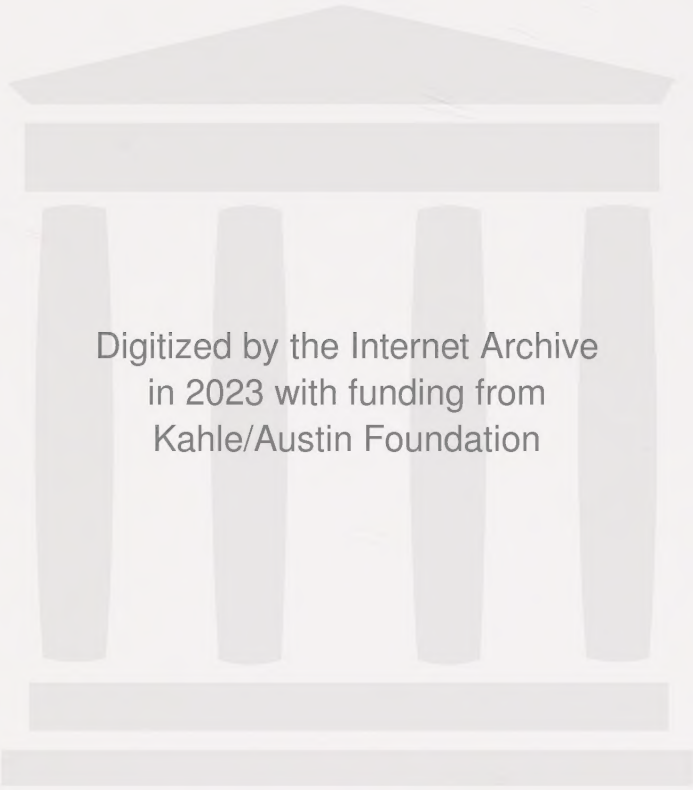


POPOL VUH

The Sacred Book
of the Ancient Mayas-Quiché



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POPOL VUH

The Sacred Book
of the Ancient Mayas-Quiché



Cover:
Jade pectoral carved with a governor
opposite a snake and a dwarf
from Nebaj.

National Museum of Archaeology,
Guatemala City, Cuatemala.
Photograph: G. Dagli Orti

Translated by:
David B. Castledine

Footnotes with the
abbreviation B de B.
are taken from the Abbé
Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg.

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Introduction

The discovery, translation and later editions and interpretations of the *Popol Vuh*, *Book of the Community* or *of the Council* of the Quiché tribe which settled in the modern land of Guatemala, are surrounded by a series of arguments, controversies and historical facts.

The Indians of this country, like those in Mexico, used to record their history, mythological beliefs, important dates and their lore in types of books whose leaves were made of bark, now called codices, using hieroglyphs. They were symbols and characters understood only by the priests and leading men or members of the ruling class, although they could also count on memory. Thus, by the repetition and declamation of important historical events, they ensured that they were handed down from one generation to another.

Shortly after the fall of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in 1521, Hernán Cortés, wishing to extend his conquests, sent Captain Pedro de Alvarado to Guatemala to subjugate the different Indian tribes belonging to the vast Maya linguistic family. Among these, the most notable both because of their numbers and their advanced civilization were the Quichés and the Cakchiquels. They were enemies and fought constantly for the domination of the region.

Alvarado arrived in 1524 and the Quichés confronted him but were quickly defeated. For this reason the Quiché rulers of the place gave their consent for the victors to enter the town, called Utatlán or Gumarcaah but because of his experience and shrewdness the captain was suspicious, thinking it could be an ambush. Therefore, he established himself in the surroundings, captured and killed the chiefs and ordered the town to be burned.

Many codices were destroyed in the fire, but according to some researchers, several of them still existed in Guatemala in the late 17th century. After the destruction of Utatlán the inhabitants fled to differ-

ent places, such as Chichicastenango, called Chuilá by the natives, and which the Spaniards later named Santo Tomás. They left the task of implanting Catholicism and teaching the inhabitants Spanish cultural norms in the hands of missionary friars.

The friars who arrived in Guatemala used noble, liberal precepts, since from the beginning they devoted themselves to giving the natives instruction in reading and writing Spanish. There were some excellent students among the Indians, who were soon able to write texts about their history and traditions in their own language, using the Latin alphabet. In addition, the missionaries did not object to this activity, but rather encouraged it, and as a result important information about the culture of the region was preserved.

Santo Tomás Chuilá, now Chichicastenango, was a settlement that made rapid progress during the course of the colonial epoch. At the beginning of the 18th century, Father Francisco Ximénez of the Dominican Order directed the convent of the town. This friar was an erudite, affable man, bent on the definitive conversion of Indians to the Christian faith, and at this time he already had a thorough knowledge of several native languages of the region.

Ximénez was born in Écija, Andalusia, Spain, in 1666 (or 1668, according to other sources) and arrived in Guatemala City when he was 22 years old. There he continued his studies in the Dominican Convent, terminating them in Ciudad Real de Chiapas. Once ordained, he returned to Guatemala. For several years, he carried out his duties in various Indian villages, which gave him the opportunity to study local languages and speak them fluently. He also analyzed their linguistic composition and laid down the bases for the preparation of a method which would serve as a guide for future students. His interest in various branches of knowledge led him to make investigations into philology and the history and religion of the area.

During the first three years of the 18th century, he exercised his ministry in the convent of Santo Tomás Chuilá, and that was when he discovered the Quiché *Manuscript*, which was later to be named *Popol Vuh*. In 1704, he moved to the Quiché town of Rabinal, where he lived for ten years. Later he was responsible for the parish of Xenacoj in the Sacatepéquez valley and this was where he began to write *Historia de la Provincia de Chiapas y Guatemala* (History of the Province of Chiapas and Guatemala). After that, he was priest of the parish of La Candelaria

church in Guatemala City and In 1721 returned to the Quiché region, the parish of Sacapulas, where he remained for five years.

In 1725 he was appointed Superior of the House of Sacapulas, and this seems to be where he wrote the rest of the *Historia de la Provincia*. Four years later he returned to Guatemala City and was again made parish priest of La Candelaria, where he stayed for only a few months, since in late 1729 he was proposed for the title of Master Preacher by his religious Community.. He must have died either this same year or at the beginning of the next, since when the appointment was confirmed in 1730 it could not be taken up because, as recorded in the minutes of the Provincial Chapter of the Order which took place In 1731, he had passed away.

According to the orders of the Spanish governors, Indians were to be taught Spanish, but it was not possible to take any formal action due to the lack of classrooms or suitable premises, and of teachers. Consequently, in order to communicate with them and attend to their requirements, the friars had to learn and use local languages. To meet this need, Ximénez set himself the task of writing an excellent grammar and vocabulary of the Quiché tongue as well as various doctrinal texts in the three major languages of the region. He always showed a preference for Quiché, which he thought highly of and spoke for most of his life. He wrote the three volumes of *Tesoro de las lenguas Cakchiquel, Quiché y Tzutuhil* (Treasury of the Cakchiquel, Quiché and Tzutuhil languages), which shared many similarities.

The second volume of this work, entitled *Arte de las Tres Lenguas* (Art of the Three Languages) was a *Confesionario* (Confessional), a *Catecismo de Indios* (Catechism for Indians) and also a copy in Quiché of the *Manuscrito de Chichicastenango* (Chichicastenango Manuscript or Popol Vuh) made by the friar according to the ancient document, with his translation into Spanish in an adjoining column, perhaps to offer proof of its authenticity. He entitled this valuable document *Empiezan las historias del origen de los Indios de esta Provincia de Guatemala, traducida de la lengua quiché a la castellana para más comodidad de los ministros del Santo Evangelio, por el R.P.F. Francisco Ximénez, Cura doctrinero por el Real Patronato del Pueblo de Santo Tomás Chuilá*. This is the friar's first translation into Spanish and the first one to be published, in Vienna in the mid 19th century.

Some time later, he fulfilled a personal ambition when the Father Superior of his Order suggested he write the *Historia de la Provincia* mentioned earlier. This consists of an account of the Conquest, the conversion of the population to Catholicism, the activities of the Dominicans and the important events of the colonial era in the first twenty years of the 18th century. He thought it useful to begin his history writing about the form of government, social life, the religious beliefs and the condition of the Quichés at the time of the Conquest. This is why he first included the document mentioned earlier, in other words the revised and corrected translation of the Chichicastenango Manuscript, containing stories about the origin of the Indians of Guatemala, followed by an account of the deeds of Quiché rulers.

It is not known for sure whether the Manuscript was discovered accidentally by Father Ximénez in the convent of Chichicastenango, or whether his parishioners turned over to him the book they guarded so carefully because the friar had won their confidence through his character and his linguistic gifts, which enabled him to communicate with them in their own language. Some investigators suggest that the inhabitants of the town presented it to him, while others maintain that he found it in a sacristy cupboard.

This text, composed by a Quiché Indian who was instructed by the friars in reading and writing Spanish is variously known as *Popol Vuh*, *Popol Buj*, *Manuscrito de Chichicastenango*, *Popol Wuj*, *Libro Sagrado*, *Libro del Común*, *Libro del Consejo*, or *Libro Nacional de los Quichés*. It deals with the origins of the tribe, their beliefs about the formation of the universe and the creation of man, the importance and symbolism of the pre-Hispanic Ball Game, their ancient traditions, and the succession of their different rulers up to the mid 17th century.

It is not known who wrote the Manuscript, which remained hidden for many years before Ximénez discovered it. Both the copy of the Quiché version and the Spanish translation in the friar's handwriting are preserved, but of the ancient document, which was continuous from beginning to end, without division, nothing more was ever known. It is assumed that it was lost or hidden, and when its custodians died, it was completely forgotten.

Despite speculations and theories put forward by various scholars the puzzle of the author's identity has not been solved. As long as there is no data or reliable evidence to clarify the issue, the manuscript

must continue to be considered anonymous, compiled by one or more Quiché Indians, perhaps interested in preserving and spreading their customs and beliefs. Some historians believe that the ancient book mentioned by the author did not exist in hieroglyphic characters, but was taken both from important oral accounts of the tribe and old symbolic representations of the past and that the author should more properly be classified as a compiler of reports about outstanding events in the history of his ancestors.

Confirmation that the *Popol Vuh* or *Chichicastenango Manuscript* is an anonymous work is the fact that Father Ximénez says nothing about its author, but he does suggest that it may have been created by a team of compilers. It is written in educated style with elegant expressions in Quiché, which leads to the supposition that its author, authors or compilers must have belonged to the noble or priestly class. It is still considered to be one of the most important documents about the ancient civilization of Central America.

Neither is the year when it was written known, though it is believed that it must have been shortly after the Conquest, since the Manuscript itself gives important facts in this respect. One is the reception given in 1539 for the Bishop of Guatemala, Francisco Marroquín, when he went to Utlán to bless it and change its name to Santa Cruz del Quiché. The second, contained in the last part, refers to the Lords of the Quiché and their descendants, naming Tecún and Tepepul, sons of the dignitaries executed by Pedro de Alvarado, as the thirteenth generation. It also mentions the last heirs, Don Juan Cortés and Don Juan Rojas, as the fourteenth generation, who still lived in the town around 1550-1560.

Between 1553 and 1557, when the Oidor (Judge) of the Royal Audiencia, Alonso Zorita traveled through the province as Visitador (Royal Inspector), he found these Lords of Utlán living in extreme poverty. Also, the signatures of Don Juan Cortés Reyes, Caballero (Gentleman) and Don Juan Rojas, together with that of Captain Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador of the region, appear at the foot of the *Títulos de la Casa Ixcuin-Nihaib, Señora del Territorio de Otzoyá*, which was probably written some years after the conquest of Utlán. The signatures of these Lords can also be seen on the *Título de los Señores de Totonicapán*, dated September 28, 1544, at the side of that of Cristóbal Fernández Nihaib. The *Popol Vuh* names the latter as the Lord of Nihaib who ruled

when the Spanish were already established there, and gives his successor as Don Pedro Robles, Ahau Galel.. This leads to the belief that the *Popol Vuh* was finished after this date, in the mandate of Pedro Robles.

There is also another document, the *Título de don Francisco Izquín, Ahpop Galel* dated November 22, 1558, drawn up and signed by the Lords of the Quiché, Don Juan Cortés Reyes and Don Martín Ahau Quiché. It should be noted that this *Título* is not signed by Don Juan Rojas, which implies that by this date he had relinquished his duties or died. His heir was Don Martín Ahau Quiché, a change not included in the *Popol Vuh*, which gives grounds for placing the composition of this document between 1554 and 1558.

The *Chichicastenango Manuscript* is one of the most important documents written by Indians in Latin characters. The author was aware that a book had existed in ancient times which referred to the traditions of his people, and he recorded them to prevent their loss. Some researchers think it was the translation of a hieroglyphic record copied literally in a manuscript produced to replace the ancient one after its destruction. It has been classified as a real work of literature on the mythology and history of the groups which settled in this region; a reliable testimony with an important place among the compositions made by natives in their own languages. The author or compiler says he produced it "because the *Popol Vuh* can no longer be seen," but there is no other information to help identify the old book except the little given by the author of the Quiché manuscript himself.

It has also been questioned whether the ancient testimony had a permanent structure and stable composition and it is supposed that it was a volume in hieroglyphs used by priests to explain the emergence of the group and its religious beliefs to the population, in order to preserve the memory of them. However, these topics could have passed from mouth to mouth, a way of remembering information, myths and historical events common among Mesoamerican groups.

The narrator notes that he writes "within the Law of God," already in Christian times, and it has been pointed out that the influence of the Bible is clear in the description of the creation given in the *Popol Vuh*, although this does not eliminate the typical Quiché perception. At this time, the natives of Guatemala were obviously under the influence of the teaching, pictures, prayers and plays used by the missionaries to

instruct them in Catholicism. Although certain biblical similarities can indeed be found, the manuscript must be considered a real and extraordinary native contribution to the history of Guatemala.

The *Popol Vuh* also included prophecies and omens consulted by the Lords to discover what lay in store for their people and what they could do about it. The author states that his purpose in writing all this was to provide information about what existed in the ancient Quiché because the book formerly guarded so zealously by priests and rulers had been lost, probably burned in the fire that destroyed Uatatlán.

Some scholars have criticized the fact that the book was named *Popol Vuh*, even though the Indian author uses these words in the preamble to his work. They also object to the subtitle *Libro Sagrado* (Sacred Book), since Ximénez suggested *Libro Nacional* or *Libro del Consejo* (National Book or Book of the Council). But the name *Popol Vuh* was quickly accepted and continues to be used to this day. Also, the anonymous author clearly indicates that his intention was to replace the extraordinary ancient book with a retelling or new version of the lost volume. At the same time, he recognizes his knowledge of the subject matter in it, which was why he could record the myths, customs and beliefs of his people in a comprehensible way.

It has been said that the convincing proof of its legitimacy as a native Mesoamerican document is the fact that it was written in the Quiché language. In addition, the opinion is that Friar Ximénez could not have composed it, in spite of his complete mastery of the language, since it is a literary example of native talent that involves their beliefs and mythology. Ximénez himself only took credit for discovering it.

The friar's first translation into Spanish was a literal one. He kept very closely to the original grammatical construction, although this obscured meaning somewhat. He preserved figurative expressions without investigating their equivalents in Spanish. Nevertheless, his translation is a painstaking work that he must have devoted many hours to. He almost certainly produced it when he was in charge of the parish of Santo Tomás, as the title page reads that he was the Priest teaching Christian doctrine by Royal Appointment in the town of Santo Tomás Chuilá.

Later, on writing his work *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapas y Guatemala*, Ximénez reexamined his earlier translation. He eliminated the repetitions characteristic of the Quiché language, di-

vided the account into chapters, making it easier to read but less faithful to the original. This second version is only known through the transcription of the *Historia de la Provincia* made by the Guatemalan archaeologist Juan Gavarrete around 1870 and printed in his country some sixty years later.

Since the manuscript with Ximénez' first version still exists, together with his copy of the original in Quiché, it can be consulted, without the errors that blemish other editions. However, in spite of its imperfections this translation is regarded highly since the friar was master of old Quiché and understood Indian thought much better than any later researcher or translator of the *Popol Vuh*. Generally speaking, Ximénez is considered to have translated the manuscript without bias and conscientiously to produce a version that was true to Quiché traditions. However,, as is natural, he being a cleric he states that these contained grave errors and false beliefs when he says "I well understand that all these stories are children's tales."

After traveling in Central America, the Austrian doctor, Carl Scherzer arrived in Guatemala in 1854. In the San Carlos University Library, he discovered documents stored there after the expulsion of the friars and the closing of convents between 1829 and 1830. These papers included the manuscript of Father Ximénez on the *Arte de las tres Lenguas* which contains, together with other works the *Historias del Origen de los Indios*. This last document he published in Vienna in 1857 with the title *Mitteilungen über die Handschriftlichen Werke des Padre Francisco Ximénez in der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Guatemala*.

The Abbé Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg arrived in Guatemala on February 1, 1855, and in April that year Archbishop Garcia Peláez appointed him parish priest of Rabinal, a Quiché town, where he learned to read and write the language. The Abbé asserted that the Ximénez manuscript was brought to him by one of the inhabitants, named Ignacio Coloché. Brasseur copied it and translated it into French, trying to ensure that it was as accurate as possible. He organized it into four sections, each divided into chapters to make it easier to read and understand. In Paris, (1861), he published *Popol Vuh, Le Livre Sacré et les mythes de l'antiquité américaine avec les livres héroïques et historiques des Quichés*.

In 1913, a German translation of the manuscript appeared, published in Leipzig. The author, Noah Elieser Pohorilles used Brasseur's

French text, although in the title he gave the work: *Das Popol Wuh. Die mythische Geschichte des Kicé-Volkes von Guatemala nach dem Original-Texte übersetzt und bearbeitet* he states that it is a translation of the Quiché.

Professor Georges Raynaud of the Sorbonne, an expert on the Mesoamerican Indian beliefs, mythology and manuscripts made a deeper study of the Quiché text and the vocabularies of languages of Guatemala. He translated the original manuscript into French and in 1925 published his interpretation of the *Popol Vuh* with the title *Les dieux, les héros et les hommes de l'ancien Guatemala d'après le Livre du Conseil*.

Two of Raynaud's students at the École de Hautes-Études of Paris, the Guatemalan Niguel Ángel Asturias and the Mexican J.M. González de Mendoza, under the direction of the professor translated his version from French into Spanish and published *Los dioses, los héroes y los hombres de Guatemala antigua* in Paris in 1927.

The same year, J. Antonio Villacorta and Professor Flavio Rodas N published the *Popol Vuh. Manuscrito de Chichicastenango* in Guatemala. They used Brasseur de Bourbourg's transcription of the Quiché text, phoneticizing it to make it easier to read in Spanish. They also made certain changes and included the texts of lectures given by Villacorta on indigenous groups and topics of Mesoamerican culture. This version has been criticized by various experts, mainly for the translations of the names of rulers and deities.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the American journal *The Word* published a translation into English by Dr. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, but it is not known whether it was made from Spanish or Quiché. The Edward E. Ayer collection in the Newberry Library of Chicago contains an unpublished version by Colonel Beebe, based on the French text of Brasseur de Bourbourg. However, a complete English translation of the work was not published until 1950 when the University of Oklahoma brought out the one by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley from the book by the Guatemalan researcher Adrian Recinos *Popol Vuh; las antiguas historias del Quiché*, (1947), considered by many to be the best and most exact version in Spanish, based on the Ximénez manuscript which forms part of the *Arte de las Tres Lenguas* with its supplementary texts. This is housed in the Edward E. Ayer collection in the Newberry Library mentioned above.

A German translation was published in Stuttgart in 1944 under the title *Popol Vuh. Das heilige Buch der Quiché Indianer von Guatemala* by Dr.

Leonhard Schultze Jena of Marburg University. It was based on the Ximénez manuscript, with a study on different cultural aspects of the Quiché people.

In the course of time, other translations and studies have appeared that have clarified some obscure passages in the Quiché text, but the field of study is very wide and the subject is constantly open to discoveries. Therefore, future research on the *Popol Vuh*, one of the treasures of civilization, will reveal more about the history and mythology of the inhabitants of the Quiché and Maya culture in pre-Hispanic times.

The literary heritage of the Yucatán Mayas, the Quichés and the Cakchiquels of Guatemala is large, because there were learned men among them who after the conquest set down their knowledge, the contents of ancient codices and oral accounts in their own languages. Among the most important writings of the Quichés and Cakchiquels of Guatemala are the *Memorial de Sololá* also called *Anales de los Cakchiqueles*, the *Título de los Señores del Totonicapán*, the *Rabinal Achí* and the exceptional *Popol Vuh*.

The last of these is probably the most famous and widely known Quiché text in the world. Although it contains some Christian intercalations, it also preserves different pre-Hispanic traditions. At the beginning of the 18th century, when Father Ximénez discovered and translated it, to prove its authenticity and not get into argument with the religious authorities — given the similarity between the Indian creation myth and some passages of the Bible — he wrote a copy of the Quiché text in a column parallel to his Spanish version, which made the work of later researchers easier.

Later, translations were made into German and French, and in time, scholars of various nationalities have devoted themselves to interpreting it. This is why today publications exist in many languages, and interest in the work does not decline; on the contrary, it grows day by day.

The *Popol Vuh* is divided into a preamble and four parts. In the preamble, the Indian compiler notes that his prime intention is to tell of events in the Quiché area since the birth of the first members of the tribe, their wanderings, settlements and the beginning of their history. He states that there was an ancient book which was hidden or disappeared after the conquistadors arrived, and that he decided to write a reproduction of the *Popol Vuh* “under the Law of God” so that it would not be lost.

The first part talks about the cosmic background of the different human beings created by the gods, and also about how they were destroyed on several occasions, until the final ones were created. It also tells of the demigods Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué, who arrived on Earth to confront Vucub-Caquix and his sons, the giants Zipacná and Cabracán.

The second part gives other mythological tales, such as the adventures of Hun-Hunahpú (father of Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué) and his brother Vacub-Hunahpú when they went to play the ball-game against the lords of Xibalbá, the region or realm of the dead, where they defeated and sacrificed them. Another story tells how the young girl Ixquic became pregnant with the saliva spat out by the skull of Hun-Hanahpú which hung in a tree after his defeat and she, exiled from that region, gave birth to Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué on Earth. These, after being despised by their half-brothers, changed them into monkeys and then went to Xibalbá to avenge their father and uncle.

The third and fourth parts are about the creation of the first fathers, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Acab, Muhucutah, Iqui-Balam and their wives, the creation of their peoples and their efforts to procure fire, the activities of these forefathers as sacrificing priests, the frustrated attempt of warriors to finish with them, the later union of inhabitants under these four Lords, the way they took farewell of their descendants and vanished when they foresaw their end, and how their sons organized the branches of Cavec, Nihaib and Ahau Quiché and led the migrations. It also includes the names of the Lords who headed each of these houses, telling of their gods, rites, ceremonies and traditions in the consolidation of the Empire.

The *Popol Vuh* has been considered as a sort of Bible of this Central American tribe, an essential source for the study and understanding of the ancient Maya culture of Guatemala, since it paints a complete picture of the creation of the world and human beings, their history, customs, legends and myths.

POPOL VUH



THE SACRED BOOK OF THE
ANCIENT MAYAS-QUICHÉ

BOOK I

Preamble

Here is the beginning of the ancient history (of the country) here called Quiché.

Here we write and shall begin the history of times gone by, the beginning and origin of all that has been done in the town of the Quiché, in the tribes of the Quiché nation.

Here then, we shall set forth the narration, revelation and explanation of all that was in darkness, its dawn by the will of the Creator and Former; of he who begets, of he who gives being, and whose names are the hunter with a blowpipe who shoots the opossum (Hun-Ahpú-Vuch,¹ a hunter with a blowpipe who shoots the coyote (Hun-Ahpú-Utiu,² the great white piercer (Zakinima-Tzyiz,³ the Dominator, the serpent covered with feathers,⁴ the heart of the lakes, the heart of the sea, the Master of the Planisphere, the Lord of the blue surface.⁵

This is how they are named, sung to and celebrated, those who are the Grandmother and the Grandfather whose names are Xpiyacoc, Xmucané,⁶ Preserver and Protectress; twice grandmother, twice grand-

¹ Hun-Ahpú, almost always written as a single word, is the name of one of the principal Gods or deified heroes in the ancient realm of Guatemala; it is also the name of the twentieth and last day of the month in the Quiché and Cakchiquel calendar. Vuch or uch, opossum, here commonly called *tacuatzin* (B. de B.).

² *Utiu* is the coyote (B. de B.).

³ *Zaki nima tzyiz*, white, large piercer, translated word for word (*coatimundi*). In the figurative sense, it is he who draws blood or pierces himself in honor of the gods. Formerly, people drew their own blood to sacrifice to idols (F. Domongo de Basseta).

⁴ *Tepeu*, *Gucumatz*, the most high and powerful serpent covered with feathers. The first of these words may be of Mexican origin, according to Molina's Vocabulary. The second is composed of *Gug* or *gue* which means brilliant green feathers, like those of the quetzal and *Cumatz* serpent. It is the same as *Quetzalcóatl* (B. de B.).

⁵ Names or honorific titles given to the divinity to show his greatness. (Ximénez.).

⁶ Xpiyacoc, Xmucané. Two words very difficult to interpret. They are identical with those of the ancient Mexican traditions, *Cipactonal* and *Oxomoco* (B. de B.).

father; thus as told in the Quiché stories, of whom all is told that they did immediately for prosperity and civilization.⁷

Here is what we shall write (what has been proclaimed) in the word of God⁸ and in Christianity; we shall reproduce it because this national book is seen no longer, where is clearly stated that we came from the other side of the sea (that is to say) "the account of our existence in the country of the shadows and how we saw the light and life" as it is called.

⁷ Chi zakil golem, sakil tzih, translated literally is: in the whiteness or light of life, whiteness of the word. Metaphor which sometimes means happiness, a kind of golden age, civilization, etc. (B. de B.).

⁸ *Chupan chic u chaba Dios*. Literally in the tongue of God, in other words, of Christianity, because the missionaries used the word *Dios* in Spanish instead of Cabahuil, which is God in Quiché. On this point there was a heated argument between the Dominicans and Franciscans in the first years after the Conquest. The former sustained that Cabahuil in fact signified the idol or tangible representation of the Divinity, while the latter maintained that the word referred to God himself. The opinion of the former was the one which prevailed, the word *Dios* being used for teaching the Indians instead of Cabahuil. (Ximénez).

Chapter I

This is the first book written long ago, but the sight of it is hidden from he who sees and thinks. Great was the description and the account (it gives) of the time when all (that is) in the sky and on the earth was formed, the squaring of its signs, the measure of its angles, its alignment and the establishment of parallels in the sky and on the earth, the four extremities, the four cardinal points, How it was said by the Creator and the Shaper, the Mother, the Father of life, of existence, he who works and breathes everywhere, the father and vivifier of peace among peoples, of his civilized servants; of the One whose wisdom has reflected on the excellence of all which exists in heaven and on earth, in lakes and in the sea.

Here is the account which shows that all was in suspense, all was calm and silent; all was immobile, still, and the immense skies were empty.

Here then is the first word and the first account. There was not yet a single man or a sole animal, there were no birds, nor fish, nor crabs, nor woods, nor stones, nor ravines, nor cliffs, nor plants, nor groves; only the sky existed.

The face of the earth still did not show itself; there was only the tranquil sea and all the expanse of the skies.

There was nothing which took shape, nothing which seized another thing, nothing which moved to and fro, which made the slightest friction or the faintest noise in the sky.

There was nothing standing, nothing but the tranquility of waters, but the lonely, placid sea within its limits, because nothing existed.

There was nothing but immobility and silence in the shadows, in the night. Alone also the Creator, the Shaper, the Master, the Serpent covered with feathers.

Those who beget, those who give life, are above the water like a waxing light.

They are covered in green and blue, and this is the reason why their name is Gucumatz⁹ who is the being of the greatest sages. This is how the sky exists, how also the Heart of Heaven; this is the name of God, this is what He is called. This was when his word came here, with the Dominator and Gucumatz, in the darkness and in the night, and when it spoke with the Dominator, Gucumatz.

And they talked and consulted and thought deeply; they understood each other and united their words and thoughts.

While they talked, day broke, and at the moment of dawn, man appeared. At the same time, they discussed the creation and growth of forests and reeds, the nature of life and humankind (brought about) in the shadows and the night by he who is the Heart of Heaven, whose name is Huracán.¹⁰

Lightning is the first sign of Huracán; the second is the trace of the lightning; the third is the flash which wounds, and these three are the Heart of Heaven.¹¹

Then they came with the Dominator, Gucumatz, and they debated about civilized life; how crops would be sown, how light would be created;¹² who would be the support and provider (of the Gods).¹³

Let it be done in this way. Be filled, was the command. Let the water draw back and cease to hinder, so that the earth might exist here, that it might become solid and show its surface to be sown, let the day shine in the sky and on earth: because we shall not receive either glory or honor for all we have created and shaped for human beings to exist, the creature endowed with reason.

⁹ *Serpent covered with green and blue feathers* the colors of sacred or mysterious attire.

¹⁰ *Huracán*. This name, whose meaning does not appear in any Quiché or Cakchiquel book or dictionary, seems to have come from the Antilles, where it means storm. This is the origin of the word *huracán* (hurricane) adopted by the Spanish, whose meaning is well known (B. de B.).

¹¹ Remains of the ancient tradition of all peoples about the Trinity, three persons in one, of God.

¹² *Zakiro*. Dawn, break of day, etc. This word is applied metaphorically to the dawn of civilization. (B. de B.).

¹³ *Apachinuk*. To feed, sustain. This expression refers to the men the gods wish to assist with religion, i.e. priests (B. de B.).

Thus they spoke as they were creating the earth.

Thus it was really how the creation came about and why the world exists. They spoke and it was made in a moment.

Like a mist, like a cloud it was formed in its physical state, when mountains rose from water, like crabs, and great mounts appeared in an instant.

Only by a supernatural power and a marvelous will could what had been decided be done about the being of mountains and valleys, and at the same time the creation of forests of cypresses and pines which appeared on the surface.

And thus Gumatz was filled with joy. "You are the welcome one" he cried. "Oh Heart of Heaven! Oh *Huracán!* Oh track of lightning! Oh flash that wounds!

What we have created and shaped shall be finished, they replied.

And then the earth was formed, the mountains and plains; the course of waters was divided; streams began to wind between mountains; this was the order in which waters appeared, when great mountains rose.

Thus was the creation of the world when it was created by those who are the Heart of the Sky and the Heart of the Earth, for this is how they are called, those who first made it fruitful when the sky and the earth were still inert, suspended in the middle of the water.

This was its fecundation when they formed it, while they reflected on its composition and perfecting.

Chapter II

Immediately they gave fertility to the animals of the mountain, to the deer, the birds, which are the guardians of the woods; to the beings which inhabit the countryside; to the deer, the birds, the pumas, the jaguars, to the snakes and to the moccasin serpent, guardian of the reeds.

Then he who begets, who gives life, spoke. Is it to remain silent, to be without movement that the shadow of the woods and lianas exists. Therefore it is good that there are beings to guard them.

This is how they spoke while they stimulated the fertility they were busy with, and immediately deer and birds came into being. Then they gave homes to the deer and birds.

You, deer, shall sleep on the bank of streams and in gullies; there you will remain among the undergrowth and the grass; in the woods you shall breed, you shall walk on four feet, and on four feet you shall live. So it was done as was said to them.¹⁴

Then, similarly, the homes of birds large and small were allotted: You, birds, shall live in the heights of woods, at the top of creepers; there you shall make your nests and multiply; you shall grow on the branches of trees, on the strands of creepers.

Thus the deer and the birds were told, and they did what they had to do, and all took up their homes or lairs. So it was that he gave shelter to the animals of the earth, he who begets, who gives life.

So, deer and birds created, the same were told by the Creator and Maker, he who begets, he who gives life.

Now bellow, warble, since you are given the power to bellow and warble; make your language heard, each one according to its species, each one according to its kind; thus was it said to the deer and the birds, to the pumas, jaguars and serpents.

Say, then, our name; praise us, your mother, your father; invoke then Huracán, the trace of lightning, the flash that injures, the Heart of Heaven, the Heart of the Earth, the Creator and Maker, he who begets, he who gives life; speak, call upon us and revere us: Thus they were told.

But it was impossible for them to speak like humans; all they could do was prattle, cackle, caw, without a semblance of a language, each voicing differently according to its kind.

When the Creator and the Maker heard that they could not speak, they said once again to each other: they have not been able to say our names. Although we are their Creators and Makers. This is not good,, they said to each other, he who begets and he who gives life.

And the animals were told: you will be changed because you have been unable to speak. We have gone back on our word: your nourish-

¹⁴ The word *quch* or *quieh* means deer. But it is also the generic name for quadrupeds (B. de B.).

ment and food, your lairs and homes you shall have in ravines and woods, for our glory is perfect and you do not praise us.

There are still beings, no doubt, who can worship us; we shall make them capable of obedience. Now, do your duty; as for your flesh, it will be ground between teeth, so be it.

This, then, is your fate. This is how the large and small animals on the face of the earth were spoken to and told,

Then they wished to test their fortune again; they wished to make a fresh attempt and settle on a new way of adoration.

But they could not understand one another's language; they did not achieve their goal and nothing could be done.

So, their flesh was humbled, and all the animals which are on the face of the earth were condemned to be eaten.

This was why another attempt had to be made in creatures by the Creator, the Maker, by he who begets and who gives life.

Let there be another try (they said), the time of sowing draws near, see there the dawn that is about to break; let us make those which must be our support and sustainers.

What shall we do so that we are invoked and commemorated on the face of the earth?

We have already practiced with our first labor and creation; it has not been possible to be praised and honored by it. Therefore, let us try to make obedient, respectful men who will support and nourish us.

They spoke. Then the creation and formation of man took place; of earth, of clay they made his flesh.

They saw it was not good, because it did not hold together, was without consistence, without movement, without strength, incompetent, limp, it did not move its head, its face only turned to one side, its sight was cloudy and it could not look backward: it had been given the gift of speech but it had no intelligence, and it soon dissolved in water, not being able to stand.

So the Creator and Maker said once more: the more work is done, the more incapable he is of walking and multiplying: let an intelligent creature be made, they said.

Then they again broke and destroyed their work and creation. They immediately said; What shall we do to ensure that beings emerge that will worship and invoke us?

So they spoke while they debated again. Let us say to Xpiyacoc and Xmucané, the hunter with the blowpipe shooting the coyote; try your luck again and see the time of your creation. Thus the Creator and the Maker spoke to each other, and then spoke to Xpiyacoc and Xmucané.

Immediately, a conversation was held with these seers, the grandmother of the sun, the grandmother of light, as they are called by those who are the Creator and Maker, and these are the names of Xpiyacoc and Xmucané.

And those of Huracán spoke to Tepeu and Gucumatz; and so they said to the sun (diviner or astrologer), to him of the creation, who are the diviners: It is time to agree again about the features of the man we had created so that once again he will be our support and maintainer, so that we are invoked and remembered.

Take then the word, you who beget and give birth, our grandmother and our grandfather, Xpiyacoc and Xmucané; make germination occur, make dawn break, let us be invoked, let us be worshiped, let us be remembered by shaped man, by created man, by upright man, by molded man: let it be so.

Show your name, O hunter with blowpipe who shoots at the opossum, O hunter with blowpipe who shoots at the coyote, twice begetter, twice procreator, great wild boar, great coatimundi, he of the emerald, the jeweler, the engraver, the architect, he of the green planisphere, he of the blue, the master of resins, the leader of the TOLTECAT, grandfather of the sun, grandmother of the day, because this is how you shall be called by our works and our creatures.

Cast your fortune with your corn, with your *tzité*¹⁵ to know if we are to make and carve his mouth and face out of wood. Thus the diviners were told.

Then it was the moment to cast fortune and know what corn grains and coral beans (*tzité*) held in store; sun and creature, said to them an old man and an old woman. This old man was the lord of the *tzité*¹⁶ Xpiyacoc was his name; but the old woman was the diviner, the maker, whose name was Chiracán Xmucané.

¹⁵ A tree commonly known as Pito which produces bright red beans that in olden times Indians mixed with grains of corn to tell the future. (Note of translator into Spanish).

¹⁶ The Quiché word *Ahlitzité* also means enchanter with *tzité* or coral beans.

They spoke thus at the moment when the sun halted at midday: it is the time for you to agree; speak, for we listen, speak and tell us whether the wood should be carved and sculpted by the Maker and the Creator; if this will be the support and nourisher at the moment when germination shall occur and day shall dawn.

O corn, O *tzité*, O sun, O creature, unite, couple with each other; thus it was said to the corn, to the *tzité*, to the sun and the creature. And you blush, O Heart of Heaven, do not make Tepeu and Gucumatz hang their heads.

Then they spoke and told the truth: this is how your dolls must be made, worked of wood, so that they talk and reason easily on the face of the earth.

So be it, they answered when they spoke.

At this very moment the manikin was made, carved of wood: men were produced; men reasoned, and these are the people who live on the surface of the earth.

They lived and multiplied: they begot daughters and sons, figures worked in wood; but they had neither heart nor intelligence, nor recollection of their Maker and their Creator; they led a useless life, living like animals.

They did not remember the Heart of Heaven any more, and this was why they failed; they were nothing more than a trial, an attempt at man, who spoke at first, but whose faces withered, their feet and hands were insubstantial; they had neither blood nor substance, not humanness or fat; their faces showed only dry cheeks; their feet and hands were arid, their flesh weak.

Therefore, they did not think of lifting their faces to the Maker and Creator, their father and source. So these were the first men to exist in great numbers on the face of the earth.

Chapter III

The end of these men soon arrived, the destruction of these wooden puppets, who were condemned to death.

The waters spread by the will of the Heart of Heaven and there was a great flood which covered those manikins, those beings made of wood.

Tzité (formed) the flesh of man, but when woman was created by the Maker and Creator, *zibak* (was what was used to make) the flesh of woman¹⁷; this was what they had to be made of by order of the Maker and the Creator.

But they did not think or speak in front of their Maker and Creator who had formed them and brought them to light.

They were destroyed thus (as we said): they were drowned, at the same time as a heavy resin fell from the sky. (The bird) called *Xecolcobach* pecked out their eyes; the *Camalotz* cut off their heads; the *Cotzbalam* devoured their flesh; the *Tecumbalam* ground their bones and sinews, and their bodies, reduced to powder, were scattered as punishment.¹⁸

For not having recognized their mother and father, the Heart of the Sky, whose name is *Huracán*; it was because of them that the surface of the earth grew dark and a dark rain began to fall; rain by day and rain by night.

Then came all the animals, large and small, and those men were rebuked in their face by wood and stone; all the beings that had served them spoke, their griddles, their plates, their cooking pots, their dogs, their turkeys all reviled them in their faces.

"You have hurt us, you have treated us badly; now you shall be tormented." So said their dogs and turkeys.

And the *metates* (flat grinding stones) said in their turn, "We were hurt by you daily; all the time, by day and by night, always *joli, joli, juqui, juqui* went our faces because of you.¹⁹ We have suffered all this from you, but now that you have ceased to be men you shall feel our might; we shall mill your flesh to powder. So spoke the grinding stones.

And then the dogs spoke up in their turn, saying "Why did you not give us anything to eat?"

We hardly had to show ourselves and we were thrown out and chased away. The stick to beat us with was always there while you were eating.

¹⁷ *Tzibak*, commonly Cibaque, the name of a type of reed that according to some dictionaries is sassafras. (B. de B.) The heart of the reed mace, according to Ximénez.

¹⁸ The birds of prey mentioned in this passage are not known in translation (B. de B.).

¹⁹ *Joli, joli, juqui, juqui*. The sound the corn makes when being ground on the stone.

Thus you treated us when we were unable to speak. Otherwise we would have killed you. Why did you not foresee this? Why did you not think of yourselves?

Now we shall destroy you, now you shall feel the teeth of our mouths: now we shall devour you" said the dogs, destroying their flesh.

And also their griddles and cooking pots spoke to them in their turn "You caused us suffering and damage, blackening our mouths and faces with smoke: you always had us on the fire, burning us, as if we felt nothing."

(Then those men were seen) to run, pushing one another, filled with desperation; they wanted to climb onto houses, but the houses, crumbling, threw them to the ground; they tried to climb trees and the trees shook them off; they ran to hide in caves, and the caves shut in their faces.

So ended the ruin of those human creatures, people fated to be changed and destroyed, who were given over to death and disdain.

It is said that their descendants (still to be seen) are in those small monkeys²⁰ which live in the forests; this was the sign or example of them that remained, because their flesh was just made of wood by the Maker and Creator.

And this is why these little monkeys look like men, a sign that they are another generation of human beings (who were only puppets) made of wood.

Chapter IV

In that era there was very little light on the face of the earth, day did not yet exist, but there was a man full of pride who was called *Vukub-Cakix*.²¹

The sky and the earth existed, but the faces of the sun and the moon were hidden.

²⁰ *Qoy* a species of very small monkey found in Alta Verapaz (B. de B.).

²¹ *Vucub-Cakix*. Seven macaws. Father Ximénez thinks that *Vukub-Cakix* is reminiscent of Lucifer. Brasseur de Bourbourg believes he was an ancient monarch of some region of Central America in historical times.

Vukub-Cakix said, "What remains of these people, who were drowned, is certainly extraordinary, and their nature is like that of supernatural beings.

Now, I shall certainly be greater yet over all these creatures, I shall be their sun, their dawn, their moon. So be it.

My splendor is great, because of me men exist and walk, for the globes of my eyes are of silver, and their pupils glitter like precious stones, and the enamel of my teeth gleams like the face of the sky.

See, my nose shines afar like the moon, and my throne is of silver, and when I step down from it, the face of the earth comes alive.

So then, I am the sun, I am the moon, because of the whiteness and happiness of my vassals. So be it, because my sight reaches very far.

Thus spoke *Vucub-Cakix*, but in fact he was not the sun, only the pride he took in his riches (made him talk like this).

His sight ended where it fell, and his eyes were not enough to see the whole world.²²

At this time, the face of the sun could not yet be seen, nor that of the moon, nor the stars, nor was there day or light.

And *Vucub-Cakix* grew arrogant, comparing himself with the sun and moon, whose light had not yet begun to shine and show itself. His ambitions of greatness made him dominate everything.

And this was when the flood came, which happened because of the puppets, men, made of wood.

Now we shall tell how *Vukub-Cakix* was overcome and died, and when man was made by the hand of the Maker and Creator.

Chapter V

Here is the beginning of the decline and destruction of the glory of *Vucub-Cakix*, caused by two young men, one called Hunahpú and the other Xbalanqué.²³ These two young men were really gods. When they

²² *Xecach*. The world: *Xc* is the preposition *below* and *Cha* means *sky*: it can be translated *what is below the sky*.

²³ Rather than Hunahpú it should read Huhun Ahpú, as seen later. Huhun Ahpú means *each one of the hunters with blowpipes*. Hun Ahpú, a hunter with a blowpipe, Xbalanqué means *the margay or the small jaguar*. (B. de B.).

saw the evil he had done, behaving himself with conceit in the presence of the Heart of the Sky, they said: it is not good that this should happen thus, when man does not yet exist on earth.

Let us go then and see if we can shoot him with our blowpipe when he is eating, infecting him with some sickness that will put an end to his riches, to his stones, to his precious metals, to his emeralds and jewels of which he boasts so much; and so shall all men do.²⁴

Because riches have not been made to fill them with pride. Let this be done." This the young men said, each one with his blowpipe over his shoulder.

But *Vukub-Caix* had two sons; the first was Zipacná; the second was Cabrakán. Chimalmat²⁵ was the name of their mother, the wife of *Vukub-Cakix*.

Now, this Zipacná's job was to shape or pile up the great mountains like those called *Chicat*, *Hunahpú*, *Pecul*, *Yaxcanul*, *Macamob*, and *Hulisnab*.²⁶ and these were the mountains that existed before dawn broke and which were formed in a single night by the power of Zipacná.

In the same way, Cabrakán moved mountains at will and both large and small ones shook because of him.

And thus, the sons of *Vikub-Cakix* were proud for this reason. Listen,, said *Vikub-Cakix*. I myself am the sun. I am the one who made the earth, said Zipacná, and I am he who moves the sky, who makes the earth tremble, said Cabrakán.

This was how the sons of *Vukub-Cakix* assumed greatness in the manner of their father.

²⁴ Ximénez translates; *that it not be that men take an example to become vain*.

²⁵ The etymology of the name Zipacná is very doubtful. Zipac means spur of a rooster, but if the word is broken down further, Zi is *pac amona tree of the hot land*. In both cases, the last syllable, na, has many meanings, being the particle of the present time, of thought, etc. Cabrakán, according to Ximénez, means *with two legs*, but it usually corresponds to earthquake. Chimalmat may come from the Mexica Chimalli, shield, although it is also reminiscent of Chimalmán, the name the Mexica gave to Quetzalcóatl's mother (B. de B.).

²⁶ All these mountains are on Guatemalan territory. Hunahpú is the volcano of Agua, not Fuego as Brasseur de Bourbourg asserts; Yaxcapul, or Gragxamul as the Cakchiquels say, is the volcano of Santa María near Quezaltenango. The identity of the others still has not been determined (Note of Spanish translator).

This was the evil that the two young men saw. But at that time, our first mother and our first father had not yet been created.²⁷ This is how the deaths of (*Vukub-Cakix* and his sons) and their destruction was decided on by these two young men.

Chapter VI

Here now is the story of the blowpipe pellet the two young men shot at *Vucub-Cakix*; we shall tell about the defeat of each one of these who became so arrogant.

Vukub-Cakix had a large nantze tree,²⁸ and the fruit was his food. He would go to it every day and climb to the top to see the peel of the fruit which had been eaten by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

The two young men saw *Vukub-Cakix* at the foot of the tree and hid in the foliage, while *Vucub-Cakix* arrived to throw himself on the nantze fruits, which were his food.

Immediately, he was wounded by a pellet from the blowpipe of Hunhun-Ahpú²⁹ who aimed the shot at his cheek; at once he fell to the ground from the top of the tree, screaming.

Hunhun-Ahpú rushed to him to overpower him, but *Vukub-Cakix* seized him by one arm and shook it, and tore it violently from his shoulder.

Carrying Hunhun-Ahpú's arm, *Vukub-Cakix* reached his house, which he entered holding his jaw,

What has happened to you, my lord? asked Chimalmat, his wife.

What else could it be except that those two blackguards shot me with a blowpipe and dislocated my jaw?

That is why all my teeth are loose and hurt me very much. His arm, which I tore off with the first pull, I have brought to put on the

²⁷ That is to say, the beings the Quichés considered to be their grandparents.

²⁸ Tapal or Nantze, a tree of hot climates which produces a well-known small yellow fruit which is aromatic and tasty.

²⁹ Instead of Hunahpú the text here reads Hunhuh-Ahpú, which the father of the first is called elsewhere. The story would be more accurate if in the four preceding chapters they were called Hun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hun-Ahpú; but all these names are more or less symbolic and should not be taken literally (B. de B).

fire so that it can hang over the flames until those devils come in search of it, as they are sure to do, said *Vukub-Cakix* as he suspended Hunhun-Ahpú's arm.

After thinking the matter over, Hunhun-Ahpú and Xbalanqué spoke with an old man with completely white hair, as well as with an old woman, and this old woman was really stooped and bent double with age.

The old man's name was the Great Wild White Boar (*Zaquimimac*), the Great White Coati (*Zaquimazis*) was the name of the old woman. The young men said to the old woman and the old man.³⁰

Do us the honor of accompanying us to the house of *Vukub-Cakix* to retrieve our arm. We will be behind you, and you shall say, these are our grandchildren who come with us; their mother and father are dead, so they follow us everywhere we care to allow them, because it is our task to extract worms from teeth, you shall say.

So, *Vukub-Cakix* will regard us as boys, and we shall be there to give you advice, said the two young men. Very well, answered the old couple.

Then they set off to the end of the house where *Vukub-Cakix* was lying in front of his throne. The old woman and the old man went along, with the two young men playing their part behind them. And when they were reaching the foot of the king's house, they heard the groans that *Vucub-Cakix* was giving because of his teeth.

When *Vucub-Cakix* spied the old man and the old woman and also those who accompanied them, the king immediately asked, Where do you come from, old ones? We are looking for something to feed ourselves, my Lord, they answered.

What is your sustenance? Are these your sons that you accompany? No, my Lord, these are our grandchildren; but see, we have pity on them, we share and give them half of our food, the old woman and the old man replied.

By now the king was in despair because of the suffering his teeth caused him, and could only speak with difficulty. I beg you earnestly to help me in this instant, he said. What do you do? What can you cure? The king added.

³⁰ Here, the two divine people mentioned in the first chapter appear in another, more human form (B. de B).

We simply take worms out of teeth, cure eyes and set bones, my Lord, they answered.

Very well. So cure me quickly, I beg you, of my teeth which are making me suffer every day. I have neither sleep nor rest because of them and the trouble with my eyes.

Two demons shot me with a blowpipe, to begin with, which means I cannot eat. So have pity on me because every thing moves, my teeth and my jaw.

Very well, my Lord, said the old couple, it is a worm that makes you suffer. It will be enough to pull your bad teeth, Highness. It will not be good to take out my teeth because only thus am I king and all my handsomness comes from my teeth and eyes, answered *Vukub-Cakix*.

We shall put others there in exchange, clean polished bones will be put in place of them.³¹ But these clean polished bones were nothing but grains of white corn.

Very well, pull them out and help me, he replied. So, his teeth were taken out and nothing put in their place except grains of white corn, and immediately they gleamed in his mouth.

His noble quality disappeared immediately and he no longer looked like a king. They finished taking out his teeth of precious stones which gleamed in his mouth. While they operated on his eyes, they injured the globes, taking away their glory.

But he was in no state to realize this; he could still see well: but what nourished his pride had been taken away completely, on the advice of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Then *Vukub-Cakix* died, Hunahpú took back his arm, and Chimalmat, the wife of *Vukub-Cakix*, also died.

Thus was the destruction of the wealth of *Vukub-Cakix*, since the healer was the one who took away the emeralds and precious stones of which he had been so proud here on earth.

The old man and the old woman who did all this were miraculous beings. Having recovered the arms of the two young men, they put them in their places, and after they had stuck them back, all was perfect.

³¹ Fired clay vases (a sort of funerary urns) have been discovered in Peru and Ecuador containing, among other things, a skeleton with false teeth attached to the jaw with gold wire (Bollaert, in his work on New Granada, Ecuador, Peru and Chile).

They only did all this to ensure the death of *Vukub-Cakix*, because they thought it ill that he should become so proud. Then the two young men set off on their way, having fulfilled the word of the Heart of the Sky.

Chapter VII

Here follow the deeds of Zipacná, the elder son of *Vukub-Cakix*. I am the creator of mountains, said Zipacná.

Well, Zipacná was bathing on the edge of the river when he noticed many young men pass by, dragging a tree trunk to build their house with. The young men were all walking together after they had cut the great tree down for the main beam of their house.

Zipacná went up to them and asked "What are doing, boys?" It is just this tree trunk that we cannot lift to carry on our backs. I will carry it, he answered. Where to? What need have you of it?

For the main beam of our house, which we beg you to carry. Very well, he replied. Then he lifted it powerfully, put it on his back and took it to the entrance of the house of the boys.

So, now stay with us, young man. Do you have a mother and father? Not any more, he answered. So, they continued, we shall hire you again tomorrow to choose another tree to build our house. It is well, said Zipacná.

Then the boys gathered in discussion. See this young man, they said. What shall we do to kill him, because it is not good that he does these things — lifting the tree trunk alone.

Let us dig a large pit and we shall push him so that he falls into it. Go and take out the earth from the hole, we shall tell him. And when he is going down into it we shall throw a large tree trunk in, and he will quickly die there in the hole.

Thus the boys said, and dug a very deep pit. Then they called Zipacná. We really like you; go and dig a little more earth out, for we cannot do any more, they said.

Of course, he answered, and went down into the pit. And calling out to him as he dug they asked Have you gone down to the very

bottom. Yes, he said, as he began to dig, but the hole he was digging was to save himself.

Will it soon be finished? The boys called from above. I am still busy digging, but I will shout to you from down here when I have finished, cried Zipacná from the bottom of the pit.

But he was not digging the bottom of the pit at all — which was destined to be his grave — but a hole where he could save himself. Afterwards, Zipacná called out, but not until he was safely sheltered in the other hole.

Come and take away the earth and the pieces of the pit I have dug, because I have reached very deep. Can you not hear my shout? But I hear the sound of your voices repeated one, twice, like echoes. I can hear where you are. So Zipacná shouted from the hole where he had taken refuge, and continued calling out from the bottom of the pit.

Then the young men brought a great tree trunk and dropped it into the pit, where it fell rapidly.

Let no-one speak; let us simply wait for him to cry out and die, they said to one another, speaking quietly, covering their mouths and looking at one another as they let the log fall.

Zipacná gave a shout, but only one, when the wood fell to the bottom of the pit.

Oh! How well we have done. He is well and truly dead, because if he had gone on with the work he began, we would have been lost; he would have set himself up as a leader among us, the multitude of boys.

This is what they said, overfilled with joy. Now what we must do is make our *wine*³² over three days and spend another three days toasting the foundation of our houses, we the many boys.

So they said. Let it be so: Tomorrow we shall look to see if ants have been attracted by the smell of Zipacná's body — to carry off his rotting flesh; then our hearts will become calm while we drink our wine, they added.

But from his pit Zipacná heard everything the young men were saying. After the second day, the ants arrived suddenly, coming and going in great numbers to gather under the log.

Some carried off Zipacná's hair and others his fingernails. When the boys saw this, they exclaimed. That miserable creature is now fin-

³² Here we have used the word *wine* to translate the generic name of fermented beverages prepared by the Indians (B. de B.).

ished! Look, the ants have come in hordes, some carrying his hair and others his fingernails; this is what we have done.

This is what they said to one another. But Zipacná was very much alive. He had cut the hair of his head and bitten his nails to give them to the ants.

So, the boys thought he was dead. Therefore, on the third day they began their celebration, and all of them became drunk.

And as they were all drunk they did not realize anything. Zipacná made their cabin fall on their heads and they all ended up dead.

Not even one or two of the boys survived, all killed by Zipacná, son of *Vucub-Cakix*.

Thus the multitude of boys died, who are also said to have entered the group of stars called Moh (the Pleiades) because of them,³³ but this might be a fiction.

We shall also tell here how Zipacná was defeated by the two young men, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Chapter VIII

Here follows the defeat and death of Zipacná when he was in turn vanquished by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

What pained the hearts of these two boys was that the numerous young men had been killed by Zipacná.

He only ate fish and crabs on river banks; these were his only daily food. By day he went about looking for sustenance, and by night he carried mountains on his back.

Hunahpú and Xbalanqué made an enormous false crab and gave it a head made of *ek*³⁴ since *ek* can be gathered in forests and is found everywhere.

³³ Motz or Moh. *Group or set* is the name of the Pleiades in Quiché *Omuch guholab*. The "four hundred" boys who perished in an orgy of drinking are the same ones venerated in Mexico under the name of four hundred rabbits (*Centzon totochtlin*) invoked as divine protectors of wine (pulque) and drunkards (B. de B.).

³⁴ *Ek* name of a wild plant with large leaves which the Indians use to decorate their triumphal arches (B. de B.).

They made the large parts of the crab with this, and the small ones of *pahac*;³⁵ They used a stone for the shell covering the back of the crab.

They placed this sort of turtle at the bottom of a cave at the foot of a great mountain called Meavan, with the hope of overcoming Zipacná.

Then the boys went to look for Zipacná on the river bank. Where are you going, young fellow? They asked. I am not going anywhere, boys, he replied. I am just looking for food.

And what is your food? Only fish and crabs; but there are none here, or I have not been able to find them. Today is the second day I have not eaten and I am dying of hunger, said Zipacná to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Over there, at the bottom of the river there is a really huge crab, they said, and it would make a good meal. But it bit us when we tried to catch it, and that scared us. We would not try to take it now for anything, they said.

Have pity on me boys; come and show me where, said Zipacná. For nothing in the world would we. Go alone; you will not get lost. Follow the river bank and you will reach the foot of a great mountain where it makes a lot of noise at the bottom of a ravine. Go there, answered Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

How unlucky I am! Where is this, boys? Come and show me; there are many birds that you could shoot with your blowpipes, and I know where they are, said Zipacná.

His humility made the boys feel sorry for him. Do you think you can catch it if we go back there for you, because in fact we have not tried again, as it tried to bite us when we stooped into where it was. So we were frightened to crawl in, but we nearly caught it. So it would be better if you went in alone, they said.

Very well, answered Zipacná, going forward with them. When they arrived, Zipacná climbed down to the bottom of the ravine, where the crab was lying on its side, displaying its red shell, and this was at the bottom of the ravine where they had hidden their trick.

All goes well, said Zipacná, happily. I wish it were in my mouth already, because I am really dying of hunger. So he tried to enter, mouth down, but the crab had already begun to climb up.

³⁵ It is not known exactly what *pahac* is, but it is believed to be a type of sweetsop (B. de B.).

So he came out. Have you caught it? they asked. Not yet, he said. If it hadn't crawled up, I would have. But maybe I should go in again, he said.

He immediately began to go back in on his stomach. He was almost inside, and only the ends of his legs could be seen of him when the great mountain, hollowed out below, slid apart and fell on his chest. Zipacná never came out; he was turned into stone.

This was the end of Zipacná, thanks to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. According to ancient tradition, it was he who made mountains, the elder son of *Vucub-Cakix*.

At the foot of the mountain called *Meavan*³⁶ he was conquered; only in a miraculous way was the second of those who were too proud was overcome. There is still one left, whose story we shall tell.

Chapter IX

Well, the third of the arrogant ones was the second son of Vucub-Cakix, called Cabrakán. I am the one who destroys mountains, he used to say.

But in the same way, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué also defeated Cabrakán. At that time Hurakán the trace of lightning and the stroke that wounds, spoke to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, saying:

May the second son of *Vucub-Cakix* be overcome in his turn; this is our wish, for what they do on earth is not good, exalting their glory to such heights and power; let this be so no more. Entice him toward the East, added Hurakán.

Very well, powerful lord, they replied. What we see is not good. Are you not who you are? Are you not he who is Peace? You, the Heart of the Sky? added the boys as they listened to the word of Hurakán.

At the same time, Cabrakán was busy moving mountains; just by tapping the earth with his feet, mountains large and small broke because of him.

³⁶ *Meacan* or *Meahuan*. A high mountain on the left of the Chixoy on the borders of Totonicapam and Verapaz (B. de B.)

This was when the boys found him. Where are you going, young man? they asked Cabrakán. I am not going anywhere, I am simply here disturbing mountains, because I am he who destroys them, and I am always busy doing that, he said in reply.

Then he said to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. Why have you come here? I do not recognize your faces. What are your names?

We do not have names, we just hunt with blowpipes, and catch birds with birdlime in the mountains. We are orphans and we have nothing of our own. We simply go through the mountains large and small, young man. But we have seen, and where it stands there are enormous precipices; it is really very high, it is so high that it rises above the peaks of all the mountains. So, we have not been able to catch even one or two of the birds on it. But if it is true that you demolish all mountains, said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué to Cabrakán, help us throw it to the ground.

Have you really seen the mountain you say? Where is it? I shall see it and destroy it. Where did you see it? Over there, it stands where the sun rises, replied Hunahpú and Xbalanqué

Very well. Show me the way, he said to the two boys. Oh no! they answered, we must take you between us, one on your left and the other on your right, because we have our blowpipes, and if there are birds, we shall shoot them. They set off in good spirits, trying out their blowpipes. Now, when they shot their blowpipes, they did not use clay pellets, they just blew to make the birds fall.

Cabrakán was very surprised by this. Then the two boys lit a fire and put the birds over it to roast, but they rubbed one of them with *tizate*³⁷ and put white powder all around it.

This is the one we shall give him to whet his appetite with the aroma it gives off. This bird will be his downfall. Just as earth will cover all parts of this bird thanks to us, we shall throw him to earth in the same way and bury him.

It is true, it is prudent to think about making creatures at the time seeds are about to appear and the day is about to appear, said the boys.

As it is very natural for man to wish in his heart to eat and chew, so the bird we have prepared will tempt Cabrakán, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué said to each other.

³⁷ Very crumbly white earth, used for polishing metals, making cement and other purposes. The name *tizate* comes from the Nahuatl *tezatl* (B. de B.).

Meanwhile, they were roasting the bird, which was cooking and taking on color as it turned, shining with juice and fat which produced a very appetizing smell.

Cabrákán was longing to eat it, so much that his mouth watered, that he yawned, and the saliva and spittle dribbled from him because of the bird's delicious aroma.

So he asked What id the dish you have there? I have never smelled anything so delicious. Give me a small piece, he added.

They gave the bird to Cabrákán that was to be his downfall. When he had finished the bird, they set off again, making for where the sun rises, where the great mountain stood.

Cabrákán was already weak in his hands and feet, he had no strength left because of the earth the bird he had eaten was rubbed with. He was now incapable of doing anything to mountains, and could no longer destroy them.

The boys tied him up; binding his hands behind him; then they tied his neck to his feet, threw him to the ground and buried him.

Thus was Cabrákán defeated by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. But it would not be possible to relate everything they did here on earth.

Now we shall also tell of the birth of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, because we have already spoken of the destruction of *Vukub-Cakix*, Zipacná and Cabrákán here on earth.

POPOL VUH



THE SACRED BOOK OF THE
ANCIENT MAYAS-QUICHÉ

BOOK II

Chapter I

Now we shall also tell the name of the father of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. But we shall cast a veil of mystery over his origin, we shall cover the story of the birth of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué in mystery; we shall tell only the half of this and only a part of the history of their father.

Here then is the story. The name of each one is Ahpú (hunter with the blowpípe), as they are called, and their parents were Xpiyacoc and Xmucané.¹ Hunhun-Ahpú and Vocub-Hunahpú were created during the night by Xpiyacoc and Xmucané.

So, these Hunhun-Ahpú were two; they had begotten two legitimate sons, the name of the eldest was Hunbatz, and the second Hunchoven.²

The name of their mother was Xbakiyalo:³ such was the name of the wife of Hunhun-Ahpú called. As for Vocub-Hunahpú, he had no wife, he was single. Hunhun-Ahpú had two sons, called Hunbatz and Hunchoven.

By their very nature, Hunhun-Ahpú and Vocub-Hunahpú were very wise and their knowledge was great. They were diviners here on earth, and their lives and customs were blameless.

Hunbatz and Hunchoven were instructed in all the arts: they were flute players, singers, hunters with blowpipes, painters, sculptors, jew-

¹ In other words, the parents of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué were the children of Xpiyacoc and Xmucané.

² Hunbatz can be translated as *strand or monkey*, batz also means a cotton thread or type of large monkey. Batz is the eleventh sign or day in the calendars of the Tzeltals, Quichés and Cakchiquels (B. de B.).

³ This name is symbolic, like the others. Ximénez translates it as "fastened bones." (B. de B.).

elers, silversmiths. Hunbatz and Hunchoven became skilled in everything.

Well, Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú spent every day playing knuckle-bones and the ballgame, and every two days the four gathered together with many others on the ball court.

And Voc,⁴ the messenger of Hurakán who is the lightning that cuts through the clouds, and the ray that wounds, came to see them: But this Voc was not far away from here on the earth or very far from Xibalbá,⁵ because at a given moment he went up to the sky to join Hurakán.

While Hunbatz and Hunchoven were still here on earth, their mother died. And while they were on their way to Xibalbá, they were playing ball, and this was heard immediately by Hun-Camé and Vogub-Camé, the sovereign of Xibalbá.

What is this? What is happening on earth? Who are these who make it shake and cause so much tumult? Let them be sought out at this moment, bring them here to play the ballgame so that we can beat them. They do not obey us any more; they no longer have respect or reverence for us, and all they do is fight over our heads, said all those of Xibalbá.

So they all gathered to discuss matters, with Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé as high judges. All these lords were tribute payers of the empire and all of them just by the will of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé.

These were Xiquiripat and Cuchumaquiq by name, whose power was exercised on people with flowing blood. Others were called Ahalpuh and Ahalganá, and these too were lords.

Their work was to make men swell up, make fluids reach their legs and make their faces a pale color, something which is called *Chugamal*;⁶ that was the work of Ahalpuh and Ahalganá.

⁴ Woc or Vac, hawk, a bird of prey that eats snakes (B. de B.).

⁵ Xibalbá was the name of a powerful empire which existed before the first Toltec invasions, probably several centuries before the Christian era. All this second part of the sacred book casts a more or less symbolical veil of mystery over the struggle against this empire by foreign nations or dynasties whose civilization was Toltec in essence (B. de B.).

The chronicler Ximénez and the missionaries of old times saw Xibalbá as a symbol of hell and its princes as demons or gods of the underworld.

⁶ *Chugamal*, a name the Indians gave to an illness similar to jaundice, (B. de B.).

Other lords were Chamiabak and Chamiaholom, staff-bearers of Xibalbá, whose staffs were nothing but bones; their job as staff-bearers was to make men waste away until they only had a head without flesh and bones, and when they died there was only a skeleton to take. This was the task of Chamiabak and Chamiaholom, as they were called.

There were also the lords named Ahalmez and Ahaltogob, and their work was to bring disasters on men and make bad things happen to them. This was the task of Ahalmez and Ahaltogob, as they were called.⁷

Immediately after them came other lords named Xic and Patán,⁸ whose work was to make men die on their way because of what is known as sudden death, by making blood rush up to their mouths to make them die vomiting it. The job of each one was to squeeze the necks and put pressure on the chests of men so that they fell down on their way, making blood surge into their throats while they were walking. This was the task of Xic and Patán.

And these gathered to discuss how to persecute and punish Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú. What the lords of Xibalbá wanted was to strip Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú of their leather shields, their belts, their gloves⁹ and the crown-like helmets that they wore.

Now we shall tell of their journey to Xibalbá, leaving behind them Hunbatz and Hunchoven, sons of Hunhun-Ahpú. By now their mother was dead, and then we shall talk of how Hunbatz and Hunchoven were defeated by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Chapter II

The messengers of Hun-Camé and Vucub-Camé arrived immediately, and were told — go, Ahpop Achih, and take this message to Hunhun-Ahpú and Vocub-Hunahpú and say: Come to us.

⁷ *Ahal-mez*, he who works in filth; *Ahal-togob*, he who works or produces misery (B. de B.).

⁸ *Xic*, a bird of prey like a hawk (B. de B.).

⁹ Equipment used in playing the ballgame (B. de B.).

They must come, the lords say to them; they must come to play ball with us to make our faces look happy. We are really amazed at their skills, so the lords say, come.

And have them bring the equipment they use to make all this noise; their belts, their gloves and also their rubber balls, said the lords. The messengers were told to bid them come.

Now, the messengers were owls. Arrow Owl, One Leg Owl, Macaw Owl and Owl Head were the names of the messengers of Xibalbá.¹⁰

Arrow Owl was as fast as an arrow; One Leg Owl had only one leg of course. As for Macaw Owl, it was fiery red all over, and finally Owl Head had only its head, no legs, but wings.

These four messengers had the rank of Ahpopop-Achih, or captains of the guard. Leaving Xibalbá, they arrived rapidly, taking their message to the court where Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú were playing the ballgame, on the court of Ninxor Carchab as it is called.

The owls sent to the ball-court delivered their message in the same order as the speech by Hun-Camé, Vokub-Camé, Ahalpuh. Ahalganá, Chamiabak, Chamalholom, Xiquiripat, Cuchumaquí, Ahalmez, Ahaltogot, Xic and Patán, because these were the names of all the lords who had arranged the words for the owls to say.

Is it really true that the king Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé spoke thus? Is it really true, exclaimed the two brothers, that we must go with .you? The lords said that you should bring all the equipment for your game, answered the messengers. It is well. First, wait for us a moment; we are going quickly to say goodbye to our mother. So they set off to their house and said to their mother, because their father was dead: We are going away mother, but our journey will be in vain. The messengers of the king have come for us. They must come, say those who were sent to find us.

But proof of our existence will remain here, this rubber ball, they added. They went immediately to hang it in the loft of the house. Thus, we shall still play ball afterwards, they said. And you, mother, keep occupied with music, singing, painting or writing and carving. Keep our house warm and comfort the heart of your grandmother, they said to Hunbatz and Hunchoven.

¹⁰ This is the origin of the Indians' horror of owls (B. de B.)

When they took leave of their mother, Xmucané was moved to tears. We are leaving, but we are not yet dead; do not worry, said Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú.

Then, having set out, the messengers went on ahead, and they began to go down the road that leads to Xibalbá, whose first steps were very steep. Having descended, they reached the bank of a fast river which flowed at the bottom of deep valleys called Nuziván-cul and Suziván,¹¹ which they crossed. They also crossed seething waters covered with calabashes, and the calabash trees¹² were numberless but they passed through them without injury.

Then they came to the bank of a river of blood; they crossed this, but did not drink any of its water. After this they reached another river, which contained only water, and so far they had not been caught in an ambush. They crossed this also, but then they reached a place where four roads join, and there at the crossroads they were taken.

One of these roads was red, another was black, one white and the last of them was yellow, making four roads, and the black road spoke. I am the one you must take, I am the road of the king, it said.

Here, then, they were taken in the trap, because they were taken along the road to Xibalbá, and when they reached the room where the throne of the kings of Xibalbá stood, they realized they had already lost the game.

The first ones they saw seated were a figure and a man made of wood, arranged by those of Xibalbá, and these were the first they greeted. Greetings, Hun-Camé they said to the figure; greetings Vokub-Camé, they continued, to the wooden man.

But they did not answer. The kings of Xibalbá laughed heartily, and all the lords joined in because Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú had been tricked, and they considered them already defeated, so they laughed even louder.

Then Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé said: Very well. You have come. Tomorrow prepare your headgear, your belts and your gloves, they were told.

Be seated on your seat of honor, they said to them. But the seat of honor was nothing but a hot stone, and when they sat down they were

¹¹ Steep ravine where waters meet or divide (Ximénez).

¹² Ximénez translates as stockades.

burned, and the burning made them squirm about on the seat, without finding relief, and as they tried to stand up, the throne burned them.

The lords of Xibalbá burst out laughing again; they cried with laughter, their chests hurt them, and from so much mirth, the princes of Xibalbá almost suffered apoplexy.

Go to your lodging, where your bundle of pitch pine will be taken to you, and your tobacco¹³ to make you sleep, they were told. They went immediately to the gloomy house, where there were only shadows inside, and meanwhile the lords of Xibalbá discussed what to do. Let us sacrifice them tomorrow and let them die as soon as possible, because their fire is an insult to us, those of Xibalbá said to one another.

Their pitch pine stick was a rounded arrow from the tree called *Zakitok* (white flint knife) the pine of Xibalbá, so its flame was very fierce and would soon come to an end and so fan the flames of those of Xibalbá.

Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Camé went into the dark house and they were given their pitch pine sticks, a lighted one each; and each was given a lighted cigar, which the lords had sent and which were taken to them.

When they went to give them their firebrands of pine and cigars they were squatting in the dark, which the lighted pine dispelled as it arrived. Let each of you light his torch and cigar, but come and bring them as day breaks. And be careful not to use them up, because you must give them back just as they were given to you, the lords tell you this.

This is what they told them, and how they were defeated. Their pine burned up, and they smoked the cigars they had been given. The trials or torments in Xibalbá were many and they were of many different kinds.

The first was that of the gloomy house, completely dark inside. The second was that of the house called *Xuxulim*,¹⁴ into which a cutting wind blew, cold and unbearable, which filled it.

¹³ *Ziq*, tobacco; *xigar*, to smoke and to perfume. This is probably the origin of the word *cigarro* (cigar).

¹⁴ *Xuxulim*, a word meaning the whistle of the north wind, cold and penetrating.

The third was the house of the jaguars, where there were only jaguars, which gathered together in ferocious groups and watched one another mockingly, shut up in that house.

Xoti-há, or house of the bats was the fourth test; there were only bats in this house, squeaking, flapping about and whirling round. The bats were shut in and could not escape.

The fifth was called Chayin-há (or house of the fighters), where there were only warriors, victors, who alternately fought using their obsidian spears and rested.

These are the first trials of Xibalbá, but Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú did not enter them.

When Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú went before Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé they asked: Where are my cigars; where are my pine torches that you were sent last night? We have finished them, lord!

Then today will be the end of you. You shall die, you will be destroyed, your chests will be cut into pieces, and the memory of you will be buried in these places. You will be sacrificed, said Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé.

So they sacrificed them and they were buried in the Place of Ashes. First Hunhun-Ahpú's head was cut off, and the body of the elder one was buried with that of his brother.

Take his head and put it in the tree that is in the middle of the road, added Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé. The moment they went and put the head in the tree, it instantly became covered with fruit, because it had never borne fruit before. This was the calabash that we still call the head of Hunhun-Ahpú.

Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé looked in amazement at the fruit of the wonderful tree. This fruit was round everywhere, but Hunhun-Ahpú's head could no longer be seen, because it was a fruit just like all the others of the calabash tree. This is what the people of Xibalbá saw when they went to look at it.

The tree soon became great in their opinion, because of what had happened so suddenly when they put Hunhun-Ahpú's head among the branches. So, the lords of Xibalbá talked among themselves. Let no-one be so bold as to sit at the foot of the tree, they said, forbidding one another to go near it.

Ever since then, the head of Hunhun-Ahpú never appeared again because it had become the same as the other fruit of the gourd tree, as

it is called. But a girl heard this wonderful story, and now we shall tell how she arrived.

Chapter III

Here follows the story of a young girl, daughter of a lord called Cuchumaquiq.

This maiden, daughter of a lord, heard of these wonders: Cuchumaquiq was the name of her father and Xquiq the name of the girl. And when she heard the story about the fruits of this tree, which her father told her, she was also much amazed.

Why should I not go and see this tree people talk so much of? Certainly, these fruits must be delicious, according to what I hear tell. So, she set off alone and reached the foot of the tree planted in the middle of the Place of Ashes. Ah, ha! She exclaimed What! This is the fruit of this tree? Is it not wonderful how the tree is covered with fruit? Shall I die, shall I be lost if I pick one? Added the girl.

Do you still want one? Asked the head. Yes I do, said the girl. Very well, simply stretch out your hand, said the skull. Yes, said the girl, reaching out in front of the skull.

Then the skull spat forcefully into the girl's hand that she was holding out: the girl looked curiously into the cup of her hand, but, the saliva was no longer there.

This saliva, this spittle which I have just given you is my posterity. Now my head will cease to speak because it is only a skull without flesh. Thus are the skulls of the greatest princes, because it is only flesh that makes their faces handsome. This is the reason for the terror men feel at the moment of death, because of the skeleton which is all that remains of their bodies.

The same happens to children, whose nature is like spittle and saliva, whether they are the sons of lords or of artists or of orators. This nature is never lost, but is passed on; the image of the lord, the artist from among ordinary people, or the orator does not disappear or vanish. It is the same with the daughters or sons they leave, and this is what I have done with you.

Go up, then, onto earth: you will not die. Believe my word, it will be so, said the head of Hunhun-Ahpú and of Vokub-Hunahpú.

And all these things as they happened were by order of Hurakán, the lightning which cuts the sky and the bolt which injures.

So, the girl returned home, enriched by the mysterious news or warnings she had been given. And she immediately conceived, simply because of the saliva, and this was the conception of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

After she had been at home for six months, her father, whose name was Cuchumaquic, looked at her with suspicion. He observed her with more attention when he noticed she was pregnant. Then, the lords Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé talked with Cuchumaquic.

My daughter is with child, my lords, to her dishonor, he said when he came before the kings. Very well, make her tell the truth, and if she will not speak, let her be killed, let her be taken far away and sacrificed. It is well, my lords, he said.

So he asked his daughter: Whose is the child you are carrying in your belly, daughter? But she replied, I have no child, my lord and father, because I have not yet known a man.

Very well, he said, you are a harlot!... Take her and sacrifice her, you the Ahpop-Achih. Bring me her heart in a vessel and return this very day to the lords, he said to the Owls.

The four went to fetch the vessel and set off immediately on the road, carrying the girl on their backs and taking a flint knife to sacrifice her with.

Surely you will not kill me, oh messengers of Xibalbá because what I have in my belly is not a disgrace, but the fruit I conceived when I went to look at the head of Hunhun-Ahpú which is in the Place of Ashes. So, you will not sacrifice me, oh messengers, she said.

But what shall we put in place of your heart? Your father said to us: Bring me her heart; you will return to the kings; do your duty and show the command has been obeyed, bring the proof of it in a vessel. You shall put the heart in the bottom. Did they nor speak to us thus? So what shall we put in the vessel? However, we too do not wish you to die, said the messengers.

Very well! This heart cannot be theirs. Your place cannot be here either. Go with me and from now you will be the messengers of death; you will be the real fornicators, and mine will be Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé; and they will be only the masters of blood and skulls.

As for burning this heart before them, this shall not be, either. Put the product of this tree in the vessel, said the girl. And the red sap flowed from the tree and fell into the vessel; it set into a red ball: it was the change for her heart that this liquid sprang from the red tree.

Similar to blood the sap came out of the tree, in place of the blood. This clotted in the bottom of the vessel, this liquid from the red tree, and it looked like blood, it became bright, reddish, clotted in the vessel, while the tree became famous because of the girl.

Sangre de Dragón (Dragon's Blood) it was named, and nicknamed Blood Tree, because it was a contract of blood that was made.

There you will be loved, and everything on the face of the earth will be your inheritance, she also said to the Owls. Very well, they replied. As for us, we shall go and report on our mission. Go on your way while we present the sap instead of your heart to the lords, said the messengers of Xibalbá.

When they arrived in the presence of the lords, all were waiting anxiously. Is it done? Asked Hun-Camé. It is done, lords. Here is the heart in the bottom of the vessel. Very good, let me see it then, said Hun-Camé.

Then he lifted it delicately with the tips of his fingers, and the bright red liquid began to flow. Stir the embers up well and put it on the fire, said Hun-Camé.

When it had been thrown on the fire and the lords of Xibalbá had begun to smell the aroma it gave off they all rose and approached the fragrance coming from the blood.

While they stood amazed by what was happening, the Owls, warned by the girl, left flying up in great numbers from the cave to the earth and became her servants.

Thus were the lords of Xibalbá tricked by this girl who they all let blind them.

Chapter IV

Well, Hunbatz and Hunchonen were in the house with their mother¹⁵ when Xquiq approached their mother. She was pregnant and there was little time before the birth of those who were named Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

When the girl came to the old lady, she said; I have come, mother; I am your daughter-in-law, I am the adopted daughter, lady and mother, she said as she entered and approached.

Where do you come from? Where are my sons? Did they not die in Xibalbá? His two descendants, the signs of his word, who are called Hunbatz and Hunchoven. Do you not see them? Out of here! Go! Repeated the old woman.

Believe me, truly I am your daughter-in-law, because I am the wife of Hunhun-Ahpú; Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú are not dead, they are here alive, and the sentence which befell them has only made them more famous. You are my mother-in-law. You shall see their image in what I bring you.

Then Hunbatz and Hunchoven became angry with the young woman. They did nothing except play the flute and sing; they spent all day painting and carving, and were the consolation of the old woman.

The old woman then said I have no need of you for my daughter-in-law. Proof of your adultery is what is in your womb. You are a liar, my sons you speak of are dead. And she continued, what I tell you is only the truth. But it is well, you are my daughter-in-law, I understand. Go then and bring food for those who eat. Go, gather a good net full, come back immediately, since you are my daughter-in-law, as I understand, the girl was told.

Very well, she replied, and went immediately to the field where Hunbatz and Hunchoven had sown crops, and as the path had been opened by them, the girl took it and reached the field.

But she found only one sheaf or clump of corn, because there were not two or three, just a single one on the field, so the girl's heart fell.

¹⁵ Probably mother is used here instead of grandmother (B de B.).

Miserable sinner that I am! Where can I find the net full of food she asked me for? Then she thought of invoking the Guardian of food for him to grant her what she had been asked for.

Xtoh, Xcanil, Xcacau¹⁶ you who prepare corn with ash, and you, Guardian of the food of Hunbatz and Hunchonen, come to my help, exclaimed the girl. Then she grasped the leaves and the ends of the ear, pulled them off gently, without picking the ear, she arranged them, turning these leaves into ears of corn on the bottom of the net, and so was able to fill the net completely.

The girl went on her way and creatures¹⁷ carried the net and... they went take their load to a corner of the house as if she had carried it.. The old woman saw her, and when she saw such a large sack full of food, she cried, Where did you get all this corn from? Did you ruin my field, or have you brought all our crops? I am gong to see it this instant, said the old woman, setting off to look at the field.

But the only stalk of corn in the field was standing in the same place, and also the place where the net had been could be seen. The old woman went quickly back to the house and said to the girl. This is a sure sign that you are my daughter-in-law. I shall still see your works and those of the wise ones you carry now in your belly.

Chapter V

What we shall tell now is the birth of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. When the day arrived, the same, the girl called Xquiq gave birth. But the old woman was not there when they were born. The two boys called Hunahpú and Xbalanqué for these were their names, were born instantly, and it was on the mountain where they were born.

The young woman returned to the house, but they did not sleep. Go and put them outside, because all they do is cry, said the old woman. After that they took them to an anthill, and there they slept very peacefully, so they took them off it and laid them on thorns.

¹⁶ Xtoh, Xcanil, Xcacau, names of three Indian deities which take care of food and abundance (B. de B.).

¹⁷ *Chicop* means wild, savage, brute; Ximénez translates it as animal (B. de B.).

Now what Hunbatz and Hunchoven wanted was that they would die on the anthill. They wanted this because they were their rivals in the arts, and the sons of Xquiq were an object of envy for them.

From the beginning, their young brothers were not received in the house; they did not recognize them and so they were brought up on the mountain.

Hunbatz and Hunchoven were great musicians and singers; however Huhahpú and Xbalanqué, having grown up in the midst of great pains and troubles, tormented in all ways by the others, became very wise. They were also skilled flute players, singers, painters and sculptors. Everything was perfect in their hands.

They knew all about their birth and also knew that they were the representatives of their fathers, who had gone to Xibalbá, where they had died. However, Hunbatz and Hunchoven were very clever, and because of their intelligence they had known since the beginning all about the existence of their young brothers.

But their wisdom was not evident, because of their envy, and the ill will of their hearts had mastered them, although Hunahpú and Xbalanqué had not done anything to provoke it.

These last two did nothing but shoot with their blowpipes every day; they were not loved by their grandmother, or Hunbatz or Hunchoven. They were not given anything at all to eat. When the meal was over and Hunbatz and Hunchoven had eaten, they came.

But they did not become offended or angry, suffering in silence, because they knew their rank and saw everything as clear as day. They brought birds when they returned each day, but Hunbatz and Hunchoven ate them without giving anything to either Hunahpú or Xbalanqué.

Hunbatz and Hunchoven did nothing but play the flute and sing. Now, one day Huhahpú and Xbalanqué came back without any birds. And when they entered the house, the old woman became annoyed-

Why did you not bring any birds, she said to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. The reason is, dear grandmother, that our birds became entangled in the thick branches of the tree — they replied — and we cannot climb up to get them. But let our older brothers climb up, let them come with us and bring the birds down, they said.

Very well, we shall go with you tomorrow as soon as it is light, answered the elder brothers. Now the wisdom of Hunbatz and

Hunchonen was dead in one and the other about their defeat. We, said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué to each other, shall only change the nature and shape of their bellies, and let our word have effect because of all the great torments they have caused us. They wanted us to die and to be destroyed, that disgrace should overtake us, we who are their younger brothers. They have lowered us in their minds like servants; so, in the same way, we shall humiliate them as a sign of our power.

This they thought as they went to the foot of the tree called Canté (mouse killer), accompanied by their elder brothers, they walked, amusing themselves shooting their blowpipes. The birds which sang in the top of the tree were numberless, and the two elder brothers were amazed to see so many.

See how many birds there are, but not a single one has fallen yet, so go and make them fall, they said to their brothers. Very well they answered.

But after they had climbed up the tree, it grew larger and its trunk lengthened, and when Hunbatz and Hunchonen wanted to come down they were not able to descend from the top of the tree.

So they shouted from above. How has this happened to us, little brothers? Unfortunate are we! This tree frightens those who look at it, they said from the treetop. And Hunahpú and Xbalanqué replied. Take off your belts and, attach them below your stomachs, making sure to leave a long end which you will pass behind, and like this you will be able to climb down easily, said the two brothers.

Very well, they answered, pulling the ends of their belts, but in that very instant these ends turned into tails and they were changed into monkeys.

They immediately climbed back up to the top of the trees among mountains large and small, and they went through the woods, gesticulating and swinging in the branches of the trees. Thus were Hunbatz and Hunchonen defeated by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, and it was only through their magic power that they did this.

Then they returned to their home. When they arrived they said to their grandmother and mother. Grandmother, what can have happened to our brothers, for in an instant their faces became like those of animals?

If you have done this to your brothers, you have ruined me, you have sunken me in sadness. Do not act so with your elder brothers, oh my children, the old woman said to Hunahpú and Xbalaqué.

Then they replied to their grandmother. Do not grieve, grandmother. You shall see our brothers' faces again; they will come back; however, this will be a test for you. Be careful not to laugh. Now experience your fortune.

Immediately, they began to play their flutes, playing the song of Hunahpú-Qoy.¹⁸

After this, taking their flutes and drums, they sang playing flute and drum, having their grandmother sit with them, doing that to attract their elder brothers with their tunes and songs, which is why it was then called the tune of Hunahpú-Qoy.

Then Hunbaatz and Hunchonen entered and began to dance, but when the old woman noticed their ugly faces, she could not help laughing. At that instant they left, and she never saw their faces again.

You see, grandmother, exclaimed Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, they have gone back to the forest. What have you done, grandmother? We can only try this four times, and now there are only three left.

We shall call them with the sound of the flute and singing. Contain your laughter and let the trial begin again, they said.

Immediately, they began playing the flute. The two monkeys came back to the center of the room, giving their grandmother so much pleasure and making her so happy that finally she burst out laughing. There was really something so grotesque in their faces, with swollen lower stomachs, the waving of their tails and the hollow of their bellies that there was much to make the old woman laugh when they came in.

So, they went back to the mountains. What shall we do now, grandmother. For the third time only we shall do the test again, said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

They played their flutes again; the monkeys came back dancing, and for the moment their grandmother could contain her laughter. The monkeys climbed onto the roof, showing their large red eyes, their long muzzles and the faces of all kinds that they made to each other.

¹⁸ The Hunahpú-Qoy or the monkey of Hunahpú is a curious dance which is still performed among the Indians of Guatemala. It is featured in certain fiestas of the year, with quite well-made wooden masks and costumes suitable for this type of farce or dance.

The old woman looked at them again she could not help laughing. But their faces were seen no longer because of the laughter. This time only, grandmother, we shall call them out of the woods, and this will be the fourth time.

They called them again with the flute for the fourth time, but they did not return, but fled into the forest. The two brothers then said to their grandmother: mother we have tried to make them come one more time, but they have not, despite our efforts. Do not grieve about this; here we are, your grandsons and we look on you as our mother, as our grandmother, since we have stayed in memory of our elder brothers who were called Hunchonen and Hunbatz. So said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

(Hunbatz and Hunchonen) were invoked by the musicians and singers of the peoples of old times, and also formerly by painters and sculptors. However, they were changed into wild animals and turned into monkeys for having become arrogant and mistreated their brothers.

In this way, the defeat of their hearts (or of their intelligence) was brought about, and thus were Hunbatz and Hunchonen lost and overcome and turned into animals. Before this happened, they lived in their houses and were highly skilled musicians and singers and did great things while they were with their grandmother and mother.

Chapter VI

In their turn they began their work to be well thought of by their grandmother and mother. The first thing they did was to sow a field. We are going to work the fields, our grandmother and our mother, they said. Do not grieve; we who are here, we who are your grandchildren, we are here in place of our elder brothers, added Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Then they took their axes, picks and hoes and set off, each one with his blowpipe over his shoulder. They left the house, charging their grandmother to send them food. At midday exactly, bring us our meal, grandmother, they said. Very well, my grandsons, said the old woman.

Soon afterwards they reached the place where they had to work the field and they broke the earth everywhere with their picks; the picks were only for removing the roughness of the earth and cleaning the ground.

And they also struck the ax into the trunks of trees and in the branches, throwing them to the ground, splitting them, making everything fall, trees and vines of every sort with one ax felling all this forest and doing all this work.

All that the pick ripped up was also considerable; the amount of brambles and thistles that was cleaned away just with one pick could not have been calculated; what had been cleaned and all they had brought to earth in the mountains large and small could not be calculated.

Then they gave their orders to an animal called Xmucur (or turtle-dove), and having told it to climb a tree, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué said: All you have to do is watch for our grandmother coming to bring us food, and when she arrives, coo immediately and we shall take up the ax and the pick. Very well said the dove.

Then they amused themselves hunting with blowpipes and abandoned the work. A little later the dove cooed and they immediately ran, one to take the pick and the other to seize the ax.

After covering his head, one of them covered his hands purposely with soil, also smearing his face like a real laborer. The other also filled his hair with weeds and twigs as if he had really been busy cutting trees.

This was when their grandmother saw them. They ate immediately, although in fact the work of preparing the earth for sowing had not cost them any effort, so they were brought food to eat without earning it. When they arrived at the house, they said: We are really tired, grandmother, entering and stretching their legs and arms for no reason in front of her.

When they returned next day, on reaching the field they saw that everything was standing again, trees and reeds, and that undergrowth and thistles had become tangled up again.

Who has played tricks on us in this way? They exclaimed. No doubt, all the animals large and small are the ones who have done this to us: pumas, jaguars, deer and rabbits, opossums, coyotes, wild boars, por-

cupines; the birds large and small, they have done these things, and they did them in a single night.

Then they began to prepare the field again; they did the same on the surface, and cut trees, always debating with each other between felling trees and clearing undergrowth.

This time, they said, we shall watch carefully over what we have cleared. Perhaps this way we can surprise those who have come to do this, they added thoughtfully. Then they went home.

What do you think, grandmother? We have been made fun of. The great brambles and trees we had cleared had returned to their place when we arrived a little time ago, they said to their grandmother and mother. But we shall return and keep watch, because it is not well that they treat us so.

Then they got ready and returned to their felled trees, and there they hid under the cover of darkness.

Then all the animals gathered, each kind joining the others large and small. And at midnight they arrived saying in their language: rise trees. Rise vines.

This was what they said when they arrived and crowded together under the trees and under the vines. Finally they came closer and revealed themselves to the eyes of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

The first were the puma and the jaguar; the brothers tried to catch them but the animals did not let them. In turn the deer and the rabbit came close, bringing their tails near. They caught them, but they only pulled off their extremities, and the deer's tail remained in their hands. And because they seized the tail of the deer and of the rabbit, these animals have only a very short tail.

The fox and the coyote would not give themselves up, and similarly the wild boar and the porcupine, and all the animals passed in front of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué whose hearts burned with rage because they had not been able to catch a single one.

But another animal hopped up, and it was the last one. The brothers blocked its path and caught the rat in a cloth. When they had caught it they squeezed its head hard and tried to strangle it. They burned its tail in the fire, and since then the rat has a hairless tail, as well as bulging eyes because the boys had squeezed them outward.

I must not die in your hands; know that it is not your job to work the land, said the rat. What are you telling us now? asked the boys.

Let me go for a moment because I have something to tell you. I will tell you at once, but first give me something to eat, said the rat.

We will give you something to eat later, but first say what you have to say, was the answer. Very well. Know, then, that this is the property of your fathers Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú as they were called and who died in Xibalbá; that these exist as well as their playing equipment, which has remained hanging from the roof of the house: their belts, their gloves, their rubber ball. But you have not been shown them because of your grandmother, since it was on account of this equipment your fathers died.

Are you sure of these things? asked the boys of the rat, and they were very happy to hear the story of the rubber ball. After the rat had said this, they gave it something to eat.

This is the food we shall give you: corn, white chili, beans, pataste, cacao. All shall be for you. And if anything remains stored away or forgotten it shall be for you and you shall gnaw it.

Very well, boys, but what shall I say if your grandmother sees me? Do not fear, we shall be here; we are ready for when we have to answer our grandmother. Quickly then let us climb up to the corner of the house, let us go where we have to go; climb to the place where the things are hanging. We shall look in the rafters of the house, paying attention to our food, they said to the rat.

Having discussed this one night and given their opinions, Hunahpú and Xbalanquú arrived at exactly midday, taking the rat without showing it. They approached the house and one of them entered while the other went to the corner, where he let the rat climb up at once.

Then they asked their grandmother for their food; prepare our meal, we would like a chili sauce, grandmother, they said. Immediately a bowl of broth was made and put in front of them.

But this was only a trick to deceive their grandmother and mother, and having secretly poured the water out of the jug, they said to their grandmother, we are dying of thirst, go and fetch something to drink. Yes, I'm going she said as she left-

They continued eating; really, they felt no need to drink and only did this to prevent her seeing what they were going to do. And having watched the rat thanks to the chili sauce, it climbed quickly at the side of the rubber ball hanging with the other equipment in the roof of the house.

When they had finished the chili sauce, they found a Xan: now, this Xan was an animal similar to a mosquito, and it went to the river bank and began to puncture the old woman's pitcher, and the water ran out. She tried to stop it but could not plug the hole.

What is our grandmother doing? We are stifling through lack of water, we are dying of thirst, they said to their mother. When she had left, the rat cut the cord which held the rubber ball; this fell from the ridgepole of the house together with the belts, the gloves and the leather shields. They seized them quickly and went to hide them on the road which led to the ball-court.

After this, they went to look for their grandmother on the river bank. Their grandmother and their mother were at that moment both busy trying to plug up the side of the pitcher. They arrived with their blowpipes, and went to the river. What are you doing? We were tired of waiting and came, they said.

Look at the side of my pitcher that cannot be repaired, said the grandmother. But they stopped it up at once, and they returned, the brothers walking in front of their grandmother. And this is how they obtained the rubber ball.

Chapter VII

Hunahpú and Xbalanqué felt full of happiness as they set out to play the ball-game on the court. And the two went a very long way to play ball the two of them alone. They began by sweeping the court of their fathers.

It so happened that the lords of Xibalbá heard them. Who are these who come to play again above our head and do not fear to make the earth shake? Did Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú not die, who wished to exalt themselves in our presence? Go and look for these also.

Thus spoke Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé again and all the lords of Xibalbá. And they sent messengers to fetch them, saying: go and tell them the lords say they should come. We want to play with them here; in seven days we want to play against them, say the lords. Go and tell them this, they repeated to the messengers of Xibalbá.

So they took the main path which the boys themselves had cleared from their house and which led straight to it. The messengers went along it and arrived directly at the grandmother's, they were eating when the messengers of Xibalbá arrived.

Let them come, say the lords, the messengers repeated. And then they set the day when they had to go. In seven days they will be expected, they said to Xmucané. Very well, they will go, oh messengers, answered the old woman. And setting out on the road, the messengers returned.

Then the old woman's heart grieved. Whom shall I send to fetch my grandchildren? Was not this just how the messengers of Xibalbá came the other time to take their fathers? said the old woman, entering the house alone and sad.

And immediately, a louse fell onto her skirts. She picked it up at once and put it on the palm of her hand. The louse wriggled and began to walk.

My nephew, (a familiar expression among the Indians), would you like me to send you to the ball-court to call my grandsons? she said to the louse. Messengers came to see your grandmother and said. You must prepare yourself within seven days, and they must come, the messengers of Xibalbá said. This is what your grandmother says, she said to the louse.

So it went wriggling along the road. Now, on the road there was a boy called Tamazul, which means toad. Where are you going? he asked the louse. I have a message in my belt and I am going to look for the boys, the louse replied.

Very well, but you do not walk very fast, from what I see, said the toad to the louse. Do you want me to swallow you? Then you will see how I run and we shall arrive at once. Very well, answered the louse.

Immediately, the louse let itself be swallowed by the toad. Then the toad walked for a long time along the road, but did not run. After this, he met a large serpent called Zakicuz.

Where are you going then Tamazul, my son? asked Zakicuz. I am a messenger, I have a message in my stomach. You do not walk quickly at all, I see. Would I not arrive sooner than you? said the serpent to the toad. Come here, he said. And so the toad was swallowed in turn by Zakicuz. Since then, serpents swallow toads as food until today. The

snake went along the road quickly, and when he met a Vac,¹⁹ which is a large bird, he was immediately swallowed.

Soon afterward, it reached the ball-court. Since then, hawks eat snakes and devour them in the mountains. When the Vac arrived, it perched on the cornice of the ball-court where Hunahpú and Xbalanqué were amusing themselves playing.

And standing up, the hawk cawed *Vacco, vacco, vacco* was its cry. What is that screeching? Quickly, our blowpipes, the two boys exclaimed.

They shot at the hawk, hitting him in the eye with the pellet. The hawk gave a turn and fell at the feet of the two brothers. At once they ran to seize it and asked What have you come here to do? They asked.

I carry a message in my stomach, but first cure the pupil of my eye, and I will tell you immediately, said the hawk. Very well, they replied. So they took a little rubber from the ball they were playing with and applied it to the eye of the hawk. They called this remedy *Lotzquiq*,²⁰ and as soon as they applied it, the hawk's sight was completely cured.

Speak now, they said, so it vomited a large snake. Now you speak they said to the snake at once. Yes, it replied, and vomited the toad. Where is the message you have told us about? they said. I carry it in my stomach, replied the toad.

So he tried to vomit, as if he were choking, but could not. His mouth filled with spittle with the effort he made, but he did not vomit. With this, the boys wanted to beat him.

You are an impostor, they said, kicking him behind, and his back fell to his legs. He tried again to vomit, but the efforts had no effect but to fill his mouth with spittle.

Then they opened the toad's mouth, and when it was open they searched in it. The louse was stuck on the toad's gum, as it had stayed in his mouth. He had not swallowed it, but simply held it in his mouth. Thus the toad was tricked, and for this reason it is not known what sort of food it eats, it cannot run, and it is only known that it is made of serpents' flesh.

¹⁹ *Vacco* or *Vac*, is the hawk, an American bird of prey (B. de B.).

²⁰ *Lotzquiq* is a tropical plant which appears to be known to natural history as *Oxalis*. The Indians of Central America assured me that they used it to remove cataracts from the eyes and showed me how to use it (B. de B.).

Speak, they ordered the louse, and he gave the message. Your grandmother says. Go to fetch them. Messengers of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé from Xibalbá asking for you. They must come within seven days counted from today to play ball with us. They must also come with their equipment they use for playing, the rubber ball, the belts, the gloves and the shields so that they may amuse themselves here, said the lords.

They truly did come, said your grandmother. So I came, and what your grandmother says is true; she grieves and weeps, that is why I have come. Can this be true? wondered the boys when they heard the message. They set off immediately and reached their grandmother; they only went to say farewell to her.

We are leaving, grandmother, we came only to say goodbye to you. But here is the sign of our word that we shall leave: each of us will plant a reed in the middle of the house. If it dries up, this will be the sign of our death. They are dead! You will say, if the reed dies, but if it flourishes, they are alive, you will say. Oh! our grandmother, do not weep, here is the sign of our fate which we leave for you, they said.

They left at once, after Hunahpú had planted one reed and Xbalanqué another; they planted them in the middle of the house and not in the field or in wet ground but in dry earth inside the house.

Chapter VIII

Then they set off, each with his blowpipe, down to Xibalbá. They descended the steep steps of the mountain quickly and crossed the seething waters of the river. They passed among some birds, and these were the ones called Molay (identity not known).

They also crossed the river of mud and the river of blood where they were to be caught in the trap, so thought the people of Xibalbá. But they did not touch them with their feet, crossing them on their blowpipes. Leaving there, they reached the place of the four roads.

Now, they knew what roads there were in Xibalbá: the black road, the white road, the red road and the yellow road, and took the correct one without hesitating. They sent an animal, a type of mosquito called Xan to the lords of Xibalbá, saying:

Bite one after the other; of course, bite the first one seated and then bite all of them, because you must suck the blood of men on the roads, they said to Xan. Very well, answered the mosquito.

So it followed the black road, and when it reached the figure and the wooden man, which were the first seated, covered with their adornments; it bit the first, but it did not speak. Then it bit the second one seated, but it did not speak either.

Then it bit the third, and the third of those seated was Hun-Camé. Ah! he exclaimed when it bit him What is wrong, Hun-Camé? What bit you? asked Vokub-Camé. Ah! cried the fourth who was seated. What is wrong Vokub-Camé? What has bitten you? asked the fifth who was seated.

Ah! ah! shouted the one who was Xquiripat at the same moment. And Vokub-Camé asked What has bitten you? The sixth who was seated, on being bitten cried Ah! in his turn. What is it, Chumaquiq? Asked Xiquiripat, who was the seventh one. What has bitten you? and at that moment he was bitten too and added Ah!

What is it, Ahalpuli? asked Chumaquiq. What has bitten you? And when the eighth one also felt the bite he cried Ah! What is the matter, Ahalcaná? asked Ahalpuh What has bitten you? Then the ninth of those seated felt himself bitten too and shouted Ah!

What is it, Chamiabak? asked Ahalcaná. What has bitten you? And when the tenth who was seated felt the bite in his turn he exclaimed Ah! What is the matter Chamiaholom? asked Chamiabak. What has bitten you? Then the eleventh one seated felt himself bitten and cried Ah!

What happened? said Chamiaholom. What has bitten you? And also the twelfth was bitten and exclaimed Ah! What was that, Patán, asked his neighbor.

What bit you? asked the thirteenth, and at that moment he was bitten and shouted Ah! What is the matter, Quixic? Asked the fourteenth of those seated, and when he was also bitten he exclaimed Ah! What has bitten you, Quixixgag? asked Quigre²¹

Thus was the calling out of their names, for they all announced them to the others, and that was how they identified themselves, calling one another by their names, each of those who ruled in those re-

²¹ This last name is missing from Ximénez' translation.

gions. Each was addressed by another, and that was how they told their names, and this was how they told the name of the last one, who was seated in the corner.

Not a single name of anyone was forgotten. They said the names of everyone, when they were bitten by a hair that Hunahpú pulled out of his leg, because it was not a real Xan that bit them and that went to hear the names of all, sent by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

The young men set off and reached the place where the lords of Xibalbá were. Adore the king who is seated over there they said, That is not the king it is only a figure and a wooden man, they replied as they went forward.

Then they began to greet them. Greetings, Hun-Can; greetings, Vukub-Camé; greetings, Xiquiripat; greetings, Chuchumaquic; greetings, Ahalpuh; greetings, Ahalcana; greetings, Chamiabak; greetings, Chamiaholo; greetings, Quiqxic; greetings, Patán; greetings, Quigre; greetings, Quiqxixgag they said when they arrived before them, looking each one in the face and saying the names of all, not missing one.

What would have pleased the lords would have been for the two boys not to discover their names. Be seated, they said, indicating where they wanted them to sit, but they did not wish to. That is not our seat, since it is a bench of hot stone, said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, not falling into the trap.

Very well. Go to your lodging, they said. So they entered the Dark House, but they could not be overcome in it.

Chapter IX

This is the first test in Xibalbá, and when they entered this place, their defeat would begin, those of Xibalbá believed. Of course they entered the Dark House. Immediately lighted sticks of pitch pine and a cigar each were brought by the messengers of Hun-Camé.

Here are their pine torches, said the king, but they must deliver them whole tomorrow, with their cigars. So said the messengers when they arrived. Very well, said the two boys.

But in fact they did not burn the pine ticks, but put something red in their place, in other words a macaw feather which looked like lighted pine to the night watchmen, and as for the cigars, they put fireflies on the ends.

All night they were guarded by night watchmen, and these said, they have fallen into the trap. But the pine sticks had not been used, and there were the cigars which had not been burned at all and looked the same as before.

So, they were taken to the princes, and they said: How is it possible for these things to have happened? Where do these people come from? Who created them and brought them into the world. Truly, our hearts are troubled because what they do to us is not well. Their faces are strange, their ways of behaving are strange, they said among themselves.

So all the lords summoned them. Let us go and play ball, boys, they said to them. Then they were questioned by Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé. Where do you come from? Answer us, boys, asked the lords of Xibalbá.

Who can say where we come from? they said. We do not know ourselves, and said no more. Very well, said the lords of Xibalbá, let us play with the rubber ball.

Very well, they replied, but it must be with this ball that we play, with ours. The lords of Xibalbá replied, by no means shall you use this ball, but ours, which is this one. The boys replied, it is not that one but ours we shall use.

Very well, the lords replied. The boys then said, let us go for a chil (an insect which burns). Certainly not, said the lords, rather for the head of a puma. So be it, answered the boys. Not yet! Cried the lords of Xibalbá. Very well, said Hunahpú.

Then the game of ball with the lords began, and they threw theirs at the ring of Hunahpu. Then, while the lords of Xibalbá were looking at the shot the ball went bouncing all over the court.

What is this? shouted Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. Do you wish our death? Did you not send messengers for us. How unfortunate we are truly. So we shall return, they said.

Now this was exactly what the lords of Xibalbá wanted, that the boys would die as soon as possible in the ball game and would be

defeated. But this did not happen because the lords of Xibalbá were overcome by the boys.

Do not go, boys, let us play ball, but we shall now use yours, said the lords. Very well, they replied, and threw their ball, (scoring), which ended the game.

Having counted their losses, the lords asked What shall we do to defeat them? They shall go and bring us four pitchers of flowers immediately.

Very well. What are the flowers you want? Sad the boys to the lords of Xibalbá. A bunch of *cakamuchich*, a bunch of *zaquimuchich*, a bunch of *canamuchil* and a bunch of *carinimak*,²² said the lords. Very well, answered the boys.

So they descended, accompanied by guards armed with spears, equal in strength and number. But the spirits of the boys were calm when they gave themselves up to those who were charged with overcoming them.

The lords of Xibalbá rejoiced at the hope they would be defeated. We have done well this time, they are going to fall hopelessly into the trap, said the lords. Where will they go to get the flowers? You have to bring them tonight, and if you do not, we shall be victorious, they said to Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.

Very well. Tonight too we shall play ball, they said, consulting each other. Then the boys went into the House of Spears, the second test in Xibalbá. Now the princes wanted them to be killed by the spear bearers and that they should die as soon as possible, this is what they desired in their hearts.

But they did not die. Speaking to the spear bearers they made them this promise. It is to you that the flesh of all animals shall belong, and upon hearing this, they stopped moving and simply lowered their weapons.

And in the House of the Spears during the night they called all the ants, saying. Come, leaf-cutter ants and *zompopos*, come and go all together to find the bunches of flowers the lords have said.

Very well, they replied. Then all the ants took to the road to collect the flowers from the garden of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé. These

²² These flowers are all of the type commonly known as *Chipilin* but it is not known exactly what they are (B. de B.).

had warned the guardians of the flowers of Xibalbá beforehand, saying. Take care of our flowers, do not let them be cut by those two boys we have caught in the trap. Where could they go to find those we have told them? So keep careful watch all night, and they had answered Very well.

But the guards of the garden heard nothing of what happened. In vain did they go to shout as loudly as they could into the branches of the trees in the garden, walking about and repeating the same cry *Xpurupurek Xpurupurek!*, shouted one, *Puhuyú*, *Puhuyú* repeated the other, also singing.

Puhuyú was the name of the guardians of the plants in the garden of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé. They did not see the ants stealing what was their duty to guard, coming and going in hordes, cutting flowers, walking and carrying them on their stings in the trees and below the trees, and the flowers spreading a sweet perfume.

However, the guards went on shouting at the tops of their voices, without noticing the teeth that were cutting their tails and wings at the same time. The teeth harvested flowers and carried them without losing their perfume to the House of Spears.

The four pitchers were soon filled with flowers and were completely ready when dawn broke. A little later, the messengers entered to fetch the boys. Have them come, said the king, and bring what we talked about at once, they said to the boys.

Very well, they said, and went to fetch the four pitchers of flowers. And when they were in the presence of the king and the lords, these took the flowers, which were lovely to see. And thus the lords of Xibalbá were tricked.

The boys had only sent ants, and in one night the ants collected them and placed them in the pitchers. At the sight, all the lords of Xibalbá were amazed and their faces paled because of these flowers.

At once they sent for the guardians of their gardens and said Why did you let your flowers be stolen? What you see here are our own flowers. We did not notice anything, my lord. They did not even leave our tails alone, they replied. And they split their mouths in punishment for letting what it was their duty to guard be stolen.

Thus were Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé defeated by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué, and that was the beginning of their works. Since then the Purpuvek have had cleft mouths, even today.²³

After this they went down to play ball, and they also played all together. When they had finished playing, they discussed what they would do the following morning. Enough for today, said the lords of Xibalbá. It is well, said the boys.

Chapter X

Afterwards, the boys were made to enter the House of Cold. The cold there was unbearable, and the house was full of ice, because in fact it was the home of the icy north winds. But the cold soon ended with the pine torches they lit. It was no longer felt and it disappeared because of the care of the boys.

Far from dying there they were full of life when the day dawned. This however was what the lords of Xibalbá desired; that they should die, but it was not so and they were in good health when the sun rose.

They went out again when the guards went for them. How is this? They are not dead yet? exclaimed the king of Xibalbá, looking at Hunahpú and Xbalanqué in surprise.

After this, they entered the House of Jaguars, which was full of jaguars, and the two brothers said to them Do not bite us, you have something better to do. Then they threw bones to the animals.

They threw themselves on the bones, and on hearing the noise they made, the guardians said, Their death is decided at last; they will have felt the power of Xibalbá, which has delivered them to the wild beasts. Their bones will be gnawed this time, said all those who watched over them, happy because of their death.

But they had not died; they looked just as healthy when they came out of the House of Jaguars. When they saw them the lords of Xibalbá exclaimed What kind of people are these? Where do they come from?

²³ These watchmen or guardians of the flowers seem to have been a species of owl or night birds, today called Parpuate (B. de B.).

After this, they were made to enter into the midst of fire in a House of Fire, where there was nothing but fire inside. But they were not burned up, although it was extremely strong and hot. The two brothers looked equally well when the sun rose. However, this was what the lords of Xibalbá desired, that they should soon die in the place they entered this time. But it was not so, and the spirits of the lords sank because of them.

Then they were made to enter the House of Bats.²⁴ There were only bats in the entrance hall of this house, the house of Camazotz,²⁵ a great animal or barbarian whose instruments of death were like those of Chakitzam,²⁶ and who killed all those who came into his presence.

When they had entered this house, the two boys crept into their blowpipes so as not to be touched by those that were there. But they gave themselves up because of another Camazotz who came from the sky or on high, to show when things began to be done by him.

The bats were gathered in council all night making a great noise *Quiitz, Quilitz* they said and repeated all night. They stopped a little, however and there was no movement among them, and they remained standing on one end of a blowpipe.

Then Xbalanqué said to Hunahpú. Day seems to be breaking, look. Perhaps it is beginning. I am going to see, he answered. And as he wished very much to look through the hole of the blowpipe, wishing to see the dawn, his head was cut off by the Camazotz, and his body was without a head.

Not noticing what had happened, Xbalanqué repeated Has it not dawned yet? But Hunahpú did not move any longer. Can Hunahpú have gone? What can he have done? said Xbalanqué. But he no longer had any movement and just lay there dead.

Then Xbalanqué felt full of shame and sadness. Ah! he exclaimed, miserable are we; we are half overcome. Then the guards went to place

²⁴ These houses of tests, no doubt images of those which really existed in Xibalbá, in imitation of those which there were in Egypt, have the names of towns and places which still exist with the same meaning, for example Balami-ha, House of Jaguars, Zotzi-ha, House of Bats, etc.

²⁵ *Camazotz* is here a symbolic proper name meaning the leader or he who rules bats, with the qualifier of the most brutish and barbaric of all. It was probably the chief of the barbarians who defended the entrance to Xibalbá (B. de B.).

²⁶ *Chaki-tzam* – *dry point*, possibly the name of a place (B. de B.).

Hunahpú's head on the ball-court, by express order of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé, and all Xibalbá was full of joy because of what had happened to Hunahpú's head.

Chapter XI

After this. Xbalanqué summoned all the animals, the porcupines, the wild boars, all the animals large and small, during all the night, and the same night he asked them what their food was,

What does each one of you eat? I have called you here for you to choose your food, said Xbalanqué. Very well, they answered.

So each one went to take his own, all went to choose the food they ate. Some took what was already rotten, some chose plants, some chose stones and others earth. The food of the animals large and small was very varied.

Following their example the tortoise, who had stayed behind hidden in its shell, went to take its part, meandering as it walked along. It placed itself at the end of Hunahpú's body and instantly became a head.

Large numbers of soothsayers came from above the Heart of the Sky, Huracán himself came to flutter over the House of Bats to work this miracle. But Hunahpú's face was not perfect, although it was made; his hair grew too and he could also speak.

Day was about to break, and light was already making the horizon red and the day appeared. Is the Tacuatzin ready? They asked one another. Yes, replied the old one So it opened its legs and darkness came back, and the old one opened his legs four times.

And the Tacuatzin opens his legs²⁷ is still said today to indicate that the sun is rising.

And the moment dawn covered the horizon with its brilliant colors, he began to live. Is Hunahpú's head good like this, they asked. It is

²⁷ The Indians, to express that it is dawning say the *Tacuatzin* is opening his legs. In these sentences, Tacuatzin and the old one are synonyms and shroud an incomprehensible mystery (B. de B.).

good, they replied, and in this way they finished making Hunahpú's head, and it did look like a real head.

Then they talked and decided not to play the ball-game. Expose only yourself to the danger, they said to Xbalanqué. So be it, I shall do everything myself, said Xbalanqué.

After this he gave his orders to a rabbit. Go and place yourself above the ball-court and stay in the hollows of the cornice,²⁸ Xbalanqué told the rabbit. When the rubber ball reaches you, come out and I shall do the rest., he said to the rabbit when he gave this order during the night.

By now the sun had risen, and both looked equally well. The lords of Xibalbá also went down to play ball in the place where Hunahpú's head was suspended over the ball-court.

We are the ones who have won! You have been covered with shame! You have not returned the palm! They said to him. This was how they taunted Hunahpu. Rest your head from the passion it had to play ball, they said. But he was not hurt by the insults they heaped on him.

The lords of Xibalbá threw the rubber ball; Xbalanqué went out to receive it. It went straight to the ring, stopped and came out, it passed over the court and with a single bounce went directly between the moldings which decorated the cornice.

The rabbit jumped out hopped away, but it was chased at once by the lords of Xibalbá, who ran behind it in confusion, shouting. All the lords went after it.

Xbalanqué, alone on the court, hurried to take Hunahpú's head and put it back in place of the turtle; then he went to put the turtle on the ball-court, and this head was really that of Hunahpú, and both were very happy at this.

The lords of Xibalbá were looking for the ball. Having found it quickly among the moldings of the cornice they shouted. Come, here is the ball we have just found, standing up for them to see it.

When the lords of Xibalbá arrived they said. What is this we saw when we began to play again? And they played, and it was a draw once again.

Then the turtle was injured by a stone thrown by Xbalanqué, and rolling down fell and smashed on the ball court, broken into a thousand pieces like a potsherd before the eyes of the lords of Xibalbá.

²⁸ Ximénez, instead of hollow of the cornice, translates as tomato patch or thicket.

Who of you will go to find it? Who is the one who shall go to fetch it? the lords said. Thus the lords of Xibalbá were defeated by Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. These experienced great hardships, but did not die from all the ill done to them.

Chapter XII

Here now is what has been remembered about the death of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. We shall now give the account of their death.

After having been warned about all the hardships and suffering they would experience and experienced, nevertheless they did not die in the trials of Xibalbá, and were not overcome by all the attacks from the wild animals there.

They soon summoned by two individuals who were like prophets and whose names were Xulu and Pacam, both soothsayers, and they said. If by chance you are asked a question by the lords of Xibalbá about our death, which they are planning and plotting at present, why are we not dead yet? Why have we not been defeated or brought down by their tests? You will tell them it is because the brutes have not entered into the conspiracy with them.²⁹

That is why our idea of the sign of our death will be a bonfire, which will serve to kill us. All the people of Xibalbá have just gathered, but in fact we shall not die. Now we are going to tell you what you must say.

If they come to ask you about our death when we have been condemned, how will you reply, Xulu or Pacam? If they ask you: Shall we throw their bones into the ravine, will that not be good? If you do that they will come back to life, you will say.

If they also ask you; Would it be good to hang them from trees? Certainly not, because in that way you will see their faces again, you will say. If they finally ask you a third time. Shall we do right to throw their bones into the river? If they repeat the question, you will say.

²⁹ The brutes referred to here are the barbarians or savages subject to the throne of Xibalbá (B. de B.).

This is what must be done so that they die. It would be good if before this their bones be ground between two stones, like corn is ground to make flour, and let each one be ground up separately. Afterwards, you will throw them into the river where the spring bubbles up so that their ashes go to all the mountains large and small. This is what you will reply when they ask you for advice we have given you, said Hunahpú and Xbalanqué³⁰ as they took their leave of them, knowing they were going to die.

Then the lords of Xibalbá made a great bonfire like an oven half underground, where they put many branches. Then came the officials who were to accompany the messengers of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé.

Come, they were told, come and see how we are going to burn you, boys. This the king said. Very well they replied.

They walked quickly and reached the bonfire, and there they wanted to make them be happy. Let us enjoy our sweet drinks and fly four times over the bonfire young men, said Hun-Camé.

Do not make fun of us like that, said the boys. Do you think we do not know that death awaits here, my lords? Embracing each other face to face they crossed their arms and went to stretch out with their faces over the bonfire, and in it they died together.

When they witnessed this scene the lord of Xibalbá were filled with joy, and showed it with shouts and confused murmuring. At last we have really defeated them, and they did not give themselves up very quickly, they said.

They immediately summoned Xulu and Pacam to whom (the boys) had given their last instructions. Just as they had foretold, they were asked what should be done with their bones. When they had finished their divination, the king of Xibalbá had their bones ground up and thrown into the river. But these ashes did not go far, sinking down at once to the bottom of the water, where they were turned into handsome boys and they were truly their faces which showed again.

³⁰ Here the name of Hunahpú is changed again in the text to Xhunahpú, which means the little one, the young one or the second (B. de B.).

Chapter XIII

On the fifth day they appeared again and were seen in the water, like two fish-men. They showed themselves and their faces were seen by the lords of Xibalbá and they were searched for everywhere in the water.

But the following day in the morning they appeared as two poor men with old faces, miserable looking, who had only rags for clothing, and their appearance had nothing attractive about it. When they were noticed by the lords of Xibalbá, they did not reveal who they were, simply performing the dance of the Puhuy, the dance of the *Cux* and the *Iboy* and dancing also the *Xtzul* and the *Chitic*.³¹

The many wonders they performed, burning houses as if they really were on fire and then making them reappear or be created again made all Xibalbá hurry to the spectacle.

Then they sacrificed themselves, killing each other, and the first who had allowed himself to be killed lay dead, but they immediately came back to life. And those of Xibalbá watched in amazement while they did all this, because they did these things as the beginning of their new victory over Xibalbá.

Later, news of their dances happened to reach the ears of the kings Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé, and when they heard it they said, Who are these poor men? Truly we would like to see them.

Yes, their dancing is really remarkable, like everything they do. Said he who had brought the news to the kings. Delighted by what they were hearing, they sent their messengers for them; Tell them to come and perform these things here, so that we can see and admire them, and they shall be applauded, said the kings. Tell them this, they said to the messengers.

When they reached the dancers, they gave them the king's message. We do not wish to go, they replied, because truthfully we are ashamed. Would we not blush to appear before lords of this rank, because our faces are so ugly and our eyes so large? And being so poor as well? What is there to see in us; we are nothing but dancers? What will

³¹ Names of animals applied to certain pantomimic dances accompanied by dialogues and songs, several of which are still performed by the Indians (B. de B.).

our companions in misery say, who are over there wanting to take part in our dancing and amuse themselves with us? Not in this way would we treat the kings. Therefore we do not wish to go, oh messengers, explained Hunahpú and Xbalanqué.³²

However, as a result of being importuned, and with signs of their ill humor and regret on their faces, they left against their will. But they refused to walk quickly and several times the messengers obliged them, arguing with them, to bring them to the kings.

They arrived before the lords, and feigning to humiliate themselves, bowed their heads deeply on introducing themselves, they prostrated themselves with their miserable appearance and their worn clothes, giving a sight that was really repugnant.

Then they were asked about their country and their tribe; they were also asked who their mother and father were. Where do you come from? they asked. We have almost no memory of that, my lord, they answered. We did not know the faces of our mother or father because we were small when they died, and they said no more.

Very well. Do something to admire you for, do everything you wish and we shall give you your reward, they were told. We do not want anything, but truly we are very frightened, they said to the king.

Do not be afraid and do not be so timid, dance. And of course, act that you kill yourselves, that you burn my house down; do everything you know so that we can see your skills, that is all our hearts desire. After that you shall leave, poor creatures, and we shall give you your reward, they said.

When they began their songs and dance, all the lords of Xibalbá went to sit near to see everything. Then they danced the Cox, the *Puhuy* and the *Iboy*.

And the king said: Kill my dog which is here and afterwards bring it back to life. Very well, they said, killing the dog, and afterwards they resuscitated it and the dog was very happy to be alive again, and wagged its tail in pleasure. Then the king said, Now burn my house down and they at once set the house on fire, but all the lords sitting inside its walls did not burn, An instant later they made it appear again, and the house of Hun-Camé was lost for hardly a moment.

³² This is the fourth generation of Hunahpú and Xbalanqué to appear in this epic, counting the first ones who were sacrificed in Xibalbá (B. de B.).

All the lords were amazed, and took great pleasure in seeing the dances. Also the king told them, Now kill a man, sacrifice him but do not let him die.

Very well, said the two poor men said, So they took a man, opened his chest, drew out his heart and raising it, passed it before the eyes of the lords. Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé were also amazed, but a moment later they brought the man alive again and he showed great joy at being revived.

The lords continued to be amazed. Now kill yourselves, that is what we really wish to see in our hearts, that spectacle that is special to you. Very well, my lord, they replied.

Then the sacrifice of one by the other began, and it was Hunahpú who killed Xbalanqué. His arms and legs one after another, his head was separated from his body and taken far away, while his heart was torn out and exhibited before the eyes of all the lords, who were enraptured by the sight.

They looked on in stupefaction, but they saw only one thing, the show given by Hunahpú. Rise, he said, and Xbalanqué was brought back to life. They both rejoiced; in fact, what they did gladdened the hearts of Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé; they felt as if they themselves had been the actors.

Then, an excess of desire and curiosity attracted the hearts of the lords to the spectacle tat Hunahpú and Xbalcané had performed for them, and Hun-Camé and Vokub-Camé let these words escape them. Do the same to us, sacrifice us, they said.

Very well. You will come back to life. Can death exist for you? But be joyful, it is our duty, O lords, the duty of your servants and vassals, they answered.

And the one they sacrificed first was the principal king, Hun-Camé, Lord of Xibalbá. When he was dead they seized Vokub-Camé and did the same to him, but they did not bring them back to life again.

Then all the lords of Xibalbá fled, seeing their kings dead with their chests open. Quickly, they were sacrificed two by two as the punishment they deserved. No more than an instant was necessary to kill the king, and they did not revive him.

But one of the lords humbled himself before the dancers, not having been found or known until that moment. Have mercy on me, he said when he saw he had been found out.

Their servants all fled in panic to a deep ravine, filling the vast chasm as if in one mass, and there they crowded together. Soon there came innumerable ants which went to discover them and surrounded them in the ravine.

From there they were led along the road, and when they were before the victors they prostrated themselves humbly; they all surrendered, subjecting themselves without reserve. Thus, the lords of Xibalbá were defeated. Hunahpú and Xbalanqué did this with the miracle of their own transformation.

Chapter XIV

The dancers then gave their names and extolled themselves before all the subjects of Xibalbá.

Hear our names, they said, and we shall also tell you the names of our fathers. See us then, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué are our names. And our fathers were those you killed, and their names were Hun-Hunahpú and Vukub-Hunahpú. We are the avengers of the torments and suffering of our fathers. This is how take all the evil you did to them. Therefore we shall put an end to you all, we shall kill you, and not one of you shall escape, they declared.

When they heard this, all the subjects of Xibalbá prostrated themselves, groaning and crying out: Have mercy on us, Hunahpú and Xbalanqué! True, we sinned against your fathers, as you say, and that they are buried in the Place of Ashes, they added.

Very well, they replied, this is the sentence we pronounce against you. Listen all of you, subjects of Xibalbá. Since your State and your power no longer exist and you do not even have the right to clemency your blood still dominates a little, but your ball shall roll no more in the game. You will only serve to make things of earthenware, spindle whorls, pots for cooking corn; and the beasts that live in the forests and wastes shall be your companions.

All the rich vassals, the civilized subjects shall cease to be yours; the bees will only continue breeding before your eyes. You then, perverse men, cruel, sad, miserable men who have done evil deeds, weep!

Men shall no longer be seized by surprise, as you have done, but heed what I have said about the dominating ball.³³ Thus they spoke to all the subjects of Xibalbá.

So began their ruin and downfall with the curse that was put on them. But their power was not great in former times, they only liked to make war on men, and they were not named as gods. But their appearance inspired terror, they were as evil as owls, which caused evil and discord.

It is also said that they were false, at the same time black and white, hypocrites and tyrants. Also they painted their faces and smeared themselves with colors. Thus was their power ruined and their domination ceased to grow. This is what Hunahpú and Xbalanqué began.

Meanwhile, the grandmother was moaning and weeping before the reeds they had left planted. These had grown, but then had dried. But when they were burned in the bonfire, the reeds had become green again.

After this, the grandmother lighted the brazier and burned copal incense before the reeds in memory of her grandsons.³⁴ The grandmother's heart rejoiced when the corn plants became green again for the second time. Then they were honored by the grandmother, who named them "Center of the House." And "Center" they were called.³⁵

"Living Corn Stalks,"³⁶ Flat ground, the place came to be called, and the name "Center of the House" and of "Center" was given because they planted the corn. And she named the place "Flat-ground, Living Reeds on leveled ground" because they had been planted what she called Living Reeds" because they revived. And this name was

³³ Can these words refer to the winged globe, the symbol of some ancient peoples, mentioned in Isaiah chapter 18, when he was prophesying among an unknown people and by inexplicable coincidence is found carved on the ruins of Palenque?

³⁴ This is the origin of the heathen practice that the Indians had, and still preserve in some parts, of burning incense before corn plants and certain trees.

³⁵ Chutam Uleu (This is not correct, but "Nicah.").

³⁶ Gazam-ah.

given by Xmucan to the reeds Hunahpú and Xbalanqué left planted to remind their grandmother of them.³⁷

Their fathers who died a long time ago were Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú. They also saw the faces of their fathers there in Xibalbá, and their fathers spoke with their descendants who overthrew Xibalbá.

Now see how their fathers were honored by them, and it was Vokub-Hunahpú who was honored. They went to honor him at the Place of Ashes and they wished to make a figure of him.³⁸ They looked for his body, his mouth, his nose, his bones, his face.

They found his body first, but they obtained very little by this. It refused to say his name of Hunahpú. His mouth could not say it. Now this is how they glorified the memory of their fathers, whom they left in the Place of Ashes.

You shall be invoked from this day forth, their sons said to them to comfort their souls. You shall be the first to emerge on the vault of heaven; also you shall be the first to be worshiped by civilized peoples, and your names shall never be forgotten, so they spoke to their fathers to comfort their souls. We are the avengers of your death and destruction, of the pain and hardship they made you suffer.

These were their words when they spoke to the people of Xibalbá they had overcome. Then they rose up in the midst of light, and their fathers rose to the sky. One was the sun and the other the moon, which lighted the vault of heaven and the face of the earth, and they stayed in the sky.

Also the four hundred boys who had been sacrificed by Zipacná ascended. They had been companions of Hunhun-Ahpú and Vokub-Hunahpú and became stars in the sky.³⁹

³⁷ The place where all these things took place seems to have been *Gumancab*, the capital of the Quichés, since the name means house or hut of old corn stalks. The Mexica called this place *Utlatlán*, in other words, among the reeds. Xbalanque left from here to conquer hell, that is to say Xibalbá. (B. de B.).

³⁸ The ancient Indians used to cremate their dead and with the ashes mixed with liquid rubber fashioned the figure of the deceased, and this statue was what they put in the tomb. (B. de B.).

³⁹ The Indians called the constellation of the Pleiades the four hundred boys.

POPOL VUH



THE SACRED BOOK OF THE
ANCIENT MAYAS-QUICHÉ

BOOK III

Chapter I

Now, when the idea came to create man and think about what should be included in the composition of his flesh, he who engenders and he who gives life, the Creator and the Maker, named Tepeu and Gucumatz, talked.

Dawn approaches, the work is finished, the help is ennobled; the keeper of the altar, the son of light, the son of civilization; here is honored man, mankind on the face of the earth, they said.

So they came, and gathered in great numbers, they gave their wise advice in the darkness of the night, and they debated, moving their heads, consulting one another and thinking what they would do.

In this way, all the wise decisions of these men became clear; they found and were made to see what must enter into the flesh of man. It was shortly before the sun, the moon and the stars were to appear above the Creator and the Maker.

In *Paxil* and in *Cayulá* as this place is called, the ears of yellow corn and white corn first appeared.¹

And here are the names of the animals which went to seek this food: *Yac* (fox), *Uitu*, (coyote); *Quel* (parrot); *Hoh* (crow), four animals that brought the news of the ears of yellow corn and the ears of white corn which grew in Paxil and showed the way there.

It was there that they that they finally found the food which went into the flesh of completed man, of created man. This was his blood, the blood of man, this corn which entered him, through the care of he who creates, he who gives life.

¹ *Pan-Paxil*, *Pan-Cayalá*, name of the place where corn was discovered. It can be inferred from the etymology of these words that it was in the region that drains the Usumacinta and its tributaries (B. de B.).

And thus they rejoiced at having reached that fruitful land so full of delicious things where yellow corn and white corn was abundant and Pek (cacao) also abounded and where sapodillas, custard apples, hog plums, golden spoons and white sapodillas were uncountable, and honey flowed. In short, everywhere was full of the best in this place called Paxil, Cayalá, for such was its name.²

There were foods of every kind, both large and small, plants large and small, and the way to them had been shown by the animals. So, they began to grind yellow corn and white corn, and with this Xmucané made nine drinks, and this nourishment, by entering the bodies, created strength and vigor and gave men flesh and muscles.

This was what Tepeu and Gucamatz did, he who creates and he who gives life as they are called.

They immediately began to shape our first mother and first father. Only yellow corn and white corn were included in making their flesh and were the only ingredients of man's legs and arms. And these were our original parents, the four people who were created by this nourishment entering them to form their flesh.

Chapter II

Here are the names of the first men to be created and formed. The first was Balam-Quitze; the second, Balam-Agab; the third, Mahucutah, and the fourth, Iqui-Balam. These are the names of our first mothers and fathers.³

They were called simply modeled and created beings; they had neither mother nor father; we just call them men.

They were not given life by woman. They were begotten by the Creator and by the Maker, by he who creates and he who gives life.

² The chronicler Ximénez and most missionaries who heard about these traditions believed, justifiably, that Paxil and Cayalá were a memory of Earthly Paradise.

³ Balam-Quitze, jaguar with a sweet smile; Balam-Agab, jaguar of the night; Mahucutah, the name mentioned; Iqui-Balam, jaguar of the moon. These are the literal meanings of the four names. (B. de B.).

Their creation was a wonder, a true miracle worked by he who creates and he who gives life, Tepeu and Gucamatz. And as they looked like men, men they were. They spoke and thought, saw and heard, walked and felt with their hands. Perfect, handsome men whose shape was that of man.

They had the faculty of thought; they could see immediately, their eyes looked up and took in everything; they got to know the whole world and when they studied it their eyes swept from the vault of heaven back to the face of the earth in an instant.

They saw the most hidden things at will, without needing to move, and when they turned their attention back to this world, they also saw all it contained.

Their wisdom was great; their knowledge covered woods, rocks and valleys. Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam were truly remarkable men indeed.

They were questioned by the Creator and the Maker. What do you think of your state of being? Can you not see? Can you not hear? Is your ability to walk and talk perhaps not good?

Look, then, whether mountains and plains appear under the sky; try to see them now, they were told.

After this they saw all there is under the sky, and gave thanks to the Creator and Maker, saying: We truly thank you in all ways. We have been granted life, we have been given a mouth and face. We can speak, hear, think, walk and feel and we also know about near and far.

We can see all things great and small in the sky and on earth. Thanks to you we have been created, made, and we live, our grandmother, our grandfather, they said, in gratitude for their creation and existence.

And they measured and saw all that exists in the four corners and angles of the sky and earth.

But the Creator and the Maker did not hear these things with pleasure. What our creatures say is not good, they said, they know all things great and small.

This is why the advice of the Creator and the Maker was sought again, What shall we do with them now?

Simply let their sight be shortened and let them be content with seeing only a little of the face of the earth, they said,

What they say is not well. Is their nature perhaps not that of simple creatures? They will be more gods if they multiply sufficiently and if they reproduce and multiply when day breaks. So be it.

We shall simply alter our creations a little so that they lack something; it is not well what we see. Do they perhaps want to be equal to us, we who have made them, we whose wisdom reaches far and encompasses everything?

So said the Heart of the Sky, Huracán, the furrow of lightning, the bolt that wounds, Tepeu, Gumatz, the Forefathers, Xpiyacoc, Xmucané, the Creator and the Maker. Thus they spoke, working again on the nature of the creatures of their making.

And so, the Heart of the Sky blew a cloud over their eyes, and their sight misted like the face of a mirror with steam on it. The orbs of their eyes were shadowed; they saw only what was near, and only this was clear to them.

Thus was how the wisdom and also the knowledge of the four men was destroyed, their origin and beginning. In this way, our ancestors and fathers were created and shaped by the Heart of the Sky, the Heart of the Earth.

Then their wives came into being, their women were created. God made them carefully, so as they slept, really beautiful women appeared and joined Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam.

There women were there when they woke, and their hearts filled with joy because of their wives.⁴

Chapter III

Now, here are the names of their wives. Caha Paluma was the wife of Balam-Quitze; Chomiha, the wife of Balam-Agab; Tzununiha the wife of Mahucutah, and Cakixaha the wife of Iqi-Balam.⁵ These are

⁴ Immisit ergo Dominus soporem in Adam...et aedificavit Dominus Deus costam quamtulera de Adam in mulierem &c. Genesis 2, 22 and 23.

⁵ The literal meaning of these names is: Caha Paluma, vertically falling water; Chomiha, beautiful house or water; Tzununiha, water or house of the hummingbird; Cakixaha, water or house of the macaws, names which seem to be of places (B. de B.).

the names of their wives, who were high-born ladies. They gave birth to men, to large and small tribes, and were our origin, the origin of all of us of the Quiché nation. At the same time there was a great number of sacrificers; there were more than four of them, but only four were our ancestors, of us the Quiché nation.

The names of each one of those who multiplied in the East are different, and their names have come to be those of the nations of Tepeu. Olomán, Cahah, Ouenach and Ahau as those men in the East were called, where they multiplied.⁶

The origin of those of Tamub⁷ is known and also of those of Ilocab, who came from the lands of the East

Balam-Quitzé is the ancestor of the nine great houses or families of the Cavek; Balam-Agab, the forefather of the nine great houses of Nimhaib; Mahucutah, the grandfather and father of the four great houses of Ahau-Quiché.

They were in three groups of families, which did not forget the name of their grandfather and father, whose descendants were generated and grew in the East.

Tamub and Ilocab also came, with thirteen branches of tribes; the thirteen of Tecpan,⁸ then those of Rabinal, the Cakchiquels, those of Tziquinahá and immediately after them those of Zacalhá, then those of Lamak, Cumatz, Tuhalhá, Uchabathá, Chumilahá; and after them those of Quibaha, Batenah, Acut-Vinak, Balamiha, Canchacheleb and of Balam-Colob.⁹

⁶ In the province of Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua, there is a river called Olomán which flows into the Atlantic. The other places mentioned are unknown.

⁷ Tamub and Ilocab are the names of the two oldest known tribes in the Quiché region, who were usurped by the house of Cavek at the end of the 13th century (B. de B.).

⁸ Among these thirteen tribes of Tecpan must be included the Pocomams and Poconchies (B. de B.).

⁹ The capital of the Rabinal tribe was Zamaneb in the mountains of Xolaha, east of the Quiché; that of the Cakchiquels was Ixin-hé, one league away from the town of Tepam-Guatemala; that of the Tziquinahá, Atitlán, south of the lake of the same name: Zahcahá, a village today two leagues from Quezaltenango. Lamak, Cumatz, Acul or Aculahá and Uchubahá, places in the vicinity of Zacapulas, near which the ruins of Tuhah or Tuhalhá are to be found. Chumilahá, Quibahá and Batenab seem to have been in Alta Verapaz, between Cahabón and the Petén, Balamiha is probably the modern Balamiyá between Tepam-Guatemala and Comalapa. (B. de B.).

And these are only the principal tribes, the branches of tribes as we call them. There are yet many others which have emerged from the surroundings of each town, but we have not written their names here, and only record that they multiplied in the land where the sun rises.

Many men were made, and it was during the darkness that they multiplied. Civilization did not yet exist when they multiplied, but they all lived together, and great was their life and fame, there in the lands of the East.

At that time they did not have or look after altars to the gods, they simply raised their eyes to the sky and did not know why they had come so far.

There they lived happily, dark men and pale men; gentle was the appearance of this people and sweet their language, and they were very intelligent.

There are generations under the sun and people whose faces we do not see; they have no houses, and wander foolishly among the hills large and small, and because of this they are looked down on by others.

This is how they spoke, those who watched the sun rise. They all had only one language. They did not yet invoke wood or stone and only remembered the word of the Creator and the Maker, of the Heart of Heaven and the Heart of Earth.

And they spoke, thinking about what the breaking of day hid, and filled with the holy word, filled with love, obedience and fear: they made their petitions and then, lifting their eyes to heaven, asked for sons and daughters.¹⁰

Greetings O Creator! O Maker! You who see us, you who hear us: do not abandon us. Do not leave us O Lord God! who art in heaven and on earth! O Heart of Heaven. O Heart of Earth. Give us our descendants and our succession while the sun moves and there is dawn. Let the seeds be made like the light. Permit us to walk always on open roads and paths without ambushes. Let us always be calm and at peace with our families. Let us lead a happy life. Give us then a life, an existence above all reproach, O Hurakán! O furrow of lightning. O bolt that wounds! O Chipi-Nanahuac, Raza Nanahuac, Voc, Hunahpú, Tepeu,

¹⁰ These two verses are particularly remarkable because in them is an explicit account of the primitive religion before idol worship and the expectation of a Redeemer symbolized by the light or civilization.

Gugumatz, O you who creates, you who gives life, Xpiyacoc, Xmucané, grandmother of the sun, grandmother of light. Let the seeds have their place, let there be light!

Thus they spoke, while they were at rest, invoking the return of light and hope; and waiting for the sun to come out, they contemplated the morning star, that great forerunner of the sun which lights up the vault of heaven and the surface of the earth everywhere human beings move.

Chapter IV

Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam said, Let us wait for the sun to appear. Thus spoke those great wise men, those men learned in science, those men worthy of all respect and obedience, as they were called.

Wood did not exist yet, or carved stone to keep our first fathers and mothers, but only that their hearts were tired of waiting for the sun. The tribes were already very numerous, like the nation of the Yaqui¹¹ the sacrificers.

Let us go then to seek, let us go to see if there is something to keep our symbols. Let us try to find what we must burn before them. Because we are so many there is no one to take care of us. So said Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam. A single city heard their conversation, and they left.¹² Now, the names of the places where Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam went with Tamub and Ilocab was Tulán Zuiva, the seven caves, the seven ravines. This is the name of the city where they went to receive their gods.¹³

They all reached Tulan; the number of people who arrived could be counted, and all entered walking in good order.

¹¹ Yaqui, the name the ancient Indians of Guatemala gave to the Toltecs or Nahuas (Mexico), who were sacrificers. They also used this name for foreign nations in general (B. de B.). The chronicler Ximénez understands by Yaqui the people of Acasaguastán.

¹² A passage very similar to the one of the Israelites who made the golden calf to hold as a god, seeing that Moses was slow in descending from Mount Sinai.

¹³ Tulan Zuiva, Tulanzu or Tulanzuy (empty bowl) according to Ximénez.

Gods were delivered to them, and the first were those of Balam-Quitze, of Balam-Agab, of Mahucutah and of Iqi-Balam, who were overjoyed. At last we have found what we were looking for, they said.

And the first to appear was Tohil, for this is the name of this god: they hung his chest, which was carried by Balam-Quitze. Next Avilix appeared, the name of the god which Balam-Agab carried. Hacavitz was the name of the god that Mahucutah received, and Nicatagah the name of the god Iqi-Balam was given.

And like the Quiché nation, they also received the gods of Tamub, and Tohil is also the name of Tamub, who took the grandfather and father of the lords of Tamub whom we still know today.

The third tribe, finally, is Ilocab; Tohil is also the name of their god whom their grandfathers and fathers received, and these lords we also know today.

These are the names of the three Quiché families; they did not separate, because it was the name of their god, Tohil of the Quiché, Tohil of Tanub, and of Ilocab, and the god had only one name, and these three Quiché families did not separate.

The nature of the three was very great indeed, of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz.

Then all the tribes arrived, those from Rabinal, the Cakchiquels and the Tziquinaha, with the nation of the Yaqui, as they are called today.

It was there that the language of the tribes changed; there the variety of languages appeared; they did not understand one another clearly when they came to Tulan. It was there that they separated. Some went to the East and many came here.¹⁴

And animal skins were their only clothing; they did not have the abundance of good cloth they could wear, the skins of animals were their only adornment. They were poor, they owned nothing, they were simply men, extraordinary by nature.

When they arrived at Tulan-Zuiva, at the seven caves, the seven ravines, old stories tell that their road had been long to reach it.

¹⁴ A passage no less notable than the preceding ones. It indicates to us the sudden multiplication of languages, although the cause is not explained, and also the time when these peoples left the East.

Chapter V

At that time there was no fire; only those of Tohil had it, and this is the god of the nation, and the first to create fire. It is not known exactly how it was produced, because it was already burning when Balam-Quitze and Balam-Agab noticed it.

Ah! We do not yet have any of that fire which was created. We shall die of cold, they said. Tohil answered, do not worry. Yours will be the task of keeping or destroying this fire you speak of.

Let it really be so. O God, you who are our support and our maintenance; you, our God, they said, offering him gifts.

Tohil spoke. Very well, truly I am your god. So be it. I am your Lord, so let it be. This was said by Tohil to the sacrificers. And thus the tribes warmed themselves and collected their source of fire

But immediately a heavy rainstorm began, that extinguished the fire of the tribes, and many hailstones fell on the heads of all the tribes, and their fire went out because of the hail, and there the fire which had been created was no more.

Then, Balam-Quitze and Balam-Agab asked for fire again, saying O Tohil, we are truly dying of cold. It shall not be so, do not grieve, replied Tohil. Immediately he made fire appear, striking his shoe (sandal).

Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam rejoiced and then warmed themselves. Now, the fire of the other tribes had also gone out and they were dying of cold; so, they came to ask Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam for fire. They could not bear the cold and freezing weather any longer; shivering, their teeth chattering; they had no life left in them; their hands and feet were numb, so much that they could bear no more when they arrived.

Do not scorn us now that we come to ask you to give us a little of your fire, they said on arriving. But they were not well received, and their hearts grew sad.

The speech of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam was different by now. Have we then given up our language? How did we do this? We are lost. How were we led into error? We had only one manner of speaking when we came from Tulán; our way of caring for altars and communicating among ourselves was only one.

What we have done is not good. said all the tribes in the forests and below the lianas.

At that moment, a man appeared before Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab. Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam who was a messenger from Xibalba, and spoke thus.

Truly this is your God, this is whom you must worship, and the representative of the shade (soul) of your Creator and Maker. Therefore, do not give fire to the tribes until they have given Tohil, whom you have taken as your Lord, what they have given to you. Therefore, ask Tohil, what they must offer him to obtain fire, said the messenger from Xibalba.

He looked like a bat. I am sent by your Creator, your Maker, he also said.

When they heard these words they were filled with joy; the hearts of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz also rejoiced while this messenger from Xibalba was speaking. He immediately disappeared from their sight, without ceasing to exist because of this.

Then the tribes arrived which were also dying of cold, because much hail fell, and with the black rain which froze, it was indescribably cold.

All the tribes were shivering and stuttering with cold when they reached where Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam were. Their hearts were sore, and their mouths and looks told of their sadness.

They furtively came back into the presence of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam and said to them:

Will you not take pity on us, for we only ask for a little of your fire? Is our origin and our dwelling place not the same? Was our homeland not the same when you were created and made? Therefore, have mercy on us, the tribes said.

What will you give us for us to have pity on you? they were asked. Well, we shall give you silver, replied the tribes.

We do not want silver, answered Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab. — What do you want, then? — We shall soon ask Tohil. — In their turn the tribes said, it is well. — Let us go then and ask Tohil and we shall tell you at once, they answered.

What must the tribes give, Oh Tohil, who have come to ask for fire? Asked Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab. Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam.

Well, are they willing to unite with me under their waists and under their armpits?¹⁵ Do their hearts truly consent to worship me? If they do not want this I shall not give them fire, answered Tohil.

Tell them that this shall happen little by little, that that their union of waists and armpits will not come about just now, he tells you and you will say. This was the reply to Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab. Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam.

Then they reported Tohil's word. It is well; we shall join him and embrace him., they said on hearing the message from Tohil. It is well, we promise, they said when they were given fire, after which they kept warm.

Chapter VI

However, there was one tribe that stole fire amid the smoke — that of the house of Zotzil (the Cakchiquels), and Chamalcán is the name of the god of the Cakchiquels and their symbol is a bat.¹⁶

They crept quietly through the smoke when they came to steal fire; but the Cakchiquels did not ask for fire, and did not consider themselves vanquished.¹⁷

But all the other tribes were caught in this trap, when they relinquished the lower part of their waist and their armpits to be opened, and the slitting of the chest that Tohil had meant when they sacrificed all the tribes before him,¹⁸ ripping their hearts from their chests below their armpits.

¹⁵ The interpretation of this sentence is: do they agree to give me their own lives and those of their children as sacrifices before my altars? (B. de B.).

¹⁶ The house of Zotzil or the bats, originating from Tzinacantan or Zotzlem in Chiapas, the one which founded the kingdom properly called of Guatemala or of the Cakchiquels. Its symbol was a bat and its god, Chamalcán. (B. de B.).

¹⁷ This leads to the assumption that the Cakchiquels did not sacrifice human victims. (B. de B.).

¹⁸ Human sacrifice is described here in its full horror. When the author writes *all* the tribes, this should be understood only as the victims given over by all the tribes.

This practice had still not been introduced when their death in the midst of fear and majesty at the hands of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam was enigmatically foretold by Tohil.

From Tulan Zuiva had come the custom of not eating much; they went without food constantly, simply waiting for the dawn and sunrise.

They took turns watching the great star called the morning star, which comes before the sun at the break of day; the brilliant star of the morning which was always where they directed their gaze, that is to say where the sun rises while they were in Tulán-Zuiva, the name of the place their god came from.

So, it was not here that they received their power and sovereignty; but yonder they subdued and brought under their yoke the large and small tribes when they sacrificed them to Tohil, offering him the blood, life, chest and sides of all men.

In Tulán, majesty came to them immediately, that great wisdom that they possessed in the darkness and the night and with which they acted.

They came, moving from there and abandoning the places where the sun rises, because Tohil said to them: this is not our dwelling place; let us go and see where we shall establish it.

Truly he spoke to Balam-Quitze, Mahucutah and to Iqi-Balam. Before everything, give thanks; also make holes in your ears, prick your elbows and offer your blood in sacrifice, this shall be your act of thanks to God.

It is well, they said, piercing their ears and they put these things in their song about the journey from Tulán, and their hearts grieved when they set out after they had uprooted themselves from there.

Ah! we shall never see the dawn here again when the sun rises that lights the surface of the earth, they said as they took to the road

But they left people on the way because there were some who did not wake. Each of the tribes rose so that they could always see the morning star, the herald of the sun. This sign of the dawn always occupied their thoughts as they came from where the sun rises, and their hope was the same when they left that place, which is at a great distance, they tell us today.

Chapter VII

So, at that time they reached the top of a mountain; there all the Quiché nation and the tribes gathered, and it was there that they met in council, consulting one another, and the name of the mountain today is Chi-Pixcab (of the command or warning).

And having gathered there they extolled themselves, naming themselves. I am the Quiché — And as for you, you are Tamub, this will be your name, those of Tamub were told. In the same way, those of Ilocab were spoken to; you are Ilocab, this will be your name, and these three Quiché names shall not be lost and we are one in spirit, they repeated, giving them their names

Then they also gave the Cakchiquels their name, Gakchequels¹⁹ was their name and the same was done for those of Rabinal, and this became their name and which has not disappeared even today. There were also those of Tziquinahá, whose name is the same at present, These then are the names that they gave to one another.

Of course, they met in council, just waiting for the dawn and watching for the emergence which shows itself before the sun in the East when it is about to rise. We came from there, but we have separated, they said among themselves

Because their hearts were breaking and their suffering was great; they had neither food nor sustenance, only their staffs, which they smelled and imagined they were eating; thus they ate, although they ate absolutely nothing when they came.

How they crossed the sea is not very clear. They crossed to this side as if there were no sea, because they crossed on spaced stones, and these stones were rolled onto the sand This is why they named this place "Arranged Stones and Sand Taken Away." This was the name they gave when they crossed the sea, the water having parted, as they passed.²⁰

¹⁹ The etymological meaning of this word is: Fire which has emerged from wood (half-burned log) and alludes to the theft of fire by Zótzil (B. de B.).

²⁰ Could there be here a confusion of two different traditions about crossing the sea? One referring to the first law-giver in remote antiquity and another to the Quiché tribes? These passages are no less interesting than puzzling (B de B.). Ximénez and other chroniclers see here the memory of the Red Sea and Mount Sinai, assuming Americans to be descendents of the Israelites.

Now, their hearts were full of grief when they consulted among themselves, because they had nothing to eat, only a little water, which they swallowed with a mouthful of corn.

There they were, assembled on the mountain called Chi-Pixab, also carrying Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz with them. Balam-Quiché and his wife Chaha-Pahuna, which was her name, observed a strict fast, and so did Balam-Agab and his wife Chomiha, and likewise Mahucutah, on whom this strict fast was imposed as it was on his wife called Tzununiah, on Iqi-Balam and his wife Cakix-ha.

And these were the fasters in the darkness of the night; great was their sorrow while they lived on the mountain today called Chi-Pixab where their god continued speaking to them.

Chapter VIII

At that time, Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz spoke to Balam-Quiché, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam saying: Now let us leave, it is time to move; let us not stay here, take us to some secret place..

Dawn approaches. Would your eyes not fill with sadness if we were captured by the enemy within these walls where we are because of you, O sacrificers? Therefore take us away separately they said. Very well, since we are obliged to leave, we shall seek a refuge in the forest, they all replied.

After this they took their gods, each one carrying his own, and placed Avilix in a ravine called Cuavalsivan (ravine of the hiding place). He was put there they were in the great ravine of the forest today called Paviliz (in Avilix), where they left him; here he was left by Balam-Agab.²¹

This way of leaving their gods was done in an orderly fashion, and the first one to be left thus was Hacavitz. He was placed on a large pyramid, whose name today is Hacavitz. There they also founded a town; it was established in the place where the god called Hacavitz was.

²¹ The place mentioned is still known as Mount Avilix, rising on the right of the road from Santa Cruz del Quiché to San Andrés Zacabahá (B. de B.).

Similarly, they left Mahucutah with his god, and this was the second god they hid. However, Hacavitz was not to be settled in the forest, since it was on a bare mountain that they hid Hacavitz.

Then came Balam-Quitzé, who arrived at the great forest there, and Tohil arrived to be hidden by Balam-Quitzé, and which nowadays they call Satohíl (in Tohil), the name of this mountain²²; then they celebrated the hiding of Tohil in the ravine, his secret refuge. A large number of snakes, jaguars, vipers and moccasins lived in those woods where he was hidden by the sacrificers.

And Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam lived together; together they awaited the dawn, on the mountain called Hacavitz.

And it was only a short distance from the place where the god of Tamub and of Ilocab: Amab-Tan (the town of Tan) was the name of the place where the god of the Tamub was, and there their dawn came; Amab-Uquincat was the name of the place where the dawn of the Ilocab began, only a short way from the mountain.

Also there were all the people of Rabinal, the Cakchiquels, those of Tziquinahá, all the small tribes and the large ones; they had stopped together; together they awaited the dawn and the appearance of the Great Star of the morning, which rises before the coming of the sun, they said.

They were there together: Balam-Quitzé. Balam-Agab, Mahucutah, and Iqi-Balam; they had neither sleep nor rest, and great was the anxiety of their hearts and insides for the dawn and light which was coming. There too their faces were covered in confusion; great distress and sorrow came upon them, and they felt downhearted because of their pain.

We have come this far without rejoicing. Ah! if only we can finally see the rising of the sun! What have we done, since all being of the same mind in our homeland we uprooted ourselves from it in this way, they all said to one another in sorrow and anguish, with plaintive voices.

Thus they spoke, and there was no way to comfort their hearts until the dawn came, For see the gods seated in the ravines and forests, among the tall grasses and below the bromeliads and hanging moss, without it being possible to give them even boards to sit on, they said.

²² Sotohil, the mountain which rises over the plain of the Quiché, more or less two leagues from the present town of Santa Cruz (B. de B.).

The first are Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz. Great is their glory, their strength and their power over all the gods of the tribes! Many are their miracles and numberless their journeys and travels in the cold and the awe their presence inspires in the hearts of the people, they said.

Their spirit is calm because of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqui-Balam, whose hearts were not so pained and dejected because of the god they each received and carry with them since leaving Tulan and Zuiva, yonder in the East.

Meanwhile, they were in the woods; dawn broke in Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz, as they are called today.²³

Thus it was so that our ancestors and fathers were made lords and received their dawn. We shall also tell about the coming of the dawn and the appearance of the sun, moon and stars.

Chapter IX

Here, then, is the story of the dawn, and the appearance of the sun, moon and stars.

Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqui-Balam were overjoyed when they saw the Morning Star. It was the first to come out with its shining face, appearing before the sun did.

After this they opened the package containing their incense, which had come from where the sun rises, and which they had brought with the idea that it would serve them in the future; the three together unwrapped the gifts they intended to offer.

Mixtan-Pom (copal of Mixtán) was the name of the incense Balam-Quitze brought; next, Cavitzan-Pom is the name of the incense which Balam-Agab brought, and that brought by Mahucutah was called Incense of God, Only these three had incense. This then is what they burned while they performed a stately dance as they watched the rising sun.

²³ The mountains of Mamah, Avilix and Tohil form a group of high peaks northeast of Santa Cruz del Quiché to which the natives give the generic name of Zakeribal-Tohil, place of the dawn of Tohil. (B. de B.).

Sweet were their tears as they danced and burned their incense, their precious incense. After this they wailed because they still did not see or observe the sunrise.

Immediately, the sun began to come up, the animals large and small became happy; they began to arise on rivers, in ravines; they gathered on the tops of mountains, and gazed in the direction of where the sun was rising.

Then, pumas and jaguars roared. The first bird to sing was the one called the Queletzu. All animals were truly overjoyed; eagles and kites flapped their wings, as did all the other birds both large and small.

So, now the sacrificers were on their knees, and great was the joy they felt along with the sacrificers of the Tamub and Ilocab, with those from Rabinal, the Cakchiquels, those of Tziquinahá, of Tahulhá, from Uchabahá, Quibahá, Betená, with those from Yaqui-Tepeu, in fact all those there are today. The people were innumerable and the dawn brought light to all these tribes at the same time.

Immediately the face of the earth dried because of the sun. It was like a man when it showed itself and it warmed with its presence, drying the surface of the earth.

Before the sun appeared, the surface of the earth was muddy and wet, before it rose, and when it came up it looked like a man.

But its warmth was not strong and the sun simply showed itself when it rose; it just remained like an image in a mirror, and really it was not the sun of today, old tales tell.

Soon after this, Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz were turned to stone, just as were the gods of the puma, jaguar, of the snake, the moccasin and the white rubber of fire (goblin, according to Ximénez): Their arms became tangled in the branches of trees when the sun, moon and stars appeared. Everywhere they were turned to stone.

Perhaps we should not be alive at this moment because of the voracity of the animals, of pumas, of jaguars, of vipers, of moccasins and the fire goblin. Perhaps our glory would not exist today if the first animals had not been turned to stone by the sun.

Great was the joy that Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam felt in the bottom of their hearts when the sun rose. They were overjoyed when dawn broke. Now at that time, the population

was not flourishing; they were small in number when they lived on the mountain of Hacavitz.²⁴

It was there that their dawn appeared to them, and there where they burned their incense and danced, turning their eyes to the East from where they had come; there were their mountains and valleys they had come from, those called Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam.

But it was here on the mountain that they multiplied; this was what became their home, and here they were when the sun, moon and stars first showed themselves; when day broke and the face of the land was lit, as was the whole world.

It was here too that their song originated called "Kamucú" (We See), which they sang with heavy hearts and inner pain, feeling what they expressed in their song.

Ah! we were ruined in Tulan, we were separated and our brothers stayed behind! It is most true that we have seen the sun but where are they now that the dawn has appeared? Said the sacrificers of the Yaqui nation.

Tohil is indeed the name of the god of the Yaqui people, the one called Yolcuat-Quitzulcuat, when we separated there in Tulan, in Zuiva. This is where we set out from together, this is the common cradle of our race, from where we came, they said to one another.

Then they remembered their brothers, of the tribe, who had stayed a great distance behind them And dawn brought in these lands, now called Mexico. There was also a part of the tribe that they left in the East: Tepeu Oliman are the names of the places where they stayed, they said.²⁵

Great was the anguish they felt in their hearts there on the mountain of Hacavitz, and the people of Tamub and Ilocab felt the same.

²⁴ Ximénez translates as: at that time, people were not large, but small.

²⁵ There are clearly three different migrations involved here, which took place at the same period. They left from Tulan and Zuiva, which seems to have been in Xibalbá, that is to say in the regions situated between the branches of the Usumacinta and the Tabasco river as it flows down from the mountains. One of these migrations moved west to Mexico; the other two went East and separated near the places called Tepeu and Oliman which the Cakchiquel manuscript indicates as being located between the Petén and Yucatán. The peoples of Tamub and Ilocab, separating from these, seem to have made their way South toward Soconusco, which led to the places where we find them (B. de B.).

These lived here in the forest, the region called Dan, where the dawn brought light to the sacrificers of Tamub as well as to their god, who was also Tohil, because there was only one name for the god of the three branches of the Quiché nation.

This was also the name of the god of the people of Rabinal, although there is some difference from the name of Huntoh, as the god of the Rabinal tribe is commonly known, so it is necessary to make it clear that their language matches the Quiché tongue.

But there was a great difference between this language and that of the Cakchiquels, because the name of their god was different when they left Tulan and Zuiva. Tzotzihá-Chimalcan was the name of their god, and his people still speak a different tongue today, and it was also from their god that the tribe took their titles of Ahpozotzil and Ahpoxa.²⁶

They also changed the speech of the god when he was delivered to them in Tulan, and their tongue was changed near a rock, when they came from Tulan in the darkness; they were placed together and the dawn shone for all the gathered tribes when the names of the gods were given, following the order of each nation.

Now we shall tell of their stay on the mountain where the four came together, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam. Their hearts were heavy because of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz who were still hidden in the tall grass and the hanging moss.

Chapter X

Here then is their decision and the origin of the placement of Tohil when they presented themselves before Tohil and Avilix. They went to see and greet them to give thanks for the birth of day.

²⁶ Cakchiquel and Tzutuhil are dialects of Quiché. As for Chimalcan or Chamalcan, it is not easy to ascertain their origin, since an analysis of this god's name shows that it means: Tzotziha, House of Bats, and Chamalcan, as it is usually written, arrow of *chay* daubed with yellow ocher. Ahpozotzil and Ahpoxahil are the titles of the principal chiefs of the Cakchiquel tribe, of the king and the heir presumptive. An analysis of the etymology of these names shows the first to mean Lord of the Bats, and the second, Lord or Prince of Dancers (B. de B.).

And they shone also among the rocks in the midst of the forest; it was thanks to their mysterious power alone that their voices were heard when the sacrificers came before Tohil.

What they brought and at once burned was of no value, just resin and *noh* (dry grass debris), with wild marigold, which they burned before their gods.

Then Tohil spoke and by magic gave the sacrificers their rules of conduct.

Then, taking up the word, they said to him: truly, these shall be our mountains and our valleys. We shall always be yours; our glory and our power have been exalted before all men. All the tribes are yours, as we are your companions. Therefore, watch over your people and we shall give you advice.

Do not exhibit us before the eyes of the tribes when we are made angry by the words of their mouths or by their behavior. Neither let us fall into any ambush, but give us the creatures of the field and woods, give us the female deer and the female birds.

Deign to give us a little of your blood, poor men that we are, and leave us the skins of deer; protect us from those posted as sentinels to watch for the snares laid for us. These shall be as symbols and consequently and substitutes which you shall show to the tribes.²⁷ (And the gods replied):

Where is Tohil? You will be asked, and at this you shall show them your symbols, but do not show yourselves, because you will have another thing to do. Great shall be your position; you shall conquer all the tribes. You shall bring their blood and lives to us and they shall come to embrace us, since they are ours, said Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz.

They were transfigured into youths when they showed themselves as the gifts arrived that they offered to them. Then the hunt after the young of all the birds began, of mountain animals, and the prey was received by the sacrificers. When they found birds and young deer, they went to sprinkle their blood on the stone pedestals of Tohil and Avilix.

²⁷ This seems to be the testament of the first ones to bear the names of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam, and the symbols mentioned were the statues of these personages which after their death were worshiped as the gods whose priests they had been. The young men who appear later are perhaps the sons of these, come to replace their fathers as chiefs (B. de B.).

After their blood had been drunk by the gods, the stone spoke immediately, at the same time as the sacrificers approached to present their offerings. They did the same before the symbols of their fathers, burning resin, wild marigolds and the plant we call tiger flower.

The symbols of their fathers remained apart from one another on the mountain where they had been placed by their sons, who did not live in their houses during the day, but wandered over all the mountains.

And here is what they ate to nourish themselves: the pupae of horseflies, hornets and bees which they found in the woods; they had nothing decent to eat or drink, and the way to their homes was not known, and it was not known exactly where their wives had remained.

POPOL VUH



THE SACRED BOOK OF THE
ANCIENT MAYAS-QUICHÉ

BOOK IV

Chapter I

So, many towns had already been founded, separate from one another, and each of the tribes gathered in these towns which were growing on all the roads which were opened.

As far as Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam, their exact whereabouts was not known.¹ When they saw the people of the tribes which passed along the roads they would immediately shout on the edges of the mountains, and their shout that sounded was the mournful cry of the coyote, the howl of the wildcat also like the roar of the puma and jaguar.

And when the tribes saw these things as they walked, they said. They howl just like the coyote and the wildcat, roar like pumas and jaguars as if they had not been men, according to the opinion of all the tribes. It was to set a trap for the people of the tribes that they did all this.

They wish something in their hearts. Truly they are not afraid of what they do: They have something in mind when they roar like pumas and cough like jaguars if they see one or two people on the road and want to finish us, they said.

So, the sacrificers went home every day to their wives, but they took nothing but the pupae of horseflies and wasps and the chrysalises of bees to give to their women.

Also, they went before Tohil and Avilix, saying to themselves: Here are Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz to whom we offer nothing but the blood

¹ This passage shows that the Quiché was not yet established and was of only secondary importance, while the other tribes had been settled and thriving for a long time. The tribes mentioned here as enemies of the Quiché sacrificers were the *Pokomanes*, also called the thirteen branches of *Tecpam*, who occupied part of Verapaz (B. de B.).

of wild animals and birds; we prick only our ears and elbows. Therefore, let us ask Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz for strength and courage. Who will blame us for the deaths we are causing among the people of the tribes when we are killing them one by one? This they said to one another as they went into the presence of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz.

Then they pricked their ears and elbows before the god; they collected the blood on sponges and filled the cup on the edge of the stone. But in fact it was not stone; so it was that each young man arrived in turn.²

The sacrificers rejoiced again with the blood they had given from their veins, when these signs of their work arrived. Follow their example, this is the way to save yourselves. From there in Tulan, when you led us, they were told, came a skin called "Pazilizib," which we were given, smeared with the blood you brought to us, with the blood that has become the offering to Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz.

Chapter II

Here is where the abduction of the tribes by Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam began.³

A short time after this came the killing of the tribesmen, of which they chose those who walked alone or two by two, and it was not known when they were seized. After this they went to sacrifice them before Tohil and Avilix.

Since they sprinkled blood and left the heads scattered on the road, the tribes at once said, the jaguar has eaten them. They said this because they saw something like jaguar prints, but they were only the tracks they left without showing themselves.

In this way, they carried off the men of many towns, and a great number had already been killed when the tribes noticed.

² Ximénez translates this passage thus: and in truth they did not look like stones; rather the three idols had the appearance of young men.

³ The *Título de los Señores de Totonicapam* says that the peoples exposed to this murderous abduction were those of *Vakamag*, or the seven nations, who had come with Tamub or Ilocab, and the Pokomanes, whose towns surrounded the mountains where Tohil's sectarians lived (B. de B.).

It is then Tohil and Avilix who have come among us; they are certainly the ones who feed the sacrificers. Where can their homes be, so that we can follow their tracks? said all the villages or tribes.

So, they consulted with one another, and immediately began to follow the tracks of the sacrificers, but their footprints were not clear. They were just traces of wild animals, traces of jaguars were what they could see, without being able to make out their steps clearly. But their tracks could not be understood because they were reversed, made like this to deceive people, and neither their way nor direction were clear.

Mists formed in those high places, which produced a dark rain that made mud; there was also a cold drizzle, and this was all the people could see in front of them.

But their hearts became weary in the search, following these unknown enemies along the roads, because Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz were great; and they withdrew to the top of the mountain that dominated the tribes they were decimating.

Here began the abduction that the sorcerers thought up, when they carried people of the tribes off on all roads to sacrifice them to Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz., but they kept their own sons safe there on the mountain.

Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz had the appearance of three young men as they went about, and this was a special miracle worked by the stone. There was a river where they bathed at the edge of the water, simply to show themselves. And this place was named "Tohil's Bathing Place," this was the name of the river.⁴

And the people saw them many times, but they disappeared immediately at will when they were observed. Suddenly the news spread that Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam were present, and therefore a council of the tribes gathered to debate how to kill them.

And of course the tribes wanted to deliberate on the way to make Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz fall into the trap.

All the priests said to the tribes in their faces, all shall gather and rise up; let there not be one of the two battalions remain behind the others.

⁴ Tohil's Bathing Place, known today in the Quiché language as *chatinibal Tohil*, a spring or stream located five or six leagues southeast of Cubulco on the road to Jayabah, on the summit of the mountain that separates the two places (B. de B.)

They all assembled and rose, and consulting among themselves asked one another: How shall we escape the snares that the Quichés of Cavek⁵ set for us, because this is the ruination of your vassals? It is not clear how this destruction of men happens.

If we must be destroyed through the continuation of these abductions, so be it; but if the power of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz is so great, then this Tohil shall be our god, and beseech the sky that you can capture him. They have not vanquished us yet. Are we not a numerous people? Are not the Cavek any more than a handful all together? This they all said when they gathered together.

One part of the tribes replied to the others, saying: Who, then, has seen these men bathing at the edge of the river every day? If they are Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz, we shall surely catch them in a trap in that place; and in this way, the defeat of the sacrificers will begin, answered the other part, speaking out.

But how shall we entrap them? they asked. — This is the snare in which we must catch them. Since they appear to be young men, when they can be seen in the water, let two maidens go there also who are in truth the most beautiful and gracious, and let the desire to possess them overcome the youths, they replied.

It is well. Let us go then and seek two of the most gracious, they said, already looking for them. These were truly the fairest among all the maidens, the ones they sent.

Go, our daughters; go to wash clothes in the river, and if you see these three youths, undress in front of them, and if their hearts desire you, call them.

And shall they say: Do you wish to come to us? — Yes, you will answer. And when they ask: Where do you come from, whose daughters are you?—Then tell them: we are daughters of lords, and also say: Give us a token of yours. When they have given you something, if they really want (to caress) your faces, give yourselves to them. If you do not, we shall kill you. After this our hearts will be content when the token is here, bring it here, and this will be a guarantee that they came to you.

⁵ The name *Cavek*, which appears here for the first time, is that of the royal family that ruled in the Quiché from the founding of the kingdom until the country was conquered by Alvarado (B. de B.).

So spoke the lords when the two maidens were sent off. These are their names: one of them was Xtah and Xpuch the other. So it was these two called Xtah and Xpuch who were sent to the river, to the bathing place of Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz, This was the decision of all the tribes.

After this, the girls went and dressed so as to look really very beautiful and glorious, and on the way to the place where Tohil was bathing they moved shamelessly and joked with each other in the same way. When they were going, the lords rejoiced on their part because of their daughters they had sent.

And so, they reached the river and began to wash. They both undressed and were frolicking in front of the rocks when they noticed Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz. These reached the river bank and were somewhat surprised at the sight of these two girls who were washing. Naturally, the two girls blushed when Tohil and his companions arrived.

But in no way did Tohil and his companions desire to possess them, and so they asked, Where do you come from? and also What do you want, that you come here to the edge of our water?

They replied; we have been sent by the lords, and that is why we have come here. Go and look on the faces of the Tohils and speak to them, the lords told us; and bring us a token to prove that you have seen their faces, they also said. Thus the two girls spoke, giving their message.

Now, this was what the tribes wanted: that the two maidens would be deflowered by the incarnations of Tohil. But Tohil, Avilix and Hacavitz then said, speaking to Xtah and Xpuch, as the two maidens were named.

Very well, you will be given this proof of our conversation with you. Wait one moment and you shall take it to these lords, they were told. After this, they consulted with the sacrificers and Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam were told:

Paint three cloaks; draw on them the symbol of yourself for them to reach the tribes with these three girls who are washing; go, give the cloaks to them, they said to Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab. Mahucutah.

After this, they painted three figures. Naturally, Balam-Quitzé painted a jaguar on the cloak on the cloth. As for Balam-Agab, the figure he drew was an eagle, while Mahucutah for his part painted hor-

nets and bees all over. These were the figures he drew and painted on the cloth.

So the painting of the three cloaks was finished, and when they handed them over to the girls named Xtah and Xpuch, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah said to them. Here is the proof of your meeting with us. Go now to the lords and say: Truly, Tohil has talked with us, and here is the proof we bring of this, so that they will put on the cloaks you give them.

This is what they told the maidens when they took leave of them. So, the painted cloaks, called Xcucaah, were sent thus and arrived with those who carried them. The lords were immediately overjoyed to see the girls, who carried in their hands the things they had asked for.

Have you seen the face of Tohil? they asked. — Certainly we have, replied Xtah and Xpuch. Very well. What token of this do you bring, if it is true? said the lords, thinking it was some proof of their sin with Tohil.

The girls laid out the cloaks that showed jaguars everywhere, eagles everywhere and covered with hornets and bees, whose figures appeared on the surface of the cloth in brilliant colors. So they all wanted to wear them and began to put them on.

The jaguar did absolutely no harm when the painting of it was the first to be put on the lord's back, then he put on the second cloak, whose painting was an eagle. This is very good, the lord thought to himself, and paraded up and down under the people's gaze. Then, after having bared his private parts before the eyes of all, the lord covered himself with the third painted cloak as well.

So, he put over his back the hornets and bees painted on the cloth. His body was immediately stung by the hornets and bees; he could not bear the stings of these little creatures and began to scream because of the insects whose figures were only painted on the cloth, the painting done by Mahucutah, which was the third.

From that moment, the lords and tribes were thwarted. After this, the maidens named Xtah and Xpuch were interrogated by the lords. What kind of cloths did you bring here; where did you go for them, you scoundrels? hey asked the girls when they reviled them, in view of Tohil's victory over all the tribes.

Well, what they wanted was that Tohil should court Xtah and Xpuch, and that the girls should lie with him, and the idea of the tribes was to attempt this.

But victory (over Tohil and his companions) was not possible because of the three remarkable men Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah.

Chapter III

So all the tribes met in council again, saying: How then shall we subdue them? Truly, their nature is very great as it is now, they said when they assembled again to debate. Well then, we shall attack them, we shall kill them: we shall arm ourselves with arrows and leather shields. Are we not many? Let there not be either one or two of us remaining behind.

This is what the tribes said when they held council again. As a result, all the tribes armed themselves, forming a great number of soldiers when all the tribes gathered for their attempt.

Now, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam were those on the top of the mountain, and Hacavitz was the name of the mountain, and they were there to keep their sons safe on the mountain.

However, their men were not numerous; it was not a multitude like that of the tribes. The summit of the mountain that served them as a fortress was narrow, and for their destruction was debated when they all assembled at this time, when they met and rose up together.

So then, all the tribes gathered, all decked in their armor for war, with their arrows and shields; the precious metals of their ornaments could not be described, and the appearance of the lords and captains was admirable, and all were truly in readiness to keep their word.

They shall all be completely destroyed, and Tohil, this god, the one we worship, if we take him prisoner we shall be content, they said amongst themselves.

But Tohil knew full well what was happening, and Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam did too. They heard at the same time what had been discussed at the meeting of their enemies, because they had neither sleep nor rest ever since all the leaders and warriors had begun to arm themselves:

After this, all the warriors arose and set off, intending to storm the place by night. But they did not arrive, because all the warriors spent the night marching, and after this they were defeated by Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah.

All together, they made a halt to spend the night on the road, and without realizing it, fell asleep. Then they (Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah) began to shave off their eyebrows and beards; they took the precious metal from round their necks, together with their crowns and other ornaments, but they took only the grip of their maces as if it were precious metal. This was done to humiliate them and take them in the snare, as a sign of the power of the Quiché nation.

As soon as they awoke, they wanted to take their crowns and their mace grips, but there was no longer any gold or silver in the grip or in their crowns.

Who has robbed us? they asked. Who has shorn us like this? Where did they come from to steal our gold and silver? all the warriors repeated. Could it be those demons that carry men off? Have they not finished frightening us yet perhaps? Let us storm their city on the peak, and thus we shall see our precious metal again; this we must do, said all the tribes, and they were certainly capable of keeping their word.

Now, calm had returned to the hearts of the sacrificers who lived on the mountain, Balam-Quitzé, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam, and after long discussion they built fortifications around their town, surrounding it with palisades and tree trunks.

Afterward, they made some figures that looked like men and set them on the fortifications. They also gave them bows and shields, and put crowns of gold and silver on the heads of these figures, these wooden men, and adorned them with the precious metals they had gone to take from them on the road. The figures were decked out with these.

They protected the entrances to the town with a moat and then sought Tohil's advice, asking; And what if they kill us, and what if we are defeated? Their hearts received Tohil's reply. Do not become afflicted. I am with you and shall tell you what you must do. Do not be alarmed, he said to Balam-Quiché, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam.

Chapter IV

Then they took hornets and wasps which they had gone to find, and also lianas. And after they arrived, bringing these insects, they put them inside four large gourds which they placed around the city. They shut the hornets and bees up in the gourds, and these were what would help them defeat the tribes.

Meanwhile, the town was spied on, reconnoitered and examined by the scouts of the tribes. They are not numerous, they reported. But they managed to see only the figures and wooden men in full sight with their bows and shields. They really looked like men, like genuine warriors, to the tribes, and they were happy at the small number they saw.

The united tribes were large in numbers: uncountable were the men, warriors and soldiers ready to kill Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah who were up there on the mountain called Hacavitz. Here is the story of their arrival which we shall tell.

So they were there, Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam. They were together on the mountain with their wives and children when the warriors and soldiers arrived, and the tribes together numbered more than sixteen or twenty-four thousand.

They surrounded the embankments of the town and shouting loudly, armed with bows and shields, with war whoops, making a clamor, shooting off their weapons and giving cries and whistles they reached the town walls.

But all this did not intimidate the sacrificers, who watched their enemies from the edge of the wall where they were standing in place with their wives and children, their thought full of the acts and empty words of the tribes as they climbed up to the top of the mountain.

When they were about to throw themselves on the entrance to the town, the lids were lifted off the four gourds placed at the edge of the town and the hornets and wasps flew out of them. They swarmed out of the opening in each gourd like smoke.

Thus the warriors perished because of the insects, which clung to their eyes and eyelashes, stung their noses, mouths, legs and arms. Where could they have gone to collect them? (they said). Where did they go to gather all the wasps and hornets there are here?

Clinging to them, they stung their eyes; the numberless insects buzzed around each man, and confused by the hornets and wasps they could no longer hold their weapons or their shields, letting them fall to the ground everywhere.

Stretched on the ground before the mountain, they did not even feel that they were being shot with arrows and wounded with axes. Havoc was wrought simply by the dry branches used by Balam-Quitze and Balam-Agab. Their wives also set about killing.

Only half the enemy army returned, and all the tribes fled in haste.

But the first ones caught were killed, and those who died were not few. Not many, although they intended to carry on, since the insects attacked them, taking part in the battle. They did not use the force they could have either, and a great number died without either arrows or shields.

Then, all the tribes submitted to their domination.

The tribes humbled themselves before Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah. Do not kill us, miserable as we are, they said. It is well, although you deserve to die; but you shall be tribute payers for as long as the sun travels, as long as there is light, they were told.

So, thus was the defeat of all these nations by our first mothers and fathers; a defeat which took place on the mountain of Hacavitz, which is its name today. It was there that they first settled, where they grew, multiplied, produced daughters and gave birth to sons, on the top of Hacavitz.

There they were happy, having vanquished all the tribes, which had been defeated on the mountain. This is how they humbled the tribes, all of them.

It was after this that their hearts grew calm.

They said to their sons that the time for them to die was near when the tribes had tried to kill them. And now we shall also tell how Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam as they were called, died.

Chapter V

And as they foresaw their death and end soon, they told their sons. However, they had no signs of illness, they felt neither suffering nor pain when they uttered their last words to their sons.

Here are the names of their sons: these are the two that were fathered by Balam-Quitze; Qocaib was the name of the first,⁶ Qocavib, the name of the second son of Balam-Quitze, grandfather and father of the Cavek.⁷

And these are the sons of Balam-Agab. Here are their names: Qoacul was the elder son and Qoacutec the younger, father of those of Nihaib.⁸

But Mahucutah had only one son, Qoahau was his name.⁹ These three had sons, but Iqi-Balam did not have any children. These were truly the sacrificers, and these the names of their sons.

So this was when they gave their sons their last commands. The four were together; they sang in the anguish of their hearts, they groaned as they repeated the Qamacu, which is the name of the song they sang as they bade farewell to their sons.

Oh sons!, we are leaving (they said), and we are returning: glorious are the words, glorious the commands we leave you!

You also came from our distant homeland, O our wives! they said to their womenfolk, and they bade farewell to each, one by one.

We are going back to our home; the King of the Deer is ready and stretches in the sky. We are going to make our return journey; our mission is completed, our days are now over.

⁶ Speaking of this the "Título de Totonicapam" says that Balam-Quitze, the leader of the sacrificers and the first of this race to enter the country, fathered Qotzaha and Qoraxón; Qotzaha fathered Tzicuín, and he in turn Ahcan. Finally, Ahcan fathered Qocaib and Qocavib who are mentioned here (B. de B.).

⁷ Qocavib, grandfather and father of the Cavek. Because of an accusation which is unclear Qocaib, the elder son, is not included among the first kings, the title not being borne until Balam Conache, the incestuous son of Qocaib (B. de B.).

⁸ The second royal family of Quiché, the Nihaib, of Toltec origin, called Itzcuín (dog) in Nahuatl, along with the Cavek family, helped much in the conquest of these lands, and then changed their name to Hun-tzi (one dog) in the Quiché language (B. de B.).

⁹ There are still considerable ruins called those of Ahau Quiché on a mountain at equal distance from the mountains Tohil, Mamah and Avilix, 6 leagues southeast of Zacabaja (B. de B.).

So, remember us, do not erase us from your memory or forget us. You shall yet see your houses and your mountains. Multiply. So be it! Follow your way still and see the places we came from again.

These were their words when they bade their sons farewell.

Then, Balam-Quitze also left the symbol of his authority, saying: This is what must make you think of me, and here is what I am going to leave with you. This will be what establishes your power. I have bid you farewell and I have become filled with sorrow, he added.

So he left the symbol of his authority (which was a bundle closed and sewn up), Hidden Majesty, as they called it, whose form could not be seen because they did not unwrap it and they did not know where the seam was because no one saw it being rolled up.

This was how they bade their sons farewell and then they disappeared from the mountain called Hacavitz.

They were not buried by their wives and sons, since their disappearance had not been observed when it happened; the only thing visible were their gods, and so the bundle was very dear to their sons.

That was the reminder of their fathers, and they immediately burned incense before it.

And thus it was that they multiplied because of the lords, when these received power from the hands of Balam-Quitze, who had begun as the grandfather and father of the house of Cavek. But their sons, Qocaib and Qocavib did not disappear at all.

In this way the four sacrificers died, who were our first grandfathers and fathers, when they disappeared and left their sons on Hacavitz mountain where they lived.

Subdued and humbled, all the tribes no longer had any power, but were reduced to serving every day.

The lords remembered their fathers, and the bundle held great value for them. They did not unroll it; they kept it wrapped up.

The Hidden Majesty, they called it when this mystery that had come to them from their fathers was designated and named and which they had left as a symbol of themselves.

Such was the end and disappearance of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam, these first men to come from the other side of the sea, where the sun rises. They had been here for a long time when they died, and these venerable men, known as the sacrificers, were very old.

Chapter VI

It was after this that they thought of going to the East, and thus they decided to comply with the advice of their fathers, which they had not forgotten. Their fathers had been dead for a long time when they were gives wives from the tribe, acquiring many in-laws by this.

As they set off on their journey they said "We are going to the East from where our fathers came. These three were the sons and heirs: Qocaib was the name of the elder son of Balam-Quitze, chief of all the Cavek; Qoacutec, the name of the son of Balam-Agab, who is of the Nihaib; Qoahau, the, son of Mahucutah, of the Ahau-Quiché.

These, then, are the names of those who went there on the other side of the sea. So, the three of them set off. It was certainly their wisdom that made them do this, because it is not for nothing that there are men of their nature. They bade farewell to all their brothers and relatives and left, full of happiness. We shall not die, we shall return, they said when they set off.

They certainly crossed over the sea when they reached the East¹⁰ to receive the rank of kings. Now we shall give the name of the Lord or Monarch of the eastern countries they reached. When they came before Lord Nacxit ("precious stone" in the Pokomam language), for this was the name of the great lord, the supreme judge, whose power was limitless, he granted them the royal insignia with all it represents. From there came the insignia of the rank of Ahpop and that of Ahpop-Camha, and finally Nacxit gave them the insignia of kings.

Here follow all the names of the insignia: the shade,¹¹ the throne, the flutes and other instruments,¹² powders of different colors,¹³ per-

¹⁰ The East referred to here seems to be Honduras, and the sea the gulf of the same name, which they perhaps crossed a little above Livingston (B. de B.).

¹¹ The shade, *Muh*, means the canopy or pavilion of gold and precious feathers. According to the "Título de Totonicapam" there were four, one above the other, decorated with a bow for the Ahau-Ahpop or supreme king, three for the second king, the Ahpop-Camha, and two for the Nim-Chocoh-Cavek (B. de B.).

¹² *Galibal*, throne or place of the canopy. *Xuhak*, flutes or music, *Cham-Cham*, an instrument like a drum (B. de B.).

¹³ *Tatil-ganabah* was earth or metallic powder, ocher of various colors with which princes were rubbed as a sign of consecration when they took possession of their rights (B. de B.).

fumes,¹⁴ the principal jaguar, the bird, the deer, the shells; the knots of pine; trumpets, the insignia of heron feathers,¹⁵ in short, all the things they brought when they came and which they went to receive from the other side of the sea: the art of painting of Tulan, their writing, they said, for the things which had been preserved in their stories.

When they returned and reached their town on the summit called Hacavitz and assembled all the people of Tamub and Ilocab, all the tribes gathered and rejoiced to see Qocaib, Qoacutec and Qoahau, and they once again took up the governing of the tribes.

The people of Rabinal, the Cakchiquels and those of Tziquinahá¹⁶ were filled with joy. They showed them the insignia of royalty, the greatness of their power, and the life of the tribes also became great, although they had not made a show of all their authority.

They remained there in Hacavitz together with everything that had come from the distant East to where they had journeyed. And those on the mountain had multiplied greatly.

There, also, the wives of Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab and Mahucutah died. Then they left their mountains and searched for their hills, where they gradually settled. The places they founded were innumerable, giving them names and changing those our forefathers had, in order to increase and extend their power.

In days gone by it was known in what epoch they first left their town called Hacavitz, and how they came to found the city which was named Chi-Quix (among the thorns).

They spread far within the bounds of this city, where they begot sons and daughters. They were very numerous, and among all of them they covered four hills, which in their turn, bore the name of the city of Chi-Quix.

¹⁴ *Txikril*, perfumes or balsam, whose use is not known (B. de B.).

¹⁵ Most of these words, little-used today, are difficult to translate since their meanings do not give an accurate idea of the article. They are usually used in a figurative sense.

¹⁶ The first capital of the people from Rabinal was Rabbinical, of which ruins can still be seen on the hacienda of the same name, 9 leagues from the modern town of Rabinal. The last capital of the Cakchiquels was Iximché, also called Tecpán-Guatemala, one league from the modern village, was where Alvarado founded the first Spanish town in Guatemala. Ah-Tziquinahá (birds' nest), whose capital was Atitlán, on the lake of the same name (B. de B.).

They married off their sons and daughters. Only as dowries, as a favor and an offering did they put the price of their daughters, which was given to them, and they left their daughters well-placed.

Afterward they visited each one of the neighborhoods of the city with their different names: Chi-Quix, Chi-Chac, Humetaha and Culba-Cavinal,¹⁷ and these were the names of the places where they lived. They occupied themselves exploring the mountains surrounding their town, searching for uninhabited hills, for now they were very many in all.

By now, those who had gone to receive the insignias of royalty in the East had died. They were already old when they had come to settle in each of the towns. But they could not get used to being in the different places they passed through, they suffered great trials and tribulations, and far from their original homes, by now fathers and grandfathers, they found the right place for building their city. Now hear the name of the city they came to.

Chapter VII

Izmachi is the name of the site of their city where they finally lived and settled permanently.¹⁸ There, they put their power into exercise, having begun to build their houses of stone and lime (a type of chalk or white earth called Chun), under the fourth generation of kings.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Chi.Quix*, in the thorns or brambles, the first name of this city which grew gradually together with the two other suburbs, Chi-Chac and Humetaha, whose names mean *plague* and *leprosy*. Culba, frontier, and Cavinal, which means to assemble, have left a memory in the interesting ruins called Cavinal (B. de B.).

¹⁸ Chitizmachi (grass or mustache), whose name comes from Izmaleh, the surname of an old family of lords. The Izmaleh or Izmalchi today exist in Rabinal. They look very Eastern, and if Lord Kingsborough had known them, he would certainly have interpreted their name as Ismael, so making them descendents of Abraham (B. de B.).

¹⁹ Counting Balam-Quitzé, as is done here, the four generations are completed, with Cotuha, who reigned with Iztayul. Cotuha was a native of the country, but did not belong to the House of Cavek, of which Qocaib was chief, perhaps displacing his elder brother. It was Cotuha who promoted Quiché conquests, and on the death of Balam-Conache, Ahau-Ahpop ascended the throne, while Iztayul, Conanche's eldest son, remained as Ahpop-Camha. This manner of succession between two families seems to have continued up to the Spanish conquest (B. de B.).

These, then, had the word and ruled, Conanche the same as Beleheb-Queh, and with him, the Galel-Ahau. Afterward, king Cotuha reigned, with Iztayul, the names of the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camha, who reigned in Izmachi, which they had created and which in its time rose to be a magnificent city.²⁰

Only three palaces were built there in Izmachi; the twenty-four palaces we shall speak of later did not exist yet, but only three. There was one great house of the Cavek, one of the Nihaib, and another belonging to the Ahau-Quiché.²¹

They were only two serpents, these two branches of the family. Now, in Izmachi they were all of one heart and one mind. There was no enmity among them or problems either. The kingdom was peaceful, without quarrels or disputes. Peace and happiness were in their hearts. There was no envy or jealousy in what they did, and their power was still limited. They had not decided anything grandiose, nor had they become haughty. But then they tried to make their shield accepted there in Izmachi, as a sign of their empire. They made it the sign of their majesty and a symbol of their greatness.

And when the Ilocab realized, war broke out because of them; they wished to kill King Cotuha, since they wanted only a single king for themselves. As regards King Iztayul, they wanted to castigate him, they wanted to punish him because of the Ilocab. Then he was killed.

But their envy had no effect on King Cotuha, who fell upon them before dying at the hands of the Ilocab. This was the start of the revolution and the upheaval of war.

They took the city by storm, killing in their path, because what they wanted was the ruin of the Quiché people so as to reign alone. But they came only to die: they were overcome and taken prisoners, without counting the many who perished.

And then the sacrifices began. The people of Ilocab were immolated before the god; this was the punishment for their sins, by order of King Cotuha. Also, a great many were enslaved after being defeated because they were the ones who caused the war against the king and the town. What they wished in their hearts was to destroy and dis-

²⁰ P'Ízmachi. The ruins of this city can still be seen south of Uvatlán or Gumarcah.

²¹ These three remaining families resided in the capital, although the latter two had their own capitals elsewhere. These families changed their names, such as the Cavek and were fixed only after the conquest of Iztayul and Gucumatz (B. de B.).

grace the name of the Quiché king, but they did not succeed. So human sacrifices to the god began,²² when the war of the shields broke out, which was why the fortifications of the city of Izmachi were begun.

This was the birthplace of their power, because the empire of the king of the Quiché was really great. It was surrounded on all sides by lords skilled in works (of magic and spells), and there was no one who could humble them, no-one to quell them, and for this reason they built up the very grandeur of the royal power that had been established in Izmachi.

Here was the source of the custom of piercing oneself with thorns before the god and of fear; all the tribes, large and small, were filled with fear when they saw the arrival of the captives who were sacrificed for the sake of King Colhua, King Iztayul and the people of Nihai and Ahau-Quiché.

Only these three branches of the royal family lived there in Izmachi, as the town was named, and this was where the feasts and festivals began for their daughters when they came to bring wood to use in the temples.

This was why the three branches of the family gathered in the palaces named for them and there drank their (fermented) drinks and also ate their food, named the price of their sisters and their daughters. And with joy in their hearts, they did nothing but eat and drink from their painted cups (*cucules* like they use nowadays, painted and chiseled) in their mansions.

These are our praises and acts of gratitude to the gods, for our posterity, a sign of our word on our sons and daughters, they said. This is where they came to hold fiestas for giving names to the newborn. And there they distinguished themselves from one another, they divided into families, organized themselves into seven tribes and lived in different quarters of the city.

Let us unite, we the Cavak, we the Nihai and we the Ahau-Quiché, said the three families and the three great houses. They lived in Izmachi for a long time until they established another city.

²² Solemn, public sacrifices, because human blood had already been seen spilled on the altars of Tohil (B. de B.).

Chapter VIII

After this, when they arose to leave Izmachi,, they came to the capital city whose name is Gumarcaah, so called by the Quichés, when King Cotuha and King Gucumatz came together with all the princes. By that time, the fifth generation of human beings had come into existence since the beginning of civilization and the origin of the Quiché as a united nation.

There they built many houses, and there they also erected the temple of their god on the highest point of the city when they settled there.

After this, their empire began a new spurt of growth, and as they were very considerable in numbers, its great families assembled, and once gathered together they subdivided²³ because quarrels had arisen. They were envious of one another over the dowry price of their sisters and daughters, and these no longer offered the usual beverages when they were present.²⁴

So this was the origin of their separation, when they turned against one another and threw the bones and skulls of the dead among themselves. So they divided into nine families; and the dispute over their sisters and daughter being over, they put into execution what they had decided, to divide the royal authority among twenty-four great houses.

It is a long time since these lords arrived in this town, which occurred when the twenty-four great houses were completed in the capital called Gumarcaah which was afterward blessed by the Bishop. Since then, the city has been completely abandoned.²⁵

²³ Gucumatz seems to have verified this subdivision and created new posts, both to restrain the lesser nobles and to reduce the power of the high aristocracy. The "Título de Tonicapam" contains many details about this subdivision (B. de B.).

²⁴ It appears that in the heat of the quarrels they had abandoned their old ways. The text makes allusion to the custom of offering chocolate and other beverages to those who went to ask parents for their daughter's hand in marriage and of sending pitchers of drinks to the prospective father-in-law or the future husband (B. de B.).

²⁵ Gumarcaah or Utatlán was largely burned down by Alvarado in March 1524, but after the Quiché empire surrendered to the crown of Spain, the nobles returned to live in the city. Don Francisco Marroquín, the first Bishop of Guatemala, visited it when he traveled through his dioceses, probably between 1530 and 1540. Don Juan de Rojas, the son of Tecum II, and Don Juan Cortés, son of Tepepul IV governed there with a

There they increased. Having gathered together their thrones and royal seats and distributed the titles of all their honors among the princes, nine families were formed with the nine lords of Cavek, nine with the lords of Nihaiib, four with the lords of Ahau-Quiché, and two with the lords of Zakik.²⁶

They came to be very numerous, and also many were the men in the retinue of each of the lords; these were the first and at the head of their vassals, and many, many families belonged to each lord. Now we shall give the names of each and every one of these lords and of each of the great houses.

Here are the titles of the lords at the head of the Cavek. The first lord was the "Ahpap," then "Ahpap-Camha," the lord of the priests of "Tohil," the lord of the priests of "Gucumataz," the great chosen one of the "Cavek," the councilor "Chituy," the minister of tributes, "Tzalat," the councilor of the Ball Court, and the head majordomo.²⁷

These are the lords at the head of the Cavek, nine lords whose great houses are classified according to their rank, and whose titles will be explained again later. (In the last chapter).

Now here are the names of the lords at the head of the Nihaiib. The first was "Ahau-Galel," then "Ahau-Ahtzik-Vinak," "Galel-Camha," "Nima-Camha," "Uchuch-Camha," the Great Chosen One of "Nihaiib," the lord of the priests of "Avilix," "Iacol-Atam-Utzampop-Zaklatol," the minister "Ieoltux." These are the nine lords of the Nihaiib.

Here too are those of "Ahau-Quiché," and here are the titles of the lords: "Ahau-Vinak," "Ahau-Lolmet," the Great Chosen One "Ahau-Quiché," the lord of the priests of "Hacavitz." Four lords of those of Ahau-Quiché in the order of their great houses.

Two families were formed of the house of "Zakik:" the "Tzutuha" and the Galel-Zakik," although there was only one great house for the two lords.

certain degree of power, with the titles of Ahpopop and Ahpopop-Camha, and were still living when this book was transcribed from Quiché characters into the Latin alphabet (B. de B.).

²⁶ The Zakik belonged to the family of Catuha (B. de B.).

²⁷ We have translated these titles as closely as possible, without vouching for their true meaning, since almost all are completely forgotten today.

Chapter IX

And thus, the twenty-four lords were complete, and there were also twenty-four great houses. So, power and majesty grew in the Quiché; its grandeur grew strong and spread when the city with its ravines was built of stone and lime and covered with mortar.²⁸

The large and small tribes came to where the king was, helping the Quiché to shine; then, glory and majesty rose, and the house of the gods was built, just as the houses of the lords were. But they were not the ones to build them; they did not work on the construction of them. They were not capable of building their houses or the one of their god; not them, but their vassals, who had multiplied.

It was certainly neither deceit nor violence that had attracted them; in truth they belonged to these princes; great was the number of their brothers and relatives, having increased like the fame of the prophecies that issued from the mouths of the princes had also grown.

Because they were truly esteemed, and great was the glory of the princes, and the veneration they held them in grew as did their fame, because of their vassals and the inhabitants of the surrounding ravines.

But not all the tribes came to surrender thus, like in wartime one forces an entry into the ravines and cities, but by reason of the wonders worked by the kings, which glorified King Gucumatz and King Cotuha.²⁹

Gucumatz came to be a truly marvelous king; every seven days, he rose to the sky and in seven days made his way to Xibalbá. Every seven days he changed into a snake, every seven days he turned into an eagle, and also every seven days he assumed the guise of a jaguar. And he

²⁸ *Civan-tunamit*, ravines and city, is the city defended by its walls and the ravines which surrounded it and served as formidable, natural beacons. This was the siting of most ancient cities in Central America: Uatlán or Gumarcaah consisted of three different tablelands surrounded by ravines, joined by narrow stone paths. It had only one entrance, which is still used today. On another meseta north of Uatlán are the ruins of *Ilocab* with their own entrance, and to the south, *Izmachi*, also with its own entrance (B. de B.).

²⁹ Gucumatz and his Ahpop-Camha, Cotuha II. Persuasion, fear and violence brought most of the Mam country and a large part of the Suchitepéquez coast under their dominion (B. de B.).

really changed into the perfect image of an eagle and a jaguar. Every seven days he also took the form of solid blood, which was simply clotted blood.³⁰

Truly the existence of this wonder-working lord filled all the other lords with terror. News of his feats spread everywhere; all the lords of the tribes heard what was said about this marvelous king. And this was the origin of the grandeur of the Quiché, when Gucumatz gave these signs of his power.

The memory of his sons and grandsons was not lost in people's minds. Not because he had done these things or because he had been a king who worked wonders, but rather because he had been the means of dominating all the tribes, as a way to demonstrate himself to them as the only chief. This extraordinary king, Gucumatz, was the fourth generation of royalty and was distinguished as Ahpop and Ahpop-Camha.

Some successors and descendents remained, who also ruled majestically and begot sons who also did many things. This was how Tepepul and Iztayul, the fifth generation, were fathered. They were both kings, and each of the generations of these lords produced sons.

Chapter X

Here are the names of the sixth royal generation, of the two great kings. E-Gag-Quicab was the name of the first, and Cavizimah the second.³¹ And see here the great things that Quicab and Cavizimah did and how the Quiché grew in fame because of their marvels.

Here is the conquest and destruction of the ravines and the towns of the tribes both large and small, all very close together, among which was the city anciently distinguished as the home of the Cakchiquels, (Iximché) which today is Chivilá (Cichicastenango) and also in the mountains of the people of Rabinal, that of Parnaca (today Tzacualpa,

³⁰ All the old historians mention the amazing metamorphosis of Gucumatz, but we shall not attempt to explain them (B. de B.).

³¹ E-Gab-Quicab, a name which means fires of the hands, or honey. Cavizimah, *calabecero*, decorated or armed in war (B. de B.).

near Joyabah), in the mountains of Coakeb and of Zakabaha and likewise the town of the Zaculeu, the ruins of which are one league from Huehuetenango, of Chuvi-Miguna, now known as Coxtum, near Totonicapam, of Xelahau (Quezaltenango), of Chuva-Tzak (Momostenango and also Tzoloh-Ché, nowadays Chiquimula, near the Quiché region.

These peoples hated Quicab. He waged war against them and conquered and ruined the ravines and cities of the people of Rabinal, of the Cakchiquels and of the people of Zakuleu. He conquered all the towns and Quicab spread his forces to distant parts. One or two of the tribes in all his possessions had not paid their tribute, so he entered their towns by force, to make them take their tribute to Quicab and Cavizimah.

They entered into servitude; they were harassed and their citizens bound to trees and pierced with arrows; for them there was no longer any glory or honor. Thus was the destruction of these cities, so quickly erased from the face of the earth; like a flash of lightning which damages and shatters stone, so too did he annihilate nations by terror.³²

Beyond Colché there stands a pile of rocks, as a sign of a town destroyed by him, which almost seem to have been cut with his ax. There it is, on the coast of Pentayub, and can still be seen today by all who pass, as a symbol of Quicab's might.

He could neither be killed or defeated; he was a true hero, and all the tribes brought tribute to him. All the lords, after gathering to discuss matters, went out to fortify the surroundings of the ravines and towns, since by then they had taken control of all the towns of the tribes.³³

After this, spies were sent out to observe the enemy far from the capital, and new tribes were formed to occupy the conquered lands permanently as colonies.³⁴ "In case the tribe should return to occupy the town," all the lords said when they met in council.

³² This was when most of the Mam lords of the land of Otzová, which included a large part of the modern departments of Totonicapam and Quezaltenango were killed and replaced by lords of the Cavek family (B. de B.).

³³ This explains why the Quiché language supplanted Mam, to which it is very closely related, in all these places (B. de B.).

³⁴ This was done among the lower members of the three ruling families of Cavek, Nihaiib and Ahau-Quiché, to whom Quicab distributed the conquered cities, like William the Conqueror did in England with Saxon kingdoms, giving them to the Normans (B. de B.).

Then they set out to the places assigned to them. These will be like our defense trenches, like our tribes, they will be like our walls and castles, this shall be our power and bravery, said all the lords when they went to take up the position designated to each one by their tribe and there fight their enemies.

And when they had been told what they had to do they set off to take possession of the land of the conquered tribes. Do not be afraid if there are still enemies who throw themselves on you to kill you; come and tell me at once and I will go and kill them. said Quicab also, when all the chiefs were sent away with the Galel and the Ahtzik-Vinak.

Then the chiefs of spears and the chiefs of slingshots, as they were called, left with arms and equipment. The grandfathers and fathers of the Quiché spread to all parts, everywhere in the conquered lands simply to guard the hills, to hold the spears and slingshots and to keep watch in time of war. They did not have a different origin or god different from that of the Mother Country, only having thought of fortifying their towns.

So all the lords left the capital, appointed as princes of Uirilá (or Chuvilá), of Chutimal, Zakiyá, Xahbaquieh, Ternah, Vahxalahuh, with the lords of Cabrakán (or Cabrican), of Chavicak in Hunahpú,³⁵ with the lords of Pamaká, of Xoyabah, Zaxcabahá, Zihayá (today Cija), of Migina, of Xelahuh and of the lands of the coast. They went out to occupy themselves with the war and guard the land where they went by order of Quicab and Cavizimah, the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camha, the Galel and the Ahtzik-Vinak, who were the four sovereigns.

They were sent to watch the enemies of Quicab and Cavizimah, the names of the kings at the head of the House of Cavek; of Quemá, the name of the king at the head of the House of Nihaib, and of Achk-Yboy, the king who was head of the House of Ahau-Quiché. These were the names of the kings by whom they were sent, when their vassals went to settle in those lands and on each one of the mountains.

They went immediately. They brought captives and prisoners of war before Quicab and Cavizimah,, the Galel and the Ahtzik-Vinak. The chiefs of spears and slingshots made war on all sides, always bring-

³⁵ Chavicak-chi Hunahpú means Arrow of Fire of Hunahpú or of the blowpipe shooter. Hunahpú is the name the ancient Indians gave the to volcano of Fuego B. de B.) In other documents the Agua volcano has the name Hunahpú. (L. EE.).

ing new prisoners. In turn, they became heroes, when they were only guardians of frontier posts. They sat with pride, and their speech became bold, like their thoughts, because of the kings, when they took their prisoners and all their captives before them.³⁶

After this, the council gathered by order of the kings, the Ahpop, the Ahpop-Camha, the Galel and the Ahau-Vinak, and from this came the declaration that come what may, they would still be the first, being there as dignitaries to represent their families. I am the Ahpop-Camha, they exclaimed, Ahpop to do my duty like yours, Oh Ahau-Galel. As for the Galels, their names shall always be such, said all the lords, making their decision.

Those of Tamub and Ilocab did the same; thus, the three tribes of the Quiché were equal in position, when the chiefs took the rank of royalty and had themselves ennobled.³⁷ Such was the result of this assembly, but it was not there in the Quiché itself that they usurped power. The name has not been forgotten of the place where the chiefs of the vassals took command when they had all been sent to their domains, and later they all gathered in councils.

Xebalax and Xecamac are the names of the places where they took power when they began to exercise their ranks, and this took place in Chulimak.³⁸

In this way was the naming, the installation and the recognition of the twenty Galel, of the twenty Ahpop, who were instated by the Ahpop-Camha, the Galel and the Ahtzik-Vinak. All the Galel-Ahpops received their rank, as did eleven Nim-Chocoh, Galel-Ahpop, Galel-Zakik, Galel-Achih, Ahpop-Achih, Rahtzalam-Achih, Utzum-Achih were the titles of warriors they obtained when they were appointed

³⁶ The revolution, which is treated lightly here, had as its main causes the wars that the kings of the Quiché allowed themselves to be led into. To ensure their conquests, they were obliged to send most of the heads of families from their homes out to them. These made up the main nobility, and so distancing the aristocracy, they found themselves in need to increase the power of the lower classes. The chiefs raised their heads, and thus their emancipation came about (B. de B.).

³⁷ Clearly, the heads of the Houses of Tamub and Ilocab, humbled for two centuries and reduced to a sort of slavery took advantage of this opportunity to rise again and occupy their former status in the nobility (B. de B.).

³⁸ The name of this place, famous in the ancient annals of the Quiché, has now been lost. Some Indians showed me ruins called Chulimal, between Lemóa, Chichicas-tenango, and the foot of the mountains of Totonicapam (B. de B.).

and given titles to their thrones and their seats. These, the chiefs of the vassals of the Quiché nation, their lookouts and scouts, the chiefs of spears, the chiefs of slingshots, the parapets, doors, walls and towers that guard the Quiché.

Those of Tamub and Ilocab also did it in this manner, the lords of the town there is in each of the places having taken the power and made themselves title holders. This was the origin of the Galel-Ahpop and the titles that exist in each of these places today. This was the source from where they came through the Ahpop-Camha, also the Galel and the Atzik-Vinak, by whom they were created.

Chapter XI

Now we shall tell here the name of the house of the God. In fact, the house was called by the same name as the god; the Great Building of Tohil was the name of the Temple of Tohil, property of the Cavek. Avilix was the name of the Temple of Avilix, who belonged to the people of Nihai, and finally, Hacavitz was the name of the Temple of the God of the Ahau-Quiché.³⁹

Tzutuha (or the Flowery Fountain), which can be seen in Cahbahá, is the name of another very large building where there was a stone that the kings of the Quiché worshiped and was also venerated by the entire nation. The people of course made their offerings to Tohil and then went to pay their respects to the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camha.

They immediately took their precious feathers and tributes before the king, and they also maintained and provided food for this king, the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camha. They were the ones who founded the city, they the great kings and all the men who worked wonders, the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuha, the marvelous kings Quicab and Cavizimah.

They knew whether they would make war on one another, and all was clear to their eyes; they knew if there would be death or hunger or

³⁹ Thus, the three ruling Houses each had their own temple in the same enclosure, whose colossal ruins can still be seen today in Utatlán, near Santa Cruz del Quiché. Each family also had its own palace. (B. de B.).

if strife would break out. They also knew where all these things were shown to them, where the book they called "Book of the Community" was.⁴⁰

But it was not only in this way that the kings demonstrated the grandeur of their status. Their fasts were also great, with which they gave thanks for their palaces and their kingdoms; they fasted for a long time, making offerings to their god. This is how.

Nine men fasted and another nine made offerings and burned incense. Thirteen more oversaw the fast and another thirteen made offerings and burned incense to Tohil, and before their god they ate nothing but fruit (*zapotes*, *matasanos* and *jocotes*).

For they did not have bread (*tortillas*) to eat. They were seventeen men who made offerings and ten who fasted. They did not eat anything at all during the great sacred work they did which was a demonstration of their rank as kings.

Neither did they sleep with women, but stayed alone, in continence, fasting in the temple, where they spent each day only in worshiping, making offerings and burning incense.

They were there from nightfall until morning, grieving in their hearts, sorrowing deep inside, begging for light and life for their subjects and power for themselves, and raising their eyes to the sky. Here are the requests they made to their god in prayer, and these were the pleas of their hearts.

"Greetings, beauty of the day. O Hurakan, Heart of Heaven and Earth!! You, giver of glory and happiness; return to us and fill us with prosperity with your gifts; give life and being to my subjects, that they might grow and live, those who are the keepers of your altars, who invoke you on the road, on the banks of rivers, in the ravines, in the forests and among the lianas.

Give them daughters and sons. Let no disgrace or misfortune befall them; let not the tempter come behind them or into their presence. Let them not fall or injure themselves; may they not be fornicators or sentenced by the judge. May they not fall on the path or on the road. Let there be no obstacle or danger behind or before them; Grant them

⁴⁰ *Popol-Vuh*, the national book which contained the mysteries described in the first two parts of this book, and no doubt astronomy, astrology, the art of magic, etc. (B. de B.).

a smooth road and clear paths where no disgrace or misfortune may come to them from your bolts of lightning.

May their lives be happy, those who keep and maintain your house and give you sustenance. O Heart of the Sky! O Heart of the Earth, you, Veiled Majesty. O Tohil, Avilix, Hacavitz who fill the sky and the earth in the four quarters, the four cardinal points. As long as there is light, let them be before your mouth, before your face, oh God!"

So spoke the lords, while outside the nine men, the thirteen men and the seventeen men fasted. They fasted by day and their hearts were heavy for their subjects and all the women and children when these took their tributes to each of the kings.

That was the price of the settled life they enjoyed, and the price of power, that is to say, the power of the Ahpop, the Ahpop-Camha, the Galel and the Ahtzic-Vinak. They entered two by two and alternated their posts to bear the burden of the nation and all the people of the Quiché.⁴¹

Their traditions had only one origin, and there was also only one origin of the custom of maintaining and feeding the altars. It was the same origin, that of their traditions, because those of Tamub and Ilocab also did the same, along with those of Rabinal, the Cakchiquel, those of Tziquinab, of Tuhalhá, of Uchabahá; and there was only a single mouth and ear in the Quiché when they did what they had to do.

But they did not reign only in this manner. They did not waste the gifts of those who maintained and fed them, but made their food and drink of them. They did not pay for them, since they had obtained them by skill, and seized their empire, their majesty and power by force.

This was not the only way the cities with their ravines were conquered; tribes both large and small paid considerable ransoms. They brought precious stones, rich metals and the sweetest honey, scepters of emeralds, and pearl, There also arrived works of feathers, tributes from all the towns. All this was taken into the presence of the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuha, before Quicab and Cavizimah, the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camha, of the Galel and the Ahtzic-Vinak.

⁴¹ These supplications or sentiments of the kings who prayed for the peoples they were responsible for show a deeply religious nation. There is close analogy between the customs of the kings of the Quiché and those of Israel: their vows are the same (B. de B.).

Certainly, what they did was not little, and the cities they conquered were not few in number. Innumerable were the cities and tribes which came to pay tribute to the Quiché, and for this reason they felt great sorrow, because their riches were taken from them by these lords. However, their power did not grow very quickly; Gucumatz was the founder of royal greatness, and he was the instigator of its enhancement and the growth of the Quiché.

Now we shall give the generations of kings in order, and we shall give the names of all the lords again.

Chapter XIII

Here, then, are the generations in order of all the reigns, which began with Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Mahucutah and Iqi-Balam, our first grandfathers and fathers in the time the sun appeared, when the moon and stars came into sight.

See, then, here, the generations and the order of reigns, which we shall start from the beginning of their successions as the kings ascended the throne then each generation of kings and elders went to the tomb, as well as the sovereign of the capital, and finally, each one of the kings.

Also, the particular title of each king of the Quiché will be given.

The Royal House of the Cavek

Balam-Quitze, root of those of Cavek.

Qocavib, second generation, beginning with Balam-Quitze.

Balam-Conache, with him really begins the royal house, with the title of Ahpop, third generation.

Cotuha and Iztayub, of the fourth generation,

Gucumatz and Cotuha, first of the marvelous kings, who were the fifth generation.

Tepepul and Iztayul, of the sixth order or generation.

Quicab and Cavizmah, seventh succession of kings, also marvelous.

Tepepul and Xtayub, of the eighth generation.

Tecun and Tepepul, of the ninth generation.

Vahxaki-Caam and Quicab, the tenth generation of kings.

Vakub-Noh and Cavatepech, the eleventh order (or generation) of kings.

Oxib-Queh and Beleheb-Tzih, the twelfth generation of kings. These were reigning when Donadiú arrived, and they were hanged by the Spaniards.⁴²

Tecum and Tepepul, who were made tributaries of the Spaniards.

They had sons and were the thirteenth generation of kings.⁴³

Don Juan de Rojas and Don Juan Cortés, the fourteenth generation of kings, were the sons of Tecum and Tepepul.⁴⁴

This was the order of the royal generations of the kings of Ahpop-Camha of the family of Cavek-Quiché.

And we shall now repeat the nine names of the families. Here are the Great Houses belonging to the lords of the followers of the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camhá. These are the names of the nine Great Houses, with the different titles of the lords of each Great House or family.

The Ahau-Ahpop, king of kings, head of a Great House, and Cuha, guarded house, was the name of this palace.

The Ahau-Ahpop-Camha, lord minister of the house, and Tziquinaha, nest of birds, was the name of his palace.

The Nim-Chocob-Cavek, the Great Elected of Cavek, head of a Great House.

Ahau-Ah-Tohil, lord of the priests of Tohil, head of a Great House.

⁴² Donadiu or Tonatiuh, the brilliant, the name of the sun, which the Mexicans had given to Alvarado. The Quiché could not pronounce this name in the Mexican way and therefore wrote it with d.

⁴³ This Tecum, counted here as the thirteenth generation, was perhaps the same one who commanded the Quiché army when Alvarado reached the plains of Quetzaltenango and who was killed by the conquistador beyond Zabcahá. Tepepul, who seems to be the Coguechol or Sequechul of the old Spanish historians tried to shake off the foreign yoke, was taken and put aboard a Spanish ship which was wrecked off the coast of Acapulco (B. de B.)

⁴⁴ These two princes, who were left a shadow of royal power were still alive in 1558, and we have their signatures on a document which is very important in the History of the Quiché. Forced to leave the city of Utatlán or Gumarcaab, which was already almost deserted, they died in Santa Cruz del Quiché, recently founded by Alvarado.

Ahau-Ah-Gucumatz, leader of the priests of Gucumatz, head of a Great House.

The Popol-Vinak-Chitu, councilor, etc., head of a Great House.

The Lolmet-Quehnay, minister of tributes, head of a Great House.

The Popol-Vinak-Pa-Ham-Tzalatx-Xcuxeba, councilor of the Ball Game, etc., head of a Great House.

The Tapeu-Yaqui, head of a Great House.

These are the nine families of Cavek. Innumerable and infinite were the vassals who obeyed these nine Great Houses (Chinamitales).

The Royal House of Nihaib

Here, then, are the nine Great Houses of those of Nihaib, but first we shall give the order of its generations as regards kings.

Only one name was the root from which they sprang before the sun and dawn had shone for the people.

Balam-Agab, the first grandfather and father.

Qoacul and Qoacutec, of the second generation.

Qochahuh and Qotzibaha, painted house, the third generation.

Beleheb-Gih, nine suns, the fourth generation.

Cotuha, the fifth of the kings.

Batza, river of the monkey, the sixth generation.

Ztayul, of the seventh generation.

Cotuha, who was eighth in the line of kings.

Beleheb-Gih, the ninth king.

Quemá, water of weaving, who has already been mentioned, of the tenth generation.

King Cotuha, of the eleventh generation.

Don Cristóbal, so called, who ruled in the presence of the Spaniards.

Don Pedro de Robles, today Ahau-Galel.

These are all the kings who followed the first Ahau-Galel, and now we shall name the lords of each Great House.

The Ahau-Galel, lord of the family of Nihaib, head of a Great House.

The Ahau-Atzik-Vinak, head of a Great House.

The Ahau-Gañeñ-Camha, head of a Great House.

The Nima-Camha, head of a Great House.

The Uch-Camha, head of a Great House.

The Nim-Chocoh-Nihaib, head of a Great House.

The Ahau-Avilix, head of a Great House.

The Yocol-Atam, head of a Great House.

The Nima-Lolmet-Yeoltux, head of a Great House.

These, then, are the Great Houses of the Nihaib, and these were the titles that the nine families were known by. Innumerable also were the families of each of these lords whose titles we have given first.

The Royal House of Ahau-Quiché

Here are also those of Ahau-Quiché, of whom he was the grandfather and father.

Mahucutah, the first man.

Qoahan, name of the second generation of kings.

Caklacan, red flag.

Quocozon

Comahcum.

Vukub.Ah, seven reeds.

Qocamel, the humble.

Coyabacol.

Vinak-Bam.

These are the kings who reigned of the Ahau-Qucié, and this was the order of their generations. Now, here are the titles of the lords corresponding to the Great Houses, of which there were only four.

The Ahtzic-Vinak-Ahau, the title of the first lord, the head of a Great House.

The Lohmet-Ahau, second lord, head of a Great House.

The Nim-Cocoh-Ahau, the third lord, head of a Great House.

Hacavitz, was the fourth lord, head of a Great House. These are the four Great Houses of the Ahau-Quiché.

So, there were three Nim-Cocoh, the Great Chosen, who were for the three kingdoms, and were like the fathers of all the lords of the Quiché. The three Chosen gathered in a meeting, and they were the ones who had authority like mothers and fathers. The position of the three Chosen was the highest.

There were, then the Great Chosen one of the Nihaib, a second Grand Chosen one of Ahau of the Ahau-Quiché, and the third Great

Chosen one of the Cavek, each one at the head of their family. And now see what remains of the life of the Quiché, because now there is no way to see the book which all the kings read who have disappeared.

*Thus, everything ended for those of the Quiché,
Which now is called Santa Cruz.*

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POPOL VUH

The Sacred Book of the Ancient Mayas-Quiché

Written by a nameless author in the mid 16th century in the Quiché language with Latin characters, it was discovered in the early 18th century by the Dominican friar, Francisco Ximénez when he directed the convent of Santo Tomás Chuilá, or Chichicastenango, Guatemala. The cleric, an expert in Indian languages, made a copy of the original, with a Spanish translation, in two columns, entitled "Here begin the stories of the origins of this province of Guatemala" included in the *Arte de las tres Lenguas*, the second volume of his work *Tesoro de las lenguas Cakchiquel, Quiché and Tzutuhil*. Later, he revised and corrected the translation to produce a second version, which he included in the first volume of his *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapas y Guatemala*.

The *Popol Vuh*, also called *Manuscrito de Chichicastenango*, *Libro Sagrado*, *Libro del Consejo*, *Libro del Común* or *Libro Nacional de los Quichés* is one of the most valuable legacies of pre-Hispanic Maya thought. It is divided into four parts, which tell of the origin of the world and the creation of humans; the adventures of two demigods in Xibalbá, the region of the dead, and finally gives information about the origin of the indigenous peoples of the region, their migrations, wars and conquests, followed by a chronology of their rulers.



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