



Figure 4. Toltec warriors.
a. Tikal, Stela 31, Yax Nun Ayin. Detail, left side. Courtesy Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

Toltec

CLEMENCY COGGINS

Desirée Charnay, French expeditionary photographer, impelled by a European fascination with heroic travel, discovery, and recording of antiquities in the New World, raised money to follow the legendary journey of Quetzalcoatl from Tula,¹ in the Mexican state of Hidalgo, to the east (Charnay 1887). In his quest for the truth behind the legend of this iconic feathered serpent, Charnay defined what would become the longest-running debate in ancient Mesoamerican history and archaeology. Beginning at Tula, Hidalgo, Charnay ended his travels 800 miles to the southeast, at Chichén Itzá, in Yucatán, where he noticed serpent columns and a ball court ring that closely resembled some he had seen at Tula (fig. 1; map).² This led him to research the Toltec, ancient inhabitants of Tula, and Quetzalcoatl, their feathered-serpent god-king. Reading sixteenth century central Mexican Aztec accounts, Charnay found the Toltec were believed to have created civilization, and that, historically, they had invaded the Maya regions. He saw Toltec accomplishments as “excellent, graceful, and delicate” (82) and was confident “no human blood ever stained their altar, their offerings consisting of fruits, flowers, and birds” (88). Eventually, he concluded that all Mesoamerican ruins were Toltec; that they were not very old, and that Tula, Hidalgo, had been their capital. Thus, he insisted on the unity of Mesoamerican culture. If he had other less probable notions, they were standard for the period, and his insights about the Tula–Chichén axis have not gone out of style, as we shall see.

Tula and Chichén Itzá

Lindsay Jones, in the book *Twin City Tales*, analyzes the relationship between Tula and Chichén Itzá from the point of view of comparative religion, describing “the infamous sister-city semblance” [noted above, as] “the burnt-over district of Mesoamerican studies” (1995:13).

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1. In this paper, the place name “Tula” refers to Tula, Hidalgo; “Tollan” refers first to Teotihuacan, to other places considered to have been Tollans, and to the “legendary” Tollan.

2. The discovery, hypothesis formation, and photographic documentation took two trips.

Most scholars, especially historians and archaeologists, have accepted Charnay’s conclusions, even in light of the known propensity of the Aztec for rewriting history, and doubts were officially laid to rest at a conference on Tula, in 1941 in Mexico (López Austin 1989:32). There, the common-sense idea that the magnificent Tollan of Aztec history was Teotihuacan was over-ridden by a majority of the eminent conferees who focused on the reality of Tula, Hidalgo, and its specific role in the Aztec histories. Because of apparent certainty about the dating and identity of the historical Tula, derived from these sources, it was also generally accepted that Chichén Itzá, which so resembled Tula, ancient capital of the civilized world, was its remote, contemporary foreign colony. This view was convincingly demonstrated by the portraits of dozens of certifiable Toltec warriors portrayed with their characteristic weapons in the relief sculpture of both Tula and Chichén Itzá.

Toltec. In the following overview of the debate about Chichén Itzá and Tula I will concentrate on the art historical and archaeological points of view, seeking cultural constants found at these two places and elsewhere much earlier, might be described As Toltec. Apparently consistent throughout at least thirteen centuries (A.D. 200–1500), and many central Mexican penetrations into Maya regions, was a Toltec ideal that epitomized the primordial Toltecs of Tollan—the source of wisdom and inventors of the calendar, or creators of civilization, the arts and sciences (Davies 1977:416). “The Nahuas of the time just prior to the Conquest associated *Toltecáyotl* [Toltecness] with everything superlative in their culture [It was] the summing up of ancient wisdom and art” (Léon-Portilla 1963:79, 80). Tollan was seen as the first city by the Aztec *tlamatini*, as Teotihuacan would have been by the Toltec of Tula Hidalgo, thus representing the urban, and exemplifying civilization. “In native thought Tollan was the source of all legitimate power . . . all legitimate rulers needed Tollan ancestors” (Feldman 1974:150). Toltec meant to be learned in the historic tradition, calendar and the “loftiest theological ideas” (Léon-Portilla 1963:79), as was true of the Nahuatl word *tlamatini*—the wise men who personified writing and wisdom, analogous to the Yucatecan word *ah its’at*, for a wise man. Toltec also meant to be knowledgeable in every facet of the noble life, including, and especially, military prowess. The



Figure 1. Columns at Chichén Itzá and Tula. From Charnay 1887:343.

word *Toltecáyotl*, however, has usually described the extraordinary artistic and literary skills of the Toltec (Léon-Portilla 1963:167–176; Léon-Portilla 1980), whereas in this paper, which considers Toltec traits that originated at Teotihuacan about A.D. 200 and spread throughout Mesoamerica, *Toltecáyotl* is not used for lack of archaeological evidence of such creativity abroad. Instead, “Toltec” will describe the ideal of rulership that evoked a noble warrior who was learned in the history and priestly duties of Tollan (Sahagún, bk. 8:chs. 17, 20), and who might pursue them in a foreign environment where the roles of military officer and director of the marketplace would also have been essential (bk. 8:ch.19).

Such use of Toltec does not assume the concept had the mythic complexity or cultural brilliance of its Aztec significance. Nor, indeed, that the third-century-A.D. feathered serpents of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan were intended to evoke the man-god of Aztec legend. But, more simply, it suggests that as Teotihuacan’s plan was conceived and its pyramids built, the foundations of “Toltec” were laid.

Here, in addition to a characteristic understanding of time and the calendar, Toltec refers to qualities of military and commercial leadership exemplified by traveling and emigrating citizens of ancient Teotihuacan, by their Epiclassic descendants after the collapse of the

city, by their descendants at Tula, Hidalgo, and finally by their descendants at Tenochtitlan—although this cultural continuity took different forms at different times and places.³ The Toltec ideal which was transmitted from elite father to elite son, may be traced archaeologically through its warrior society and associated evidence of storm god and calendric ritual, intertwined with an evolving role for Quetzalcoatl that finally, a millennium later, bore little, if any, resemblance to the feathered serpent of the original Tollan.

Quetzalcoatl: the legend

Once upon a time there was an old, wise, humble king given to solitary penitential devotions: cold nocturnal bathing and puncturing himself with thorns. He taught his people to write and to measure time, to work gold, jade, and feathers, to grow and weave cotton of many hues, and to raise corn and cacao. He built four precious houses for fasting and prayer, and a temple with serpent columns. But his extraordinary piety excited anger among the sorcerers, intent on destroying the Toltec. They tricked him into drunken behavior that

3. Enrique Florescano has recently adopted such a long view in *Memoria Mexicana* (1999:ch. 4).

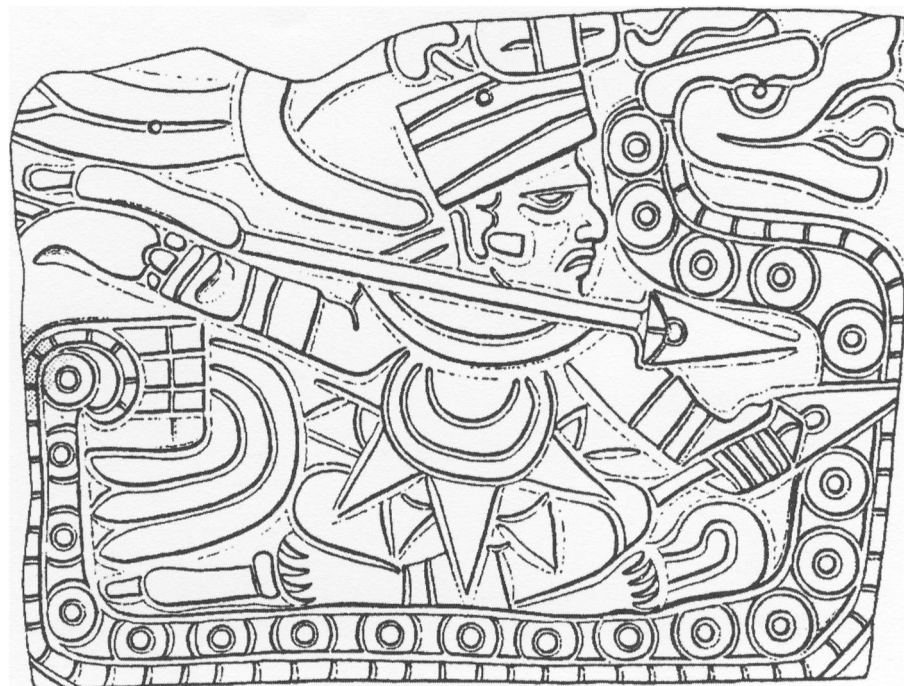


Figure 2. Toltec star warrior on serpent raft. Jade from the Sacred Cenote, Chichén Itzá. From Proskouriakoff 1974:pl. 78a. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

the Sun, instead of the destruction predicted for the end of an age. At this time the tied bundles of wood that signified fifty-two years were burned. Colonial documents describe the Aztec ritual, but there is also sculptural evidence of it as early as Teotihuacan (Von Winning 1979), and this Toltec ceremony was apparently introduced to the Maya whose calendric celebrations were different. William Ringle informs me the drilling of New Fire was also undertaken [as seen in Postclassic codices] at “founding or refounding rites, and so [was] central to placemaking as well as to the origin of time” (personal communication, 2002). Indeed, Paso y Troncoso may note a kind of founding event as well as war ritual in his commentary on the *Codex Borbonicus* (1979:235–239):

Uitçil-opoxtlī, dios de la guerra, patricinaria el rito más de una vez del año, ya que las guerras eran tan frecuentes; y conviene recordarlo también para no parezca extraño que se hiciera el rito secular durante la gran fiesta de Uitçil-opoxtlī. Todo esto nos dice que la ceremonia del fuego nuevo se habrá hecho en tiempos remotos con más frecuencia, ya que durante su vida nómada, todos los que se vanagloriaban de ser chichimecos, lo sacaban con el mismo aparato, cuando les era necesario, y no se cuidaban de conservarlo (bien que más tarde, y ya reducidos á la

vida culta, introdujeron la costumbre de sacar fuego nuevo antes de habitar casa recién construida); y la otra costumbre de sacarlo cuando atacaban a sus enemigos, pareceme que habrá venido también de la edad en que vagabán (237).

[Huitzlopochtli, God of War, was patron of this rite more often than once a year, since wars were so frequent; and it suited them to record that it did not seem strange to perform the secular rite during the fiesta of Huitzlopochtli. This tells us the new fire ceremony was performed more often in the remote past, since during their nomadic life when they gloried in being Chichimecs, they drilled fire with the same apparatus [stick and hearth] whenever it was necessary, without care to save it (although later, when they were civilized, new fire was drawn before inhabiting a newly constructed house); and the other custom of drilling fire, when they attacked their enemies, also seems to me to have come from the time when they were nomadic.] (Coggins translation).

Fire ritual associated with bound bundles of wood was a major religious event for the Aztec; there is evidence for its early importance at Teotihuacan, and later indirect evidence in the Maya regions where it was taken by Toltec who were identified by their feathered war and fire serpent ritual.

Quetzalcoatl as Zeitgeist. In 1976 Gordon Willey considered the difficulties of understanding Quetzalcoatl in a paper entitled “Mesoamerican Civilization and the Idea of Transcendence,” in which he described the cult of Quetzalcoatl as a transcendent movement of the kind that appears at a stage of crisis in a civilization, and that “frequently the bearers of transcendence were on the borders of old imposing civilizations” (1976:206). Relative to the rest of Mesoamerica the central Mexican highlands are indeed near the northwestern frontier, and the high desert lands that had harbored the nomadic Chichimec. For Willey, Quetzalcoatl signified international stability and the “adaptive and protective ideology of a rising merchant class” (212). In 1998, archaeologists William Ringle, Tomás Gallareta, and George Bey have considered the same questions in much greater detail, incorporating recent archaeological work. In this article entitled “The Return of Quetzalcoatl: Evidence for the Second Spread of a World Religion during the Epiclassic Period,” they postulate “a network of major shrines” (1998:185) “that replicated on a vast scale the eastern and western aspects of the Venus cult and the wanderings of the man-god Quetzalcoatl” (227)—a conclusion they support with abundant ceramic, iconographic, and ethnohistoric detail. The authors find it a “near impossibility that Tollan-phase Tula was a donor culture” to Chichén Itzá (184), a view that is endorsed in this paper. A different approach by archaeologists Susan Kepecs, Gary Feinman, and Sylviane Boucher has given this “transcendent” movement a “world systems perspective,” without ever mentioning Quetzalcoatl (1994:146). They cast the macro-regional exchange of luxury goods, so characteristic of Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic Chichén Itzá, in convincing economic terms that ignore the old Tula–Chichén dichotomy.

Dialectics

During the last seventy-five years, an expanding body of knowledge about the widely separated Chichén Itzá and Tula has involved the ideas, arguments, and reconstructions of writers, historians, art historians, and anthropologists, while archaeologists have added basic data—the building blocks of explanation.⁷ The “influences,” or ways in which cultural traits diffuse from one group to another, are often perceived differently by these various disciplines, because they have different

intellectual concerns, and because of changing explanatory modes and intellectual fashion.

Gordon Willey and Jeremy Sabloff organize their *History of American Archaeology* into periods of archaeological investigation, each with its own preoccupations (1993). These are evident in the study of the Tula–Chichén problem, beginning with descriptive methods around the turn of the nineteenth century that adopted a Darwinian or evolutionary view of cultures, diachronically, while explaining synchronic similarities by postulating “psychic unity” (87). Such theorizing was not, however, as common then as the simple collection of objects and the explication of texts, as for instance by the great German scholar, Eduard Seler, whose vast linguistic knowledge and convictions about the essential unity of an autochthonous Mesoamerican civilization led him to impose the Aztec template on earlier cultures and thus, like the Aztec, to see the Toltec as creators of that civilization (Seler, vol. 2:10–17).

Carnegie Institution. In the 1930s and 1940s the greatest innovation in Maya archaeology was the dedication of a branch of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., to its study. This work began at Chichén Itzá in 1923, when Sylvanus Morley established an office on the old hacienda of Edward Thompson, who had dredged the Cenote of Sacrifice twenty years earlier (Coggins 1992b). The Carnegie archaeologists excavated, recorded, and reconstructed Chichén Itzá selectively, with the support of ethnographic, medical, and botanical research programs to broaden their understanding of ancient and modern Maya culture (1924–1940). This multidisciplinary approach marked the beginning of a more systemic view of the Maya, and presumably of ancient Chichén Itzá. It did not, however, produce a synthesis of the years of Carnegie work. Perhaps as a consequence, in 1940, American archaeology and particularly the Carnegie archaeologists were blasted by the scornful dismissal of anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn who wondered if archaeologists ever considered their meticulous excavations and publications and asked themselves “so what?” (1977:43). Were they so immersed in their typologies and local histories that they could make no syntheses, come to no broad conclusions about the cultures? This represented the belated second stage of an attack on American archaeologists. In the first, late in the nineteenth century, archaeologists were broadly condemned as antiquarians, or simple collectors of objects without context—a phase thought to have passed. But Kluckhohn’s accusation had a similar galvanic effect, leading to self-examination and

7. Outlined by A. M. Tozzer in 1957 (ch. 2), A. López Austin and L. López Luján have recently summarized this debate (1999:21–34).

new methods even though most archaeologists were by then dedicated to scientific excavation and the building of chronologies. Basically the same criticisms concerning lack of theory resurfaced in the 1960s, but from within the ranks. The so-called “new” archaeologists rejected the goal of historical reconstruction, in favor of the search for cultural process. Their aim was the creation of predictive patterns or laws of behavior. In this endeavor, ideology, and of course its artistic expression, was considered of tertiary importance, at best. The statistical analysis of settlement patterns and of domestic burials might produce grand cultural generalizations for comparative purposes, but the idiosyncratic evidence of historic individuals and of unique events does not. This classic forest-versus-trees dispute was, however, beneficial in forcing archaeologists again to question what they were doing. In recent decades at Chichén Itzá, this injunction to consider process has coexisted uneasily with an unremediated passion for historical minutia that was never really dampened. These latter interests can now shelter in the inevitable reaction to the “new” archaeology called “post-processual”—a school that has returned to an old-fashioned focus on the singular and the relational (Hodder 1986; 1987).

Herbert Spinden, an anthropologist, but effectively an art historian, was the first to analyze the art of Chichén Itzá in his 1909 doctoral dissertation, *A Study of Maya Art*, published in 1913 by the Peabody Museum. Spinden was also the first to sort out Maya iconography, and the first to associate stylistic development with the actual dates on monumental sculpture—a method Tatiana Proskouriakoff later adopted, along with his belief in the historic nature of the Maya inscriptions. Spinden set the tone for decades of debate over Nahua (or Toltec) influences at Chichén Itzá. His lists of the structures and architectural, artistic and religious features that exhibit Toltec traits are the same as those later compiled by Alfred Tozzer (1957), Alberto Ruz (1962, 1971, 1979), and George Kubler (1961, 1962), among many others (Spinden 1913:205–206). He saw them as intrusive at Chichén Itzá, as had Charnay.

Tozzer. Alfred Marsden Tozzer, as a Harvard graduate student, had watched Edward H. Thompson dredging the Cenote of Sacrifice at Chichén Itzá, and he was the first to make larger sense of the Carnegie work, although he had never dug there nor worked for the Carnegie Institution. First, as an anthropologist and historian, Tozzer published a heavily annotated English translation of Diego de Landa’s *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*; this was an encyclopaedic description of the

culture of the sixteenth century Maya of Yucatán, which he amplified by many times with his voluminous notes (1941). These drew from all known ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and archaeological Mesoamerican sources, and from the various recent Carnegie research projects. Invaluable to every Mayanist, this work was followed by two monumental volumes on the Sacred Cenote at Chichén Itzá. Actually a study of the history of Chichén Itzá itself, and of Tozzer’s theories about the Chichén–Tula relationship, it incorporated Edward H. Thompson’s dredging, and Carnegie work at the site, with the background of broad scholarship established in his translation of Landa’s *Relación*. The Peabody Museum published the volumes posthumously in 1957.

Tozzer had already presented a brief analysis of the differences between the Maya and the Toltec at Chichén at the 1928 International Congress of Americanists in New York (1930). In this study of the figural reliefs on the walls and columns at the site, he noted a distinctively “Toltec” dress that was military, with the characteristically central Mexican spear-thrower (*atl atl*), round shield, back disk, cylindrical platelet hat, butterfly pectoral, and nose beads. This uniform, which had a very long Toltec history, was contrasted with the idiosyncratic clothing of the Maya with their rectangular shields, spears, knives, jade beads, and nose bars. The paper served to define and harden the dichotomies between the cultured Maya and the barbarian Toltec that still characterize this debate. Tozzer’s later Sacred Cenote work considered the question from every angle, with this ethnic contraposition as an explanatory device. He saw Chichén Itzá as a Maya site that was invaded, then abandoned, by the Toltec (1957:18), and dismissed the Itzá as an unimportant post-Toltec group (2), while generally using the Maya *katun* prophecy dates recorded in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel as an historic framework (21, 22).⁸ In Tozzer’s view, the Toltec brought the first man-god Quetzalcoatl, or Mayan *K’uk’ulkan*,⁹ while the later Itzá brought a second, who was associated with idolatry. Tozzer treats the Sacred Cenote as the focus of Chichén Itzá, seeing it as an

8. The Classic Maya calendar, the vigesimal Long Count, comprised units that were multiples of twenty, in which one basic unit was a year of 360 days, or a *tun*. Twenty of these, or one *katun*, divided time into divinatory periods of historical importance. This system, probably conceived in the fourth century, had been simplified by the ninth century in northern Yucatán—although the named *katuns* still served to characterize periods of time.

9. *K’uk’ulkan* = Quetzalcoatl, or quetzal-feathered serpent in Yucatecan. This may also be written *kukulkan*, *kukulcan*, or *c’uc’ulcan*, depending on the orthographic convention.

oracle and goal of pilgrimage emblematic of Postclassic Mesoamerican religion and trade.

Kubler and Ruz. In Mexico, four years after the publication of Tozzer's book, Mexican Mayanists launched a new journal, *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, edited by Alberto Ruz Lhuillier. In the first issue George Kubler, art historian at Yale, published the shot that was heard around the small world of Mesoamerican archaeology, resounding still. Entitled "Chichén Itzá y Tula," it questioned the accepted view of Chichén Itzá as the passive, read Maya, receiver of aggressive Toltec styles of art and architecture. Indeed, on the basis of what seemed to be the earlier occurrence of standard "Toltec" architecture at the Yucatán site, Kubler described Tula as a frontier garrison of Chichén Itzá. This article was intended, somewhat disingenuously, as a meditation on neutral art historical questions of invention and the diffusion of stylistic traits. But it touched, unavoidably, on religion, ethnicity, and nationalism because it was generally believed, as Charnay had concluded, that the civilizing Toltecs with their god Quetzalcoatl had taken their (superior) Nahua culture to Chichén Itzá. In the second issue of the new journal this traditional point of view was restated as an emphatic rebuttal by Alberto Ruz, the editor, archaeologist, and Mayanist. Ruz listed the Toltec and Maya traits Kubler had noted and defended the priority of Tula, or of central Mexico, for most of the Toltec ones. Kubler's insistence on the origin of many Toltec architectural traits at Chichén had been framed as a question of relative chronology, but chronology was actually irrelevant to Kubler's argument. This was fortunate for two reasons: first, the relative dating of the two sites was really not known at the time, and second, more critically, Kubler was using the discredited Spinden correlation of the Maya calendar, which placed his dates 260 years earlier than all accepted historical reconstructions. Among the traits considered by Ruz were site orientation, the feathered serpent columns noted by Charnay, warrior portrait columns, colonnades, prowling jaguars, modified *talud-tablero* architecture, and the use of *almenas*.¹⁰ In later elaboration of his argument Ruz brought in many more traits (1971).¹¹

10. The Spanish *almena* is translated in English as "merlon," but these attached elements that lined the edge of a roof in ancient Mexico were actually more like "antefixes"; they had both symbolic and decorative significance.

11. In 1980, archaeologist Román Piña Chan expressed his arguments in favor of the priority of Chichén Itzá without mentioning the earlier debate.

Both Kubler and Ruz discussed the Chacmool figures of which, at the time, there were more known examples at Chichén than in central Mexico—but with no known antecedents in either place. Ruz conceded the Chacmool might be of Maya origin, as Kubler had concluded (1962:65), and noted other Chichén traits such as round structures and a "phallic cult" that probably derived from Veracruz—Ruz defined "Mexican," archaeologically, as referring to central Mexico and sometimes including Oaxaca and the Gulf Coast (1971:203, 204). Basically, however, Ruz denied Kubler's implied Maya renaissance at Chichén (1962:218), later stating that virtually all Maya-Toltec sculptural motifs were brought by the Toltec invaders (1979:233). This is also the position recently taken by Karl Taube who states that "Toltec at Chichén refers specifically to the culture emanating from the site of Tula, Hidalgo" (1994:213; and Cobean and Mastache 2001). In this paper Toltec refers to the distinctive culture emanating from Teotihuacan beginning A.D. 250–350, which was a critical element in the formation of Classic Maya culture. In the Epiclassic period, a more complex and diversified Toltec culture was widespread and especially evident at Xochicalco, Cacaxtla, and Chichén Itzá, although not at Tula, Hidalgo.

One of the subtexts of this debate was an aesthetic one. Maya art was highly developed and its architecture the most technologically sophisticated in Mesoamerica. Tula was a town near the northern edge of Mesoamerica and its sculpture was crude in comparison with Maya work, while its grandest architecture was confined to two pyramidal platforms and post and lintel structures. Nevertheless, Kubler's only derogatory remark in his article referred to what he saw as the unsuccessful Maya attempt to create a frieze of Toltec prowling jaguars on the early version of the Castillo at Chichén Itzá. His real interest was in deconstructing the site's eclectic monumental architecture, and in understanding the interrelationship of the many different styles he identified there. Most scholars who worked at Chichén after Tozzer have remarked on the wide assortment of cultural characteristics shown in the reliefs and wall paintings, and especially in the great variety of objects offered to the Sacred Cenote (Coggins 1992a). Aside from the obvious Toltec and varieties of Maya traits, there was also evidence of contact with the Pacific Coast of Guatemala, Oaxaca, West Mexico, Morelos, Veracruz, and lower Central America.

Kubler found that Toltec Chichén had reproduced the traditions of all ancient Mesoamerica (1961:64), and he was particularly interested in the striking use of the

official, monumental iconography of Monte Albán in the dentate hanging panels of the nine terraces of the Castillo, Chichén Itzá's most important structure (55). However, in considering the "Toltec" colonnades, and feathered serpent and warrior columns, Kubler insisted the Maya had made them first. His real point, ignored in the outrage, was that Toltec chiefs who went to Chichén Itzá carried ideas rather than objects and artisans (1961:49). Kubler observed that powerful small groups can impose ritual and symbolic systems—the Spaniards for instance (1962:222). At Chichén, Maya artists and architects had been put to work realizing the ideology of the Toltec state and its religion. These Maya solutions to Toltec artistic problems were then taken back to Tula where they were adapted locally. As Kubler put it: "Concepción Mexicana, construcción Maya" (1961:52). This analysis of the situation was much the same as Tatiana Proskouriakoff's in her study of the gold disk from the Cenote of Sacrifice that shows the heart sacrifice of a Maya by a Toltec, with a Toltec tutelary serpent in the sky above (Lothrop 1952:fig. 1). The characteristically Maya drawing, particularly of the bordering serpent heads, and the repoussé metal work had apparently been accomplished by a local artist, perhaps in the employ of the recently established foreign rulers. I would concur in this analysis, except that many of the Toltec artistic problems had been solved in the southern Maya lowlands and Veracruz before the Toltec ever went to Chichén Itzá.

It is not clear why this insight of Kubler's should have caused such a storm, since it leaves the intellectual priority with the Toltec, unless it was his remark about the frontier garrison. It is, however, much clearer why another position taken by Kubler aroused universal outrage among Mesoamerican archaeologists. This was his attack on the use of ethnographic analogy, and his statement of the "principle of disjunction" in criticism of Americanists such as the revered Eduard Seler, and some of Kubler's own contemporaries who interpreted ancient Mesoamerica in terms of sixteenth-century Aztec sources. His point, simply stated, was that if a cultural artifact has the same form it had centuries earlier (an image of the rain god Tlaloc, for instance), then it will have a different meaning from the original in its later appearance; while, conversely, if an ancient meaning perseveres, then its outward form will have changed (1985b:404–405, 1985a, 1985c). This stricture against ethnographic analogy was particularly applicable to the Tula/Chichén question since so much of the historical interpretation depended on sixteenth-century Aztec and Maya sources. But it applied to all Mesoamerican

archaeologists who, as Gordon Willey explained in his rebuttal of Kubler, have no way to build remotely accurate hypotheses about such ancient cultures, except by ethnographic analogy (1973:161).¹² Willey further emphasized the long duration and integrity of the Mesoamerican tradition which clearly differs from the ancient Mediterranean world given as example by Kubler. Rather like the criticisms of Kluckhohn and the "new" archaeologists, Kubler's unpalatable judgement forced many Americanists to reexamine their assumptions, and art historians to proceed with greater caution. However, Willey's views have prevailed. The "principle of disjunction" today is seen as entailing little more than traffic tickets, rather than a criminal case, when it comes to interpretation, and archaeologists argue for continuity as the working hypothesis in explanation (Quilter 1996:314). To this Kubler would insist out that continuous form does not predicate continuous meaning, nor does continuity of form or of meaning necessarily imply continuity of culture (1985b:404).

The problem

In the following consideration of the key questions—what, where, and when was Tollan? Who was "Toltec," and what did Toltec mean? What was the history of Maya/Toltec interaction?—I will follow Kubler's principle of disjunction, as he intended it, by looking for continuity of meaning, rather than of form, and vice versa. However, Kubler warned, "it is much more difficult to describe change than to report continuity" (1985c:351), since discontinuities remain invisible while resemblances command our attention. Only through an understanding of original archaeological contexts is it possible to connect related, apparently dissimilar, meanings over time. Ian Hodder notes "archaeology differs from antiquarianism by concern with context" (1987:8), and "objects change meaning according to context" (1986:176); therefore, he argues, "the first stage of the analytical procedure is to identify the network of patterned similarities and differences in relation to the object" (1987:7). Like Kubler, who advocated a principle of complementarity in which there is an exhaustive overlay of different descriptions (1973b:167), Hodder argues against an agreed methodology and for diversity and lack of consensus (1986:170). Long preceding postmodernism, Collingwood observed, in *Idea of*

12. In 1975 Kubler wrote a lively defense of his views, with an explanation of his own intellectual background (1985a).

History, that “historical thought is a river into which none can step twice” (1967:248). These data, which may involve the anecdotal and historical evidence scorned by social scientists as least explanatory, are nevertheless the richest in information (Lévi-Strauss 1966:261), if also the most ambiguous. They are the province of historians whose “role is to portray, not to legislate” (Kubler 1973b:165).

These are the principles I have tried to follow in this consideration of continuity and change in the centuries leading up to Chichén Itzá. My aim is to portray the cultural phenomenon I call “Toltec” from its early Teotihuacan to its later Chichén Itzá manifestations, by way of the Maya regions where its influence was profound. Most Mayanists who work in Yucatán, now agree that the Toltec period at Chichén probably dated between A.D. 750, or earlier, and A.D. 1150 at the latest, and most Mexicanists now accept that Tula was one of many Tulas, whereas Teotihuacan most closely described the mythical Tollan and was probably the first truly urban one (see chronological chart). My conclusions incorporate this new consensus on the relative dating of Chichén Itzá and Tula, in which Chichén predates Toltec Tula, or Tula Grande,¹³ by as much as two centuries. I see this as confirmation of the Teotihuacan origins of much that is Toltec at Chichén, in which Toltec signifies the condition or practice of Toltecness, lived by men of Teotihuacan ancestry, however far in the past the connection may have been (Coggins 1987b, 1988b, 1989, 1990).¹⁴ In my view, this description and the ideal of Tollan was based on Teotihuacan, while Tula was one of several Postclassic Mesoamerican Tulas founded after the fall of Teotihuacan that emulated the ever-developing yet ancient Toltec ideal.

Another nagging dictum of George Kubler’s is relevant here: “whoever defines a period runs the risk of becoming its jealous guardian” (1985b:396). Protective attitudes often do characterize the Toltec–Maya debate, which has the unnerving, if entertaining, characteristic of producing earlier and earlier dates on each side every time one or the other manages to establish historical precedence (Cobean and Mastache 2001; Cobos and Winemiller 2001). In order to portray some aspects of

the long-term relationship between the Toltec and Mesoamerica I have divided the question into three broad chronological periods (using Maya terminology): I. Early Classic (A.D. 350–450); II. Late and Terminal Classic (A.D. 700–900); III. Early Postclassic (A.D. 900–1100). The first two phases are discussed in this paper, from a Maya point of view. The second, Late Terminal Classic Maya phase, is contemporary with the central Mexican Epiclassic, which followed the Classic in central Mexico (Jiménez Moreno 1966:49). This disjunction between the southern and northern “Classic” periods has been masked by general misunderstanding of the actual period of Teotihuacan’s collapse. It is now clear Teotihuacan was declining toward the end of the Maya Early Classic period, and was largely abandoned by the beginning of the Maya Late Classic (García Chávez 1998:492; Rattray 2001:405). During the Maya Late–Terminal Classic and the Central Mexican Epiclassic the Toltec ethos was spread far and wide, for the second time, with the foundation of new Tollans by the peoples of the Teotihuacan diaspora. In 1966, William Coe observed there were “perhaps three cultural *entradas* of Petén life . . . [or else] there may have been a continuous though changing Mexican infusion” (1972:258).¹⁵ I believe both possibilities were true and that the episodic Toltec *entradas* all had roots in Teotihuacan and profoundly affected all of Mesoamerica.

The Middle Classic Period. A Middle Classic period of time is not used in this paper; it was the definition and explanatory device for a symposium organized by Esther Pasztory in 1973 entitled “Middle Classic Mesoamerica: A.D. 400–700” (1978). Many of the papers dealt with international cultural phenomena, like the ballgame and Quetzalcoatl, that are now thought to characterize the Epiclassic period, and in the past thirty years archaeological work has clarified the relative dating of many sites, and served to undermine the value of a Middle Classic period as so defined. Since the collapse of Teotihuacan was then set near A.D. 750, the Middle Classic dates apparently corresponded to the height of Teotihuacan, and of El Tajín—both major players in the diffusion of traits that characterized the period. However, Teotihuacan’s decline had actually begun by A.D. 500 (Rattray, 2001:394; Sempowski 1992:49), and was complete a century and a half later; whereas El Tajín, critical in the spread of ballgame

13. Tula Grande is the acropolis site with characteristically Toltec architecture, sculpture, and ceramics that is usually dated A.D. 900–950 to 1150–1200 (Diehl 1981; Cobean and Mastache 2001).

14. “Men” is used advisedly—Teotihuacan warrior-merchants apparently traveled and settled without “Toltec” women, if that is not an oxymoron. Evidence at Kaminaljuyu, Tikal, and Copán suggests they married local Maya women.

15. Petén is the northern Guatemalan state that comprises much of the southern lowlands in which Classic Maya civilization unfolded.

Table 1. Chronological Table. Evidence of Toltec Culture in Mesoamerica A.D. 150–1000.

	Long Count # Ahaw k'atun	Maya Lowlands	Tikal	Kaminal Juyu	Copan	Seibal	Chichen Itza	Tula, Hidalgo	Teotihuacan	
600										600
593	9.8.0.0.0 - 5									
573	9.7.0.0.0 - 7									
554	9.6.0.0.0 - 9									
534	9.5.0.0.0 - 11									
514	9.4.0.0.0 - 13									
500										500
495	9.3.0.0.0 - 2		Manik			Junco				
475	9.2.0.0.0 - 4	Early	III B						Early	
455	9.1.0.0.0 - 6			Esperanza					Xotalpan	
435	9.0.0.0.0 - 8									
416	8.19.0.0.0 - 10	Classic	Manik							
400										400
396	8.18.0.0.0 - 12		III A							
376	8.17.0.0.0 - 1									
357	8.16.0.0.0 - 3								Late	
337	8.15.0.0.0 - 5		Manik II	Aurora	Bijac				Tlamimil Iolpa	
317	8.14.0.0.0 - 7									
300										300
298	8.13.0.0.0 - 9									
278	8.12.0.0.0 - 11		Manik I						Early	
258	8.11.0.0.0 - 13	Late				Cantutec			Tlamimil Iolpa	
238	8.10.0.0.0 - 2									
219	8.9.0.0.0 - 4	Preclassic								
200										200
199	8.8.0.0.0 - 6		Cimi	Arenal						
179	8.6.0.0.0 - 8									
160	8.5.0.0.0 - 10								Miccaotli	
150										

ideology, actually rose to power two centuries after the fall of Teotihuacan (Brüeggeman 1993). At the conference, Lee Parsons described the Middle Classic significance of the Peripheral Coastal Lowlands that connected Veracruz and the Pacific coast of Guatemala, and catalogued the period's characteristics, many of which are actually Epiclassic (1978:32–34). On the basis of his work at Bilbao, on the Guatemalan coast, Parsons had concluded Chichén Itzá was a late Middle Classic site (1969:183), and at this conference Marvin Cohodas came to much the same conclusions (1978a).

As described, this Middle Classic period had an early phase of Teotihuacan expansion that lasted from A.D. 400–550 and a later one, A.D. 550–700, that saw the rise of the “peripheral centers” including Xochicalco,

Cholula, El Tajín, Yucatán, and major Late Classic Maya sites (Pasztory 1978:15). However, the Teotihuacan Horizon probably began and ended earlier—closer to A.D. 360–480 in the southern Maya lowlands (at Copán it was even briefer)—well within the traditional Early Classic period (see Table 1; Coggins 1979b, 1988c; Sharer 1997). This was followed by a period when the Maya were focused on internal affairs, with little Teotihuacan contact from about A.D. 450–650. They were the centuries surrounding Teotihuacan's collapse, but would have been the heart of the Middle Classic period in the old formulation. It now appears the early Teotihuacan-related traits were separated from the late traits in the Maya regions by as long as two centuries, and that the late ones followed the end of Teotihuacan,

Table 1, *continued*

	Long Count # Ahaw katus	Maya Lowlands	Tikal	Kaminal Juyu	Copan	Seibal	Chichen Itza	Tula, Hidalgo	Teotihuacan	
A. D. 1100										A. D. 1100
1086	10.13.0.0.0 - 7									
1066	10.12.0.0.0 - 9									
1047	10.11.0.0.0 - 11									
1027	10.10.0.0.0 - 13	Early								
1007	10.9.0.0.0 - 2	Postclassic	Caban	Ayampuc				Tollan		
1000										1000
987	10.8.0.0.0 - 4									
968	10.7.0.0.0 - 6									
948	10.6.0.0.0 - 8				Ejar		Sotuta			
928	10.5.0.0.0 - 10									
909	10.4.0.0.0 - 12									
900										900
889	10.3.0.0.0 - 1	Terminal				Bayal				
869	10.2.0.0.0 - 3	Classic	Ezrab	Pamplona						
849	10.1.0.0.0 - 5									
830	10.0.0.0.0 - 7				Coner					
810	9.19.0.0.0 - 9									
800										800
790	9.18.0.0.0 - 11	Late								
771	9.17.0.0.0 - 13									
751	9.16.0.0.0 - 2		Imix			Topelilote				
731	9.15.0.0.0 - 4	Classic								
711	9.14.0.0.0 - 6									
700										700
692	9.13.0.0.0 - 8									
672	9.12.0.0.0 - 10			Amatle						
652	9.11.0.0.0 - 12									
633	9.10.0.0.0 - 1		Ik		Acbl				Metepoc	
613	9.9.0.0.0 - 3									

and thus constituted the Epiclassic period in central Mexico (A.D. 700–900). In the Maya area, however, this is called the Late–Terminal Classic period, and it is currently seen as including the rise of Chichén Itzá (Andrews, A. et al. 2001; Cobos and Winemiller 2001), and of Coyotlatelco (or pre-Toltec) Tula (Cobean and Mastache 1989:37; Díaz; 1981; Fournier 2000; Gaxiola 1999; Cobean and Mastache 2001). Such dating problems do not, however, invalidate the papers in that conference, which still provide a solid basis and valuable tool for analysis of the Early Classic and the Epiclassic periods in Mesoamerica.

Relative dating. From a more humanistic angle, art historians and archaeologists have considered various

stylistic and iconographic characteristics of the sculpture of Chichén Itzá that probably predate historic Tula, thus usually demonstrating Kubler's point (Parsons 1969; Cohodas 1978a and b, 1989; M. Miller 1985; V. Miller 1989; Kristan-Graham 1989).¹⁶ A second approach notes evidence of ritual and other traits later characteristic of the Aztec, like warrior imagery, skull platforms, heart sacrifice, and elements of coronation ritual (M. Miller 1985; V. Miller 1989; Wren and Schmidt 1991; Taube 1994, 2000a). In considering the question of Chichén priority Cynthia Kristan-Graham

16. Schele and Mathews have summarized the literature on Chichén Itzá in six compendious footnotes (2000:355–360, notes 8–13).

makes the point that the Aztec might have adopted their model of kingship from Chichén Itzá, since central Mexico had apparently lacked such a tradition (1989:xvii). For lack of contradictory evidence, it has been thought Teotihuacan did not have a single ruler and was extraordinary for lacking indications of individual personality and power. The Late Classic Maya, however, had rulers whom they named and portrayed, and Chichén Itzá's form of governance is, nevertheless, still unknown.

If any such "Aztec" traits at Chichén Itzá do predate Tula, implications for the development and character of Postclassic Mesoamerican culture are significant. With the new dating, one must conclude that Maya and Mexican cities to the south and east of the Basin of Mexico preserved and elaborated the traditions of Teotihuacan in conjunction with powerful influences from Veracruz and Oaxaca before the rise of Tula. This means Kubler was right in terms of relative priority, but wrong in his negative view of the perseverance and longevity of Toltec, or any, tradition. Striking continuities of form and meaning that define Toltec are outlined below; the task is to recognize the disjunctions that certainly existed.

Chichén Itzá has, variously, been seen as a Late Classic, as a Terminal Classic, and as a Middle Postclassic city, dating from as early as A.D. 700 to 1050, or even 1250 more traditionally. Most of the dated monumental inscriptions were written in a Mayan script, between A.D. 800–900, followed by more "Toltec" phases at the site between A.D. 900 and 1150. Thus, Chichén Itzá has been understood to follow more or less closely upon the southern lowland Late Classic period, and in its early phase to be part of the Yucatán Terminal Classic sphere. Teotihuacan was thought to have ended at about A.D. 750, shortly before the beginning of Chichén Itzá, and before the two Quetzalcoatl (or Kukulcan) *entradas* from Central Mexico that were associated with the Toltec state (Thompson 1970:1). However, several earlier radiocarbon dates for Chichén do not agree with the traditional scenario (Andrews IV and Andrews V 1980:table 4), nor has more recent archaeological work at the site and at its port, Isla Cerritos 90 km to the north (Robles 1987). These excavations have supported an earlier, more compact period of time for Toltec Chichén Itzá, perhaps from as early as A.D. 700 to 1050 (Anderson 1998; Andrews, A. 1990; Cobos n.d.; Maldonado and Kurjack 1993; Ringle, Bey, and Peraza 1991; Ringle, Gallareta, and Bey

1998).¹⁷ While only about a century earlier, this difference makes it clear that the origins of Chichén Itzá were largely Maya and Toltec derived, however indirectly, from Teotihuacan, not from Tula, Hidalgo. The collapse of Teotihuacan is now believed to have taken place about A.D. 600–650 (Manzanilla 1998; Cowgill 1996:329; Rattray 2001:405; García Chavez 1998), and evidence for the subsequent spread of its culture is found south and east of the Basin of Mexico—not at Tula. It is significant there is no evidence of the feathered serpent at Tula, Hidalgo, in the Epiclassic period (Fournier 2000:2). Excavations at Chichén Itzá by Charles Lincoln (1986, 1990), Peter Schmidt (1994, 1998, 1999), and Rafael Cobos (Cobos and Winemiller 2001) all support early dates for Maya and Toltec cultural manifestations that were contemporary and intermixed at the site.

The correlation. The beauty of these new conclusions is, unfortunately, tarnished by further uncertainties that derive from two more areas of debate. The first involves the correlation between Maya Long Count dates and real time, the second, between the correlation and Colonial sources. On the Long Count correlation question, most archaeologists accept the one worked out by J. Eric S. Thompson, and modified slightly; this equates the Long Count *katun* in which the Spanish conquest occurred with the *katun* 11.16.0.0.0—a period of twenty tuns that ended on 13 Ahaw—the Gregorian date November 12, 1539.¹⁸ However, there have always been a few scholars who object to the "fit" between this correlation and the archaeological facts or between the correlation and the historical accounts, since none is completely satisfactory (D. H. Kelley 1983). Arlen Chase addressed both objections in a comprehensive argument for an 11.3.0.0.0 correlation of the Long Count with A.D. 1539—thirteen *katuns* or one cycle earlier (1986). This would equate the important Long Count *baktun*-ending, 10.0.0.0.0, with the year A.D. 1086, instead of 830, as is generally accepted. The clear advantage of such a correlation is that it leaves about 350 years for the Postclassic period, instead of the 600 years (A.D. 900–1530) inherent in the accepted

17. Ringle, Gallareta, and Bey (1998:table 1) list later recalibrated midpoint dates for the long-known radiocarbon dates from Chichén Itzá.

18. This is the "Goodman–Martínez–Thompson" correlation (GMT), with a correlation factor of 584,283 (Thompson 1960:305).

11.16.0.0.0 correlation. This problem gets worse as new excavations keep pushing the dates earlier and compressing historic periods backwards, since it has the effect of leaving yet more time for the Mesoamerican Postclassic period, which is apparently already too long. Chase also addresses the valuable, if inconsistent, colonial accounts that include dates, prognostications, and historic events. Since Yucatec Maya history was recorded by *katuns* that recycled every 260 *tuns*, and the Maya believed an event would recur in a *katun* of the same name (Roys 1967:Appendix D), it is very difficult to know which *katun* 8 Ahaw, for instance, corresponds to which absolute date. The Maya would not have cared. Many scholars have studied and interpreted these Colonial sources and Chase discusses most of them, concluding that they support his correlation. The reader's conclusion may be that these accounts may be used to support more than one correlation.

Calendars. Another approach to the calendric inconsistencies involves side-stepping such problems, while complicating them further. This solution postulates a different calendar for every ethnic group, or each major polity (Chase 1986:2,109; Kubler and Gibson 1985; López Austin 1989:99; Molloy and Kelley 1993:105), and apparently promises chaos until one realizes the Calendar Round, consisting of the ritual count of 260 days and solar count of 365 days, has not stopped since the beginning of Mesoamerican time. A "different calendar" meant a different choice for the day (yearbearer) on which to begin or end the 365-day year. Such differences involved latitude, the local agricultural calendar, and divinatory and/or possible historic reasons—but they had no effect on the actual day in the two calendars (Caso 1967:30–90). Thus the Maya changed their year bearers (Thompson 1960:124, 125), and Moctezuma II, or a predecessor, changed the New Fire ceremony from 1 Rabbit to 2 Reed, without affecting the millennial count of days.

When it comes to the extant radiocarbon dates, which tend to support the 11.16.0.0.0 correlation (Andrews IV and Andrews V 1980:fig. 4; Ringle, Gallareta, and Bey 1998:Table 1), Chase dismissed most as uncalibrated and probably unreliable, although he admitted "radiocarbon dates from the Maya area" were "still troublesome" for his proposed 11.3.0.0.0 correlation (1986:139). They are also troublesome for central Mexico, where radiocarbon dates are also often

earlier than once thought, suggesting a backward compression of history comparable to the Maya area (Rattray 1991). The correlation question is not yet completely to everyone's satisfaction. The only way to settle it is by further excavation and discovery of more radiocarbon dates that will reveal the elusive inhabitants of ancient Chichén Itzá and Tula in their natural and built environments, relative to the rest of the Mesoamerican world.

Nahuatl

The classic Mesoamericanist debate over the role of Tollan has recently been given new life with a linguistic interpretation that rejects entrenched positions while validating others, long rejected. In 2000, Karen Dakin and Soeren Wichmann published an article "Cacao and Chocolate: A Uto–Aztec Perspective" in which they suggest that one of the most definitively Mesoamerican words, *cacao*, and the related *chocolatl*, were originally Nahuatl.¹⁹ Cacao is the native chocolate bean that was grown extensively on the southeastern Chiapas Soconusco coast and in southern Tabasco from Preclassic times. Cacao was such an important luxury trade item, and so essential in Mesoamerican culture that it served as a currency as well as a drink—inspiring economic competition and conflict over control of trade networks. The word *cacao* appears in most Mesoamerican languages and linguists have suggested it derived from the Late Preclassic Mixe or Zoque languages of the north and south coasts of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec where cacao was grown (Justeson et al. 1985:59; Kaufman and Norman 1984:122:147). It has long been axiomatic in Mesoamerican studies that the Uto–Aztec Nahuatl language did not penetrate into central Mexico until after the fall of Teotihuacan (Justeson et al. 1985:64). In fact no one knows the identity of the principal language spoken at Teotihuacan during the six or seven centuries of its existence. Many have considered Nahuatl (Cowgill 1992a; Jiménez Moreno 1966:39; Millon 1981:232), but it is usually rejected as having arrived too late. Linguists have proposed Totonac (of the Veracruz coast) as the language spoken (Justeson et al. 1985:68). However, Veracruz archaeologist García Payón believes the Totonacs came

19. Dakin and Wichmann use the word *Nahuatl* for all varieties of this Uto–Aztec language and *Nahua* for the people (2000:55, note 1).

later to Veracruz, where they prolonged Teotihuacan culture on the coast after the end of the city (1991:48). Nahuatl has been rejected as a possible source for a word like cacao because cultivation of the bean was preclassic and the central Mexican use of Nahuatl presumed to be Postclassic. Furthermore, cacao does not grow in the dry uncultivated uplands where Nahuatl is thought originally to have been spoken. The latter point is undeniable.

Anticipating opposition, Dakin and Wichmann are prepared to defend their iconoclastic etymologies on many fronts; from an historical point of view their controversial hypothesis throws new light on the Early Classic Maya. They postulate two main Nahuatl-speaking migrations into Mesoamerica from northwest Mexico. The first, "eastern" one pushed into central Mexico where it became the principal language of Teotihuacan, then eventually beyond to the Gulf Coast and south across the isthmus to Soconusco where these Nahuas were in contact with a tropical environment (2000:58).²⁰ These were proto-Pipiles who later controlled the trade routes of the cacao-growing region of the south coast and into El Salvador and beyond. Dakin and Wichmann also postulate a second, western Nahuatl migration into central Mexico in which some went more directly south near the Pacific Coast to Soconusco. This later *entrada* spoke a Nahuatl that differed from the earlier one; they note that in the sixteenth century two Nahuatl dialects were recorded in central Mexico (ibid.:58). The authors avoid suggesting dates for the eastern and western Nahua migrations, but it is tempting to see them as representing, first, the early centuries of Teotihuacan expansion, and second, the Chichimec movements of Terminal Classic–Epiclassic times that culminated in the foundation of Tula, Hidalgo. This latter is the only period generally supported by linguists for such a migration (Justeson et al. 1985:61), although since the excavation of Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala, in the 1940s (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946), the archaeologically documented contacts between Central Mexico and the Maya area have indicated both the Early Classic southern presence of Teotihuacan and of "Toltec," as later found in Postclassic Aztec culture. However, strictures against ethnohistoric analogy, as much as the mysteries of glotto-chronology, have inhibited pursuit of such hypotheses. For this

20. If this scenario is possible, Nahuatl speakers may have been involved in the destruction of monuments that Gareth Lowe notes at Chiapa de Corzo, Chinkultic, and Kaminaljuyu around A.D. 200 (1977:232–236).

reason, among many, Dakin and Wichmann's brave and stimulating article will open the floodgates of new interpretation.

Possible confirmation of the Early Classic presence of Nahuas on the Soconusco Coast is found in another recent article that would demolish the presumed late arrival of Uto–Aztec speakers in Central Mexico. Linguist Jane Hill suggests, even more iconoclastically, that it was proto-Uto–Aztec speaking people that first cultivated maize at around 3000 B.C. in central Mexico (2001:913). She postulates that as a consequence of their agricultural success these farmers outgrew the land and were pushed north—the only direction not blocked by other settled groups (916). Eventually these innovators reached the American Southwest, leaving blocks of Uto–Aztec speakers along the way. If this complex hypothesis, based on the vocabulary and extent of maize farming is demonstrated to be true, it might provide an explanation for the presence of Uto–Aztec speakers in southern Mesoamerica during the Classic period, and before.

Zuyuano

Of one hypothetical component of the Toltec ethos we have only late evidence, and in a foreign context. This component is the existence of an esoteric language that conveyed Toltec knowledge from father to son, known in sixteenth century Yucatán as the "Language of Zuyua."²¹ I have postulated that this "language" existed at Classic period Maya cities as well as at Chichén Itzá, and that it derived from Toltec concepts introduced into the Maya regions in Early Classic times or before, where it was used by the foreign elite and their descendants (Coggins 1988a, 1992c; Florescano 1999:ch. 5). The language of Zuyua was probably Nahuatl. Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján (1999, 2000) have used the postclassic Toltec-associated word *Zuyua* to define the epiclassic culture of Mesoamerica that corresponds generally to my second period of time—A.D. 700–950. They have used the term *Toltecáyotl* to describe characteristics that are the opposite of *Chichimecáyotl*, or civilized peoples versus barbarians, noting that although the Zuyuanos boasted of their Chichimec origins they identified with the Toltec (1999:65–68; Sansores 1994), whereas Kirchhoff saw the terms as often interchangeable (1966). While perhaps quibbling with abstractions, in this paper I have used

21. In Colonial times the "language of Zuyua" was mentioned in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Roys 1967:88, 192).

Toltec (or Toltecness which would be a translation of *Toltecáyotl*) in a larger sense chronologically and a smaller one, culturally. Here, Toltec dates from about A.D. 200 at Teotihuacan where it includes the qualities of both Chichimec and Toltec and continues to do so until it has become a part of the multi-cultural epiclassic manifestation and political system they describe as *Zuyuano*. For them, *Zuyuano* was a supraethnic ideal that would impose Tollan as a vision of primordial order, on the Mesoamerican world (1999:40–45, 62)—very much the phenomenon that Willey, and Ringle et al., explored. This valuable historical construct allows the Epiclassic to be discussed without depending on ethnic terms; for López and López, *Zuyuano* describes a more systemic militaristic and multicultural political phenomenon than does Toltec as used here. In fact, they insist *Zuyuano* does not mean Toltec, since no ethnicity, language, or particular origin is involved, and that Tollan *Zuyua* is not Tula, Hidalgo, but rather refers to a mythical ideal (1999:143)—although I would expect, by this same token, that it would refer to all Tollans deriving from Teotihuacan, before and after its collapse.

Teotihuacan

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún in his *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva Espana* (the *Florentine Codex*) described the lives, beliefs, history, and natural history of the conquered Mexica as he learned them from his Aztec informants (1952–1982). In Book 10, the origin of the Mexica, inextricably intertwined with the story of their Toltec forebears, was related in a tale no more “reliable” than those of other sixteenth century central Mexican Nahua groups. These glorious ancestors had stayed a long time at Tamoanchan, after the founders had wandered down the Gulf Coast to Guatemala and then back north again (Sahagún bk. 10:ch. 29). Alfredo López Austin has explored all possible interpretations of the name Tamoanchan (1994:45–101) and does not reject the common assumption that it was on the Gulf Coast as described. Sahagún’s translation of Tamoanchan was “we seek our home” (bk. 10:ch. 29:191), while Seler used the variation “House of Descent” (1992:3:265). To a Mayanist, the name looks Mayan; apparently consisting of a preposition, *ta*, plus *moan*, the name of a mythological Maya bird, and *chan*, or serpent, as Seler suggested (*ibid.*). Thus Tamoanchan might possibly be read as “at the place of the bird-serpent”—a likely home for the Teotihuacan feathered serpent. When they finally left Tamoanchan, the Toltec made offerings at Teotihuacan where they built pyramids

to the Sun and Moon “that were just like mountains,” and elected their leaders, ultimately to bury them there under pyramids (Sahagún bk. 10:191, 192). Gordon Brotherston, among others, has suggested that since Tamoanchan, as the first Tollan, was probably located on the Gulf Coast and Olmec-related, such a location would explain the puzzling importance of tropical birds, cacao, and cotton in the descriptions of the mythical Tollan, since none is naturally available in highland Central Mexico (2001:237).

Taking a somewhat more analytical view of this tale in his introduction to the twelve volume history, Sahagún explains that:

Regarding the antiquity of this people, it is considered certain that they have dwelt in this land now called New Spain for more than two thousand years. For according to their ancient paintings there is information that the famous city called Tula was destroyed a thousand years or so ago. And before it was built many of those who built it were settled in Tollantzinco where they left many very remarkable buildings. As to how long they were there, how long it took to build the city of Tula and how long their prosperity lasted before it was destroyed, it is likely that more than a thousand years went by; from which it follows that at least five hundred years before the incarnation of our Redeemer, this land was populated (bk. 1, prologue:48).

Thus Sahagún was told “this people” had lived in Central Mexico since about 500 B.C.,²² and that “the famous city called Tula” was destroyed at about A.D. 500. Tollantzinco the stop that preceded Tula in their migration, was perhaps Teotihuacan; modern Tulantzinco is located north of Teotihuacan and its name simply means “little Tollan” (Manrique Casteñeda 1987, 184). The place Tollantzinco probably did not exist until the Epiclassic, and then had little connection with either Teotihuacan before, or with Tula, Hidalgo, later (Gaxiola Gonzalez 1999). The vague A.D. 500 date that Sahagún gives for the destruction of Teotihuacan is not so long before the A.D. 600–650 date now proposed, and by A.D. 500 long distance trade had fallen way off at the dying metropolis (Rattray 2001:394; Sempowski 1992:27). The date could not refer to the destruction of the much later historic Tula, which occurred near A.D. 1200, although neither Sahagún, nor his informants could have known this. Communities had existed in the Basin of Mexico since the third millennium B.C. (Niederberger 2001:229), or earlier, but Sahagún’s “history” probably referred only

22. “More than two thousand years” before 1565, when Sahagún was compiling and writing the manuscript, or about 500 B.C. in Middle Preclassic times.

to Teotihuacan, the Tollan that had been melded with Tula, Hidalgo, which he thought had fallen a millennium before his own time (A.D. 1560)—instead of only four centuries before. Despite Aztec destruction of historical records, Sahagún's informants may have had a surprisingly accurate view of their long history.²³

Teotihuacan was occupied by the end of the third century B.C. (Cowgill 1992b; 1996:fig. 1). By the end of the second century, the future city was laid out, the Pyramid of the Moon's first three stages, and the Pyramid of the Sun had been built.²⁴ The Pyramid of the Sun had established the city's characteristic orientation of 15.25 degrees west of north with the long north-south axis of the "Street of the Dead" focused northward on the mountain, Cerro Gordo (Millon 1973:53). This arbitrary orientation for the focal Street of the Dead implies knowledge of the Mesoamerican calendar and its origins (Broda 2000:401–408; Coggins 1993, 1996; Malmstrom 1981) as does the layout of the street and its principal monuments which reveals measurements determined by the powerful numbers that organized the calendar and its cycles (Sugiyama 1993).

Talud–tablero. Teotihuacan, Tollan, is thought of as the first Mesoamerican city, exemplar for all that followed and the very definition of civilization.²⁵ Temples lined the great axial avenue, each with the *talud–tablero* facade that would, henceforth, identify a Toltec settlement wherever it was encountered in Mesoamerica (fig. 3). This specialized architectural form may originally have been taken to Teotihuacan from the Puebla–Tlaxcala Valley to the southeast, an immediate source of some of the city's founding ideologies (García Cook 1981; 1989:182; Coggins 1996:27). The *talud–tablero*, and its later Mesoamerican variations, has been analyzed by architectural historians who appreciate its longevity and symbolic role (Gendrop 1984; Kubler 1973a; Marquina 1942). The Toltec *talud–tablero* provides a paradigmatic example of continuity of meaning with later variation in form. A striking analogy is found in the orders of Greek and

Roman classical architecture, which to this day enjoy an archaizing continuity of form, with meaning derived from facets of Renaissance and Enlightenment Classical ideals, however remotely. With regards to Mesoamerica we speak of a tradition of 1300 years that might be described as beginning with the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl. The Toltec tradition characterized ancient Mesoamerican civilization as the Greek Classical ideal that still characterizes "western civilization."

It is likely surrounding populations were moved to the site of Teotihuacan and coerced into laying out the main avenue and constructing the vast pyramids of the Sun and Moon—structures that represented a scale of human endeavor hitherto unknown in central Mexico. Such workers became the nucleus of the growing city. Their mobilization and supervision would have required a policing function and it is possible these enforcers became a permanent class or caste at Teotihuacan that later became military (Millon 1981:217; 1992:389). Between A.D. 150 and 200, after the two great pyramids to the north, a smaller pyramidal structure was constructed over an ancient shrine on the east side of the axial avenue, but to a slightly different orientation of 17 degrees west of north. Set within the vast walled "Ciudadela," this pyramid, known as the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, was decorated with feathered serpents in its *taluds* and in its *tableros*, which were probably first examples of this significant facade at Teotihuacan (fig. 3b). The *taluds* and *tableros* of this pyramid are constructed of enormous monoliths, unlike those of later ones.

The Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl. Teotihuacan was a metropolis of about 100,000 people when the third pyramid was built (Cowgill 1998:199).²⁶ Just before construction began, near A.D. 200 (Cabrera Castro 2000:196), close to two hundred human sacrifices were made that quite literally embodied the calendric and martial themes of the pyramid's foundation and future role. The bound bodies (probably captives) were buried in groups of one, four, eight, nine, eighteen, and twenty and set at the corners, nodes and axes of a quincunx pattern laid out beneath the future pyramid (Cabrera

23. Comparable "accuracy" is found in an historical account of the Maya in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Roys 1967:79, 83).

24. In two articles I have outlined my understanding of the role of Teotihuacan in Mesoamerica (Coggins 1993, 1996).

25. El Mirador, Petén, Guatemala, was surely a city several centuries earlier, as measured by massive construction built by an inferred population (Matheney 1986). Teotihuacan was apparently qualitatively distinct in terms of urban planning, the formal housing of its resident population, and its widespread cultural and commercial contacts.

26. It is perhaps historically and linguistically correct to call this the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, since the name *Quetzalcoatl* is Nahuatl, and carries sixteenth-century significance. However, at Chichén Itzá and Tula the feathered serpents are generally described as Quetzalcoatl and I follow this usage that emphasizes formal continuity, although not necessarily meaning. Pyramid, instead of Temple, of Quetzalcoatl is used here to distinguish functionally between them.

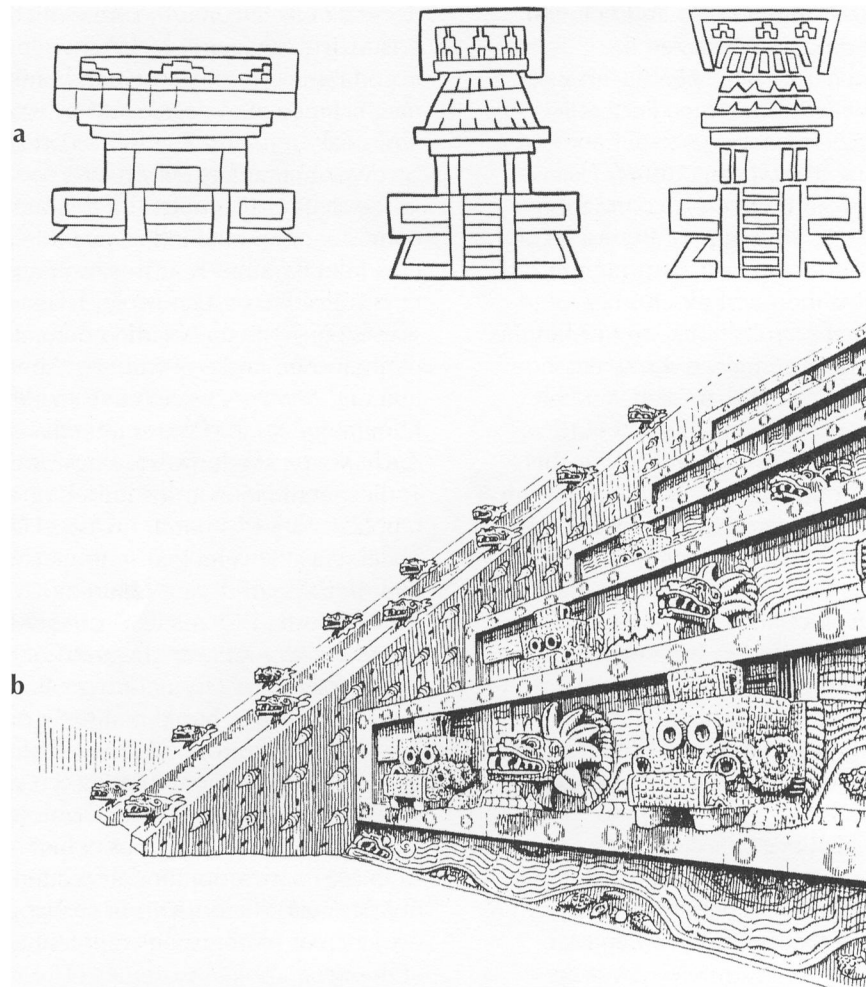


Figure 3. Teotihuacan architecture.

- a. Teotihuacan *talud-tableros* in 1. Tetitla wall painting and 2, 3 on two ceramic vessels. From Sejourne, 1966:fig. 26. Courtesy of Siglo XXI Editores.
 b. Facade, Temple of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacan. From Coggins 1996:fig. 4. Drawing: Elizabeth Wahle.

Castro, Sugiyama, and Cowgill 1991; Cabrera Castro 2000:205–208; Sugiyama 1989a, 1998). These are calendrically significant numbers and the quincunx form itself signifies the completion of a cycle (Coggins 1980). Many of the sacrificed individuals wore the warrior's pyrite mosaic back disk and were accompanied by both black and green obsidian projectile points probably for spearmen (*atl atls*). In the axial burial (Bu 190) site on the south side of the pyramid were eighteen such sacrificed individuals accompanied by thousands of shell objects, including hundreds of small rectangular platelets like those known later to make up warrior headdresses (Sugiyama 1989a:tables 2, 3; 2000:126).

These appear to have been sacrificed warriors that are the earliest evidence of a military role at Teotihuacan. In the tableros of the pyramid, each feathered serpent bears a headdress on its rattlesnake tail.²⁷ Karl Taube sees this as representing Xiuhcoatl, the other divine serpent—patron of fire and of war (Taube 1992, 2000a; Coggins 1996:24–26). Sugiyama, however, believes it is the proper shell-platelet headdress of Quetzalcoatl that identifies his militaristic identity and authority (1992). While this headdress may have signified the “war

27. In Mesoamerica a headdress often indicates the identity or affiliation of its wearer.

serpent," as Taube maintains, it was also and first, the crocodilian form of *cipactli*, the first day of the calendar, and thus of time (Sugiyama 1989b; López Austin, López Luján, and Sugiyama 1991). The sacrificed warriors were, thus, dedicated to the feathered serpent and to his Xiuhcoatl (fire serpent) identity whose domain was war, and the calendar and New Fire ritual—a combination of traits that were always characteristic of the Toltec abroad, and fundamental to Toltecness. This hybrid serpent represented the creation and life, as measured by time—a world view that saw Teotihuacan or Tollan as the place of the beginning. Teotihuacan serpents are "clusters of deity attributes" rather than deities (Kubler 1982:93; Pasztory 1993:60; Sugiyama, 2000:119), while Tlaloc, god of storm, war, and lineage, was the Teotihuacan male deity. Contemporary evidence for the association of the goggled Tlaloc with feathered serpent imagery and with ancestry is also found in the third century in what may have been the founder's burial of the Tlajinga apartment compound (Storey 1992:97). This was two pairs of carved shell "Tlaloc goggles" with feathered(?) serpent eyepieces that bear a striking resemblance to gold goggles with feathered serpent eyepieces offered to the Sacred Cenote at Chichén Itzá some six centuries later (Coggins 1984:no. 32). A Tlaloc effigy vessel was the only vessel included in the central burial of twenty individuals under the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl.

Around A.D. 350, the crowning temple of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl was burned and dismantled and the principal facade largely blocked from view by a new platform, suggesting catastrophic loss of power and of local significance for this religious institution at Teotihuacan (Cabrera Castro, Sugiyama, and Cowgill 1991:85–90; Sugiyama 1998:183).²⁸ The recent excavations at the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl provide evidence for the formation of the Toltec ethos as early as the end of the second century A.D., and perhaps for its rejection or subordination early in the fourth century. At this time the fourth stage of the Pyramid of the Moon was constructed.²⁹ The pyramid was re-oriented slightly to the dominant, 15.25 degrees west of north, and the first *talud-tableros* on this axial structure characterized its facade. An "offering-burial" preceded, or was

dedicated to, this fourth phase of construction (Cabrera Castro and Sugiyama 1999). This included an adult male accompanied in death by two felines and a wolf, which may have been in cages, and by eagle, owl, falcon, and snake remains. The felines and wolf suggest the "prowling" animals shown later in murals at Teotihuacan in the militaristic context of the late Atetelco apartment compound, and the felines, canids, and raptors on the facade of Pyramid B at Tula, half a millennium later. The raptor bird bones also evoke Teotihuacan, and later Tula, war imagery, as do obsidian projectile points and the pyrite-mosaic disks of warriors. These same kinds of funerary offerings were found in elite Toltec tombs at Kaminaljuyu, far to the south, probably somewhat later. And like the single Tlaloc effigy vessel in the much earlier sacrificial warrior Burial 14 under the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, this burial included ten such vessels. Tlaloc was the principal Teotihuacan deity—a martial god of rain, storm, and lightning. When this important warrior burial was made, probably in the middle of the fourth century A.D., the Pyramid of the Moon was reoriented to the city's north-south axis, *talud-tableros* were added. This burial and the subsequent construction may have corresponded to the destruction of the Temple of Quetzalcoatl. Incorporating the symbolism of the subordinated Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl into the pyramid that dominated the city's principal axis may have signified its incorporation into mainstream Teotihuacan politics and religion. This is probably the period when evidence of Teotihuacan warriors and merchants is found at the geographical extremes of Teotihuacan influence.

Very recent excavations in the fifth phase of the focal *talud-tablero* decorated Pyramid of the Moon have found a tomb with three mature males accompanied by jades of Maya style and quality, and like the principals in the tombs at Kaminaljuyu they were seated cross-legged in burial (Wilford 2002). Dated ca. A.D. 350, this burial assemblage constitutes the earliest, and the first unequivocal, evidence of Maya contact with Teotihuacan, rather than of Teotihuacan contact with the Maya. The postulated date corresponds to the likely beginning of the period which Maya monuments record as signaling the arrival of Teotihuacanos at sites in the southern Maya lowlands. Such a two-way relationship suggests alliance and intermarriage at the highest level.

There was no major monumental construction at Teotihuacan after the Temple of Quetzalcoatl. Instead the city turned to the building of corporate apartment compounds (Millon 1974:121; 1992:397). Raúl García Chávez, who has worked in the surrounding Basin of Mexico, suggests Teotihuacan came to the end of its

28. Linda Manzanilla suggests the destruction of the Temple of Quetzalcoatl may have occurred as early as A.D. 250, only half a century after its completion (1998:25).

29. Leonardo López Luján and Virginia Miller have both, independently, informed me of unpublished information that dates the fourth phase of the Pyramid of the Moon in the first half of the fourth century A.D. (personal communications, May 2002).

three centuries of expansion about A.D. 350, the end of the Tlamimilolpa Phase (1998). After this, in the Xolalpan phase, he describes the city as “contracting”; Xolalpan was the city’s period of maximum population, most intensive residential construction, and burgeoning art. At this time, about when the the Temple of Quetzalcoatl was demolished, emigrants moved east to Veracruz and south into the Maya regions (García Chávez 1998:487). Perhaps these were members of a warrior-merchant caste with ties to the suppressed or internalized Quetzalcoatl institution; their armed presence was possibly considered a threat to the city. This hypothetical interpretation is interesting because it implies an historic trajectory in which a period of expansion (A.D. 150–350) was followed by one of local contraction (A.D. 350–550), and then by swift collapse (A.D. 550–600) (1998:481). A reflection of such central Mexican events may be seen in the Maya area, where the Teotihuacan presence had been assimilated and was no longer evident between about A.D. 480 and 680 (see Table 1). A strong Toltec ethos and its evolved imagery surged back into the southern Maya lowlands at the end of the seventh century as the post-collapse Teotihuacan diaspora spread into the lowlands, and met the Toltec elite that had been ruling for almost three centuries. Most Late Classic Maya rulers aspired to Toltec ancestry.

Expansion. The Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl and its many burials and caches provide valuable information about the early economy and ideology of Teotihuacan. As in all Mesoamerican elite burials, greenstone, the most valued material, was present. But unlike Maya burials these were mostly “greenstone” objects, rather than the fine green jadeite that was most highly prized; this is not surprising since the source of jadeite was in southeastern Maya territory, far to the south. Teotihuacan warrior mirrors were faced with hexagonal plates of golden iron pyrite that was probably imported to Teotihuacan from mines to the northwest in Zacatecas,³⁰ as were greenstone and many of the pigments used to paint the sculpture on the pyramid, and the walls of the city (Weigand 1982:97–99). Brilliant green feathers represented in the sculpture and later murals, and probably present in the burials, may have been imported from the Gulf Coast to the east along with the majority of the shells—the rest came from the Pacific to the west

(Sugiyama 1989a:93). Thus by the end of the second century A.D. Teotihuacan contacts and resources extended in all four directions.

One important reason for the presence of Teotihuacanos in other parts of Mesoamerica in the fourth century A.D., after the apparent decommissioning of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, may have been the desire to establish the Toltec concept of divine order at the limits of its sphere of influence; this involved the calendar, time, and space which encompassed the farthest extent of significant measurable solar events (Coggins 1993, 1996). The importance of measuring solar events is evident in the city’s orientations which commemorated and defined solar events; a mechanism for determining these dates has recently been found at Teotihuacan in subterranean observatories that were constructed in Early Tlamimilolpa times (A.D. 200–300) near the Pyramid of the Sun (Cabrera Castro 2000; Morante López 2001) when the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl was built, or under construction. Here the local dates of the two zeniths and of summer solstice were recorded, allowing priests to calculate the true length of the year at 365.24 days (Morante López 2001:51). After the end of the prominence of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl and its military role, and probably during the postulated Late Tlamimilolpa period of expansion, this observatory was copied at Monte Alban (Morante López 2001:46; Aveni 1980:253–255). Such an export of scientific and calendric knowledge apparently characterized Teotihuacan’s relationship with Monte Albán (Millon 1974:352; Coggins 1983, 1993), and, I suggest, such a concern with astronomical and calendric precision took Teotihuacanos, who would encompass their “world,” north to the Tropic of Cancer (23.5 degrees north latitude), and south to Copán, Honduras (close to 15 degrees north latitude), late in the fourth century A.D. (map).³¹ This involved an expansion, even an imposition, of their understanding of Toltec time and space. All Mesoamerican peoples already used the same calendar, marked the zeniths (as determined by their latitudes), and the universal stations of the solar year. But only at Teotihuacan was the sun created and did it begin its eternal journey, thus starting time, and the calendar.³² In Maya regions to the south, Early Classic

31. Both geographical extremes were of calendric significance as measured by Zenith passages (Coggins 1993).

32. These mythical events were, of course, attributed to Teotihuacan in Aztec times and cannot be demonstrated to have inspired the city’s more ancient renown—but Teotihuacan’s overwhelming size, singularity, and its evident effect upon all Mesoamerica have suggested it did have such primordial significance (Millon 1992:382–395).

30. Phil C. Weigand notes that Zacatecas pyrite disks were important at Alta Vista (1982:120); however, Leonardo López Luján suggests pyrite might have come from Oaxaca, since Aztec tribute pyrite came from Coixtlahuaca (personal communication).

images of Teotihuacan warriors document their role in missions that entailed both trade and ideology, and as at Monte Albán, were perhaps not always hostile. To the north of the city, within the fluctuating Mesoamerican frontier, Teotihuacanos established a presence at the Tropic of Cancer “where the sun turns” at summer solstice and begins its apparent journey south until winter solstice (Aveni, Hartung, and Kelley 1982:331). Here, the sun is at the zenith only *on* the summer solstice, instead of the two days evenly spaced around the solstice experienced elsewhere to the south in Mesoamerica. Teotihuacanos may have settled at Alta Vista, Zacatecas, and built or simply used a distinctive “Hall of Columns,” its corners cardinaly oriented to indicate the equinox sunrise over a prominent peak directly east—a peak that also indicated the location of an important greenstone mine (327, 328). Orientation points for both equinox and summer solstice sunrises were marked on a nearby mountain by devices known as “pecked circles”; these are concentric circles centered on a cross outlined by calendrically significant numbers of holes pecked in the bedrock. Pecked circles were characteristic of Teotihuacan orientation and surveying, and served to mark counts of days relative to the zeniths and spring equinox (Aveni 1980:222–234; 2000). At Teotihuacan, pecked circles were worked in the rock at sighting points in mountains surrounding the center of the city, and sixty-eight have been found within the city—and nowhere else in such numbers (Cabrera Castro 2000:203). Deliberately located at the astronomically significant Tropic of Cancer, the site of Alta Vista was also attractive for its proximity to the mines that provided Teotihuacan with precious greenstone and red and green pigments. Since the Hall of the Columns was built toward the end of the fifth century (C. J. Kelley 1983:13; C. J. Kelley and E. Kelley 2001; Jimenez Betts 2001), Teotihuacan’s initial relationship with this northern outpost may have been as late as the Xolalpan period, although the Teotihuacan-derived pecked circles might have preceded the structure (Hers 1989:41, 50). Considered to be in uncivilized Chichimec territory, although inhabitants were settled farmers and miners, the colonists and labor force of Alta Vista probably spoke Nahuatl—the likely language of Teotihuacan, as well as of the later Toltec and Aztec.³³

33. Theoretically the Chichimec were barbarian hunters and gatherers who lived in caves, but Chichimec also referred to “uncivilized” ancestors who were great hunters and brave warriors, and thus an important part of the Toltec ideal.

The principal Teotihuacan cultural traits taken abroad included a Toltec understanding of time and space, as measured by solar observation and fifty-two-year Calendar Round cycles with their requisite drilling of New Fire. In the Maya regions, the intrusive foreign warrior elite practiced these under the dual patronage of the feathered serpent, combined with the fire serpent attributes of the patron of New Fire, the calendar, and also of warriors (Taube 1994, 2000a; Coggins 1987b). These were the dual reptilian attributes of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, and they surely represented the personification of roles and ideals rather than deities. There is no evidence of gods like the Aztec Quetzalcoatl or Xiuhtecuhtli—only of regalia that evoked the symbolic program of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan. The only Teotihuacan deity taken abroad was Tlaloc; the militaristic and calendric worship of this sky deity of rain, storm, and lightning also incorporated and expressed the cult of the Toltec ancestors. At Teotihuacan Tlaloc’s female characteristics were embodied in the “Great Goddess” whose domain was earth, water, and fertility—later to become the Aztec Chalchihuitlicue. Yet Esther Pasztory, who defined this goddess, sees her as subsuming Tlaloc at Teotihuacan, while only abroad was he the principal deity (1997:59, 104; Berlo 1992; Millon 1992:359). It is Tlaloc, however, that was represented in every medium at Teotihuacan, as well as elsewhere, while portrayals of the goddess are monumental at Teotihuacan, and his are not. Tlaloc’s storm god associations were usually militaristic, but his female counterpart had a destructive role as well. Her warrior role was represented on ceramics of the Pacific coast of Guatemala with the butterfly attributes later expressed in imagery of the Aztec goddess Itzpapalotl, or Obsidian Butterfly (Berlo 1989, 1992:136, 147). Thus, when taken abroad, she conformed to the prevailing Toltec warrior role, whereas at Teotihuacan she usually represented and personified themes of emergence from the earth and the abundant land of Teotihuacan itself. It is clear this earth goddess, and the Old Fire God (long predating Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico), was of great local importance, but was not any part of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl-associated ideology that was taken abroad. All evidence suggests the Teotihuacanos who traveled abroad were lone warriors and merchants who married foreign women (Sanders and Michels 1977:403). Their heraldry, regalia, and symbolism combined the ancestral Tlaloc religion, which became a lineage cult in Maya territory, with a newer, more geopolitical agenda deriving from the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl.

Teotihuacan was the primary central Mexican goal for religious pilgrimage and for trade—an international, multilingual place where the citizens were confident of their divine charter and tolerant of the foreign, and where Nahuatl was probably the city's lingua franca. The Toltec warrior elite, once emissaries of the institution of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, were interested in securing the Teotihuacanos' calendrically defined world for Toltec trade and order, not in converting it. Intellectual concerns are difficult to discern archaeologically, so trade and conquest have always been, and still are, assumed to have been the only possible reasons for Teotihuacan travel abroad. The city traded obsidian far and wide; it was perhaps residents' monopoly and base of power, but obsidian may have been a means, not necessarily the end. Teotihuacanos combined a Toltec ideological agenda with their military might and trading superiority—somewhat like the Christian crusaders, except that in ancient Mesoamerica there were no infidels. Instead, there was a need to encompass the astronomically defined Toltec world and its resources, not necessarily to conquer it.

Toltecs abroad ca. A.D. 350–480

Tikal

In the Maya lowlands at Tikal, Toltec arrived about A.D. 375, as shown and commemorated on their monuments at Tikal and Uaxactun. They may have come from the west, since a related date and name are known from a monument at the site of El Peru (Martin and Grube, 29), or they may have come from the east where there is clear evidence a century earlier of Teotihuacan contact at the jades-rich site of Altun Ha near the Caribbean coast (Spence 1996); they probably did not come from the south coast and southern highlands where they may have arrived somewhat later (Cheek 1977; Bove 1993). A Toltec military presence is clear at Tikal where a Teotihuacan-affiliated man became the ruler known as Yax Nun Ayin (Stuart, 2000:472) after eliminating the incumbent and marrying his daughter (fig. 4a,b; Coggins 1975, 1979). On his inaugural stela, where he is seated Mexican fashion,³⁴ this foreigner wore the highest ranking uniform of the Toltec warrior with its frontal feathered “Bird-Serpent-Jaguar” headdress associated with the fire or war Serpent (Taube, 2000a:281). His name, *Yax Nuun Ayiin I* (Martin

and Grube 2000:32), means “First (or Green/Precious) Crocodile Who Speaks With A Bad Accent (the First).”³⁵ The Yax and Nun titles were added to Crocodile only after he became ruler (Coggins 1979b:256–260). However, his original name may have been One Crocodile, *Ce Cipactli*, a day in the central Mexican calendar. Sahagún reported that a nobleman born on the day *Ce Cipactli* would become a ruler, and a brave warrior, a valiant chief, esteemed, honored, and great if he was a commoner, and that he might be given the name *Cipac*, for short (bk. 4:ch. 1). The day “One Crocodile” was the first day, the beginning of the calendar. Such a name would perfectly represent this warrior's Teotihuacan background that central Mexican tradition recorded as where the first day happened, and time began. López Austin, López Luján, and Sugiyama see *Cipactli*, the crocodile of the first day, as the headdress of Quetzalcoatl on the pyramid at Teotihuacan where it signifies all twenty days, as well as theological concepts of time and destiny (1991:100). The headdress of the feathered serpent would have implied both the religious calendric and the Tlaloc-derived military authority of the creator Quetzalcoatl; these are the two most prominent facets of the expanded Toltec role in Mesoamerica, although not necessarily at Teotihuacan after the fourth century.

Toltec warrior. Yax Nun Ayin, in a posthumous portrait on his son's Stela 31, wore the Toltec warrior's shell platelet headdress, back mirror, and coyote tails while carrying an *atl atl* in his right hand and a shield with a Tlaloc face in his left (fig. 4a).³⁶ Three flaming bundles of sticks insignia are worn in his feathered headdress, implying his role in fire ritual. As at Copán and Kaminaljuyu later, the shell platelets of the headdress were found in his tomb. Another martial element in Yax Nun Ayin's pedigree is a glyph consisting of an *atl atl* and Cauac shield, identified by Proskouriakoff as indicating his Teotihuacan affiliation (fig. 5a; Coggins 1975:143; 1979:258); in fact, two identifying inscriptions on Stela 31 suggest Yax Nun Ayin was the son of this sign which is surely a name or title (Stuart 1985; 2000:473).

35. He was a foreigner. In Yucatecan *Ah Nun* means “he who does not know how to speak the language of the land” (Barrera Vásquez 1980:588).

36. On Stela 31, the front of this shield is only visible in the second image of Yax Nun Ayin where his proper left side is shown as he stands to the left of and behind his son, Siyaj Chan K'awil. In the first image he stands to the right and in front of him; and in the third he is above, depicted as the ancestor in the sky.

34. The Maya elite sat cross-legged on a flat surface while the Toltec tended to represent their rulers on raised seats with one or both legs down (Coggins 1979a:255).

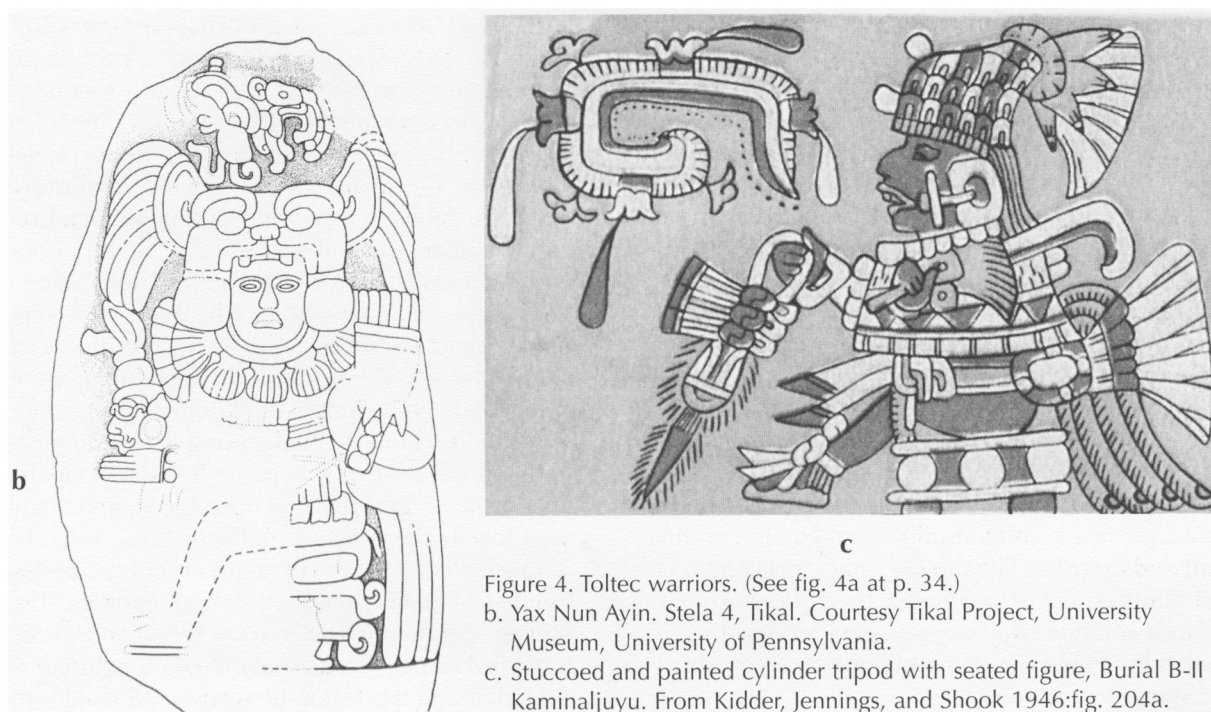


Figure 4. Toltec warriors. (See fig. 4a at p. 34.)

b. Yax Nun Ayin. Stela 4, Tikal. Courtesy Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

c. Stuccoed and painted cylinder tripod with seated figure, Burial B-II Kaminaljuyu. From Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:fig. 204a.

Another Yax Nun Ayin military emblem, later conferred upon his son, consisted of an owl with an *atl* (fig. 5b); this owl is a well-known Teotihuacan war symbol (Von Winning 1948) that probably denoted military rank at Tikal. David Stuart interprets this owl sign as equivalent to the *atl atl*-shield glyph—both referring to an individual who is actually never represented (2000:481–487). It seems reasonable to see both signs as having military associations but, I suggest, the *Atl Atl*-Cauac Shield refers specifically to the Teotihuacan god Tlaloc, as the lightning-hurling storm god and patron of its warriors, and thus signifies Teotihuacan ancestry. This glyph is the equivalent of the posthumous portraits of Yax Nun Ayin on Stela 31 where he holds the Tlaloc (Cauac) shield and *atl atl*. The Teotihuacan *atl atl* propelled its dart with a green obsidian projectile point that was characteristic only of Teotihuacan. The Teotihuacan Tlaloc is analogous to the Maya Chac, also the sky god of rain storm and lightning, and etymologically related to the Maya glyph Cauac (Coggins 1979b:258, 259; Thompson 1960:87; Kaufman and Norman 1984:117).³⁷ On Stela 31, Yax Nun Ayin's royal son, Siyaj Chan K'awil, is portrayed as having just received a headdress with the *Atl Atl*-Owl emblem from

his dead father who is also shown as the ancestor in the sky above (fig. 6).³⁸

If the *Atl Atl*-Cauac Shield was originally the emblem of Yax Nun Ayin's "father," and the *Atl Atl*-Owl sign, which he (literally) handed down to his son as a headdress, was its equivalent, then the important difference between the two signs is that the *Atl Atl*-Cauac Shield, that refers to Tlaloc and the sky, also describes the militant Teotihuacan or Toltec ancestor—while the *Atl Atl*-Owl is the title or rank of a living warrior. This is demonstrated by the final (remaining) date on Stela 31 which, if Stuart is right (2000:482), refers to the death of *Atl Atl*-Cauac Shield (meaning Yax Nun Ayin) who had died only six years before the dedication of the monument.³⁹ Here, the *Atl Atl*-Cauac Shield substitutes for Yax Nun Ayin because he had become the Toltec ancestor. David Stuart believes a title would not be used in such a context, but this individual was not Maya, and this is not a typical Mayan inscription. He came from a culture where corporate rather than personal identity was proclaimed in the headdress.

37. *Cauac* is the nineteenth day in the Maya calendar; *Quauhtl*, rain, is the corresponding nineteenth day in the Nahua calendar.

38. Saburo Sugiyama notes that at Teotihuacan a headdress may signify the transfer of political authority (1992; 2000:135).

39. Jones believes Yax Nun Ayin died in 420 A.D. on the basis of an inscription at the site of El Zapote (1999:82). This was 25 years before the Stela 31 dedication date.

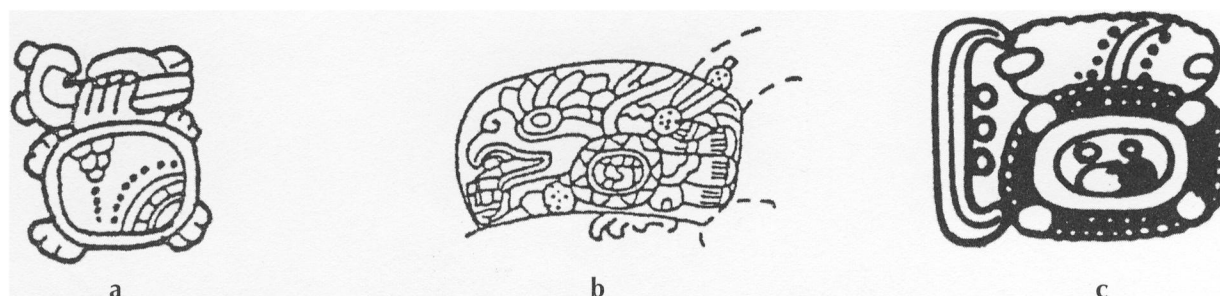


Figure 5. War emblems.

- a. Tikal, Stela 31 (H28, L4, N3), Atl Atl-Cauac Shield. Courtesy of Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- b. Tikal, Stela 31, Atl Atl-Owl (emblem). Courtesy of Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- c. Tikal, Str. 1, Lintel 3, (B4) *Tok Pakal*, Shield and Knife. Courtesy of Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

Tlaloc and Chac. Tlaloc imagery at Tikal evoked the ancestral Teotihuacan and its warriors; indeed Yax Nun Ayin himself had shown Chac, the long-nosed Maya equivalent of Tlaloc, as his ancestor in the sky on his own inaugural Stela 4 (fig. 4b). Chac and the Maya highland storm god, Tojil, were both analogues of the Teotihuacan lightning-armed Tlaloc that would later become the Maya insignia of lineage, the manikin scepter, God K, or *K'awil*, with a smoking axe hafted in its forehead (Coggins 1979a, b, 1988, 1990; 1992:266–283). The Atl Atl-Cauac Shield translates Tlaloc's menacing storm god symbolism by joining a Maya rainy sky glyph with the Toltec weapon, an *atl atl*, with which Tlaloc hurled his lightning bolts. Like the war serpent, Tlaloc denoted war; Taube calls this “lightning war” (1994:230; 2000a:274).

In the next generation, the long-nosed Maya version of the storm god, first shown legitimizing Yax Nun Ayin from the sky, became the proper name of his son and successor, *Siyaj Chan K'awiil I* (“Sky Born ‘God K’ the First”; Martin and Grube 2000:26), once known as “Stormy Sky” (Coggins 1975, 1979a). The nickname Stormy Sky came from his name glyph (atop his headdress) that consists of the long-nosed lightning-hurling Maya deity Chac (Cauac) with a smoking axe hafted in his forehead rising from a (lightning) cleft sky (fig. 6). In the Late Classic period, as the God K Manikin Scepter or *K'awil*, this emblem became, the widespread sign of Toltec ancestry and thus of Maya royal legitimacy (fig. 7a; Coggins 1979b, 1988b).⁴⁰ However, the first

Toltec generation in the Maya lowlands was not emulating Teotihuacan, they embodied it.

Calendar reform. The most profound innovation Yax Nun Ayin engineered at Tikal was the creation of a major calendric celebration for the completion of each *katun*, a period of 20 x 360 days, in the vigesimal Maya Long Count, and for the dedication of most monuments. These replaced or subsumed the earlier dedications to historic and lineage events, like birth and accession, and had the effect of emphasizing an institution (calendric religion) rather than individuals and local events (Coggins 1979a, 1980). At great public ceremonies the ruler would cast seed, or liquid, like the priests of Teotihuacan, and the prophecy was given for the next *katun*. This innovation may have been an important component of the Toltec strategy for assimilation into and transformation of the Maya ruling class. While continuing to use Maya Long Count dating, this reformulation converted it to a structural analogue of the Maya Tzolkin, or Mexican Tonalpohuali—the ritual calendar of 260 days. In this calendric reform, a period of thirteen *katuns* (13 x 20 *tuns*) constituted a complete cycle of 260 *tuns*—just as the thirteen numbers in the Tzolkin multiplied by the twenty named days constituted the Mesoamerican ritual calendar of 260 days; the elite Maya had subordinated this demotic count to their historic Long Count.

The Toltec reformation was numerological, ritual, social, and derived from a world view in which life and the individual were entirely subordinate to the cycles of time. It involved a metaphor of carrying the burden of time (Coggins 1979a; López Austin et al. 1991:96), which was set down (or unloaded) at the end of the

40. Manikin scepters were offered to the Sacred Cenote at Chichén Itzá as long as six centuries later—probably by rulers of Toltec affiliation (Coggins 1988b; Coggins and Ladd, 1992).

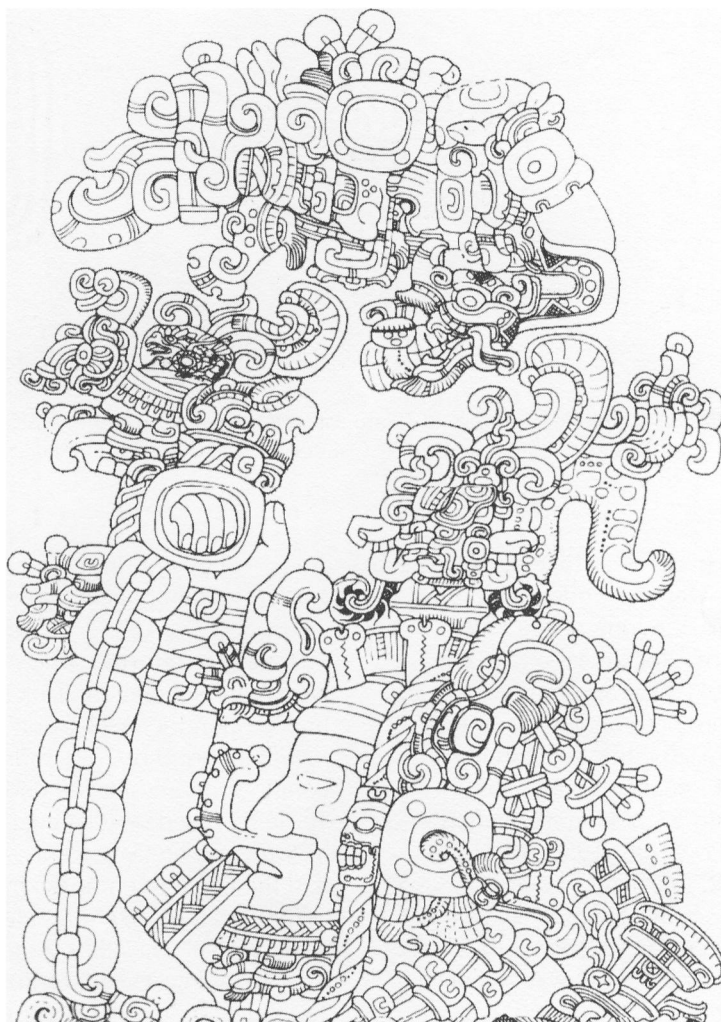


Figure 6. Siyaj Chan K'awil receiving headdress with atl atl/owl emblem from his father in the sky. Detail, Stela 31, Tikal. Courtesy Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

period, or *k'atun*—analogous to the Toltec traveling merchant role in the Maya regions. I suggest this metaphorical burden at Tikal was called “twenty,” in reference to the completion, or unloading, of the burden of the *k'atun* (20 *tuns*). Tikal was the principal Maya locus of *katun* celebration until the end of the Classic period, and was thus known as *Ti K'al*, “At the Burden of Twenty” (Coggins 1987a).⁴¹ This vocabulary of *k'atun*

41. In unpublished work, David Stuart has read the Tikal emblem glyph as *Mot'al* since its main element resembles a twisted top-knot of hair, or *mot* (Martin and Grube 2000:30). I suggest this “top knot” is the metaphorical burden of time, or *kuch*, that was set down at the end of the *katun*, as well as being the burden, or duty, of the ruler, as it would later be for Aztec kings (Coggins 1987a).

ritual persisted throughout the centuries of Toltec–Maya elite rule and modified calendric celebration in the southern Maya lowlands, and the system was still operating in Yucatán when the Spaniards arrived, although by then the renewed Toltec reformation had produced an even more simplified Maya Long Count (Coggins 1980).

Firemakers. Yax Nun Ayin's principal early title, “Smoking Frog,” probably described him as the firemaker, since he was responsible for the calendric manipulations that were to make a permanent change in the ritual of the Maya Long Count, although it might also refer to firemaking attendant upon the battles

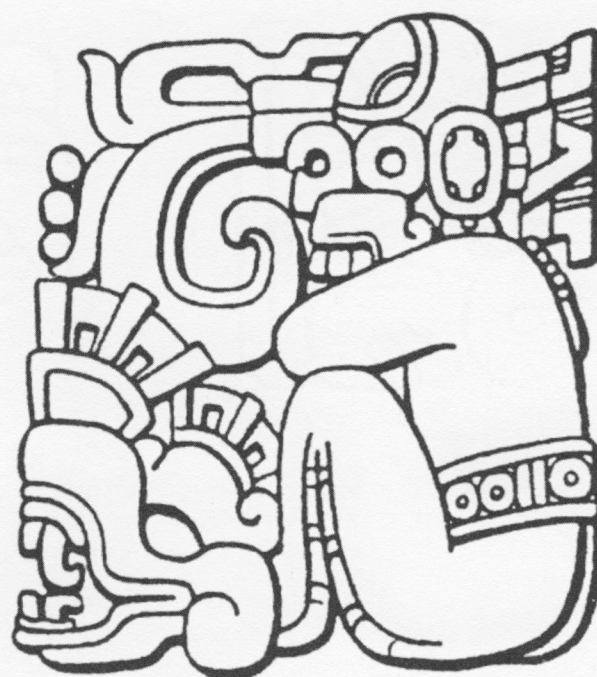
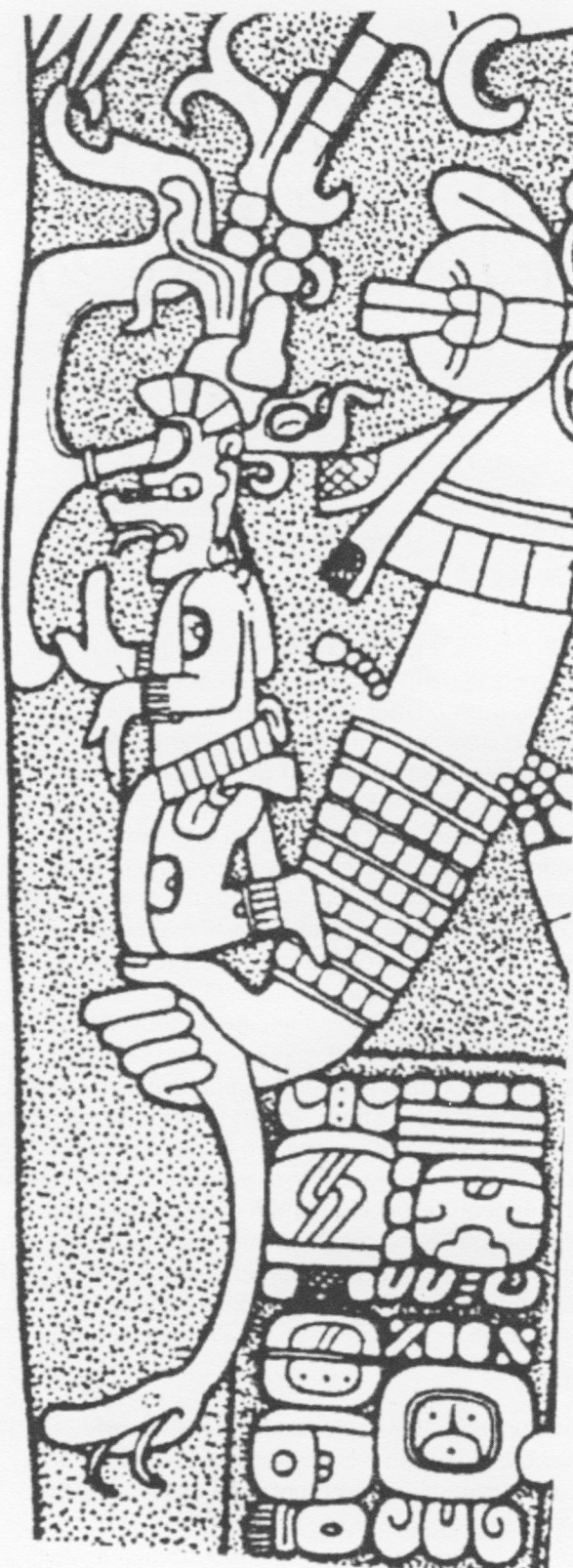


Figure 7. Manikin scepter.

a. (left) K'awil. Machaquila, Stela 3. From Graham 1967:fig. 49. Courtesy of Ian Graham.

b. (above) Tlaloc/Chac K'awil. Copán Str. 26. From Proskouriakoff 1950:fig. 35.

implied by Petén Toltec warrior imagery, and may even have been emblematic of New Fire ceremony for the founding of a new dynasty at Tikal, as it probably was at Copán. The main element of this glyph is the "birth" toad (not frog, Coggins 1988a), modified by a fire prefix (fig. 8c).⁴² The title is analogous to the glyph of the Copán founder, Yax K'uk' Mo; that denotes the "Tied-Bundles-of-Wood Temple," also referring to fire-making, and to a defining action associated with these Toltec founding rulers.⁴³ An early example of this Copán

42. The Maya glyph for birth (T740) consists of an "upended" toad; the word for birth, *sih*, is virtually homophonous with the Yucatecan words for offering, *si*, and the Chorti word for a number or series, *si*, as well as for firewood, *si'*, in both Yucatecan and Chorti (Barrera Vásquez 1980; Wisdom 1950). The fire prefix suggests to me the glyph is to be read *si'*, firewood, and thus refers to Yax Nuun Ayin as Fire-Maker, *K'ak' Si'*, or as *K'ak' Si*, referring to the person who makes the fire offering on each sequential occasion, or in a series. Stuart reads the birth toad glyph literally as *Siyah K'ak'*, or Fire is Born, the personal name of another individual (2000:476).

43. The Tikal fire/birth toad glyph also occurs on what I believe is an early portrait of Yax Nun Ayin on Uaxactun's Stela 5, on the "Ball

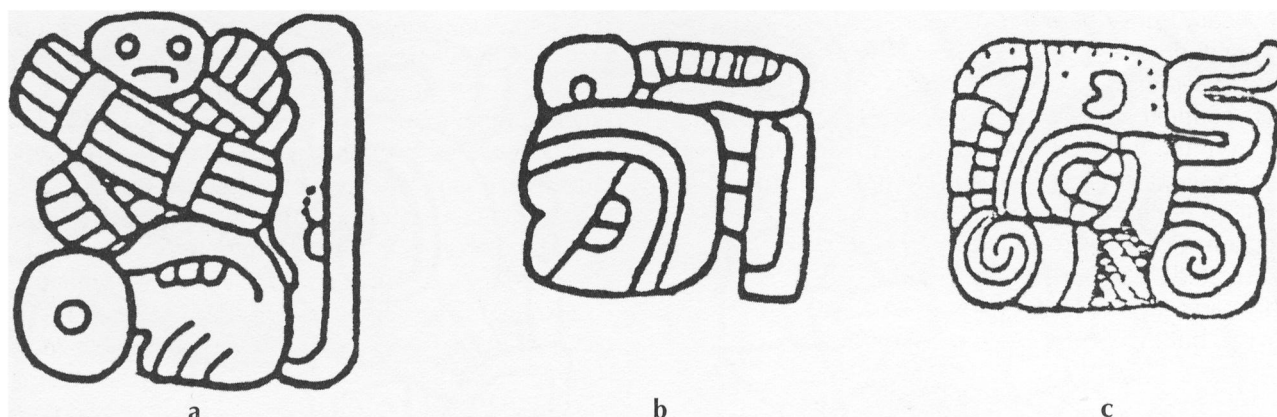


Figure 8. Fire ritual.

- a. Copán, Altar Q (B2, A5), "Founder Glyph," *Wi' Te' Nah*. Drawing: courtesy of David Stuart.
 b. Tikal, Stela 31 (F5, E15), *Wi' Te' Nah*. Courtesy of Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
 c. Tikal, Stela 31 (C22, E14), *K'ak' Si'* or *Siyah K'ak'*. Courtesy of Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

Temple glyph, written entirely phonetically, is earlier found twice associated with Yax Nun Ayin in the long historical inscription on the back of Stela 31 at Tikal (fig. 8b). Here the signs read as "*Wi' Te' Nah*" are preceded by a verb that indicates climbing steps to a temple.

Toltec assimilation

Yax Nuun Ayin, a powerful foreign warrior of Teotihuacan affiliation arrived at Tikal, the largest Early Classic lowland Maya city, a generation before the epochal turn of the Long Count cycle from *baktun* eight to *baktun* nine. This gave him time to modify Tikal calendric ritual before the end of the eighth *baktun*, in A.D. 435. It is significant that his grandson, the ruler K'an Chitam (Martin and Grube 2000:32)⁴⁴ is portrayed on Stela 9 commemorating the important *katun* ending 9.2.0.0.0, 4 Ahaw (in A.D. 475), the first *katun*-ending after the death of Siyaj Chan K'awil, his father. In this portrait he wears a complete, jaguar head-punctuated, feathered serpent cape that cascades down his back while the serpent's head forms his headdress. This serpent head is in turn crowned with the earliest known example of the Aztec royal diadem, the *xiuhuitzolli* or

copilli (fig. 9).⁴⁵ Kan Chitam may have had the Nahuatl title Quetzalcoatl, or K'uk'ulkan in Mayan.

In the third quarter of the fourth century A.D. Teotihuacanos apparently went to Tikal and other Petén sites where, possibly having lost their base of power at Teotihuacan, they showed themselves as conspicuously militaristic; they went to trade and to settle and introduced a Toltec calendar reform while creating new dynasties in their own image within the Maya world. By the end of the reign of Siyaj Chan K'awil (A.D. 458, Jones, 1999:88) the Toltec innovations at Tikal had been absorbed into local Maya culture (table 1; Coggins 1979a). Identifiable Toltec elements were confined to regalia in the time of this ruler's son and successor, Kan Chitam, and probably to the Language of Zuyua used by the educated ruling family and its priesthood, as well as to the Toltec-inspired celebration of the completion of *katuns*—evident in the dates chosen for the dedication of monuments, especially in the southern lowlands. Teotihuacan's Toltec culture was to transform Tikal again near the end of the seventh century, about two centuries later, after the collapse of Teotihuacan itself.

Copán

At Copán, at the southeasternmost extremity of Maya lands, Toltec of the next generation founded another enduring dynasty as an outpost and in the image of

Court Marker" at Tikal, on Yax Nun Ayin's Tikal stelae 4 and 18, and again in conjunction with his name on his son's Stela 31. While others have concluded the glyph refers to another person (Schele and Freidel 1990:140–164; Stuart, 2000, 478–481), I believe it refers to this Toltec ruler's ritual role, or to the firemaker.

44. Formerly Kan Boar.

45. This "crown" is also among the titles preceding his name in the inscription (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 11:B3).

Teotihuacan. But Copán, unlike Tikal, was located at the critical latitude of the “day that time began” so that at Copán the second solar zenith actually marked the day that, at Teotihuacan, was commemorated by an August sunset from the Pyramid of the Sun, and by the layout of the whole site. Copán was an ancient place, inhabited a millennium earlier by an elite with Gulf Coast, Olmec, connections (Fash 1991:67–70). Jiménez Moreno long ago suggested these early traders set the pattern for Teotihuacan’s later entradas into the Maya regions (1966:17), but the Olmec were probably intent on

procuring jade rather than securing obsidian resources near Copán, as the later Teotihuacanos may have been. Sources of the famous Olmec blue jade have very recently been found near Copán (Seitz et al. 2001). During the Classic period, this particularly desirable jade source may have been covered by volcanic flows (Russell Seitz, personal communication, May 2002), but other jade sources in the region would certainly have attracted Teotihuacan; Copán, however, controlled Ixtepeque, the principal eastern Maya source of obsidian, while highland Kaminaljuyu, at the same latitude, controlled El Chayal, the principal western source. With Teotihuacanos settled in these two places, the movement of obsidian into the Maya lowlands might have been under Toltec control, just as the production and distribution of much central Mexican obsidian was probably under the control of Teotihuacan. Green obsidian was particularly emblematic of Teotihuacan, and of its storm god, its warriors, and their weapons.

Yax K’uk’Mo’. At Copán at about A.D. 425, an individual with Toltec characteristics married into a local ruling family with macaw heraldry and became ruler. He was identified by a quetzal bird perched asymmetrically on his headdress⁴⁶ and was portrayed posthumously wearing goggles that probably signified his role as Toltec ancestor. The prominent quetzal provided the first part of his new name, *K’uk’* (Mayan for quetzal); for the second part he adopted the local macaw, *Mo’*. His complete name was *Yax K’uk’ Mo’*, “First (or Green/Precious) Quetzal-Macaw”; this proclaimed his role as the founder of a new lineage that combined quetzal and macaw lines of descent.⁴⁷ Yax K’uk’ Mo’s Toltec bloodline had brought the quetzal imagery. The iridescent blue-green quetzal feathers, so prized in central Mexico, defined their sacred feathered serpent, and figured prominently in the costume of the Teotihuacan elite—providing another motivation for trade with the southern highland cloud forests, home of the quetzal. Quetzal feathers were equally treasured by Aztec nobles; Sahagún describes the long narrow tail

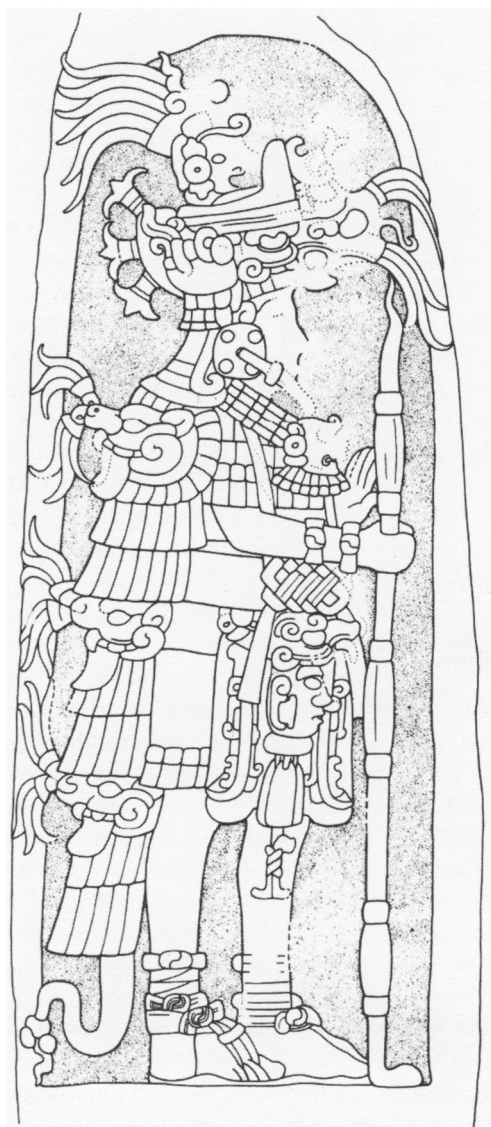


Figure 9. Tikal, Stela 9. Kan Chitam. Courtesy Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

46. On Stela 5 at Uaxactun (ca. A.D. 378) the Toltec warrior portrayed on the front (Probably Yax Nun Ayin) wears such an asymmetrical turban headdress with a quetzal, and such headdresses with goggles are found on molded figurines at Teotihuacan in the fifth century (Sejourne, 1959, fig. 65c).

47. This coupled heraldry was featured on the facade of the “Margarita” temple above the tombs of Yax K’uk’ Mo’ and his wife; here two serpent-wing birds, which may be read as one, intertwine their long necks, with a quetzal head on the right, a macaw head on the left (Martin and Grube 2000:194).

feathers with wonder, "They become green, they become turquoise. They bend, they constantly bend; they glisten" (bk. 11:ch. 2). Before the Teotihuacanos arrived in the Maya regions, the elite Maya did not wear feathers, perhaps because they were neither rare, nor particularly valuable.⁴⁸ Teotihuacan introduced feathers to the Maya as royal costume (Coggins 1975:147). In dramatic contrast to the cool colors of the quetzal, the brilliant, hot, red, yellow, and green macaw feathers were symbolic of the Sun and probably of a dominant Copán lineage.

Contemporary monumental imagery representing Copán founder, Yax K'uk' Mo', has not been found, but recent analysis of his excavated bones suggests he was a battered soldier, and his body was accompanied by the shell platelets of the warrior headdress.⁴⁹ Furthermore, a Toltec warrior burial with Tlaloc goggles and obsidian projectile points was associated with his wife's later tomb (Sharer 1997), while another burial had Tlaloc goggles, a pyrite mosaic back disk and the warrior's shell platelets (Fash and Fash 2000:443, 445).

Fire ritual. At each of the Early Classic Maya sites where powerful Toltec immigrants were present, and at subsequent Late Classic and Terminal-Classic Maya sites where Toltec ancestry is displayed, Calendar Round associated fire ritual was practiced (Coggins 1987b; 1989). A prominent retrospective historical inscription associates Yax K'uk' Mo' with a title that includes bound bundles of wood, perhaps indicating his role in New Fire ceremony that he had introduced at Copán (fig. 8a).⁵⁰ This same title is found much earlier at Tikal in association with the Toltec period, although it is written entirely phonetically there (fig. 8b). Known as the "Founder's glyph" at Copán, it comprises two crossed tied bundles of sticks with three affixes (fig. 7a). This might be read *Wi Te' Nah*, meaning "The Tied Bundle Temple."⁵¹ Thus Yax K'uk' Mo's title, like the Nahuatl

words, *cacatzilpia* and *xiuhmolpilli*, may refer to the tied bundle of wood, and then to the temple in which Toltec fire ritual occurred. However, David Stuart in recent work with this glyph suggests it is read *wi' te' nah*, in which *wi'* means "root" or "origin" (n.d.); thus the glyph would read "Origin House" or "Origin Temple." This seems to me convincing—except that it ignores the prominent tied bundles of wood. They probably served as logographic indicators of the fire ritual performed in the Toltec origin temple. Ceremonial firedrilling is usually understood to have been tied to the Calendar Round, but it may also have been performed for founding ritual as Ringle suggests, or related to battle as Paso y Troncoso reported. Any such events would have been appropriate for the Toltec Origin Temple at Copán, and for the foreigners at Kaminaljuyu, if one can assume such ritual from the Teotihuacan bundled wood and cycle signs on the funerary vessels.

It once seemed logical that Yax K'uk' Mo' would have gone to Copán from Kaminaljuyu not far to the west—since both places offered a role in the obsidian trade (Coggins 1983, 1993). However, recent analysis of his bones has shown Yax K'uk' Mo' may have grown up in Petén, perhaps near Tikal, and gone to Copán as a battle-scarred veteran in his forties or fifties (Sharer 2000). He might have lived in Teotihuacan enclaves in Petén at Tikal, Uaxactun, Tres Islas, Yaxha, Río Azul, near Holmul where wall paintings of Teotihuacan warriors have recently been excavated (Estrada Belli 2001), or possibly at El Peru (Coggins 1988c:101, 102)—and more evidence of Teotihuacan settlement in Petén will surely be found.

Kaminaljuyu

The establishment of a Teotihuacan outpost or colony at Kaminaljuyu west of Copán and south of Tikal was matched, perhaps contemporaneously, with one at mineral-rich Alta Vista on the northern frontier (see map). But it is evidence from rich burials, at Kaminaljuyu that indicates important individuals with distinctive Teotihuacan connections were living at this Guatemalan highland capital around A.D. 400, if not before (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946; Cheek 1977). Since Teotihuacan may have dominated obsidian craft production and directed its distribution in northern Mesoamerica, an interest in the redistribution of southern highland obsidian and other elite goods has been suggested as one reason for Teotihuacano presence at Kaminaljuyu (Sanders 1977:405, 408). Robert Santley describes true craft specialization as a particular characteristic of

48. At Tikal, the earliest royal portrait with feathers depicts the Toltec ruler, Yax Nun Ayin, on his inaugural Stela 4 (378 A.D.; fig. 4b).

49. He is thought to have reigned only A.D. 426–437 (Sharer 1997).

50. The inscription, on the top of Altar Q, was dedicated by Yax Pasaj, the sixteenth in line after the Copán founder, Yax K'uk' Mo'.

51. The Ch'ol and Yucatecan word *Wit'* refers to a tightly bound bundle of kindling and may be read in the logographic image of two crossed bundles of bound wood; the wood, *te'* (T87), affix would thus serve as a phonetic complement, with the *nah* (T23), temple or house, affix on the right. Michel Davoust has read the small face (T542) as *Ahaw*, Lord (1995:585), but it might read *wich*, face, and thus serve as a phonetic indicator for the reading *wit'* (Shannon Plank, personal communication); T542, has also been read *na*, and *e* (ibid).

Teotihuacan, where most of the city's production was intended for exchange beyond the state (1989:131, 134). Teotihuacanos may have introduced such specialized production at Kaminaljuyu and in the surrounding valley, where obsidian workshops were important, and Kenneth Brown believes their activities were confined to long-distance luxury trade in jade, obsidian, and ceramics [cacao and feathers] (1977:303, 322–331). This did not involve the conquest of Kaminaljuyu. Teotihuacanos were city folk, and the elite chose to settle in this cosmopolitan highland metropolis surrounded by volcanoes, not unlike Teotihuacan, although they lived apart from the center of the city (335). The Teotihuacan presence was first evident in the offerings, and then in the introduction of the *talud-tablero* for the architecture above their elite tombs. The burial assemblages apparently evoked the ideologies of the Teotihuacan Tlaloc, and of Toltec warriors and their calendric ritual as they were earlier seen at Tikal and Copán. There is no evidence at Kaminaljuyu, however, of the defining dynastic and permanent political power assumed at those two Maya centers by the Toltec immigrants.

Kaminaljuyu was located close to the latitude at which the calendar, or time, was believed to have begun on August 12, 3114 B.C., and although Teotihuacan was far from that southern latitude, the day was apparently commemorated there in the second century A.D. layout of the city when the Pyramid of the Sun was focused on the sunset of this day—which was the second solar zenith over 600 km southeast (Coggins 1996; Drucker 1977; Malmstrom 1973). The date did, however, have observational significance at the latitude of Kaminaljuyu, at Copán to the east, as well as at Izapa to the west, in the cacao-growing Soconusco.⁵² At Teotihuacan this date would primarily have had commemorative significance as the day on which time and the calendar had begun—events described, in Aztec times, as having occurred at Teotihuacan (Millon 1981:230).

The tombs. A few monumental Maya inscriptions remain at Kaminaljuyu, but they are much earlier and do not refer to these later lords, so inferences about these men must derive from their tombs (Kidder,

Jennings, and Shook 1946; Cheek 1977 a, b) of which the earliest may be dated early in the fifth century A.D.⁵³ A green obsidian bifacial “sacrificial” knife,⁵⁴ and two large carved conch trumpets in the earliest tomb, A-I in Mound A (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:figs. 157, 162), might have filled a priestly role at the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl or of the Moon at Teotihuacan. However, in the later Mound B with Teotihuacan *talud-tableros*, the initial dedicatory burial, B-I (ca. 475–500 A.D.), was unusually rich in fine Maya jades, in addition to two large conch trumpets and 200 perforated shell spangles, or platelets (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:fig. 161a–d); such platelets, characteristic of Toltec warrior headdresses found with the sacrificed warriors at the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, from about A.D. 200, were also found in the tomb of the warrior usurper, Curl Nose (now known as Yax Nun Ayin), at Tikal (fig. 4a,b.; Coggins 1979b), as well as in the tomb of the Copán dynasty founder Yax K’uk’ Mo’ the two dating between A.D. 420 and 440 (Sharer 1997:6), earlier than with Kaminaljuyu. The Kaminaljuyu tombs were located in front of the pyramid’s axial stairway; this unusual location may have copied the position of the important burial in front of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan that was looted before the adosada was built over it (Cabrera Castro, Sugiyama, and Cowgill 1991:fig. 1, pit 5, p. 88). It was also the position of the tombs chosen for Tikal’s new Toltec dynasty (Coggins 1975, 1979:265).

In the succeeding Kaminaljuyu tomb, B-II, the principal individual was accompanied by three adolescents, jaguar and canid bones, and an eagle skull, recalling the Pyramid of the Moon offering-burial at Teotihuacan in its furnishings (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:fig. 32). One of six Mayoid stuccoed and painted cylinder tripods in this funerary assemblage depicts an individual seated on a stool Mexican fashion (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook, fig. 173 a–f);⁵⁵ he wears a shell platelet headdress while carrying a Toltec “incense”

53. The Teotihuacan tombs at Kaminaljuyu were dated as mid-fifth century A.D. by the Pennsylvania State University excavations (Cheek 1977a: 166), but evidence from Tikal, where there are Long Count dates, suggests they were probably earlier. If the earliest was toward the end of the fourth century—the arrival of the foreigners at Kaminaljuyu may have been mid-fourth century, or earlier (Coggins 1975:145; 1979b:41).

54. Green obsidian was imported from Teotihuacan where it was the characteristic obsidian from the Teotihuacan-controlled Pachuca Mines to the north (Spence 1996).

55. The Maya elite sat cross-legged on a flat surface while the Toltec tended to represent their rulers on raised seats with one or both legs down (Coggins 1979a:255).

52. The band at which these two solar zeniths most exactly corresponded to 5/1 and 8/12 was between 14 degrees 42' and 15 degrees north latitude. Kaminaljuyu is 14 degrees 38' N; Copan is 14 degrees 52' N, and Izapa is 14 degrees 54' N, whereas Teotihuacan is 19 degrees 42' N (Drucker 1974:165–168).

bag and *atl atl*,⁵⁶ and with the warrior's pyrite back disk and coyote "tails" (fig. 4; Stone 1989:156).⁵⁷ Cylinder tripods were an elite ceramic form particularly characteristic of Teotihuacan after A.D. 300 (Cowgill 1998:188) that assumed similar importance for the Early Classic Maya. Seven of these vessels in Tomb B-I, probably all made at Teotihuacan, had calendric, or cycle-related decoration, with the "comb-and-bar" in the basal band (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946, figs. 174 a, c, d, 177b).⁵⁸ This motif is a variant of the sign worn in the headdress of the Old Fire God at Teotihuacan that consists of vertical bars with short perpendicular lines. It is a common Teotihuacan sign identified by Hasso Von Winning as denoting a tied bundle of firewood "related to the completion of time periods" (fig. 10a; 1977:15, 16). Here, Von Winning alludes to the imagery of drilling New Fire at the completion of a calendric cycle, as symbolized for the Aztec by a tied bundle of fifty-two wooden sticks or canes; fifty-two years was the most important cycle and it was represented by such bundle, or *xiuhmolpilli* (fig. 11).

Butterflies were another element of Teotihuacan fire symbolism and butterfly wings are shown in a completion sign on one of the seven comb-and-bar decorated vessels in this Early Classic tomb which also contained four of the warrior's pyrite mosaic-covered discs. For the Aztec, butterflies signified the immortality of valiant warriors (Coggins 1975:193–196) and, as noted, warrior butterfly symbolism was associated with the Teotihuacan goddess at Kaminaljuyu and on the Pacific coast. The personal insignia in these tombs imply a combination of military and religious roles likely characteristic of the elite trader and warrior Toltec traveling from Teotihuacan where, until the temple was destroyed about A.D. 350, they may have been part of the trained cohort of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl. Toltec

warrior uniforms and insignia were derived from the calendric fire serpent portrayed as a headdress that defined the authority of Quetzalcoatl on the facade of the home pyramid. Platelet headdresses that resembled the crocodilian skin of this fire serpent, were worn by such warriors from Early Classic through Postclassic times (Taube 1992, 2000a). The Fire serpent, Xiuhcoatl was also patron of the drilling of New Fire, and thus for the ordering of the Calendar Round and its cycles, important Toltec religious preoccupations at Teotihuacan (Von Winning 1979), as they were a millennium later at Tenochtitlan.

Cacao. Dakin and Wichmann, as noted above, postulate an early wave of Nahuatl-speakers, some of whom settled on or near the cacao growing eastern Chiapas Soconusco coast, southwest of Kaminaljuyu (2000). These migrations or trade relationships may have begun in the Preclassic period as recent analysis of bones at Kaminaljuyu has shown, as well as in the Early Classic period, probably before A.D. 400. In fact, the analysis of bones from the well-known Kaminaljuyu tombs reveals that some individuals had lived at both Teotihuacan and at Kaminaljuyu (White 2001:70). Another one of the seven Teotihuacan cylinder tripods with comb and bar basal bands in tomb B-I may provide evidence of early Teotihuacan involvement in the cacao trade, as well as of the early Nahuatl use of the word cacao (fig. 10d; Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:fig. 177b).⁵⁹ On one side of this vessel is a stylized cacao tree with ridged pods and pendant white blossoms.⁶⁰ The comb-and-bar sign is in the framing band below. Hasso Von Winning notes the resemblance of the comb-and-bar sign to the Maya glyph, T563 (fig. 10a,b; 1979:22), which is also thought to signify a bundle of firewood, and to refer logographically to fire, *k'ak'*—especially when it has a smoke or fire affix (fig. 10b:2; Kelley 1968).⁶¹ It is possible the Maya glyph's fire significance, with the double "combs," derived from the Teotihuacan sign which is an insignia of the Old Fire God. Since this vessel with the Teotihuacan comb-and-bar motif and the cacao tree was in a Kaminaljuyu tomb with offerings of both local Maya and Teotihuacan style, its decoration might make a bilingual reference to cacao

56. What may have been nine fabric bags, each containing a set of: one greenstone figure, earspools, beads, a bivalve, and miniature obsidian bifacial knives, were found associated with individuals in the central Burial 14 beneath the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacan (Cabrera Castro, Sugiyama and Cowgill 1991:88). This may have been the contents of the bags often described as "incense bags." The use of the *atl atl* spearthrower was apparently confined to Toltec soldiers.

57. The shell platelet headdress worn by the figure on the vessel is much simpler than the "jaguar-serpent-bird" type worn by a commanding officer. It resembles those worn by Jasaw Chan K'nal on Lintel 2 of Temple I, Tikal (fig. 12b), and by soldiers on Panel 2 from Piedras Negras, for instance.

58. These seven vessels would be dated Late Xolalpan at Teotihuacan (A.D. 450–550) (Rattray 2001:fig. 164; Conides 2001:239–240). They include 3 pairs, cylinder tripod pairs, in burials are a Teotihuacan trait (Conides 2001:105–109).

59. Cynthia Conides discusses this vessel (one of a pair in Tomb B-I) and seven other stuccoed and painted cylinder tripods with the same motif, which she says always included a figure with a blowgun aimed at a quetzal on the opposite side (2001, 134–136).

60. See Taube 1994:220, for identification of this cacao blossom.

61. When there is no clarifying affix, T563 is currently thought to denote the phonetic syllable *sa* (Grube 1992, 207).

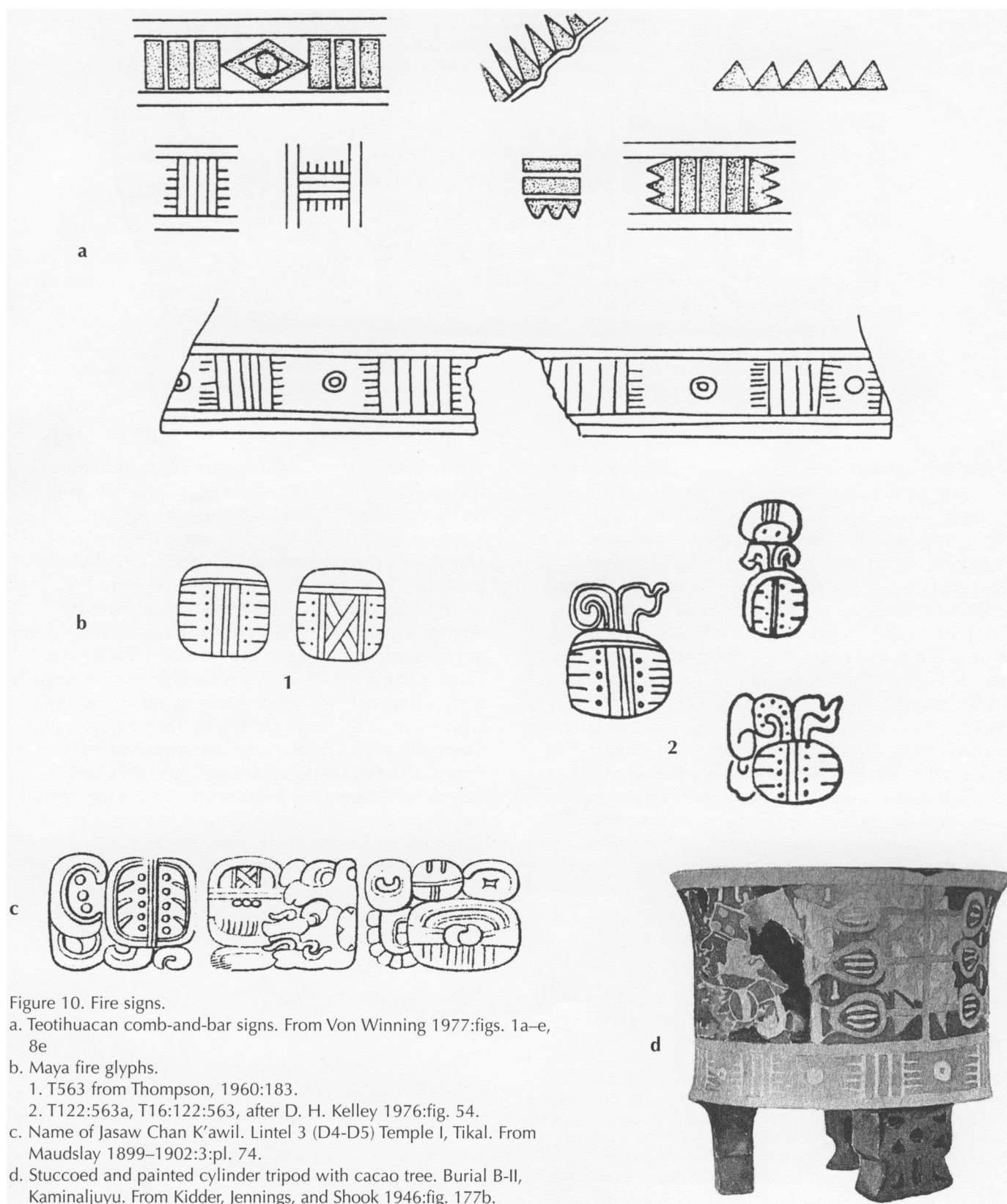


Figure 10. Fire signs.

a. Teotihuacan comb-and-bar signs. From Von Winning 1977:figs. 1a–e, 8e

b. Maya fire glyphs.

1. T563 from Thompson, 1960:183.

2. T122:563a, T16:122:563, after D. H. Kelley 1976:fig. 54.

c. Name of Jasaw Chan K'awil. Lintel 3 (D4-D5) Temple I, Tikal. From Maudslay 1899–1902:3:pl. 74.

d. Stuccoed and painted cylinder tripod with cacao tree. Burial B-II, Kaminaljuyu. From Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946:fig. 177b.

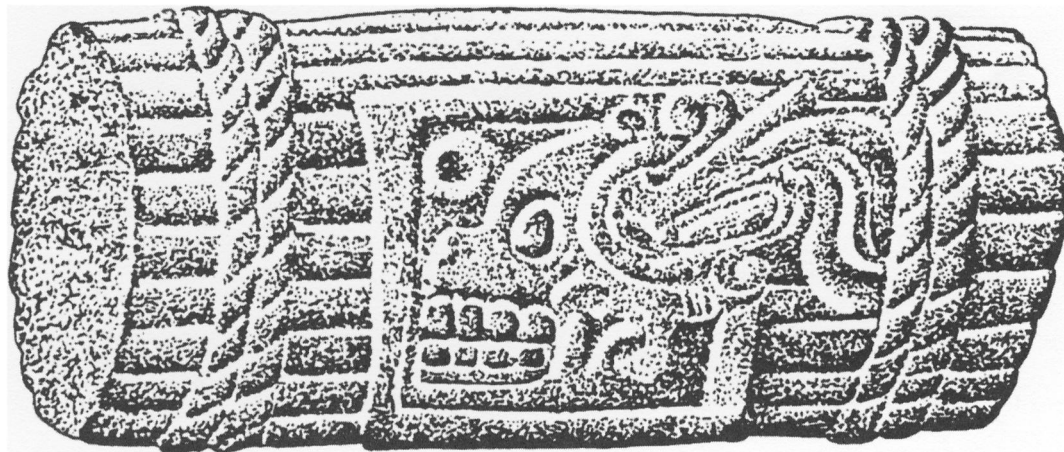


Figure 11. Aztec Xiuhmolpilli. Fifty-two-year bundle of sticks/canes for year Two Acatl (1507). Aztec patron deity Huitzlopochtli, died on One Death, the day commemorated. From Von Winning 1979:fig. 3.

and to fire ritual, even though in Maya languages *c'ac'*, fire, and *cacaw*, cacao, are usually not the same phonetic sound.⁶² At Teotihuacan the comb-and-bar sign may possibly have stood for the Nahuatl word *cacatzilpia* which means “atar una cosa fuertemente” (Simeon, 1885:56), to tie something strongly, and refer to the tied bundle of wood, or canes, of the New Fire Ceremony—later called *xiuhmolpilli*, or *xiuhtlalpilli*, tying of the year (fig. 11). The comb-and-bar sign may, thus, have been read logographically as (*caca*) *piltzia* in Nahuatl on this vessel at Kaminaljuyu, and as a phonetic indicator for the Nahuatl word *cacaw*, since cacao is shown on the vessel above.⁶³ This would confirm the Early Classic use of the Nahuatl(?) word *cacaw* in a Teotihuacan context in the southern Maya cacao-growing regions, and perhaps indicate a connection between cacao and Toltec New Fire ritual. It might also confirm the early use of phonetic signs to indicate syllabic readings as in Aztec writing.

Karl Taube has recently demonstrated there may have been a writing system at Teotihuacan and that it resembled and functioned in the same way as signs

known from sixteenth century Nahuatl manuscripts (2000b; Cowgill 1992a). Although no phonetic signs had been identified, most scholars who have worked at Teotihuacan have assumed there must have been some kind of writing at that huge commercial city. Taube is the first to have assembled the scattered corpus of Teotihuacan signs and presented them as part of a discrete system. He believes it was a true writing system; this means it was possible to reconstruct the spoken language from the signs, which are phonetic, or “visually recorded speech” (3). For this reason, Taube calls the signs found at Teotihuacan “glyphs,” by analogy with Mayan phonetic glyphs. Sixteenth century Nahuatl writing used phonetic signs, especially in naming people and places, but it is thought to have used many logographic⁶⁴ signs as well, and not to have attempted to reproduce speech. The reading of *cacatzilpia* suggested above might confirm Taube’s hypothesis, since the comb-and-bar, long believed to be an ideographic sign for the Xiuhmolpilli, may actually have had a phonetic role.

Toltecs abroad (A.D. 700–950)

Tikal

The period after the collapse of Classic Teotihuacan, between A.D. 700 and 900, is known in central Mexico as the Epiclassic period. Probably actually beginning in

62. Fire could be written, like *cacaw*, without glottal stops; the word “fire” in Ch’ol (*cac*) is not glottalized, whereas in Chorti it is (*c’ajc’*, *c’ajc*, *c’ac’*); in Yucatecan it may or may not be (*cac*, *c’ac’*) (Dienhart 1997). In this paper I have tried to use *c* and *c’*, instead of *k* and *k’*, but this is not always possible when a name is well known with a *k’*. The reader should consider them interchangeable.

63. Contemporaneously, about A.D. 400, the Maya referred to cacao on funerary vessels where the phonetic sound is clearly written as *ca*, not *c’a* (Stuart 1988). There are no glottal stops to make such a distinction in Nahuatl.

64. Logographic signs represent words; ideographic signs indicate meaning (DeFrancis 1989:279, 278).

the seventh century, this period provides abundant, complex, and little-understood testimony to the massive Teotihuacan diaspora, and to its integration with surrounding cultures. At Tikal, there is dramatic evidence for both a continuing presence and for a Toltec renaissance in the reign of the Late Classic ruler of Tikal long known as “Ruler A” or “*Ah Kakaw*,” although his title is now read *Jasaw Chan K’awil* I, or “[?] Sky God K the First” (fig. 10c; Martin and Grube 2000:44). Almost a century after the fall of Teotihuacan, this great Late Classic ruler revived, or consciously relived, the Toltec florescence of thirteen *katuns*, 260 *tuns*, or one cycle earlier—he was the twenty-sixth Tikal ruler since the first, in Late Preclassic times. Such numbers were highly significant, and prophecies for cycles of time would predict similar events for periods of time with the same name and number. Thus *Jasaw Chan K’awil* expected and created events in the periods named “8 Ahaw” (k’atun 9.13.0.0.0) and “7 Ahaw” (9.13.10.0.0) that evoked his glorious Toltec Tikal ancestors of thirteen *katuns* before. Among his most important initiatives was renewed emphasis on the ceremony associated with the completion of each *katun*. At the critical *katun* ending 9.13.0.0.0, which denoted a complete cycle since the end of *baktun* eight, he built a specialized architectural complex with pyramids on the east and west, his own stela and altar at the north, and a long structure on the south.⁶⁵ Known as Twin Pyramid groups, these complexes that institutionalized the public “scattering” ritual and its prophecy, grew bigger with each one that was built, until Christopher Jones estimates, the whole population of Tikal could have fit into the final group’s plaza (1977). They were the legacy of Yax Nun Ayin’s reformulation of *katun* completion ritual as a fusion of Toltec and Maya calendric practice.

Toltec warrior. *Jasaw Chan K’awil* had perhaps returned to rule Tikal from the Pasión River region to the west where foreign traders had continued contact with central Mexico (Coggins 1975:443–456; 1979). He may have presented himself as a militant Toltec outsider like Yax Nun Ayin, his predecessor and ancestor whose life and reign he emulated, and also as the rightful inheritor of that innovative reign. All five of *Jasaw Chan K’awil*’s monumental portraits show this ruler wearing variations on the shell-platelet war serpent uniform of the commanding officer: Stela 16, two Str. 5D–57 stucco

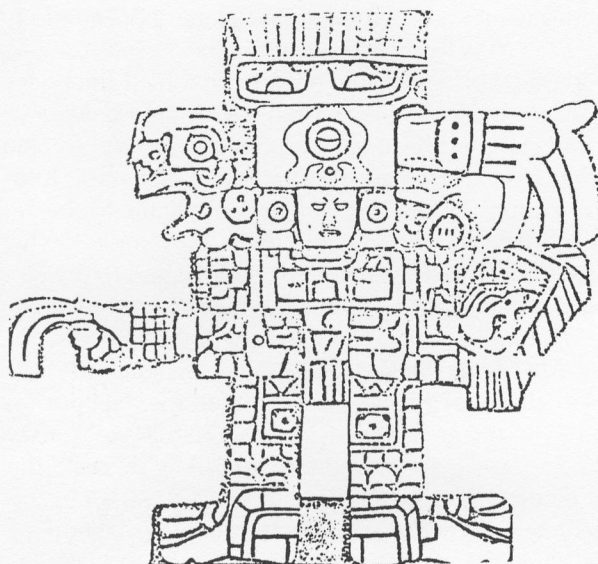
facades, Lintel 2 of Temple I, and Lintel 3 of Temple IV (fig. 12).⁶⁶ It is likely that, as at Piedras Negras (Proskouriakoff 1960), the presumptive Tikal ruler achieved warrior status and full sovereignty only when he had captured prisoners and been successful in battle himself, as was true for the later Aztec Tlahtoani. After such exploits he donned war serpent regalia for his official portraits. The interior Lintel 3 of Temple I, where *Jasaw Chan K’awil* was buried, is dedicated to a victory and to a date that was forty days before the thirteen *katun* (complete cycle) anniversary of the last date on the Early Classic Stela 31. This latter ancient date, with the atl atl–cauac Shield, had recorded the death of Yax Nun Ayin, the great warrior, *Jasaw Chan K’awil*’s revered Toltec ancestor, and founder of the ruling dynasty. The first date on the Late Classic lintel, 9.13.3.7.18, celebrated the defeat of the grand site of Calakmul, Tikal’s greatest enemy; this probably provided *Jasaw Chan K’awil*’s legitimizing battle. The second date, forty days later, commemorated his ancestor’s death, thirteen *katuns* before, with a bloodletting ceremony. Temple I, which contained his tomb, was probably built near the time of this victory and the significant anniversary—long before *Jasaw Chan K’awil*’s actual death. Lintel 2 celebrates the victory by showing *Jasaw Chan K’awil* as conqueror in war serpent regalia, his pyrite back discs were later placed in his tomb (Triak 1963). The victory is identified by a flint knife and shield glyph, analogous to his ancestor’s warrior insignia (fig. 5c), except that at the end of the seventh century the Maya used flint knives hafted in spears, not the Mexican atl atl. A shield with weapons signified war and eventually became an important emblem at Chichén Itzá, where it is found crowning the facade of the Upper Temple of the Jaguars which also celebrates war, victory, and warriors.⁶⁷ However, in the third revival, or Toltec recrudescence at Chichén Itzá the war shield was again paired with atl atl darts, not a stone blade. Such emblems also characterized the Epiclassic regime at Xochicalco, and the later Postclassic Toltec and Aztec states. This Toltec motif exemplified Zuyuano as a political statement.

Venus warrior. At Late Classic Tikal, *Jasaw Chan K’awil*’s persona was as well defined as his ancestors’,

66. Lintel 3 of Temple I may portray his ancestor Yax Nun Ayin, while Lintel 3 of Temple IV portrays the apotheosized *Jasaw Chan K’awil* in his son’s later temple (Coggins 1975:551).

67. *Tok-pakal*, flint-shield signified war (Stuart 1998b; Schele and Mathews 2000:226).

65. Smaller ones had been built in earlier times (Jones 1969), but *Jasaw Chan K’awil* revitalized the concept.

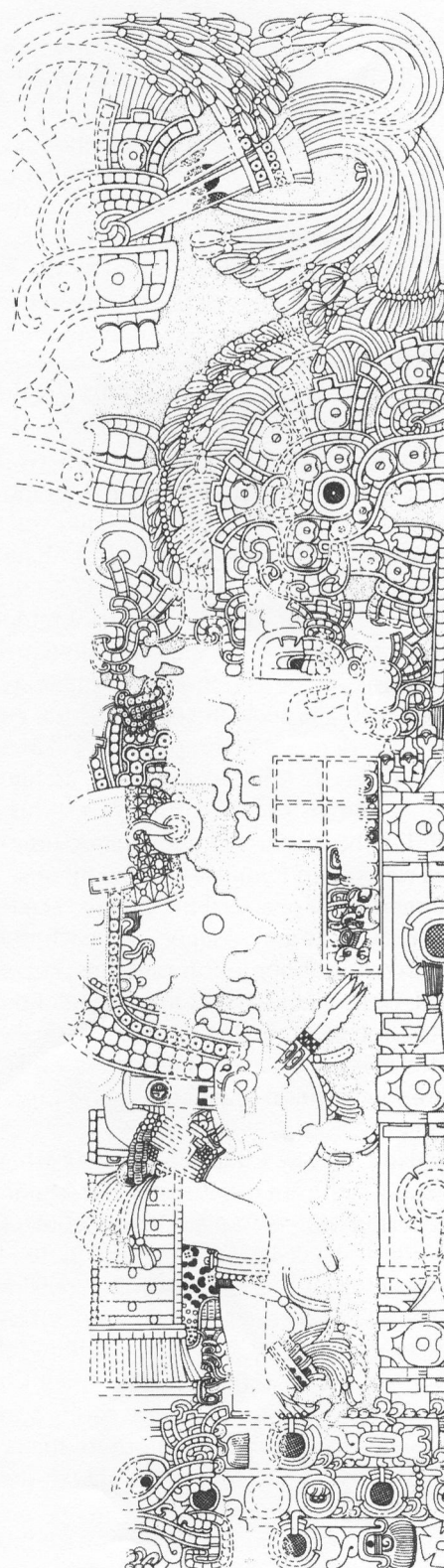


a

Figure 12. Four portraits of Jasaw Chan K'awil. Tikal. Courtesy Tikal Project, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
a. Str. 5D-57.

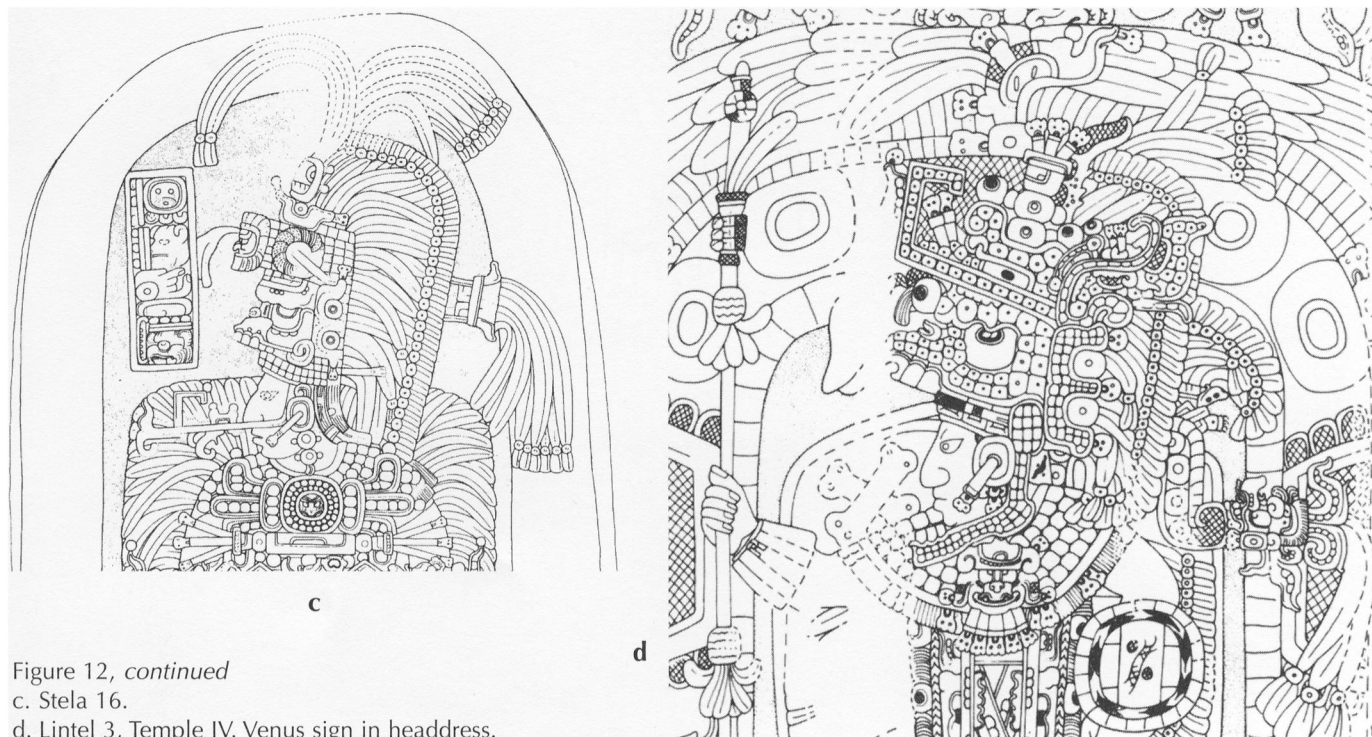
b. Lintel 2, Temple I.

but his name remains untranslated. Michel Davoust reads *Jasaw* as “dawn” (fig. 10; 1995:551). This would be like the name of the later Copán ruler *Yax Pasaj Chan Yoat* (*First Dawn Sky Lightning God*) (Martin and Grube 2000:209) who, like Jasaw Chan K'awil at Tikal, associated himself with his Copán ancestor—the dynasty founder, *Yax K'uk' Mo'*. If *jasaw* might be read *Ah Sah* (*cab*), or *Sah* (*cab*) *Ahaw*, with the *cab* implied, then the name would mean dawn and the Morning Star or Venus, since this is the meaning of *ah sah cab* in Yucatecan (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4),⁶⁸ and Venus was one of this ruler's principal insignia. The Venus sign was visible in his Warrior regalia in every portrait except the incomplete Lintel 2 of Temple I (fig. 12). Venus as Morning Star will also become the principal Toltec ancestor emblem at Tula, where it is found repeatedly in the guise of *Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli*—there the personified planet emerges at dawn from the gaping mouth of the earth monster, just as the head of the ruler emerges from the jaws of the “jaguar-bird-serpent” war serpent uniform (figs. 9, 13). The motif provides an example of continuity of meaning expressed through variation in form—from



b

68. In the Barrera Vásquez dictionary “h” is used instead of “j,” and “k” in place of “c.”

Figure 12, *continued*

c. Stela 16.

d. Lintel 3, Temple IV. Venus sign in headdress.

Early Classic Teotihuacan and Tikal to Postclassic Chichén Itzá and Tula. Finally, there is a possible logographic reading of Jasaw Chan K'awil's name that would have involved a deliberately archaizing use of the Mayan version of the Teotihuacan comb-and-bar sign as tied firewood, or simply as fire (fig. 10b, c).⁶⁹ This would have given Jasaw Chan K'awil a firemaker name or title like that of his revered ancestor. Fire events found with this glyph are found contemporaneously on lintels at Yaxchilan (Stuart 1998a:402–409), and with the name or title K'ak'upakal (Fire Shield) in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá, less than two centuries later. At Tikal in the Late Classic period after the fall of Teotihuacan, Toltec pride and symbolism persist in shield and weapon emblems, a possible firemaker title, and in the symbolism of the Venus warrior as Morning Star. After the reign of Jasaw Chan K'awil explicit Toltec symbolism faded again at Tikal.

Copán and the western river regions

Copán. There was a contemporary eighth century Toltec renewal at Copán, where the important thirteenth,

fifteenth, and sixteenth Late Classic rulers revived Toltec symbolism which, as at Tikal, evoked a founder (here Yax K'uk' Mo'), and regenerated Toltec connections that were perhaps embodied in new emigrants from Teotihuacan. The thirteenth ruler, once known as Eighteen Rabbit whose accession was only thirty days before the victory date recorded in Jasaw Chan K'awil's Temple I at Tikal,⁷⁰ constructed a temple with Chac masks set at the corners and with a serpent-mouth doorway. These are northern Maya traits, most characteristic of the southwest Yucatán peninsular Chenes region, and conceivably significant at Copán for appearing there first. Somewhat later, a bilingual inscription carved in a Mayan and a central Mexican writing system was set into the temple overlooking the ballcourt (Stuart 2000:495–498). This included a lineage emblem that recapitulated the evolution of the serpent footed manikin scepter from Tlaloc to K'awil (fig. 7b).

The sixteenth ruler, *Yax Pasaj Chan Yoat* (Martin and Grube 2000:206), emphasized Toltec war and death imagery, with associated Tlaloc year signs and skulls

69. T563, otherwise read as *sa*.

70. Eighteen Rabbit acceded at 9.13.3.6.8 7 Lamat 1 Mol; The Tikal date is 9.13.3.7.18 11 Eznab 11 Chen (Fash 1991:80; Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:98).

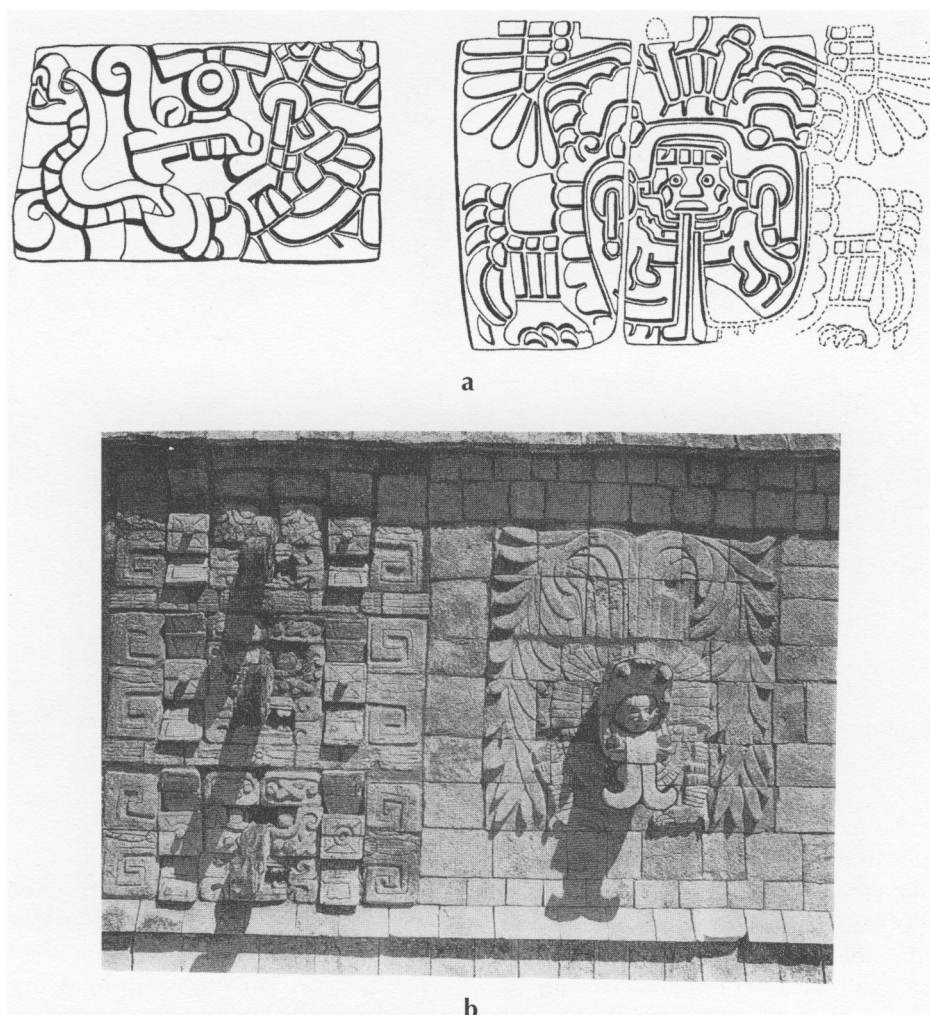


Figure 13. Complementary Tlaloc/Chac and Earth/Venus war emblems.
 a. Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli and Tlaloc/Chac panels. Structure J. Facade, Tula. From Acosta 1960:l<ms. XVI, XVIII.
 b. Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli and Chac, Temple of Warriors facade, Chichén Itzá. From Morris, Charlot, and Morris 1931:fig. 17.

(Fash and Fash 2000:451–455), while Copán sculpture included a monumental stone skull “rack” and *bacab* figures—both were important motifs at Chichén Itzá.⁷¹ Copán may also have influenced Chichén Itzá in that Yax K’uk’ Mo’s Early Classic royal heraldry is suggested later at Chichén in depictions of two principals with contrasting identities in the Upper Temple of the

71. *Bacabs* were aged supporters of the sky, a role they had assumed in one of the early creations when the earth and sky were not separated. Charles Lincoln has noted there were more *Bacabs* at Copán than anywhere but Chichén Itzá (1990:62).

Jaguars—one, like the Copán Macaw, with the Sun as patron, while the other is protected by the Toltec feathered serpent, with a quetzal persona.⁷² Sun imagery is rare in the southern lowlands, and except for the posthumous portrait of Jasaw Chan K’awil in Temple IV at Tikal, Copán is the only Classic Maya site that has monumental feathered serpent imagery. It is interesting that these feathered reptiles at Copán differ from most other monuments at the site in having only Calendar

72. These two are Arthur Miller’s “Captain Sun Disk” and “Captain Serpent” (1977).

Round, rather than Long Count, dates (Nicholson 1987:171). These may represent dates of the kind celebrated in Yax K'uk' Mo's Origin Temple. Copán's manifest and possibly close relationship with Chichén Itzá might have stemmed from Copán control of the Ixtepeque obsidian source that supplied northern Yucatan from the east, and dominated the peninsular trade after A.D. 800 (Ball and Taschek 1989; Braswell 1997; Cobos 1998).

Southern lowlands. Elsewhere in the Maya lowlands Toltec military symbolism is found at sites along the western rivers that maintained trade with central Mexico. Tikal, east of the river trade routes between the Gulf of Mexico and the southern highlands, lost contact with the lively warrior culture of the Teotihuacan diaspora along the Middle Usumacinta and at the Petexbatun sites. Tikal was, however, still an important city after the beginning of the new *baktun* ten when, at Seibal on the Pasión river, Tikal was proclaimed, with its old enemy Calakmul, as part of a declining southern lowland world dominated by Seibal at the beginning of the new *baktun* ten. At this millennial date Seibal emulated Tikal's cyclic celebrations at the culmination of *baktun* nine, and a renewed western Toltec culture emerged with monumental traits linked to the Puuc and Chichén Itzá (Coggins 1990; Sabloff 1973). A group identified as Itzá was settled in the Petén lakes region, not far from Tikal, in the ninth century (Chase 1985), and Grube sees a possible "Itzá" glyph in the inscriptions of Motul de San Jose north of Lake Petén Itzá (Schele and Mathews 1998:354, note 6; Florescano 1999:150, 151). These would correspond to the Itzá that Ball and Taschek describe as "eastern," as distinguished from "western" Itzá in southwestern Campeche (Taschek and Ball 1989:188; Chase and Chase 1982).

Quetzalcoatl's Gulf Coast goal, Tlillan Tlapalan, was probably near the mouths of the Usumacinta River, a region west of these western Itzá, and corresponding to both Anahuac and Nonohualco, which Izquierdo and Figueroa describe as the coastal zone east of Veracruz and southwest of Campeche (1978:85). There the followers of Quetzalcoatl (of the Teotihuacan and/or Tula diaspora) mixed with the western Maya along the rivers, making and exporting fine paste ceramics to the west and north into Yucatán. They married into Maya ruling families, absorbed Maya culture, both incorporating and introducing the Toltec ethos of the lost Tollan. Elements of this diaspora of the Maya west, including Mayanized Toltec elite and their craftsmen, eventually returned to central Mexico where, with other such dispersed

populations they founded a new Tollan at Xochicalco, epitome of Zuyuano, and perhaps at Cacaxtla where Maya style painting covered the walls, in a reformulation of the Teotihuacan tradition.

Nunualca. These revenants were probably Nunualca, who had departed Teotihuacan or Tula, lived on the Gulf Coast and Maya frontiers (in Nonohualco), many returning north with southern ideas. For the Maya, the Aztec, and probably the Toltec and Teotihuacan before them, the Nunualca were people who spoke with an accent. This was true for the Yucatec Maya as well (see Tozzer 1941:244, "Nonohualco"). Yax Nun Ayin at Tikal had the title *Nun* because he was a foreigner, and much later *K'ak' u Pakal* of Chichén Itzá was apparently also given a *nun* title (Grube 1994:334–336). Most frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá, *K'ak' u Pakal*, whether an individual or a title (Coggins 1987b), also had the typically Toltec appellations of Warrior, Lord of Fire, *K'awil* (God K), and Sprinkler, among others (Grube 1994:334, 335). In the Chilam Balam of Chumayel the Itzáes are also frequently described as people who could not speak the language (Tozzer 1941:note 123). Like Itzá, Toltec, Xiu, and Chichimec, the term Nunualca, perhaps of Nahuatl origin,⁷³ did not describe ethnic identity, but rather referred to characteristics of groups of people (Davies 1977:162–164; Proskouriakoff 1970:466). The Nunualca were supposed to have lived along the southern Gulf Coast, and been part of the populations of Tula, and Tollan, and Cacaxtla, as well as migrating southeast into Oaxaca and Veracruz, perhaps on the way to the Maya regions (Jiménez Moreno 1941; Carrasco 1971:463). However, these accented Nunualca were often associated with the artistic and intellectual ideals of Toltecáyotl, in contrast to the Chichimec warrior ethos (Piña Chan 1980:10; Davies 1977:164). Nunualca were surely part of both the Teotihuacan and the Tula diasporas, while for the Aztec they were probably among the *Tlailotlaques*—those who returned from the Mixteca bringing learning and craftsmanship lost in central Mexico for many centuries (Chadwick 1996:143; Kubler 1984:89, 178). The Nunualca represented much of the cultural continuity in the three centuries between Teotihuacan and Tula (and after). They may have included Itzá, remnants of the Tikal, Copán, and Usumacinta River Toltec dynasties, who had spread along the rivers and

73. *Non-tli* means someone mute in Nahuatl. It is perhaps significant that *Nonoquia* means to "sprinkle" or "scatter" (Karttunen 1983:174), since the scattering ritual is integral to Toltec *katun* ceremony at Tikal, and Sprinkler is a title of Kakupakal.



Figure 14. Murals, Temple of the Chac Mool, Chichén Itzá.
a. Warrior seated on north side. From Morris, Charlott, and Morris
1931:fig. 306.

across the southern Campeche Chenes region to the Bay of Chetumal, coming from the west but also from the south, thus corresponding to the two Itzá groups described by Ball and Taschek (1989).

The Itzá. J. Eric S. Thompson argued that the Itzá were the Putun sea traders, or Chontal-speaking Maya from Acalan, the watery rivers region of the mouths of the Usumacinta and Candelaria Rivers, in southwestern Campeche and eastern Tabasco (1970:ch. 1; Scholes and Roys 1968). While it is very likely the trading Putun transmitted Toltec culture, their water-based home environment is not likely to have been the source of many architectural and sculptural traits found at Chichén Itzá, and it is Ch'ol, not Putun Chontal, that analysis of the inscriptions suggests was spoken, along with Yucatecan, at Chichén Itzá (García Campillo, 2000).⁷⁴

74. The Chontal language of the Putun Maya is estimated to have separated from Western Ch'ol around A.D. 800 (Justeson et al. 1985:59).

Nikolai Grube has identified an *Ah Its'at*, "learned, artistic man," title at Xcalumkin in the southwestern peninsula and southern Puuc region that sources suggest was the home of the Itzá (1994:322).⁷⁵ *Its'at* might even translate as "Toltec" which may refer to a wise and artistic person in Nahuatl, and thus conceivably supply the derivation of Itzá, or *Itsá*.⁷⁶ However, I suggest the Itzá name may have applied to the original Toltec foreigners at Kaminaljuyu, Copán and Tikal, as well as to all subsequent southern traders in obsidian, whether brought to the northern Maya by eastern Caribbean or western river routes from the highlands of Guatemala. In Nahuatl the word for obsidian, and obsidian blades, is

75. There were probably many homes across the base of the peninsula and southwest as far as the Chinkultic region of Chiapas (Kowalski 1989).

76. Tozzer quotes Roys on the derivation of Itzá as "one of the most widely distributed patronymics in Yucatán" and "I am coming . . . to the conclusion that Itzá is a plant name not yet encountered" (1941:note 123).

Figure 14, *continued*

b. Lord seated on south side. From Morris, Charlot, and Morris 1931:fig. 305a.

itz-tli (Karttunen 1983:109), the two languages share an “itz” root.⁷⁷ Such an incorporation of a Nahuatl word into Maya may also be seen with *cacaw*. If it is a Nahuatl word, cacao might provide a striking example of the early dissemination of the Nahuatl name of a desirable, and in the case of obsidian, necessary, trade item. Obsidian was a key element in the economy of Teotihuacan, and believed by some to have been a factor in the Toltec settlement of Kaminaljuyu and Copán, near the prime Maya sources. Obsidian projectile points and knives were significant parts of Teotihuacan elite burials at Teotihuacan and abroad, and they were essential for Teotihuacan warriors, as their

exclusive weapons. Toltec “Itzá,” warrior-merchants may have supplied obsidian to all lowland Maya sites, from south to north, and along the peripheries. Their early capitals were the new Tollans at Copán and Tikal (Stuart, 2000) while after the Classic period, the principal Maya Tollan was Chichén Itzá. There, a Toltec Itzá merchant-warrior elite may have controlled the distribution of obsidian to lowland Maya sites, from south to north, arriving from the southern highlands, Central Mexico, Veracruz, and Michoacán (Braswell 1997), along with fine paste ceramics and cast copper bells.

The Itzá of Chichén Itzá were Toltec who, mostly as southern Maya, were shaped for at least five centuries by the ideal of Tollan. The Itzá comprised many polities in loose association that included learned governing elites who used the language of Zuyua and trained and directed overlapping warrior and long-distance merchant segments

77. Itzá is usually thought to derive from a combination of *its*, sorcerer, and *ha*, or *a*, water—thus “water witch,” in reference to the Sacred Cenote (Barrera Vásquez 1980:272; Piña Chan 1980; Ringle, Gallareta, and Bey 1998:note 33).

of their society, all sharing an idealized Toltec ancestry. From the beginning at Tikal, and until Chichén Itzá, Toltec calendar reforms had stressed the burden of time and the ruler's obligations in metaphoric allusion to the traveling merchant and warrior origins and the character of their culture. The armed men shown at Chichén Itzá, many explicitly identified as Toltec, were a specialized part of the complex Itzá society with its noble and priestly class, countless administrators, merchants, craftsmen, and ordinary citizens—all elements in the southern Mesoamerican Itzá coalition that shared an idealized Toltec warrior ancestry which was portrayed in the upper registers of the Lower Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá.

At Tula, Hidalgo, early evidence of the "Maya–Toltec" phenomenon is found in monumental sculpture that represents men with Maya nose bars on stelae—a foreign monumental form. These suggest the seated figures with Maya traits on the earlier Pyramid of the Feathered Serpent at Xochicalco. Reused low relief facade panels from Tula's Building J, south of Pyramid C, include Maya imagery that may prefigure the facade program of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén; they suggest Maya traits were present relatively early at Tula Grande, perhaps between A.D. 900–950, when they may have combined with local motifs in a new way. The Tula panels display a combination of, or an opposition between, a Maya long-snouted Chac with Tlaloc goggles, holding a serpent scepter, and Tlahuizcalpantecuhli (fig. 13a).⁷⁸ The juxtaposition of divine Maya and divine Toltec patronage contrasts the celestial and ancestral Maya storm god Chac (and early Tlaloc identity) with the terrestrial monster that disgorges the Toltec warrior's militant Venus as Morning Star. The same juxtaposition is found on the facades of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá (fig. 13b). Earlier paintings at Chichén Itzá in the sanctuary of the Chacmool Temple, beneath the Temple of the Warriors, show analogous segments of this society as Itzá (fig. 14a,b). Here, uniformed Toltec Itzá (Venus) warriors are shown seated on jaguar thrones on the north side of the throne room; they face Toltec Itzá nobles seated on the south who hold legitimizing Toltec Chac serpent scepters—late variations on the Classic Maya manikin scepter (Coggins 1988b; Coggins and Ladd 1992).

Toltec calendric preoccupations are evident in ninth-century Mayan inscriptions on the stone lintels of

structures in "Old Chichén." As at Tikal just before the completion of baktun eight, there is evidence of a deliberate association made between the Long count and the fifty-two-year cycles. Fifteen out of Chichén Itzá's twenty inscriptions, many with fire-making glyphs, cluster around the date 10.2.12.13.0, which was one fifty-two-year cycle after the completion of *baktun* 9. (Coggins 1989:264).⁷⁹ More significant, however, from the point of view of conscious Toltec continuity between Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan, is the fact that the year of completion of the ninth Maya baktun, A.D. 830, also saw the completion of thirteen fifty-two-year cycles since A.D. 154, or the thirteenth New Fire since A.D. 206.⁸⁰ This is a date close to the time of the sacrificial ceremony that inaugurated construction of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl and when the *talud-tablero* was probably introduced to the site; it was also thirteen fifty-two-year cycles *before* A.D. 1506—the last Aztec New Fire ceremony, before the Spanish Conquest.⁸¹ Such a choice of dates involved the structure of the Toltec and the Maya calendars commemorated together at Chichén Itzá by the Maya–Chichimec warriors and the Maya–Nunualca nobles of the Itzá. The Itzá were Toltec, Chichimec, and Nunualca from the time of Yax Nun Ayin and until K'ak'upakal—both of whom spoke with a bad accent. While always foreign, a source of its power, the Toltec ideal was integral to lowland Maya society to which it supplied dynastic legitimacy. The Toltec Maya warrior represented the ideal ruler, although this role changed after the fall of Teotihuacan as Quetzalcoatl became anthropomorphic. Similarly, calendric ritual changed to accommodate a multicultural society by emphasizing shorter cycles, to the exclusion of linear Maya history. Throughout a millennium of development, from early Teotihuacan to late Chichén Itzá, Toltec, as a way of life, was most remarkable for its clarity and continuity throughout the enriching and complicating changes in which it came to characterize the dominant male values of Mesoamerican civilization.

79. Most are between 10.2.0.0.0 and 10.2.17.0.0, ca. A.D. 869–886.

80. In "New Sun at Chichén Itzá" (1989:264), the retrospectively calculated cycles were based on a beginning date of A.D. 311/312 at Teotihuacan supplied by David Drucker. It now seems more likely that A.D. 154 was the beginning.

81. One Tochtli (1506) should have been the completion of the thirteenth fifty-two-year cycle; it was, however, changed to Two Acatl (1507), probably by Moctezuma II (Pérez Negrete n.d.; Umberger 1983:appendix).

78. This goggled Chac with serpentine scepter resembles the Copán example of about a century earlier that is the equivalent of the Maya Manikin Scepter (figs. 7b, 13a).

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