawilto*," all the attendees kneel and cross themselves in front of the *kajwaltik*, the wife of the "*kornal*" burns incense at the *kajwaltic* and the four corners of the room. They also light skyrockets to announce that they are beginning to touch the *kajwaltik*..." (Gómez Ramírez 1991: 140).

The description continues: the "book" is accompanied by 13 candles, 13 rosaries, 13 pouches of pilico, 13 pots of atole, prayers are said over it... and finally the testimony concludes by saying:

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

"Thus concludes this prayer of the *Kajwaltik*. In it he takes responsibility for safeguarding, protecting, watching over, and caring for the people of Oxchuc, children of the patron Saint Thomas" (Gómez Ramírez 1991: 143).

We will not go into detail here analyzing each of the elements of the ritual, as that would be the subject of another work. For the purposes of this article, it suffices to emphasize, in light of this testimony, the sacredness and the identification of the *Kajwaltik* as the community's "sacred book," where the community's memory is safeguarded, the "ancient words of our grandfathers and grandmothers," "which the ancestors have left in their conversations, and in which the history of the town's founding is embodied" (Gómez Ramírez 1991: 139).

Around the year 2000, a group of Tseltal people from Oxchuc (Manuel Gómez *K'ulub*, Pedro López *Ch'ijk'*, Samuel Sántiz *Kokt'om*, and Roberto Sántiz *K'aal*), concerned about the poor state of preservation of the *Kajwaltik* and the limited information they had about it, undertook an investigation in which they deciphered and transcribed the document and translated it into Tseltal, making the text's content available to the people of Oxchuc, perhaps for the first time in modern times. They documented this work in their book, published by the National Indigenous Institute in 2002 and titled *Kajwaltik: The Colonial Ordinance of 1674*.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Indeed, as was known practically from the first reports made about it by 20th-century researchers, the sacred book of Oxchuc is not an Indigenous text, far from it. It contains the Ordinances of the inspector Jacinto Roldán de la Cueva. It is a handwritten document bound in raw deerskin, consisting of 11 folios (two of which are illegible), written on both sides, except for the last folio, which has text only on the front. It is dated September 10, 1674, and is one of several copies that the Inspector General of the Provinces of Chiapas and Guatemala ordered to be made for distribution in the towns within his jurisdiction. These colonial Ordinances served as the basis for the proper functioning of the Spanish government in America.⁵ I reproduce an excerpt from the Second Ordinance as an example:

...(item) I command you as mayors and councilors that you in no way allow the natives to become too drunk at the patron saint festivals and other smaller celebrations. Nor shall you introduce dances and other festivities into the churches. They may not be ordered by them, much less by you. Therefore, at each festival, you will pray in the name of the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Sacrament.

⁵ According to the authors of this study, the document, which was already very illegible by then, had been reviewed, transcribed, and paleographically transcribed in 1958 by Luis Reyes García, around the time of the testimony regarding the ritual.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

They shall not believe in false images. They shall honor and revere only the Saints described in this Ordinance. It is forbidden to consume intoxicating beverages in the church, nor to dance, utter obscene words, or make any noise other than the echo of the prayers and supplications of the natives. No one may cause disorder during the transfer of banners in the selection of captains.

They shall not adopt personal customs or practices. You must protect yourselves when the day comes for organizing feasts and gatherings for prayers in the church. You, as authorities, will set an example for the other natives regarding the proper conduct of worship. You will kneel and bow your heads until they touch the ground. No one, not even yourselves, may speak of idle matters. It shall be a place of worship and reverence only... the penalty for anyone who violates this Ordinance shall be one hundred lashes and four days of confinement. (Gómez K'ulub, et. al. 2002: 89–90)⁶

As is readily apparent, these are explicit orders issued by the Spanish authorities against the Indigenous people, essentially intended to regulate their behavior. Víctor Esponda (1992) points out that this important symbol is “simply” a 17th-century document containing a severe admonition for the

⁶ I transcribe here the version published in the INI edition of 2002, since the one published by Esponda ten years earlier differs considerably. Because the document is not reproduced anywhere, it has not been possible to compare both versions with the original text.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

local Indigenous population. This is tacitly true, but the fact that, despite its content—or perhaps even regardless of its content—it is a sacred book, in my opinion, removes the “simple” aspect. There is no doubt that—as the researcher himself also states—besides the historical value of the document itself, its symbolic significance is fundamental.

Mercedes de la Garza (1980) states that, from the pre-Conquest era, books as objects were revered because they contained knowledge revealed by the gods, divine laws, or the sacred histories of the founders of lineages. In themselves, they were a principle of authority, if not authority itself. In this sense, we could say that they were even “personified.” In the case of the *Kajwaltic*, offerings of drink, incense, etc., were made to it, and it was even said that at one point it had a “companion” that turned out to be a Bible, which was eventually confiscated. In any case, equating it with mythical tradition, they preserved the religious foundations and behavioral guidelines of the community—the truth they were to follow. They were, in short, the visible, tangible (and we could add even audible, if we consider oral tradition) evidence of the power that was transmitted first from one member of the lineage to another, and then from one “official” to another. It is likely that for this reason, the ordinances that governed the Indigenous people—which are indeed a series of rules and guidelines for behavior—have passed into the collective imagination as a sacred text. That is, the actual content of the document was lost

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

over time, but instead, in memory, it was preserved as an attribute of power, as an active sacred symbol, a legitimate repository of authority. Its content was reinterpreted over time, and recreated as a sacred origin story associated with the “book” as an object of reverence. And I say “likely” because we are not entirely clear on how this process of reinterpreting an ordinance into a sacred book occurred.

In any case, as Mario Ruz (Núñez de la Vega 1988) states in his introductory study of the Diocesan Constitutions of the Bishopric of Chiapas, one thing is clear—the enduring richness of the Chiapas Indigenous writing and pictographic tradition during the colonial period. To support this assertion, we have the testimony of Bishop Francisco Núñez de la Vega, who visited Oxchuc in 1687. As he himself notes, certain idols were worshipped there, and their images were revered.

And according to primitive and ancient tradition, the Indians say that this idol Poxlon is one of the most important, that in ancient times it spoke to them and was highly revered by those of the province of Tzendales, that it was painted on a board with 14 [the aforementioned figure] kept for countless years. After having received the faith, they hung it on a beam of the church of the town of Oxchuc accompanied by another idol of Hicalahau... (Núñez de la Vega, 1988: 756).

The bishop also reports that written texts were preserved in many towns in the province, “...as evidenced by a very old historical booklet which,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

written in its original language, is in our possession” (*Ibid.*: 274). And further on he continues:

I understand that much fruit has been reaped in the service of God, Our Lord, mostly in superstitious abuses, so secretly rooted, that like a canker and a hidden cancer it was spreading throughout all these towns, from where I have extracted and collected more than thirty books in which the superstition of the Indians was set forth by art (a plague that I understand is general throughout the kingdom of New Spain with much justification) and I compelled the principal teachers to hand over said books to me, with other papers in which were written in their language the invocations with which they call the Devil to help them in their evil deeds [...] as I learned from the same papers that the Indians showed me written in their handwriting and I had translated into the Castilian language. From one to another it was taught and communicated to those who understood and were capable of learning this art... (*Ibid.*: 209).

Based on these testimonies, Esponda offers another clue: it would be possible—he points out—that this same reverence was once held for the destroyed notebooks, and that it is therefore a transposition of symbols and not of content, and that the *Kajwaltik* is, in its respective context, an equivalent of those notebooks (Esponda 1992: 202–203, 1994: 111).

Final Reflections

In summary, I present some final reflections on the public and private ritual of the Mayan peoples after the Conquest, and the examples discussed here.

From 16th-century records, we know that since pre-Hispanic times, “books” — codices— were considered sacred objects, both for their content and their use. The tradition of the *Suyúa Language*, as embodied in the Books of “Chilam Balam,” while involving periodic ceremonies, due to their eminently political nature, must have been more restricted, given their closer connection to “dynastic rituals.” These rituals were related to mechanisms for electing and legitimizing traditional Yucatec Mayan authorities. Therefore, the ritual was likely used only as long as the Spanish authorities could “make them use” this procedure. However, due to its private nature, it ceased to be valid once the Spanish imposed their rule and their own method of appointing the Indigenous people responsible for political and administrative positions.

Furthermore, it is also known that in pre-Hispanic times, complex rituals were performed around sacred texts. Recording the knowledge that forms part of the divine universe on some kind of medium, beyond oral tradition, makes the medium itself a sacred element. Since then, offerings have been made to stelae and codices, and they have been the object of a complex ceremony that, although it must have been carried out by a specific sector of the ruling group,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

was surely much less restricted than the previous one. In his description of the festival of the month of *Uo*, Landa offers us an account of this:

They would gather at the lord's house with their adornments. They would usually first cast out the demon, and then they would take out their books and lay them out on the cool places they had for this purpose. And they would address an idol they called Cinchau-lzamná with prayers and devotion, who they say was the first priest. And they would offer him their gifts and presents and burn incense balls with a new fire. Meanwhile they would dissolve in their glass a little of their verdigris, with virgin water, which they said was brought from the mountain where no woman went. And they would smear the boards of the books with it for cleansing. Having done this, the most learned of the priests would open a book and look at the forecasts for that year and declare them to those present, and preach to them a little, entrusting them with remedies (Landa 1966: 92).

It is well known that this ceremony was carried out by the principals who were in charge of the sacred books, according to testimonies from both Landa and Villagutierre, who respectively state: "from the lord's house they took his books..." and "the books were kept in the house of Canek, ruler and high priest of the Itzaes of Tayasal" —just as in Oxchuc, where the mayor's house functions as the semi-restricted space for the ritual. Although surely not everyone could interpret, much less "read" the content of the codex (its use was indeed restricted), even so, surely then as now, the community was involved in the ceremony,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

when along the ritual route they accompanied the sacred object with their songs, prayers, and their music. The function of transmitting the ritual through repeated practice and oral tradition is therefore clear. And like any ritual, its symbolic efficacy was valued, while at the same time, the necessary precautions were taken to protect the sacred object when it was moved from a private to a public space.

Finally, while in both examples the ritual served to legitimize authority, in the case of the *Suyúá* language, since the initiation ritual was intended for a very restricted group within Yucatec Mayan society, it lost its relevance within a few years. Meanwhile, in Oxchuc, it is quite revealing that the celebration and the sacredness of the document clearly align more with oral tradition than with the book's content, as they explicitly prohibited the types of celebrations now performed for the document. It would seem clear, then, that a sacred book is important because of the symbolic meaning it holds for the entire community and because of the oral tradition that has developed around it.

Regardless, whether it is one case or another, what is clear is that the ritual, public or private, inserted in certain places and times, is always a space of permanent reinterpretation of the cultural processes of the Mayan peoples, a fact that—among many others—keeps them always relevant.

In any case, it is clear that the public and private rituals—rooted in specific places and moments—

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

serve as a way of reinterpreting Mayan cultural traditions, ensuring their enduring relevance.

Catholic Church of Saint Martin of Tours

The main evangelizing church was built at the end of the 16th century, in the year 1570. The church of Saint Martin Bishop of Tours, is located on the east side of the ceremonial center of *pat o'tan*, the site of the community offices. Its patron saints are Saint James the Greater, celebrated from July 22–25, the second patron saint of the parishioners of the town of Abasolo, whose feast day is commemorated with mass, baptisms, communions, and confirmations; and Saint Martin of Tours, whose feast day is celebrated from November 8–11. Every Sunday and on feast days, the rosary is prayed to Saint Martin, officiated by the local deacon, who receives some doctrinal instructions from the parish priest of Oxchuc. Previously, there was a small plaza for horse races and ribbon races, and the local Saturday market was also located on the terraces near the sacred ceiba tree.

Now, turning to the description of the temple's architectural features, the first thing to note is that it is 37 meters long and 15 meters wide. Its main area is 64 meters long and 62 meters wide, covering 2,432 square meters. The axis of the colonial temple runs from east to west. The entire main facade is made of limestone and shell. The wall is a little over one meter thick and is supported on both sides by three columns. The main column forms the facade's portal, containing the main entrance to the sanctuary,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

supported by pilasters and a semicircular arch. At the top of the entrance, at the height of the second roof level, is a rectangular window. On either side is a small, vaulted ceiling without any images. The portal is crowned by a rather tall, triangular tower. The tower has three turnstiles that serve as bell towers. Above these are four small triangular turrets, and on either side of the bell tower are two more turrets that face the Mayan cross on the hill *Jol xbakal*, a ceremonial site for the *Jtatomaletik* people during the welcome of traditional officers. In the atrium, there is a pyramid-shaped cross where the remaining embers from the incense burner are placed at the end of each spiritual ceremony by those who give offerings. The rectangular area, enclosed by retaining walls, is also used for pilgrimages and religious festivals. A circular procession takes place counterclockwise, and past that is a centuries-old ceiba tree which stands as the pendulum of the sacred ceiba, the guardian of the *ch'ulel*, the reason for the existence of the Indigenous peoples. This space was used as a cemetery during the black fever pandemic.

Both sides of the wall are supported by four proportionate stone pilasters and a window on each side. On the south wall is another door with a headboard made of tamarisk or *k'ante'* wood that opens to the adjoining convent.

Inside the church and chapel, painted white with lime wash, you can see the wooden partitions on either side of the walls and the gabled roof with

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

chamfered edges. The nave and chapel floor is made of contemporary mosaic tiles, and the pews are pine. A metal staircase runs along the interior west wall, leading to the bell towers.

The entrance to the sanctuary (altar) is guarded by a wooden railing. The Calvary scene of Jesus is located against the north wall, and opposite it is the image of the Christ Child. The main sculpture, placed above the sanctuary, is that of Saint Martin of Tours—the learned patron saint of France, a Roman soldier who converted and became Bishop of Tours—below which is the image of *sjelol*, his namesake. To the right of the image of Saint Martin is a sculpture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, followed by Saint Cecilia. Above this is an oil painting of an angel with a sword, and to one side is the sacristy. To the right of the bishop, at the level of the body of *sjelol*, is the sculpture of Saint Sebastian, and next to it is another of the Dominican Saint James the Greater. Silver crosses, ornaments, flags, drums, and a reed flute are also found there.

Finally, I must point out that the colonial building was restored, its clay tile roof replaced by metal structures and galvanized sheets, with financial contributions of approximately \$500,000.00 [Mexican pesos] and community work by the parishioners, in 2016. Its creators were Manuel López *Xilom*, Nicolás Gómez *Kontsal*, Sebastián Velázquez *Kom*, Diego Morales *Mulex*, principals and community promoters;

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Albino López *Xilom* and Alejandro Morales *Mulex*,
skilled spiritual orators in the spiritual ceremonies.



Photo by Martín Gómez Ramírez in 2005.

Catholic Church of Saint Thomas Aquinas

The church of Saint Thomas in Oxchuc is a historical monument dating back to the early 15th century, located in the ceremonial center. The ceremonial center is the municipal seat, *muk'ulum*, or town. This ceremonial center is divided into two neighborhoods separated by the church and the town hall: the north side belongs to Saint Thomas, or *muk'ul jtatik kalpul*, meaning "large calpul," and the south side corresponds to Santísima Trinidad, or *ch'in kalpul*, meaning "small calpul." In the northwest part of the square that forms the town center are the colonial-style Church of El Calvario and the ceremonial house used for the celebration of Carnival, or *tajimal k'in*. On the east side of the same square, almost opposite the church, is the municipal hall, or *kawilto*, as it is called in the language of the people of Oxchuc. To the southeast is the market, or *ch'iwich*, where the market is held on Saturdays and Sundays. Heading northwest and north of the church atrium are two alleyways; to the southeast and south are two other streets and paths that lead to the places where the ten sacred chapters or crosses are located, which are named in each *slajunebal beibal* ceremony.

In the ceremonial center, the *ch'uy k'aaletik* pray, they are the people in charge of celebrating religious ceremonies in honor of Saint Thomas and *kajwaltik* (God) whom they honor, reverence, respect, and give

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

well-being and protection to the people, following the teaching of the first born, the first fathers and mothers.

The church was built, the locals say, after thirty *ijk'aletik* came to help with the construction of the church in Oxchuc. Before beginning work, they told their friends that they could do the job alone and that there was no need for help carrying the stones. The *ijk'aletik* began working alone, only at night. They would all gather on a hill opposite the church, and once assembled, they would praise God, saying: "You are stone/you are rock/and you are material,/move,/rise up/join together/build yourselves/in that place."

Suddenly, the stones and rocks rose from their places, as if someone were pushing them. The rocks stood like walls. The next day, everyone was amazed by the work the *ijk'aletik* had done. The black people worked again the following night, but they only gave orders with their whistles, and they didn't stop working a single night until they had fulfilled their commitments. In seven nights, the church was built, thanks to the help of the black people.

Each night the walls rose approximately one and a half meters. Even today, the levels of the *ijk'aletik's* work are clearly visible. It is believed that these black people possessed supernatural powers. With their help, the church of our Lord, or *muk'ul jtatik kalpul*, was built. This anecdote undoubtedly refers to the black slaves brought from the West (Gómez Ramírez Martín, 1988: 38–39).

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Now, turning to the description of the church's architectural characteristics, the first thing to note is that it is 57 meters long and 20 meters wide. The axis of the colonial temple runs from west to east. Its main area is 70 meters long and 60 meters wide, covering approximately 4,000 square meters. The entire main facade is made of contemporary plaster. The wall is a little over three meters thick. The main entrance forms the façade's portal, containing the main door of the sanctuary, supported by columns and a semicircular arch. At the top of the entrance, at the level of the second roof, is a circular window. Above the facade are five empty vaults. The entrance culminates in a rather ornate bell tower with three bells to announce ceremonies to the parishioners. These bells face the tenth ceremonial chapter, the Cruz Ton, a site where the metaphorical words of the Tseltal and Tojolabal peoples of Chanal, Ocosingo, Chilón, Sitala, Yajalón, Altamirano, and Las Margaritas converge. This site is used for pilgrimages to petition for rain and ensure a good harvest, health, and the well-being of families. It also served as the main gateway to the Tseltal, Chol, and Tojolabal regions for the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in 1994.

In the church atrium stands a flagstone cross, a symbolic site for the *tajimal k'in* carnival celebration. At noon, the traditional ceremony takes place in the church atrium. There, the captains from both sides of the *kalpuletik* form up facing each other, four by four. The leader stands out. Once in formation, they make four passes, meeting face to face to cross their flags.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Then, they exchange positions three times. Similarly, during pilgrimages and religious festivals, they perform circular processions in a counterclockwise direction. This atrium is surrounded by a stone wall. An empty crypt is located on the northeast corner.

Inside the church, painted white with acrylic paint, one can observe the contemporary architecture, featuring woodwork and a gabled roof with chamfered corners and ceramic tiles. Two semicircular arches run the length of the building. The nave and chapel floor is made of contemporary mosaic, and there are wooden pews. A spiral staircase runs along the east wall inside, leading to the bell towers. On either side of the wall are four proportional stone pilasters, and three rectangular windows inside, with circular ornamentation on the exterior.

The entrance to the sanctuary is accessed by four steps, and there, on the platform, is the officiating platform for Sunday Mass. The transcendent altar, supported by a wall molded into a semicircular arch, is striking. There are found the statues of the Catholic Church. At the top is the Holy Trinity (*ch'in kalpul*). In the middle is the *sjelol* of Saint Thomas Aquinas. A small black monkey, *muk'ul kalpul*, sits at the foot of Saint Thomas Aquinas. (The meaning of the little monkey of Saint Thomas is unknown.) To the south are the Sacred Heart and Saint Mary, and to the right, the Immaculate Virgin and Our Lady of Carmel. The Calvary of Christ the King is located in the corner of

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

the north wall, with a statue of Master Jesus to the left. On the central north wall are sculptures of Jesus Christ, with Saint Anthony to the left and Our Lady of Sorrows and *sjelol*, her namesake of Sorrows, to the right. Further along are a wooden cross and three wooden platforms where the holy images are placed for the annual solemn procession. On the south side of the building's wall is another altar in the center with an image of Saint Michael the Archangel, with Saint John the Evangelist and *Jalawinik* on the right, and Saint John and Saint Sebastian on the left. On the south wall is another doorway with a semicircular arch leading to the adjoining convent. To the right of this entrance, the three snail-shaped stones embedded in the wall are particularly striking.

Finally, I must point out that the colonial building was restored by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the clay tile roof was restored with metal structures and galvanized sheets.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

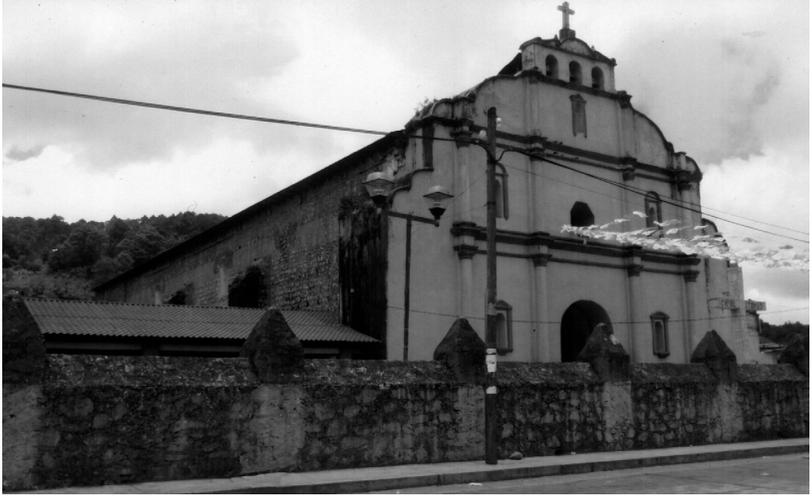


Photo. Martín Gómez Ramírez in 2021.

The Framework of a Cultural Advocate Manuel Gómez K'ulub

On August 8, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., the illustrious cultural advocate from Oxchuc, Manuel Gómez K'ulub, passed away at the age of 85 in the municipal seat of Oxchuc, Chiapas. He was born on May 18, 1927, in the town of *Nabil Lejlemchij*, in the municipality of Oxchuc. The son of Ricardo Gómez K'ulub and Rosa López *Ch'ijk'*, he married Juana Sánchez *Murino*, also from the same town. As an adult, he began his studies at the "Prof. María Delina Flores" primary school in zone 38 in Oxchuc, where he completed the sixth grade in 1972.

From childhood, he learned to play the rattles, flute, drum, violin, guitar, and harp. He learned from the highest-ranking traditional authorities from *Kajwaltik*: *ch'uy k'aaletik*, *ts'unubiletik*, *okilk'abiletik*, and *k'atinabiletik*, in the prayers of *pat o'tan*, the capitularies, and the prayer of "the ten chapters and/or paths for the purification of the soul." These are the crosses strategically located in the ceremonial center, each neighborhood or *calpul* having five crosses. He held lower-ranking religious positions in the *kajwaltik*: *martoma*, *pixkal*, *extul*, *kornal*, and *alkalil*. He was captain of *Jalawinik*, *muk'ul kalpul*; first councilman and first trustee in the town council of Oxchuc. He protected the Indigenous population and fought against the expulsion of the Ladinos for disregarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to which

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

they were subjected due to excessive debts to the Indigenous population.

Manuel Gómez was municipal president from 1971 to 1973. He was also an alternate deputy in 1976 and in 1978 he was elected as a local deputy in the Congress of the State of Chiapas. From 1994 to 2005 he was a music and dance teacher at the House of Culture of Oxchuc, together with the artist, sculptor, and engraver Sebastián Sántiz Gómez (†). His participation as a transcendental actor in the Mayan-Zoque festivals stands out as co-organizer of the IV Mayan-Zoque Festival in 1993. He was also in the theater and majestic National Palace of Fine Arts of the city of Mexico in 2010, with a group of girls and boys dancing with string music *kananchij, beel ajk'ot, Jalawinik*. He participated in the First International Seminar on Indigenous Languages: "Let's Talk About Linguistic Diversity, 2010." His wish was that the ceremonial, ritual, and spiritual centers of *skoel ch'ulchan* on the sacred mountain *Ik'al Ajaw*, even until his last public appearance at the XXI Mayan Festival, that the Zoque Chiapanec Festival be located in Oxchuc in 2011.

From childhood, Gómez *K'ulub* was familiar with the *Kajwaltik*, or Our Lord "sacred book," in all religious ceremonies and during the transfer of authority that took place at the end of each Gregorian year. He revered the *Kajwaltik*, and during his time as the first municipal trustee, he became interested in understanding it thoroughly and disseminating its

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

knowledge. To this end, he produced a translation of the ancient document, handwritten by the authorities of Guatemala on September 10, 1674, entitled "The Ordinance of the Colony of 1674." This work left a profound mark on the culture of Oxchuc.

Within the complex hierarchical structure of the town's traditional authorities, those in charge of the *Kajwaltik* hold the highest position. They are the *alkaletik* of the two neighborhoods, responsible for this celebration, which takes place during the transfer of the staff of office, after the first 13 days of the new year. At the end of this period, the book is handed over from one neighborhood *kalpul* to the other for its protection, safekeeping, and care. Thus, in a procession with a clear ritual character, the *Kajwaltik* was taken from the sacred house wrapped in a white cloth, and when the group arrived at the house of the *alkal* who would be responsible for the book, it was placed where it would remain throughout the year. The ancient manuscript was reviewed in the middle of each year in the drawer or *kaxate'* where it was kept. At this time, the small container holding the little pouch of pilico (ground green tobacco leaves), the crucifix, and the bundle of candles was refreshed.

Depending on whether the weather is good or bad, or "whether the sun shines brightly," the ceremony is accompanied by music from the harp, guitar, drum, and flute, and takes place during the festivities in honor of Saint Thomas. These festivities celebrate the "rest" of the *Kajwaltik*, and during this time, those in positions of authority (*alkales* and *extules*) must

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

observe exemplary conduct, fast, and abstain from sexual activity. Only the first and second *alkal* of each *kalpul* had the right to see and touch the sacred book, since if any intruder wished to observe or leaf through it, it would immediately begin to rain as a sign of transgression against the established norm (Gómez K'ulub, et al. 2002:82).

Don Manuel Gómez *K'ulub* was faithfully present at the annual ritual ceremonies for the consecration and reverence of the *Kajwaltik*, with due respect, the name by which this important ancient manuscript is currently known by the people of Oxchuc.

Because he preserved the collective memory of the history, customs, and traditions of his people's daily life, he was sought after, interviewed, and visited by scholars interested in the subject, who came from various parts of Mexico and abroad, including Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru, the United States, Spain, England, and France. It is noteworthy that his photographs were shared internationally by foreign researchers interested in Tzeltal Mayan culture and he was known for his fruitful and meticulous work as a storyteller of history, tales, and legends featuring the ephemeral and fleeting figures of the Tzeltal Mayan world.

With great effort and persuasive power, he secured the establishment of the UNICH University Extension in Oxchuc before the Chiapas State Congress. He received recognition for the preservation and strengthening of Indigenous culture from the CDI, and for his significant contributions to

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

national Indigenous languages, was awarded by INALI in 2012. Hence, in his penultimate words, seated in a chair, he said: “Why did they wait until I was a veteran to give me this tribute?” From the union of Manuel Gómez *K’ulub* and Manuela Sánchez, seven daughters were born, all competitive and heroic: María Elena, Guadalupe, Esperanza, Juana María, María Josefina, María de Jesús, and María de Lourdes, all surnamed Gómez Sánchez. They cared for the sickness of a silent cough in the city of Jobel. “Daughters,” he said, “I feel alone, weak, and tired. It would be best if you took me to rest at the house in Oxchuc, next to the *jtatik kalpul*, Saint Thomas.” In this message, he called upon his daughters to defend and safeguard respect for ancestral Mayan culture. At the final farewell, given with affection and admiration to this distinguished politician, farmer, translator, fighter, advisor, cultural activist, and transcendental figure from Oxchuc, at the wake held in his own museum, were members of the Oxchuc Municipal Council, officials from CELALI, and teachers who had been owed back pay. Members of the *Ts’ibjometik xmuxuk’ balamilal de Oxchuc*, along with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the *K’ulub* family, paid their respects at a viewing of his lifeless body at the Saint Tomas church, the Municipal Hall, and the House of Culture, as he had requested. At the cemetery in his hometown, former mayor Sebastián López *Balte’*, Dr. Javier López *Balte’*, and Benjamín Sántiz *Werkis* spoke with great emotion and feeling to bid him a final

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

farewell. In Oxchuc lies a man who dedicated himself daily to instilling cultural and spiritual values in children and adolescents, a man who loved his neighbors, and a beloved figure for his ideals of the Mayan people's resistance, for present and future generations. *Jichuknix/Amen.*

Yaxnichil, Oxchuc, Chiapas, May 3, 2021

SOURCE: Manuel *K'ulub* Museum, House of Culture and María de Jesús Gómez Sánchez, writer, translator, cultural advocate from Oxchuc, and own contribution.

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



*Don Manuel Gómez López and his wife, at the age of 80.
Photo courtesy of Manuel K'ulub Museum.*

The Exodus of a Great Sugarcane Grower, Alonso Gómez, Alux Kontsal

Farmer, sharecropper, sugarcane worker, sacristan, and community servant. He was born on August 15, 1939, in Abasolo, municipality of Ocosingo, Chiapas. Son of Silverio Gómez *Kontsal* and Juliana Velázquez *Kom*, he married Viviana Ramírez Méndez *K'aal*, originally from *Luchub*. He did not have the opportunity for formal schooling in his childhood; however, through a good relationship with bilingual teachers, he learned to decipher written words and speak a little Spanish. From childhood, he learned to work the land under his father's tutelage in the plots and paths of *Luchubaltik*, *K'ololte'al*, *Yanxak*, *Ji'tontik*, *Ch'enmut*, *Chawuk'te'al*, *Yanxak*, and *Ech'tik*, cultivating crops, planting sugarcane, and making panela (unrefined cane sugar). He learned from the good examples of the sacristans of the Catholic church of San Martín Obispo, in the metaphorical invocations of the *xnichimal k'op* in the ritual and spiritual ceremonies during the welcome to the traditional civil and religious offices, which are carried out year after year to entrust themselves to the good life in the performance of their civil and religious duties. He was a guarantor of Santiago Apóstol, a member of the fireworks council, the consecrator of the pilico (a type of ceremonial staff), a traditional commander, and the

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

first regional mayor of the municipal agency of Abasolo. He participated in and fought against the sale of liquor in the ranches of La Esperanza and *Ok'en chay*. As a skilled farmer, he organized and acquired the land of the La Esperanza farm, owned by Mr. Gilberto Calvo, comprising 90 hectares. This property, now co-owned by 15 partners, is called San Miguel Porvenir. The purchase was made jointly with his fellow countryman, Nicolás Jiménez *Tsuj*, who passed away in 2020. In 1977, he joined the association of small sugarcane producers in Abasolo.

The *jtatik* Alonso Gómez Velázquez, a Tseltal Indigenous man from San Martín Abasolo, left his hometown in the company of Silverio Gómez Sántiz, Pablo Gómez López, Nicolás López Hernández, Mariano Gómez Sántiz, and others. They were transported by a flatbed truck from the National Indigenous Institute of Ocosingo. He was one of 60 peasant farmers who were displaced to the sugarcane-growing region of San Francisco Pujiltic, where they founded the new settlement of Abasolo, in the municipality of Socoltenango, Chiapas, on September 28, 1978. As a result of this migration, the Tenango ejido invaded the *Yanxak* lands of the Abasolo ejido, leading to violent clashes between the two groups. However, the new settlement consisted of only 30 ejido members, from whom the "September 28th Sugarcane Growers Union, Pujiltic, Chiapas" was organized, affiliated with the CIOAC, and comprised of members from Abasolo, Tamaulipas,

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Pauchil Chanibal, and Los Pinos. Years later, Alonso Gómez still vividly remembered that pivotal moment.

I had my animals, 18 cows and a bull, back in my hometown. I decided to bring them here for breeding, but they didn't prosper, so I decided to sell them. I also made *panela*, or *piloncillo*, on the properties of *El Ch'enmut*, *Pakute'*, and *Ech'tik*. I always dreamed that one day I would become successful through sugarcane farming. Now I am a dedicated Tzeltal sugarcane farmer, committed to the production and processing of sugar due to the ingenuity of Pujiltic. In a dream, the *Jtatic* Saint Martin of Tours revealed to me that I was herding a flock of white sheep at the entrance to this ejido, bringing them to where the current chapel stands. Then my heart declared that He (the patron saint) wanted to be the protector and intercessor of this town.

Jtatic Alonso Gómez also dedicated himself to preserving his language, music, dances, metaphorical prayers, and women's clothing, a tradition he revived with Mariano Gómez *Molox*, a committed Catholic catechist, who died on December 10, 2010. On January 20, 2003, his wife Viviana Ramírez *K'aal* died as a result of uncontrolled diabetes. *Jtatic* Alonso Gómez was Catholic, as were those who had followed him to the sugarcane region of Pujiltic. He proposed the mission and vision of building a Catholic church and choosing once again the apostolic image of Saint Martin, Bishop of Tours as patron saint of the old ejido of Abasolo, Ocosingo. However, he did not succeed, despite being a devout Catholic and a lover and preserver of traditional string music: *Koxkox*

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

awakan kananchij, Beel ajk'ot, Xmal Xmanela, Muk'ul k'in, Loil k'in, Smajtan yos, Jtatic Jtiak, Slimoxna jk'altik, Ch'ul jtatic, Antiwo jme'tik. He thought that it was necessary to get another patron, hence the importance of the appointment and settlement of Saint Michael the Archangel as the eloquent patron, which is consequently celebrated on September 27, 28, and 29, in addition to the coincidence of the foundation of the "union of sugarcane growers on September 28." Each year, more Catholics and non-Catholics gathered for the momentous anniversary celebration. For the first few years, he served as the church sacristan, prayer leader, and advisor on rituals for community office inductions and spiritual ceremonies. He also held the positions of president of the Ejido Commission, rural police officer, and rural municipal agent. In his decision to seek other lands for a better future, his children Martín, Rufina, and Juana remained in Abasolo, Ocosingo, while his eldest children, Alberto, Nicolás (†), María, Amalia, Juliana, and Alonso, surnamed Gómez Ramírez, live in the sugarcane region.

On October 2, 1978, Alonso Gómez *Kontsal* participated in the caravan made up of men, women and children who arrived in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. They settled in the central plaza where they made their agrarian problems known while awaiting a response from the relevant authorities. On July 5, 1980, along with sugarcane farmers from the "September 28th Sugarcane Growers Union," he marched to Tuxtla Gutiérrez to demand a solution to their land

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

problems. Two years later, he attended the general meeting of his hometown to propose reviving the request for expansion of the *Ok'enchay* and Campo Virgen grazing lands. The ejido members of San Martín Abasolo accepted the invitation for provisional possession, with Nicolás Gómez López serving as ejido commissioner and Isidro Velázquez *Chilemanya* as municipal agent, and with the guidance of José Rodríguez from the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization (OCEZ), on October 12, 1982.

For his dedication, conviction, and outstanding efforts in defining the practices of a tireless sugarcane producer, he was an active member of the Mexican Socialist Party (PSM), the Local Association of Sugarcane Growers of the Pujiltic of the National Confederation of Rural Landowners (CNPR), and the United Sugarcane Growers Organizations of the Pujiltic Region (CURPAC). Known and admired for his financial strength, he was often flirted with by women in the region. However, after frequent visits to his hometown, in 2014 he began a relationship with Juana Ramírez, which culminated in marriage and a formal religious ceremony before their patron saint, Saint Michael the Archangel. As a dedicated community servant, he was appointed ejido treasurer in early 2017.

A few months before his death, he traveled to San Martín Abasolo to say goodbye to his granddaughters and great-granddaughters, and above all, to pray and implore his patron saint, Saint Martin Bishop of

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

Tours, Saint James the Apostle, and Holy Mother Earth, the land that saw him born and raised, and to whom he had garnered so much devotion in the annual processions when he served as the town's first traditional mayor. At the end of August 2018, the sugarcane farmer was hospitalized at the IMSS Rural Prospera clinic in Venustiano Carranza, where his health deteriorated over three months. He requested to be discharged from the hospital under the care of his daughters, and his final days were largely unknown. He passed away on September 14, 2018, at 7:00 a.m., having suffered from “weight loss and having been diagnosed with type II diabetes,” which ultimately proved fatal. The wake lasted between 44 and 46 hours in his house chapel. Before his burial, a mass was held for the mortal body in the temple of Saint Michael the Archangel, where he was devoted to the celebrations, and where his valuable companions and sugarcane leaders of the region gathered and attended.

Before the creation of Civil Registry No. 1 in Abasolo, the bodies of the deceased from San Martín were placed in rustic wooden coffins with the aerial root *ch'ox ak'*, or tiger's paw, tied a knot for each year on their birthday to verify their age during life—a custom that continued in burials. Another interesting cultural feature among the Tseltal people is choosing the deceased's favorite clothing, and the rest is burned. Today, the mortal remains of the late Alonso Gómez *Kontsal* rest next to the tomb of his late wife in

The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs

the municipal cemetery of Socoltenango, Chiapas.
Jichuknix jmamuch/So be it, grandfather.

*Wajam Spa, Abasolo municipality of Socoltenango,
Chiapas, August 15, 2021*



*Jmamuch Alonso Gómez Kotsal and daughter-in-law, at the age of 77.
Photo: Grandson Miguel Ángel Gómez Kotsal.*

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The True Meaning of Oxchuc in Mayan Glyphs



Lintel 1, La Pasadita (drawing by I. Graham, taken from Schele and Freidel 1990:302) (dating to 759 AD) showing Jaguar Bird receiving captives from Tilo:m and another individual. On the 9th day? 11 Yaxk'in. Captured at Ba-chi-lu-ku Tilo:m Sajal.

Our ancestors discovered the sacred meaning of everything around them, finding in God the daily connection with Mother Nature. Therefore, in this work we analyze and describe the sacred *ts'ib* script of our ancient ancestors, as a proposal to reestablish the origin of the names of our towns and surnames. We, the children of the Maya, as heirs of this great culture, have the responsibility to leave a legacy to continue upholding and promoting this hieroglyphic writing. We hope that this book will be useful in responsibly influencing current and future generations, providing an initial foundation of information regarding specific cases from our existence.



**Jtatic Martin Gomez Ramirez
Kontsal**

*Jach winik beomal stalel
xkuxlejal maya* “the traveler of
Mayan culture.” He is a
professor, writer, lecturer,

translator, manager, poet, essayist, natural anthropologist, narrator, researcher, cultural advocate, guide, trainer, promoter, advisor, farmer, castrator, transcendental actor, and chronicler of the Chiapas Mayan Tseltal people.

He is known for his participation in Chiapas writers' gatherings and his involvement in various essay contests in Mexico and abroad focused on the culture of indigenous peoples. He has received numerous awards for his bibliographic contributions to the cultural heritage of the people of Chiapas.

He is a writer of Mayan literature and works in various indigenous languages in the state of Chiapas.

He is also a pioneer of writing in the *bats'il k'op* language and a cultural advocate in the indigenous communities of Chiapas, where he has published various materials.

He received the “Rafael Ramirez” Medal for Teaching Merit (2017), a testament to his decision to become a technology professor in the State’s Technical Secondary Schools for 32 years, from 1986 to 2018. During this time, he dedicated himself to implementing his theories and practices to educate free human beings capable of transforming the world (EST No. 70, 2018). He currently teaches workshops on contemporary Mayan epigraphy, as well as on writing in his native language.

Email: kontsalmayor@hotmail.com or
60martingomez@gmail.com

Other Titles

- *Relatos y tradiciones del pueblo tseltal de Tenejapa.* Stories and Traditions of the Tseltal People of Tenejapa
- *Oxchuc: ofrenda de los ancestros.* Oxchuc: Offerings of the Ancestors
- *Fiestas de San Martin Abasolo.* Festivals of San Martin Abasolo
- *Ceremonias del cabildo cohetero.* Ceremonies of the Abasolo Skyrocket Council
- *Abasolo sistema de cargos municipales.* System of Abasolo Municipal Offices
- *Antología de cuentos del Cicio Lunar.* Anthology of Stories from the Lunar Cycle