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**Mixtec Rulership in Early Colonial Times.
The *Codex of Yanhuitlan***

Ñuu Dzauí, the Mixtec people in Southern Mexico, conserve a rich heritage of impressive natural and cultural landscapes, with archaeological sites and multiple works of art. Especially famous is the corpus of precolonial Mixtec pictographic manuscripts (codices), a fragmented but extremely valuable register of the ancient history and worldview of the city-states that made up the political map of the region in the six centuries before the Spanish conquest (A.D. 1521).¹ The Spanish conquest (A.D. 1521) was a destructive and incisive interruption of the autonomous development of Middle America, causing a tremendous and traumatic demographic tragedy, as a consequence of introduced illnesses, bad treatment and coercive labour. At the same time a new religion and a new economy were introduced. In towns such as Yanhuitlan, Achiutla, and Teposcolula the ancient temple pyramids were replaced with huge Dominican monasteries and churches. The early-colonial *Aniñe* (Palace) in Teposcolula, locally known as the “Casa de la Cacica”, is a beautiful example of an indigenous palace, demonstrating how ancient Ñuu Dzauí architecture and aesthetics could be combined with European techniques. Recently restored and partially reconstructed, this building is evidence of how the descendants of the rulers (*iya toniñe*) of the precolonial *yuvui tayu*, “mats and thrones” (city-states or rather village states), continued to enjoy the high profile social status of an indigenous aristocracy, with its corresponding material splendour for some time (Kiracofe 1995; Terraciano 2001). It is oriented towards and aligned with the Dominican monastery and church: a clear indication of the mental reorientation and political realignment of the inhabitants.

The artistic quality and social meaning of this architecture is paralleled by a small number of fascinating pictorial manuscripts, which were produced for the early colo-

1 This paper results from our long-term research program on Mixtec language, history and culture, carried out with the help of several students, PhD candidates and postdoc researchers at the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, and with the financial support of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). A first abbreviated version was presented as a paper at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, end of April 2007, in Austin. We thank Itandehui Jansen for her inspiring comments.

nial *caciques* (indigenous rulers).² These codices or books in native style are archaeological artefacts and works of art, as well as historical texts, providing unique insights in what went on inside those palaces and convents.³ Generally painted from the *caciques*' perspective, they illustrate the ideology of the ruling families and their handling of the complex cultural interactions, mental changes, and social readjustments after the foreign invasion. Continuing the ancient pictographic tradition while adapting to a changing socio-political context, these manuscripts may be analysed as attempts to reassess and (re)create cultural memory.⁴

1. Different styles and ideologies

The *Codex Añute* or *Selden 3135* (A.2), from the town of Jaltepec in the Valley of Nochixtlan, was painted in 1556-1560, but is completely precolonial in style and iconography, stressing precolonial symbols of dynastic legitimization.⁵ Its narrative goes back to the First Dawn and the birth of the Founding Father from a Ceiba tree in Achiutla. The devotion of the rulers to the cult of the Sacred Bundle is repeatedly mentioned. Both the Aztec military expansion and the Spanish conquest, however, are passed over in silence.

This document was possibly prepared under the supervision of the ruler Lord 10 Grass 'Jaguar, Breath of the Earth', born in 1527 and baptised as Don Carlos de Villafañe. Given the precolonial conventions and the pre-Christian discourse, one suspects that this codex was not painted to be presented at any Spanish court (as suggested by Smith 1994), but rather in the context of a native ritual occasion, possibly the ceremony of designating the heir to the throne – in this case Don Angel de Villafañe, who became the *cacique* of Jaltepec in the 1560s. The message of the old ruler to his heir was phrased and produced in conservative terms, in the form of a precolonial

2 The role of the native nobility in New Spain has received renewed interest in recent years (e.g. Chance 2000; Pérez-Rocha/Tena 2000; González-Hermosillo, Adams 2001). The Mixtec case was already a focus of Spores' ground breaking *The Mixtec Kings and their People* (1967) and is particularly interesting because of the extensive precolonial and early colonial documentation in the form of pictorial manuscripts and related alphabetic documents (Jansen 1994; Terraciano 2001).

3 Boone (2000) provides a general introduction and overview, Olko (2005) a detailed and very relevant discussion of the representation of regalia and power symbols, while Jansen/Pérez Jiménez (2007) offer a reconstruction of important narratives.

4 For the concept of cultural memory as social (re)construction of identity referring to a common image of the past and a shared canon of ancient "mythical" models, see the work of Jan Assmann (1992).

5 We use here the new nomenclature of the Mixtec codices we proposed in an earlier article (Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2004). For a commentary on *Codex Añute* (Selden), see Jansen/Pérez Jiménez (2000). For the Mixtec terms see the 1593 vocabulary of friar Francisco de Alvarado (Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2003).

screenfold book with polychrome paintings, stressing the ancient values of the dynasty.

It is interesting and illustrative of the different ideological currents at the time to see a completely different style and contents in the *Codex of Yanhuítlan*, which must have been painted also around the middle of the 16th Century, in the town of Yanhuítlan, quite close to Jaltepec. It is an “explicitly” colonial book, on European paper and in European fashion, but still containing a pictorial text. This combination is of course innovative: the author has created a particular new style from Mesoamerican (both Ñuu Dzaui and Mexica) conventions and European elements and techniques, which has resulted in a remarkable work of art. Although he could copy earlier manuscripts for some of the information, the majority of his drawings are original compositions. Just as the style speaks of the interaction of the two worlds, the contents also deal with the relationship of the successive native rulers or *caciques* of Yanhuítlan with Spanish *encomenderos* and Dominican monks. There are no explicit references to precolonial worldview here. Instead of the ancient temple with the cult of the Sacred Bundle, we see images of the Catholic Church and the rosary. The representation of the *cacique* himself does not show the power of the *nahual*, as was customary in precolonial art, but, instead, stresses the acculturation to Spanish fashion and obedience to the Spanish authorities. We conclude that the *persona* of the ruler was no longer constructed in the interaction with the indigenous community but in conformity with the colonizer.⁶

2. Diverse fragments

Unfortunately, the interpretation of the *Codex of Yanhuítlan* is handicapped by the fact that the manuscript is incomplete and survives today in three fragments, which are themselves internally out of order.

1. The main part is in the University Museum of Puebla, consisting of 11 leaves with drawings on both sides and one additional leaf, which is a composite of several loose fragments. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno and Salvador Mateos Higuera (1940) have published these 24 pages (as ‘plates I-XXIV’), adding a detailed commentary, now a classic of our discipline.
2. Four leafs (eight pages with paintings) have been preserved in the *Archivo General de la Nación*, Mexico City (AGN Ramo de Vínculos volume 272, expediente 10), where they were discovered by Heinrich Berlin, who published them in an important small monograph (1947) as ‘plates A-H’.

6 Cf. the comments by Bartolomé (1997: 149ff.) on Mauss’ concept of the *persona* as constructed in social interaction. Brück (2005) reviews the use of the concept of personhood in recent archaeological studies.

Both fragments were united in a facsimile publication by María Teresa Sepúlveda y Herrera (1994), who added an *estudio preliminar* and proposed a reconstruction of the sequence of leaves ('plates I-XXXII'). The dimensions of the pages are approximately 31 cm (high) x 22 cm (wide); the water marks confirm that the book must have been painted after 1544 (a date given in the Ñuu Dzau calendar near the end of the manuscript).

3. Heinrich Berlin already noted that the important Oaxacan historian Manuel Martínez Gracida in his unpublished works describes several scenes from a *Codex of Tututepec*, which seems to be related to the *Codex of Yanhuítlan*. Some of these plates appear in a partial publication of Martínez Gracida's main opus (1986). Having had the opportunity to consult and study the still largely unpublished works of Martínez Gracida, now in the Oaxaca Public Library, with the professional and helpful assistance of its custodians (Jansen 1987), we were able to confirm Berlin's suggestion and to identify six paintings (presumably three leaves) as copies from now lost pages of the *Codex of Yanhuítlan* in Martínez Gracida's *Los Indios Oaxaqueños y sus monumentos arqueológicos*: volume III, plate 14 and volume V, plates 27, 29, 40, 42 and 62. Apparently, these parts of the codex were copied for Martínez Gracida while still in an archive or collection in Tututepec, on the Ñuu Dzau coast. This is interesting in view of the fact that the fragment that ended up in the *Archivo General de la Nación* is appended to the acts of a lawsuit brought by Don Francisco Pimentel y Guzmán, *cacique* of Tepozcolula and Yanhuítlan, to obtain control of the *cacicazgo* of Tututepec in 1653. Unfortunately we only have the reproductions of the Tututepec pages, so we cannot tell for sure which pages belong together (as obverse and reverse). Another intriguing problem is that the plates in the work of Martínez Gracida are coloured, while those in Puebla and in the *Archivo General de la Nación* are ink drawings without colouring. It is quite possible that Martínez Gracida's draughtsman did the colouring, well versed as he was in copying ancient paintings.

The three fragments together do not form a complete document. There are several scraps of pages in addition to an unknown number of leaves which have been completely lost.

Given the state of the source it is difficult to reconstruct the order of the loose leaves. We have to take into account:

1. The dates in the Ñuu Dzau calendar given on several pages,
2. the physical connection between the obverse and reverse sides of the leaves
3. the context of historical events that took place in the region and that seem to be referred to by several images of the codex,
4. the internal "logic" of the narrative.

The main primary sources for reconstructing the history of events in Yanhuitlan in the 16th century are the 17th century chronicles of the Dominican mission by friar Francisco de Burgoa (1989) and a number of archival documents, such as lawsuits about the succession and tribute rights of the *cacique* (Paillés Hernández 1993a; 1993b), the *Proceso Inquisitorial* of 1544 against the *cacique* and *gobernadores* of Yanhuitlan (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999), and incidental letters, such as that by Juan de la Zarza to the *encomendero* Francisco de Las Casas in 1529, or that by Alonso Caballero, a local Spanish inhabitant of Yanhuitlan, to the *visitador* Valderrama in 1563 (Scholes/Adams 1961). Synthesizing these and other data, the studies by Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera (1940), Spores (1967) and Pérez Ortiz (2003), have constructed a progressively clearer image.

3. *Caciques, Monks and Encomenderos*

The names of the protagonists in the codex, the native rulers, have often been damaged (probably due to alterations in later use of this document in colonial lawsuits concerning privileges and succession rights), but other historical documents permit us to reconstruct the dynastic sequence. We note that in contrast to precolonial codices, which focus on the couple of Lord (*iya*) and Lady (*iyadzehe*) as the unit of authority and lineage history, this Spanish influenced pictorial text is only concerned with the male line of rulers leaving the women to disappear from history.

Combining different lines of evidence, we may reconstruct the dynasty and so still find an albeit hypothetical story-line, as a further step towards the general understanding of this source. For the identification of the pages we use the initials of the authors of the works in which the plates appear: JM (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940), HB (Berlin 1947), SH (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1994) and MG (Martínez Gracida 1986 and the unpublished manuscript of *Los Indios Oaxaqueños y sus Monumentos Arqueológicos*).

The first page (JM: II/SH: II) contains an important opening scene, which may be analysed as a composition of two crossing diagonal lines. The first line mentions place and time, fundamental categories that are also often present in precolonial codices. In the upper left-hand corner we see a building in frontal view with discs in stone mosaics in the roof (as in the *Casa de la Cacica* of Teposcolula). It is glossed as *aniñe*, and indeed the convention of such discs in the roof is a diagnostic sign for the *tecpan* in Central Mexican sources (Batalla Rosado 1997). This palace is located on a place sign that is the Aztec convention to represent Yanhuitlan, the “New Town”, consisting of a white blanket. In *Codex Mendoza* a tooth, *tlantli*, is added to assure the reading of the locative suffix *-tlan* (Clark 1938). The Mixtec toponymic sign was quite different and probably referred to another place-name: Valley (*yodzo*) – Mouth (*a-*) – Bird (type?) with Arrowheads (*nduvua*) on its beak (Smith 1973: 62-63). The combination of the Mouth and Arrowheads may represent Anduvua, one of the main subject communities

Fig. 1: Assembly in front of the palace, Yanhuitlan (JM: II)



of Yanhuitlan and a former city-state. We may reconstruct the *aniñe* in our imagination as similar to the *Casa de la Cacica* in Teposcolula, but today this precolonial building has disappeared and only the crumbling and overgrown adobe-walls of a later version (the residence of Don Gabriel de Guzmán) are still standing in the centre of the village.⁷

In the lower right-hand corner a date is given: the year 1 Flint, and a day Flint. Its position and configuration recall the sacred founding dates so abundantly mentioned in *Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis)*.⁸ We suppose that the day is 1 Flint, which would make it the “year bearer” or first day of the Mixtec year 1 Flint, i.e. March 24 of 1520.

The other diagonal is that of the ruler Lord 9 House (in the upper right hand section) facing an assembly of the people (in the lower left hand section). This *cacique* is represented in precolonial style, wearing a tunic (*dzico*) and seated in profile on the rectangle with step-fret motif, which is the convention to express *ñuu*, “town”.

A letter from a Spanish inhabitant of Yanhuitlan in 1563 identifies Francisco Calci as the ruler of this place at the time of the conquest: “Francisco Calci, el cual cuando la tierra se ganó era cacique y señor en el dicho pueblo” (Scholes/Adams 1961: 300). He is also mentioned in the records of the *Proceso Inquisitorial* against a later *cacique* (Don Domingo de Guzmán) and two *gobernadores* of Yanhuitlan, dating from 1544. At that time the defunct Calci received offerings as an earlier ruler of the town (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 44; Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 163). The name *Calci (Cal-tzin)* means “Lord House” in Nahuatl (the Aztec language, which often was used in the documents; the translation process in those days often passed from Mixtec to Nahuatl to Spanish and vice versa). It is a “calendar name”, identifying a person according to his day of birth, in this case the sign House. The number is not specified in the cited document, but the comparison with the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* shows it to be the number nine.

Spores (1967: 66, 132) has pointed out the importance of the voluminous document on the conflict between Tecomatlan and Yanhuitlan in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Sevilla (AGI, Escribanía de Cámara 162) and noted that this lawsuit of 1582-1584 refers to a Lord Nabacaltzin or Nabalcaltzin, king and *cacique* of the whole Mixteca Alta and Baja. We should distinguish between Yanhuitlan’s Calci and this ancient ruler however, as the latter lived more than 400 years earlier; it was from his son, Matlace Itzli [11 Flint], that the dynasty of Tecomatlan descended: “desde que fue

7 This later palace is described in early colonial texts as a large complex of nine courtyards: “unas cassas grandes en que ay nueve patios que llaman la cassa de la tecpa” (AGN Civil 516). Some of these had columns, and domed rooms around them (Cobo, cited by Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 49).

8 Edition and commentary: Anders/Jansen/Pérez Jiménez (1992).

casique matlace yztli hijo de naba caltzin rrey e cacique de toda la misteca alta y baxa que abra mas de quatrocientos años” (AGI Escibanía de Cámara 162, f. 38v). This statement is most likely a reference to Naui Eecatzin, Lord 4 Wind, who was indeed ruler of a large part of the Mixteca Alta and Baja in the 12th Century (Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2005; 2007).

Returning to the middle section of the first page of the *Codex of Yanhuitlan*, in front of Lord 9 House we see four priests, who seem to be offering leaves with birds. In one case, in the heavily damaged part on the left, we recognise a turkey. The same action is performed by the central person in the first row of the assembly: a sort of “people’s representative”, who seems to hold a quail. The offering of birds is similar to the decapitation of a quail, which has been recognised in the precolonial Ñuu Dzauí codices as a “ceremonial salute”, generally part of an “offering of royalty”.⁹

In the upper right-hand corner we see another individual, similar in appearance to Lord 9 House, seated above him. This is a loose part of the paper, however, so we are not even sure whether this figure really belongs here, although among the preserved pages there is no other place where he would easily fit. If this man is indeed part of the scene, he is obviously a second important native authority. We might think of a co-ruler or important ally, but most likely he would be Calci’s father. In that case the scene would represent the ruler’s designation of his heir and the acceptance of that appointment by the people.

The reverse side of this leaf (JM: I; SH: I) depicts a confrontation between Spanish conquistadors and native warriors on a dam between canals. We recognise the image as a scene of the *Noche Triste* (June 30, 1520).¹⁰ Here it serves as a general reference to the dramatic turning point in Mesoamerican history: the battle for the Aztec capital. The drawing is turned 90 degrees, so that the painter could present a panoramic view of the battle scene. It is quite possible that he copied it from an earlier representation and preferred not to adjust it to the format of his own book. At the same time this device underscores that the scene is not directly part of the narrative: it was included as an event that took place elsewhere, but was nevertheless an important point of reference. Earlier studies took this as the opening scene and the first page; we think that the codex started in accordance with the Ñuu Dzauí canon: focusing on a rulership ceremony and clearly stating place and (sacred) time.

The date Year 2 House, i.e. 1521, when the Spaniards conquered the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, defines the position of the next page (JM: III/SH: III). The underlying

9 *Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis) passim*. Compare the traditional sacrifice of quails demanded from the whole population by the native priests in order to avoid the wrath of the ancient deities and avert illness, as described in the *Proceso Inquisitorial* (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 168).

10 Compare the images in the *Lienzo of Tlaxcala* (Chavero 1979: 40ff.) and Sahagún (1950/78, Book 12, fig. 91).

theme seems to be the change of power to a pro-Spanish ruler. Two roads, i.e. missions, are coming from a place called Black Palace, situated in the mountains. The sign might in principle refer to a place-name such as Tiltepec (Mixtec equivalent: *Yucu Tnoo*, “Black Mountain”) near Yanhuitlan in the same valley, but the mountainous environment suggests that Yanhuitlan’s powerful neighbour Tilantongo is meant. Both this Nahuatl toponym and its Mixtec equivalent, *Ñuu Tnoo*, mean: “Black Place”. The ruler seated here is wearing a European hat, an indication that he is manifesting himself as an ally of the Spaniards. The whole image gives the impression of being retouched. The number of his calendar name is 8, but the day-sign has been altered beyond recognition; maybe the sign Deer was originally painted here. At the time Tilantongo was ruled by a Lord 4 Deer. The number of the calendar name of the individual in the codex makes us think of his younger brother: Lord 8 Death (*Iya Namahu*), who was married to the crown princess of Yanhuitlan, Lady 1 Flower (*Iyadzehe Cahuaco*). This couple is represented in *Codex Ñuu Tnoo – Ndisi Nuu* (Bodley), p. 19-III.¹¹ Possibly the alteration of the name of the ruler in the mountains in this page of the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* was done with the aim of substituting Lord 4 Deer by Lord 8 Death as protagonist of the actions depicted.

On the upper road of our page the ruler of Black Palace sends a negotiator (Lord 2 Eagle) to visit Lord 9 House and establish some important agreement with him. On the lower road, two carriers (one of them wearing sandals, suggesting that he has the status of a *cacique*) travel with food (a huge turkey and a basket-ful of tortillas) to a large palace, the drawing of which unfortunately is quite damaged. On the staircase of the palace several native shields have been deposited.

In view of the date and the Spanish hat of the ruler, we suppose he sent these gifts as symbols of his friendship to the conquistadors. The same act of giving turkeys and tortillas is represented in the drawings of the *Lienzo of Tlaxcala* as symbol of support to Cortés’ troops (Chavero 1979: 53ff.). The shields may represent the native allies or subdued armies that by now had pledged alliance to the conquistadors (Chavero 1979: 43).

The two roads seem to represent two simultaneous aspects of a project initiated by a prince of Tilantongo, possibly Lord 4 Deer – later Lord 8 Death was credited with having been the (intellectual) author of these actions. By manifesting himself as an ally of the new colonial power, he started a process aimed at taking over the throne of Lord 9 House. The ambassador sent to Lord 9 House would suggest to the reader that this happened with the consent of the ruler of Yanhuitlan.

11 Edition and commentary: Jansen/Pérez Jiménez (2005). Caso (1970; 1977/79, II: 154) made the original identification. *Codex Ñuu Tnoo – Ndisi Nuu* (Bodley) concurs with AGN Civil 516 in identifying Lord 8 Death (*Namahu*) as the son of Lord 10 Rain (*Xico*) of Tilantongo.

Starting on the reverse side, a traditional assembly of rulers of subject settlements and neighbouring towns is inserted here as the ritual recognition of a new ruler (JM: IV-V-VI/SH: IV-V-VI). The place-signs are completely conform to Ñuu Dzauí conventions and clearly copied from an original in precolonial style.

This line of settlements and nobles leads us to an image of the *cacique* on the throne of rulership. We find this image on a fascinating page (HB: E/SH: VII), which also contains a date: the year 5 Reed (1524). But the native ruler is not the protagonist of the scene. That role is taken by a Spanish conquistador, seated on a European chair (the new, colonial seat of authority) on top of the place sign of Yanhuitlan, and holding a sword, as the symbol of military conquest.¹² This must be Francisco de Las Casas, who took possession of Yanhuitlan as *encomendero* in that year. In front of him appears the native *cacique*, seated on the mat and the throne, i.e. conserving some of his rights from the earlier political structure of the *yuvui tayu*. The rectangle under him indicates that he still controls some lands, but no longer the town itself. By imitating the Spanish fashion in hat and beard, and combining the traditional cape with a European shirt, the *cacique* expresses his acculturation and obedience to the new regime. His name has been torn out, probably due to an alteration of the narrative, adapting it for presentation to a Spanish court, but given the date and the external information he must have been *Iya Namahu*, Lord 8 Death ‘Jaguar, Fire Serpent’ (*Ñaña Yahui*), the prince from Tilantongo who married the crown princess from Yanhuitlan, Lady 1 Flower (*Iyadzehe Cauaco*) ‘Jaguar Quechquemitl’ (*Dzico Ñaña*), i.e. ‘Virtue or Force of the Jaguar’. In 1580-1581 elderly persons remembered that Namahu and Cauaco had been *caciques* of Yanhuitlan some 55 years ago (AGN Civil 516; Pailles Hernández 1993b: 15).

This means that Lord 8 Death (*Namahu*) and Lady 1 Flower (*Cauaco*) had become the successors of the above-mentioned Lord 9 House (*Calci*) in 1525. The fact that this Lord 9 House of Yanhuitlan was baptised as Don Francisco and his son as Don Gonzalo suggests, however, that he was still alive when the first friars passed through Yanhuitlan in the late 1520’s. The generational sequence of names Don Francisco – Don Gonzalo clearly follows the name of the Spanish *encomendero* Don Francisco de Las Casas and his son Don Gonzalo de Las Casas (Himmerich y Valencia 1991: 137).

Calci’s son, Don Gonzalo, later claimed that his father had died when he himself was still a small child and that he was succeeded directly by Don Domingo de Guzmán (Scholes/Adams 1961: 300), which would mean that Calci lived till the end of the 1530’s. Although the overall picture is far from clear, there is reason to believe that Lord 8 Death’s enthronement as *cacique* in 1524 was not because his predecessor Calci had died, but as a consequence of a political shift, in which Lord 8 Death allied

12 See the excellent study by Wood (2003) on the representation of Spaniards in early colonial pictorial manuscripts.

with the Spanish conquistadors and was recognised as the new ruler. This is likely to be the reason why the *caciczgo* still appears connected to the name of Lord 9 House, who appears to have lived on for quite some time, but without his ancient royal authority.

On the reverse side (HB: F/SH: VIII) we find the following year: 6 House (1525). The large head of an alligator, the first day sign of the 260-day count, introduces a temporal topic. That is why we think it introduces a set of pages that refer to the times in which tributes had to be handed in to the *cacique* (HB: B, A, C; SH: X, IX, XI). These were specific twenty-day periods (*veintenas*) in conformity with general practice in ancient Mexico:

1. *Tlacaxipehualiztli* (“Flaying People”, 2nd *veintena* of the Aztec calendar, 1st of the Mixtec), represented as a Sun disc with the face of the God Xipe (the Flayed One),
2. *Etzalcualiztli* (“Eating beans and maize”, 6th *veintena* of the Aztec calendar), represented by an image of the Rain God (Tlaloc in Nahuatl, Dzavui in Mixtec).
3. *Ochpaniztli* (“Sweeping the roads”, 11th *veintena* of the Aztec calendar), represented by an image of the Mother Goddess Tlazolteotl (the image is severely damaged, part of the headdress – the typical ‘hat’ of the Goddess – is to be found on a loose scrap of paper: JM: XXIII/SH XXXI).
4. *Panquetzaliztli* (“Raising the Banners”, the 15th *veintena* of the Aztec calendar), represented as a Sun disc with the Sun God in the center, which is different from the Aztec convention of painting their tribal God Huitzilopochtli.¹³

Etzalcualiztli and *Ochpaniztli* are combined on one page, which must be rotated 90 degrees in order to be read. In doing so, we notice that the reading sequence of these two fiestas is from the right to the left. Clearly, the painter copied this part from a codex in precolonial style.

The order of these *veintenas* is given by the Mesoamerican calendar. The *Codex of Yanhuítlan* then gives a detailed list of all the artefacts and services that the people

13 The four tribute periods may be connected to the four feasts celebrated annually in Yanhuítlan (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 142). Seler (1960/61, I: 164-169) already identified and discussed these four tribute periods and their signs, as appearing in one of the Humboldt manuscripts in Berlin. Similar signs of Flayed Face and Sun combined with temples may represent the Mixtec equivalents of Tlacaxipehualiztli and Panquetzaliztli in *Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis)*, p. 48. On a carved stone in Cuilapan the month Panquetzaliztli – including the day 11 Death of the Year 10 Flint, i.e. November 15, 1568 – is represented as Ritual (“the speaking to the four directions”) of the Banner on the Altar (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 69). Following the same correlation, the other feast sign on that stone, Ritual of the *Macana* (“Sword”), including the days 11 Serpent – 6 Reed of the Year 10 Reed, must represent the Mixtec equivalent of the Aztec *veintena Tecuilhuitontli*.

offered to this *cacique* – as a norm, no doubt, for the continued payment of such tributes in later time.¹⁴ This ritualised payment included:

1. Two silver plates, identified by a gloss: *platos de plata* (HB: D/SH: XII) – the position of this page (and the topic introduced here) is guaranteed by the scene being drawn on the reverse side of the Panquetzalitzli image –,
2. two flutes (MG: V-29) – an image that fits well here as it also presents a set of two gifts –,
3. two feather headdresses (MG: V-62 and HB: G/SH: XIII), which seem to form a pair (although preserved in different collections),
4. a large number of blank discs on two opposing pages that seem to form a thematic unit (HB: H/SH XIV and JM: XXII/SH 24),¹⁵
5. the cutting of wood; four hundred spoons and bowls (JM: XXI/SH: XXIII),
6. the service of grinding and carrying corn and of four hundred men attending the *cacique*, ruling the *cacicazgo* of 9 House (JM: XII/SH XXII),
7. four houses or granaries filled with corn, glossed *ytu huiyo*, “maize field” (JM: XI/SH: XXI),
8. continuing the same type of information: one house with baskets filled with dots, representing small kernels or powdered material such as salt,¹⁶ one house filled with chile peppers, glossed *ytu yaha si yya toniñe*, “field(s) of chile peppers belonging to the *cacique*”, and one with beans, glossed *ytu nduchi tnuu*, “field(s) of black beans” (JM: X/SH XX).

This list is followed by a description of the winning of gold dust from the rivers of three specific places (JM: IX/SH: XIX). Spanish soldiers are shown supervising these actions, which suggests that they immediately usurped this part of the tribute. As a final tribute the cultivation of three corn-fields is mentioned (JM: XVII/SH: XVI).

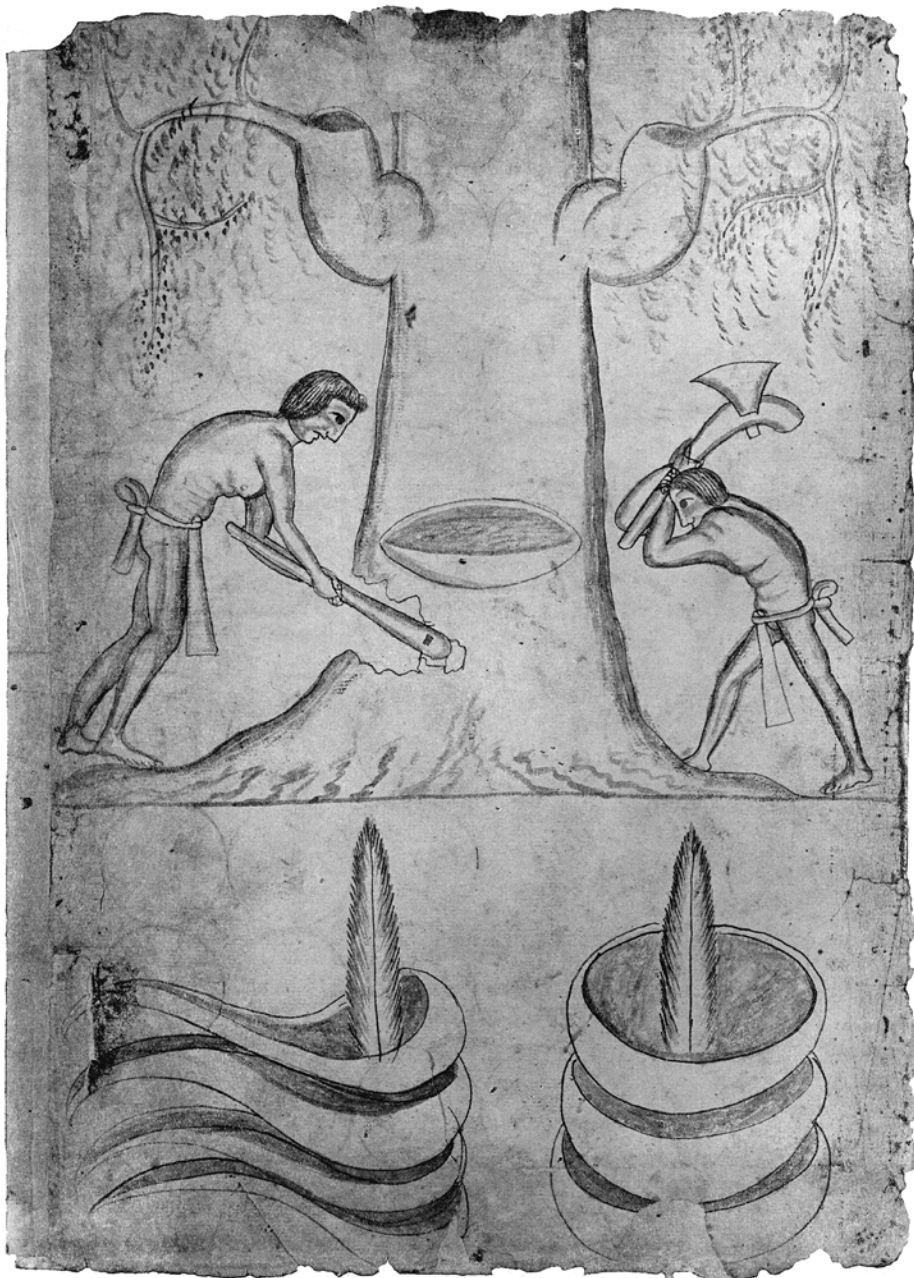
After this, we see the Europeanised town of Yanhuitlan, surrounded by boundary markers. On the mat and throne, leaning on this city, sits its new ruler, of whose calendar name only 6 dots remain. The year in which the first Dominican missionaries visited Yanhuitlan, started to baptise people and founded a monastery, was 1527 (Se-

14 Compare the lists of tributes to be paid to Don Domingo, Don Gabriel and to the *encomendero* (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 36-37, 33 respectively).

15 We count 54 + 48 = 102 discs on these two pages, but small fragments preserved (JM: XXIII; SH: XXXI) suggest that there may have been one or more other folios in between with a similar amount. The meaning of the discs is not clear. In the *Codex Texupan or Sierra* (León 1982) such blank disks represent *tomines*, while disks with crosses or 8’s identify pesos. The period that these pages of the *Yanhuitlan codex* refer to, seems too early for a reference to money.

16 It seems too early for these baskets with small kernels to represent wheat. Gold dust – another iconographic possibility, seems out of place as the house with these baskets is listed between one with maize and one with chile peppers.

Fig. 2: Cutting wood as “tribute” (JM: XXI)



púlveda y Herrera 1999: 132). On August 25, 1529, Juan de la Zarza, the *mayordomo* of Francisco de Las Casas wrote from Mexico to the *encomendero* about the situation in New Spain and in Yanhuitlan in particular. Describing how in Las Casas's absence another Spaniard, Escobar, claimed to have received control over the town and abused those powers, Zarza briefly noted: "the cacique of Yanhuitlan has died; they said Escobar has killed him, he has been jailed for this, but has escaped" (Otte 1970: 110-111). This short remark dates and explains the death of Iya Namahu (Pérez Ortiz 2003: 76-80).

In our reconstruction of the page order, the scene with the ruler on the mat (JM: XVIII; SH: XV) occurs shortly after that tragic event. It is likely that this ruler was Iya Namahu's successor, i.e. his son-in-law, Iya Nuqh, "Lord 6 Movement", baptised as Don Diego, from the dynasty of Chachoapan and Tamazola. Actually, the power passed on to Iya Namahu's daughter, Lady 2 House (*Iyadzehe Coquahu*), baptised as Doña María, who married Don Diego Nuqh soon afterwards, but her role is diminished from this colonial perspective.¹⁷ The place sign clearly represents Yanhuitlan, but is glossed as *huey ñuhu yucundaa*, "the church of Teposcolula", signalling the main missionary centre at the time.

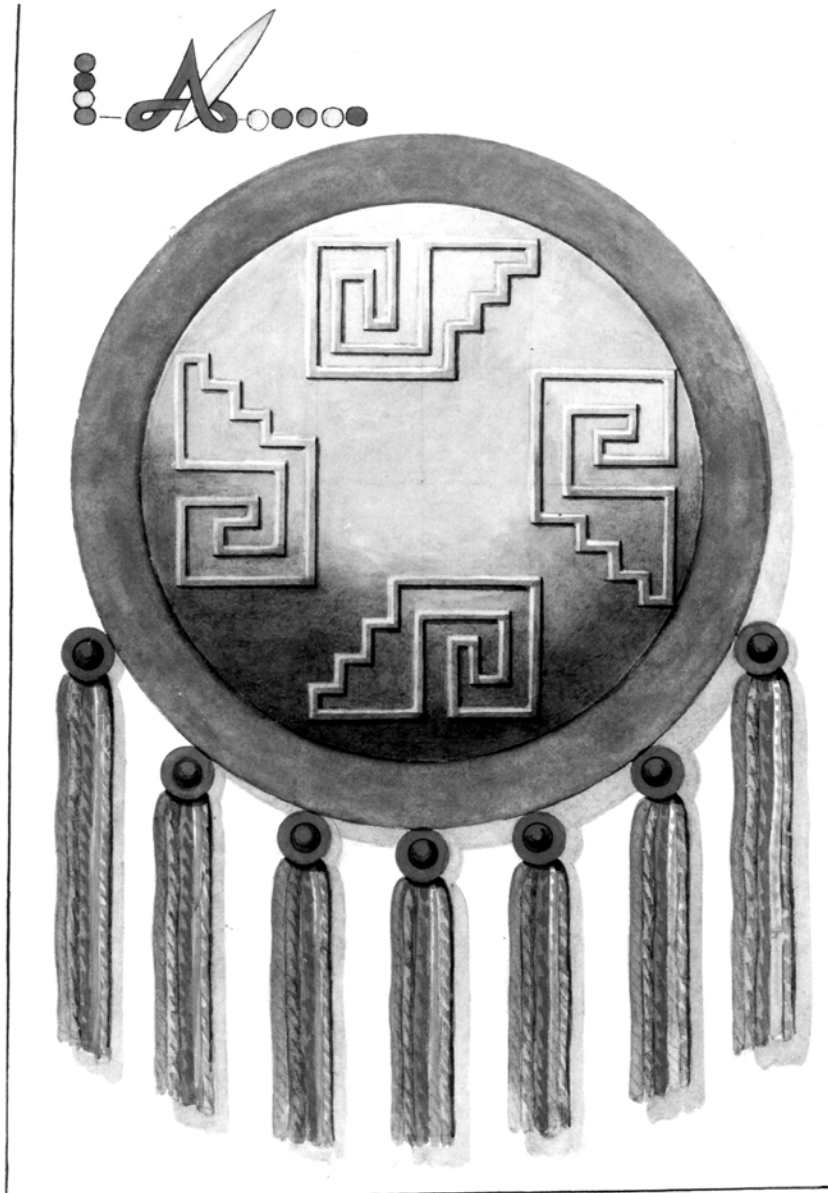
The *cacique* received special gifts on this occasion: a golden shield in the Year 9 Flint, i.e. 1528 (MG: V-27) and two spear throwers in the form of coiling serpents in the year 10 House, i.e. 1529 (MG: III-14). Twelve places are listed as the subject or allied communities of Yanhuitlan at the time, which, by their position in front of the main sign of the town (and after the precious gifts), recognise the new ruler (JM: VII/SH: XVIII). The most easily identified are:

1. Altar of Flowers: Chiyo Yuhu (Suchixtlan),
2. Mountain of the Staff: Yucu Tatnu (Topiltepec),
3. Mountain – Foot – Altar: Sachio,
4. Mouth with Arrow: Anduvua.

Zarza's letter also announces a change of *encomendero*. In 1529-1530 due to political intrigues in New Spain politics, power was temporarily taken away from Francisco de Las Casas and given to other Spanish officials. This seems to be represented in the codex under the year 11 Rabbit (1530) in which we recognise Francisco de Las Casas on the left hand of the page and another Spaniard with a turban in front of him (JM: VIII/SH: XVII). The first is seated on the place sign, i.e. as the "rightful *encomendero*". Looking at the reader he makes a public statement, pointing with his right index finger to the two raised fingers of his left hand. The other Spaniard touches with his right hand index and thumb the second finger of his right hand. Likely he is the in-

17 The family relationships and rules of inheritance are clarified in AGN Tierras 3343 and AGN Civil 516 (Pailles Hernández 1993b: 16).

Fig. 3: Golden shield as special gift (MG: V-27)



*Civilización Mixteca.
Modela de Oro de Tututepec.*

famous Juan Peláez de Berrio, who received large benefits and powers in Oaxaca – among which the *encomienda* of Yanhuitlan – from his brother, *licenciado* Diego Delgadillo, one of the members of the *Audiencia*, set up as the new colonial authority, which, very hostile towards Cortés and his faction, ousted Las Casas from his possessions (Otte 1970; Pérez Ortiz 2003: 52-61). Being from Granada, Peláez de Berrio is represented as a “*moro*”, an image that at the same time may include a covert criticism of his cruel, “un-Christian” behaviour. Further, the native historiography glosses over those internal conflicts of Spanish rule by suggesting a rather peaceful transition. The gestures of both Spanish men on this page stress the middle finger, which in this context probably refers to a *second* and *intermediary* position. Las Casas seems to say: “Here I appoint my temporal successor, the second *encomendero*”, while Peláez de Berrio accepts this designation. Indeed the *encomienda* would return to Las Casas several years later.

In the Year 12 Reed (1531) the freshly appointed second *encomendero* demanded a major tribute: 18 buckets, which have a “metallic” appearance and, therefore, may have been filled with gold dust (JM: XIII/SH: XXVI). The number suggests that such a bucket had to be paid each of the 18 twenty-day periods (*veintenas*) of the year.

The next section, starting on the reverse side of the preceding page, focuses on the introduction of Christianity by Dominican monks. This is the background for what in the second half of the 16th century would become the magnificent monastery and church of Yanhuitlan (Ortiz Lajous 1994; Mullen 1995). A first step in this project was the signing of a plan by the bishop and the *provincial* of the Dominican order. Both are seated on chairs (being colonial authorities), at a European table (JM: XIV/SH: XXV). Between them, suspended in the air, is a configuration of three objects: possibly a colonial pictographic rendering of the bishop’s name.¹⁸

Already at the first *capítulo* of the Dominican province (1535) a strategy was designed to evangelise La Mixteca. Fray Domingo de Betanzos, the first *provincial* of the order in Mexico, heeded the request of the first bishop of Oaxaca, Juan López de Zárate and sent missionaries to that region (Burgoa 1989, I: 280-281; Gillow 1978: 76-77). It is likely that these two men are represented here. At the time of the second *capítulo* (1538) a “house” of the Dominican order was already in existence in Yanhuitlan and the decision was taken to continue and intensify the evangelization of the region (Pérez Ortiz 2003: 101-106). We see here the follow-up of the papal bull *Sublimis Deus* issued by Pope Paul III in 1537, recognizing that the indigenous peoples of the Americas were persons endowed with reason and capable of becoming Christians (Zavala 1991). The provincial elected at the third *capítulo*, fray Domingo de la Cruz, formalised the official foundation of the monastery in 1541, designating fray Domingo

18 If Nahuatl is used as the language of reference here, perhaps we should identify the signs as a maize cob (*eLOtl*) and a pot (*aPAZtli*) with its cover, and read them as *lo-pez*.

de Santa María to be the *vicario* (Burgoa 1989, I: 286, 290). The latter soon started a building project.

Fig. 4: The cacique and the land between two rivers (MG: V-40)



In the Year 8 Flint (1540) and the Year 9 House (1541) two important local personalities – Lord 7 Serpent, whose sandals indicate that he had *cacique* status, and Lord 4 Reed, likely an assisting local noble (*gobernador?*) – are standing in the middle of an area delimited by two rivers that join in the upper right-hand corner of the page (MG: V-40). Corn grows in the area, suggesting that we are dealing with a specific extension of fields. In the lower left-hand corner a place-name is given: River of the Bundles of Rope (*Ixtle?*), where a family is residing: Lord 7 Deer and a couple – probably his parents – Lord 10 Monkey and Lady 8 House. We might interpret this scene as the offering of a large plot of land by the *cacique*, *gobernador* and local landowners for the construction (expansion) and maintenance of the monastery and church.¹⁹ The *cacique* of Yanhuitlan at the time was Don Domingo de Guzmán (± 1510 – 1558). He was the brother of Doña María Coquahu and ruled after her death (± 1540) as a regent for her son Don Gabriel de Guzmán, who had been born in 1537 and was the legitimate heir to the throne (Spores 1967: 134-135).

According to Alonso Caballero's letter, Don Domingo de Guzmán succeeded his brother Calci (Scholes/Adams 1961: 300). The latter statement cannot be correct, as we are well informed about don Domingo's immediate kin: Calci was not one of his brothers. Maybe Caballero just made a mistake, but it is also possible that his statement was derived from local information and should therefore be understood in Mixtec kinship terms. In the Mixtec language the word for 'brother' (*ñani*) also means 'cousin', which may have provoked confusion and caused the use of *hermano* ("brother") instead of *primo hermano* ("cousin") in the Spanish text.

The *Proceso Inquisitorial* of 1544 mentions *Acace* as predecessor and uncle (*tío*) of Don Domingo de Guzmán. (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 15, 38; Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 117). It has been suggested that *Acace* is a misspelling of *Calci*. If Calci was indeed an uncle of Don Domingo, he most likely was the brother of Lady 1 Flower (*Cauaco*), Don Domingo's mother.

On the other hand, *Acace* seems to be a rendering of the calendar name *Acatzin*, "Lord Reed", which would make him a distinctly different individual. In that case the two sources may be complementary rather than contradictory, as Don Domingo de Guzmán could have been the nephew of *Acace* and the cousin of *Calci*. In this line of thought, *Calci* might have been *Acace*'s son and Lady 1 Flower *Acace*'s sister. Definitive proof for either one of these scenarios should be looked for in the archives.

The reverse side of the aforementioned page was possibly the one with the scene of four houses, i.e. subject settlements or wards (MG: V-42). Of these we recognise

19 Compare the donation of land to this effect by Don Gabriel de Guzmán (Jiménez Moreno/Mateos Higuera 1940: 34). The church and monastery were constructed on a large platform, on the South side of which precolonial temples had been located (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 140). The whole complex is indeed bordered by two small streams coming from the Eastern hills.

Molcaxtepec (House of the Tripod Bowl) and Axomulco (House of the Corner of the Stream), two *estancias* of Yanhuitlan. They are supporting the local economy, and supposedly the maintenance of the church and convent, by dedicating themselves to the production of silk and wheat, promoted as “cash crops” by the Spaniards from around 1540 onward (Spores 1967: 81-84).²⁰

This was the time in which the cult of the rosary was introduced into the Ñuu Dzaui region. This appears in the codex as an impressive, large rosary connected to a fourfold bell, announcing its importance to the four directions (JM: XV/SH: XXVIII). We notice the Mesoamerican art-work on the golden beads of the rosary, stressing that this artefact (and the related practice) was assimilated into the native tradition.

The large rosary continues on the next page. An *encomendero*, whom we recognise as the very same Francisco de Las Casas, mentioned in the beginning of the manuscript, instructs Mixtec *caciques* in “counting the precious necklace of the Lady”, *yocahui dzeque iyadzehe*, i.e. telling one’s beads, praying the rosary (JM: XVI/SH: XXVII).²¹

The date, according to this reconstruction, must be in the beginning of the 1540s, most likely the first half of 1544. On the place sign of Yanhuitlan two *caciques* are standing (their status is indicated by this very act as well as by their elaborate clothing and their sandals). They would be Don Domingo (approximately 34 years old), on our left, and his nephew, young Don Gabriel (actually only seven years old) directly in front of the *encomendero*. He is identified with the calendar name Lord 7 Monkey and the native given name ‘Jaguar with Torch’.²² Naturally, Don Gabriel is shown here in a central protagonist role because the codex really deals with his lineage, focusing on his direct ancestors: his father Don Diego Nuqh and his grandfather Iya Namahu.

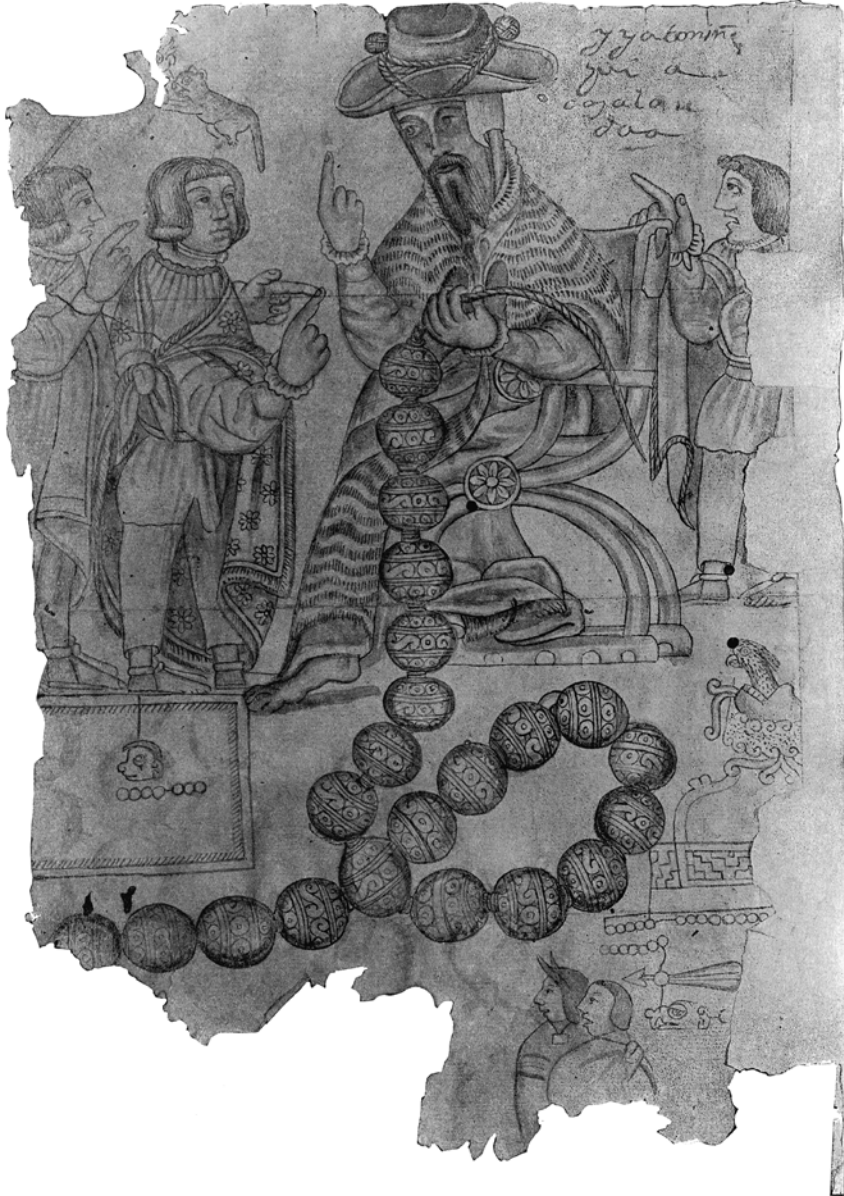
On the other side of the *encomendero* a third *cacique* is mentioned, identified by a gloss as the ruler (*iya toniñe*) of Yucu Ndaa, i.e. Teposcolula. In the lower right-hand section of the page a reference is made to a noble couple associated with one of the subject settlements of Yanhuitlan: they must have played a crucial role in the introduction of the rosary cult.

20 Compare the representation of silk in *Codex Texupan* (Códice Sierra), pp. 47ff. (León 1982).

21 The Dominicans were very much devoted to this special cult, which they promoted especially from 1538 onward (Fernández Rodríguez 1994: 164-165). A treatise on the miracles of the rosary was translated into the Mixtec language (see Jansen 1998). As Frassani (2006) has pointed out, a painting of the Virgin of the Rosary is a prominent part of the 16th century main altar-piece (*retablo*) in the church of Yanhuitlan. The *encomendero* Francisco de Las Casas played a dominant role in local religious affairs, much to the anger of the Dominicans: “él era obispo y papa en su pueblo” (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 190, cf. 160, 167).

22 N.B. this is clearly an example of a well-known Mixtec personal name, which we find also represented in other codices. The formal similarity with the representation of the Dominican order in Spanish iconography as *Domini canis*, “Dog of the Lord” (as suggested by Jiménez Moreno) is no argument for identifying the name of this person as Domingo.

Fig. 5: Cacique of Yanhuitlan, learning to pray the rosary (JM: XVI)



Interestingly, shortly after, in the years 1544-1546, the *cacique* regent Don Domingo was persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition and jailed in Mexico City because of his

continued devotion to the ancient Ñuu Dzauí religion (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999; Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2000: ch. IV). This codex implicitly contradicts that accusation by stressing the piety and loyalty of the Yanhuitlan *caciques*.

Indeed, there was an important local conflict going on. In 1541 the *encomendero* Francisco de Las Casas, as well as the *cacique* Don Domingo and the local nobles, saw the building activities initiated by fray Domingo de Santa María as detrimental to their interests, burdening the local population and so interfering with their own collection of tributes and services. The resulting opposition made the Dominicans decide to leave Yanhuitlan and to withdraw to Teposcolula (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1994: 34-35; 1999: 153).

The *Codex of Yanhuitlan* now seems to show that as a result of the *cacique* Lord 7 Monkey (supposedly Don Gabriel de Guzmán) being instructed in praying the rosary, an embassy was sent to the Dominican friars in Teposcolula to convince them to come back. Possibly this group involved several persons, including nobles from Mouth – Cactus (Atoco, Nochixtlan) and River of the Mole (Yuta Ñani, Chachoapan) now shown on a scrap of paper (JM: XXIII/SH: XXXI). The leaders of this diplomatic mission were Lord 7 Deer and his father Lord 10 Monkey (also mentioned on an earlier page, MG: V-40), who present themselves to a writing Dominican monk (looking the other way, i.e. still annoyed) in Mountain of the Axe (JM: XIX/SH: XXIX). The importance of the friar is clearly manifest in his disproportional large size vis-à-vis the Mixtec ambassadors (Wood 2003: 39).

This place-sign is the Nahuatl representation of Teposcolula (*Codex Mendoza*, p. 43): *tepoz-colollan* means “metal-holding terraces” but is represented as a curved (*cololli*) axe (*tepoztlí*). The original Mixtec name of this town is *Yucu Ndaa*, translated by fray Antonio de los Reyes (1593: 5v; 1976: 7) as “Monte de Henequén”. Indeed, the damaged place-sign of Teposcolula in the Genealogy of Tixii (Tlacotepec) seems to have been a Mountain of *Ixtle* (Smith 1973: 237).²³ Furthermore, a similar Mountain of Fiber (Ixtle) appears in the upper right-hand corner of the Lienzo of Tlapiltepec, behind the Cerro Verde (Nudo Mixteco), in a geographical position that roughly corresponds to Teposcolula, which indeed is separated from the area of Coixtlahuaca by the impressive mountain range of the Nudo Mixteco.²⁴

23 Likely the Mountain of *Ixtle*, Hair or Fiber, to which a ruler of Tilantongo migrated in 1206, according to *Codex Ñuu Tnoo – Ndisi Nuu* (Bodley), p. 14-I, is the same place (Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2005: 67). Friar Antonio de los Reyes (1593: Kv; 1976: vii) tells that in ancient times a Lord belonging to the famous lineage of Tilantongo arrived in Teposcolula. The people that came with him populated this place, so that there were still in the 16th century wards inhabited by people that originally came from Tilantongo.

24 F 37 on the *lienzo*; see Caso (1961). The word *ndaa* can also mean “blue” and then is represented by a turquoise jewel. *Ñuu Ndaa*, “Blue Town”, is the Mixtec name of nearby Tejupan (Smith 1973: 60-62), which also appears on the Lienzo of Tlapiltepec (F 30).

The outcome of the diplomatic mission sent to Teposcolula was the triumph of Christianity in Yanhuitlan: the Europeanised town is dominated by the church tower with its prominent bell and cross (JM: XX/SH: XXX). The date is Year 12 Flint, day 10 Jaguar, which corresponds to June 2, 1544 (shortly before the inquisitorial process against Don Domingo would start), or to February 17, 1545 (260 days later). Connected to the cross, a banner moves in the wind. Clearly the combination signals the triumph of Christianity. In the *Codex Texupan* (Sierra), p. 39, such a banner appears as the symbol of Santiago, the patron Saint of the conquest (León 1982). We also encounter the cross with banner in the pictographic catechisms (the so-called Testerman manuscripts) as an attribute of Saint John the Baptist and in the ideographic representation of the verb “to liberate” (Anders/Jansen 1996: 87-88). Thus, this sign may stress spiritual conquest, but at the same time it voices the religious desire of liberation.

4. Sword and Rosary

The main theme of the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* is the development of native rulership in colonial times. The protagonists are the *caciques* of this town. They did not operate in isolation but rather interact with and depend on the community at large (symbolised by the toponymic sign). This relationship is represented (and implicitly legitimated) by the seat of authority (palace, mat and throne) and made explicit in the rendering of tribute. As an emblem for his people the *cacique* also takes positions vis-à-vis the Spanish authorities. Interestingly enough, the main ingredients of this theme are already present on the very first page of the manuscript.

The codex contains several scenes that may be copied from earlier originals, such as that of the Noche Triste, which most likely comes from a Central Mexican source, and the lists of Mixtec place signs, which presumably reproduce locally available drawings. Most of the codex, however, is an original composition in a new style that integrates European representational techniques in ancient pictographic conventions. It is likely that this precious work was made for a special, official occasion within the life of one of the Mixtec *caciques* of Yanhuitlan: a dynastic ritual in which memory, legitimacy and historical reflection were important ingredients. Given the absence of Ladies and couples, it is clear that the occasion was not a *cacique* marriage.

Fig. 6: The Christian town of Yanhuitlan (JM: XX)



Reading the whole codex in its cultural and historical context, we see how the pictorial text makes most sense as a document of Don Gabriel de Guzmán: It stresses how his lineage always was very loyal to the Spaniards and immediately embraced the new order as well as Christianity, while at the same time mentioning his ancestral rights to ruling the town and receiving tributes. All this would be explained by the hypothesis that the codex was painted for Don Gabriel de Guzmán at the occasion of his official succession and enthronement as *cacique* of Yanhuitlan in 1558.

This succession was not uncontested: Don Gonzalo, son of Calci, also claimed this inheritance but was not successful (Paillés Hernández 1993b: 21; Scholes/Adams 1961: 300-301). Thus, the political background of the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* was also a covert rivalry between two intimately related dynastic lines: that of Don Francisco Calci (and his son Gonzalo) and that of Iya Namahu – Don Diego Nuqh – Don Gabriel de Guzmán (with his uncle Don Domingo de Guzmán temporarily acting as a regent). Both parties obviously tried to win the sympathy and support of the different Spanish authorities. Don Gonzalo received the sympathy of Alonso Caballero, who wrote a letter in his favour to the *visitador* Valderrama. The *encomendero* Francisco de Las Casas had a good relationship with the regent *cacique* Don Domingo de Guzmán, while Don Gabriel de Guzmán (probably remembering the inquisitorial persecution of Don Domingo in 1544-1546) shifted his loyalty to the Dominican monks.

The drawings of the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* refer to specific historical events, but also reflect underlying ideologies and cultural dynamics. By combining representational techniques from the two main cultures that entered into contact during colonisation, the draughtsman was capable of creating a multi-layered narrative precisely about the development of the complex relationships between persons, institutions, values and interests of both worlds.²⁵

Such a complex work demands an interdisciplinary approach. The very first page is a good illustration of that. Iconographical analysis permits us to identify the forms and primary meanings of the images (e.g. the decorated roof as a representation of – and a sign for – *aniñe*, the palace). The archaeological dimension is the interpretation of palaces and plazas as stages for such social and political happenings. Ethnography informs us about the continued central importance of the people's assembly in the political life of contemporary communities. History provides other data to clarify the sequence of events and helps to identify the protagonists.

Using the tools for analysing textual or visual works, we may go a step further.²⁶ Taking into account that the European reading order tends to steer the perception or decoding of a figurative scene from left to right and top to bottom, we think it is sig-

25 On the conceptual and artistic interaction of Mesoamerica and Christianity see for example the profound studies by Gruzinski (1988) and Burkhart (1989).

26 See for example the inspiring study by Bal (1994).

nificant that the first element in such a sequence is precisely the *aniñe* or palace of Yanhuitlan. This position corresponds to the thematic focus of the codex on rulership, revealed immediately on the first page.

On the first page we see the designation of an heir to the throne, but at the same time a new ‘social contract’ between the ruler (claiming his traditional rights) and the people (a new protagonist) in the new time that starts with the colonial era. According to our hypothesis, the occasion for which the codex was produced was similar in nature, so that the first page registers an earlier occurrence of that ritual event, in the “time of (new) foundation”, providing a paradigmatic antecedent. The central action for this theme is the assembly, which takes place in the plaza in front of the *aniñe*. The assembly of so many people is a new element. Precolonial codices only give assemblies of nobles or rulers of subject settlements or neighbouring villages. Here we see the antecedent of the “*asamblea popular*”, which would become very important as the heart of the decision-making (and sovereignty) in the “*república de indios*” during the colonial time, as is still the case nowadays in indigenous communities. Interestingly, this new protagonist of local history, the people, is drawn in the new style (suggesting some form of European perspective as introduced by the Spanish), vis-à-vis the ruler in ancient style. The painter situates himself and us behind this group, as part of the assembly. The central person in the front line acting on behalf of the people is indicative of the cargo system, which became so important in the colonised communities. A lot is implied here: those who carry the burden of the cargo become socialised by it and grow personally through it.

The indication of time in this scene leads us to consider not only the chronological correlation with a specific dramatic moment in historical time (1520), but also – in view of similar place-date combinations in the Ñuu Dzauí codices, referring to sacred time – may be read as a new “founding date” to be ritually commemorated. Being a colonial work, the *Codex of Yanhuitlan*, in contrast to the *Codex Añute*, disregards the long precolonial history of the Ñuu Dzauí village-states and so creates a *tabula rasa*, on which the history of the new (colonial and Christian) epoch may be inscribed, or where the European stories about the past (including the whole biblical narrative) may enter as substitutes for native historiography. This setting of a new foundation moment and point of departure for cultural memory reminds us of the ideology of a new beginning in crisis cults. In fact, we interpret the foundation rituals with their sacred days in *Codex Yuta Tnoho (Vindobonensis)* in the same way (Jansen/Pérez Jiménez 2007).

On the other hand, the temporal structure itself remains rooted firmly in the indigenous tradition. It would have been easy to include a correlation for the dates as glosses under the year signs, but this was consistently avoided. In the whole work the indications of time as such are all in the precolonial system – the Mixtec year-dates and the signs of the months for paying tribute – as if the codex is saying that in spite of all political and cultural innovations, time itself has not changed. Similarly, all indi-

viduals are identified with their calendar names, without adding a gloss with the Christian name.

In the following pages we see the development of the place-sign (emblem of the community) and the palace (rulership) of Yanhuitlan in the Early Colonial period. First, the *encomendero* Francisco de Las Casas takes possession with the sword, a weapon that establishes intertextual links with the expansionist aspect of Christianity (symbolised in San Pablo), with the Patron Saint of the *reconquista* and *conquista* (Santiago Matamoros-Mataindios) and with San Miguel Arcángel who wins the apocalyptic battle against evil. Interestingly enough, this image of the *encomendero* would enter the popular imaginary as *El Gachupin*, the Spaniard, i.e. the Devil.

The relationship of the *encomendero* and the *cacique* is clearly determined by the power of the first over the second. With the sword a Spanish chair (authority) is established, which now controls Yanhuitlan (the place sign under that seat). Later the religious authorities (bishop, monks) are also seated on such chairs. The *cacique* may keep his traditional role (*yuvui tayu*, “mat and throne”) in a form of indirect rule, as long as he accepts the Spanish regime and cultural values (here visually indicated by the Spanish hat and beard). In this way, the painter, occupying the Mesoamerican concept of ‘being seated’ as a metaphor for rulership, is capable of expressing the complex nature of power in the colonial world: two types of seats refer to two forms (extensions) of rulership.

At the end of the codex the relationship between *encomendero* and *cacique* enters into a new phase, symbolised no longer by the sword but by the rosary. The young *cacique*, following the *encomendero*’s teaching of this new cult, is again standing on the place-sign: being a good Christian and accepting the rosary (both as an act of devotion and as a liturgical discipline) returns to him the right to the *caicazgo*. In other words, Don Gabriel uses the Christian discourse to regain agency and at the same time to win the rivalry with Calci’s son Don Gonzalo.

The same development is represented in the building that crowns the place-sign. On the first page this is the precolonial palace, explicitly glossed as *aniñe*, but later it is substituted by the image of a European Christian town, a *civitas dei*, with the gloss *huey ñuhu* (*huahi ñuhu* in standard orthography), “house of God” or “church”. As in other similar pictorial manuscripts from this period, the bell (Spanish: *campana*) is prominently present in this image. On the one hand it will become a marker of communal identity in contemporary stories about a *campana de oro* (golden bell) that once belonged to the community.²⁷ On the other it marks, together with the daily discipline of praying the rosary, the introduction of European ‘clock time’ in the region.

27 Hassig (2001: chapter 6) analyses the colonial introduction of clock time. Bartolomé (1997: 86-89) discusses the bell as a marker of “acoustic territory” and as an emblem of “the voice of the people”.

In this process of change and adaptation the colonial *cacique* does not appear as a passive victim, but as an active protagonist, who makes interesting choices and influences the course of events.²⁸ It is he, who according to the codex, succeeds in convincing the *encomendero* of his devotion to the rosary and consequently succeeds in pacifying and calling back the Dominican monks. In adapting to Spanish fashion (hat, hair, beard), the *cacique* nevertheless retains his precious embroidered cape (Nahuatl: *tilmatl*) and his sandals. Consciously or unconsciously, the iconographic scheme points toward the head as the main *locale* of acculturation, while the body combines elements from both cultures (cape vs. shirt with trousers) and the feet remain firmly connected to the ancestral tradition and land (sandals).

The relationship of the *cacique* with his people is defined mainly in terms of tribute, which, in turn, hints at a system of redistribution. A first tribute category consists of food and related materials (wood, without doubt for cooking; spoons and plates, people to prepare tortillas and to help the *cacique*). Looking at present-day customs we immediately recognise this not as the food for the *cacique* himself but as what is needed for the preparation of fiestas, especially of big meals, for which large groups of peoples could be invited.²⁹

The second category is that of paired precious items, which were probably to be used by the ruler or ruling couple at the same fiestas (silver plates) and during the accompanying dances (flutes, headdresses). Finally, some very special and valuable gifts (golden shield and two staff-like objects in the form of coiled serpents) were meant to distinguish the *persona* of the *cacique* as adornments. The golden shield – similar to the famous “*escudo (chimalli) de Yanhuítlan*” (Spores 1997: 72) – contains the step-fret motif, qualifying the holder of this shield as the defender and protector of the *ñuu*, the town and the people. Paired with the shield, the spear throwers (*atlatl*), in the form of coiling serpents, may allude to the *nahual* powers of the ruler to be used for the same purpose in that ceremonial context.³⁰ There is a strong sense of social ethos and aesthetic value in these objects, which contrasts sharply with the metal buckets that the Spanish authority demanded as taxes.³¹

This identitarian meaning of the bell has clearly Mediterranean roots, and is known even today as *campanilismo* (Tak 1990).

28 See also Wood (2003) and the general comments by Gosden (2004: 25) on colonialism paradoxically often being a source of creativity, having a transformational influence on all parties involved.

29 Compare the interpretation of Mixteca Puebla style pottery by Hernández Sánchez (2005) in the context of feasting and ritual.

30 The *Proceso Inquisitorial* (Sepúlveda y Herrera 1999: 126) documents the use of shields and flutes (*rodela y flautas*) during traditional ceremonies. Seler wrote a classic article on ancient Mexican spear throwers (1960/61, II: 368-396).

31 Gosden (2004: 36-39) discusses the contrast between a) valuables and services that primarily express quality through social or religious associations, and b) dematerialised and disembedded quantifiable

The same indigenous aesthetic drive then becomes manifest in the religious sphere: the regalia of the bishop and the decoration of the beads of the rosary reflect the Mesoamerican artistic tradition and so become incorporated in the native worldview.

Read in its context, the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* provides a key to the cultural processes going on between the walls of the *cacique* residences. It is a profound indigenous reflection on the socio-political and mental changes taking place in the colonial period.

Although it does not go the road of complete denial and resistance, which characterises the *Codex Añute* (Selden), the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* contains a clear ideological perspective with many subliminal criticisms of the colonial condition. But at the same time it tries to build bridges, searching for a new religiously inspired social coherence (*convivencia*). Accordingly, it lays the foundation for a new cultural memory. Although no specific data are available about the circumstances under which these two manuscripts were created, we speculate that both had a similar function: to be presented at the appointment of an heir to the throne. If so, both reflect different attitudes among the indigenous nobles toward the “new times” and different strategies of dealing with the past (and the future). Where the *Codex Añute* (Selden) looks back to the precolonial roots and practices (suggesting a mood of nostalgia and resistance), the *Codex of Yanhuitlan* looks forward to the new order of colonial society. Precisely by breaking with the past, by manifesting obedience to the Spanish lords and by incorporating Christianity, it aims at continuing the ancient political structure.

The subdued people of Ñuu Dzau are not directly visible in this ideological discourse. They were the ones who really suffered the consequences of the colonial process: the violence, epidemics and discrimination that cultural contact brought, the deprivation that the extra payments to the *encomendero* implied, and the forced labour that was demanded from them to build the *cacique*'s palace and the Dominican monastery, occupations which did not leave them time nor energy for cultivating their lands (Scholes/Adams 1961: 301-302). After having been mentioned prominently on the first page and more incidentally in the tribute pages, their absence from the rest of the codex is conspicuous and significant: *dum tacent, clamant*.

objects (money). The first are part of living social networks, the latter become vehicles for individualist structures of colonial exploitation.

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