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Three K'iche'an Divinatory Calendars

The three divinatory calendars presented in this volume are examples of a K'iche'an¹ literary tradition that includes the *Popol Vuh*, *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (*Memorial de Solola*), and the *Titles of the Lords of Totonicapan*. Two of the calendars were written in indigenous Kaqchikel or K'iche' languages, but in European script, sometime before or during the eighteenth century. The third example was written in K'iche' and Spanish in 1854. They demonstrate that although linguistic and literary traditions were still being adhered to, there was at the same time an obvious element of adaptation and acculturation, the use of European script.

Calendars such as these continue to be the basis for prognostication or determining the favorable or unfavorable nature of specific periods of time. According to the favor of the days, land may be purchased, sales made in the market, profit accrued, and other economic enterprises pursued. The calendar designates the time for planting and harvest and other agricultural pursuits. The disposition of the days can maintain health and foretell illness or death, influence the naming of children,

guide betrothal and marriage. Obligations to the dead are fulfilled on days affiliated with the souls of the ancestors.

These little-known works appear to have escaped the notice of most scholars. Except for occasional mention of their existence, and an unpublished study of the 1722 calendar by Rudolf Schuller and Oliver La Farge (1934), no further work has been done.² Although they languished in the library of the University of Pennsylvania Museum for over a century, these are important documents, shedding light on seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century divinatory practices, and can serve as a basis of comparison with other sources on which our knowledge of K'iche'an divination is based.

MESOAMERICAN DIVINATORY CALENDARS

The indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica in ancient times and in many places into the present, maintained intricate calendars consisting of civil or solar and of sacred or divinatory cycles. The calendar was a foundational achievement of Mesoamerican civilization, reaching its highest elaboration among the Maya of the Classic period. From the earliest times the Maya observed and measured various natural cycles, particularly those related to the astronomical movements of the sun, moon, Venus, and other celestial bodies. The study of the movement of various celestial bodies produced several time cycles.

The civil calendar was a 365-day solar calendar containing eighteen months of twenty days with five days remaining. Each year was given the name of the day which started it, there being only four of the twenty that could appear as the first day of the new year (Table 1.1). These four days—No', Iq', Kej, and E—were repeated until after thirteen years the number 13 was reached, at which time the next year began with number 1 again.

The sacred divinatory calendar was not marked off into months but was a combination of day designations created by the coincidence of a number from 1 to 13 with one of the twenty possible names (Table 1.2). This process created different combinations of numbers and names, which were repeated indefinitely to form a cycle of 260 (13×20) different days. This period is referred to by scholars as a *tzolk'in*, although in K'iche'an languages it is known as *chol q'ij*, a term meaning the "order of the days," since it serves to designate a series of 260 days not repeated until the beginning of another series of similar duration and having the same numbers and names as the first.

The two cycles, one of 365 days and the other of 260 days, meshed to produce a calendar round to form a period of 18,980 days.

Important dates or period endings in all these calendars were used by the Classic period Maya to commemorate significant events in the lives of important people, such as births, deaths, successions to office, and sacrifices or other rituals.

Table 1.1. Day names in the 1685, 1722, and 1854 divinatory calendars.

<i>1685 Kaqchikel</i>	<i>1722 K'iche'</i>	<i>1854 K'iche'</i>
<i>Ymox</i>	<i>Ymox / Ymos</i>	<i>Ymux</i>
<i>Yε</i>	<i>Yε</i>	<i>Yc</i>
<i>Aεbal</i>	<i>Aεbal / Akbal / Acbal</i>	<i>Bacbal</i>
<i>Kat</i>	<i>4at</i>	<i>Cat</i>
<i>Can</i>	<i>Can</i>	<i>Kan</i>
<i>Camey</i>	<i>Queme / Came</i>	<i>Kame</i>
<i>Quiεh</i>	<i>Queh</i>	<i>Quiej</i>
<i>Kanel</i>	<i>εanil / Canil</i>	<i>Kanil</i>
<i>Tōh</i>	<i>Tōh / Thōh</i>	<i>Toj</i>
<i>Tzīj</i>	<i>4'ij</i>	<i>Tzii</i>
<i>Batz</i>	<i>Ba4,</i>	<i>Batz</i>
<i>Ee</i>	<i>Ee / E</i>	<i>Ec</i>
<i>Ab</i>	<i>Ab</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>Yix</i>	<i>Yx / Balam</i>	<i>Yx</i>
<i>Tz'iquin</i>	<i>4,iquin</i>	<i>Tziquin</i>
<i>Abmak</i>	<i>Abmak</i>	<i>Abmac</i>
<i>Nōh</i>	<i>Nōh</i>	<i>Nōh</i>
<i>Tihax</i>	<i>Tihax</i>	<i>Tihax</i>
<i>Caok</i>	<i>Caok</i>	<i>Caquok</i>
<i>Hunabpu</i>	<i>Hunabpu</i>	<i>Abpu</i>

Some activities appear to have been timed to correlate with specific cycles; for example, some war events are associated with the cycle of the planet Venus.

An exclusively Classic period Maya calendrical achievement was the long count, which permitted an infinite computation of time from an established mythical starting point, backward or forward. The long count is a linear count of days that began in 3114 BC.

Given the ancient importance of the calendar, one might wonder why the indigenous calendar did not persist more strongly after the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century than it did. Much of calendrical knowledge was probably held by a small group of individuals who guarded that knowledge but were easily singled out for control, suppression, or elimination. Calendrical knowledge was a prime source of socioreligious power and was, along with the practice of human sacrifice, a major target of early Spanish missionaries, who quickly substituted saints' days and other Catholic ritual occasions for indigenous ceremonies. The religious brotherhood dedicated to the cult of a specific saint (*cofradia*) and the Gregorian calendar were the chief instruments for effecting these changes. Some small-scale rituals for crops and households survived. In parts of the K'iche'an area, the ritual calendar has persisted and is still used in these smaller-scale rituals.

La Farge (1947:180–181) has noted similarities in divinations between the Codex Dresden and the Ajilab'al q'ij from the 1722 K'iche' calendar. Codex

THREE K'ICHE'AN DIVINATORY CALENDARS

Table 1.2. Month names in the 1685 and 1722 divinatory calendars.

1685 <i>Kaqchikel</i>	1722 <i>K'iche' A-I</i>	1722 <i>K'iche' A-II</i>	1722 <i>K'iche' A-III-VI</i>	1722 <i>K'iche' C</i>
<i>Nabeimam</i>	<i>Nabemam</i>	<i>Nabe Má</i>	<i>Nabe Mam</i>	<i>Mam</i>
<i>Rucabmam</i>	<i>Vcab mam</i>	<i>Vcab Má</i>	<i>Vcab Mam</i>	<i>Vcab Mam</i>
<i>Lieinza</i>	<i>Liqinca</i>	<i>Liquinca</i>	<i>Nabe Liquin Ca</i>	<i>Liquin Ca</i>
<i>Nabeitoeie</i>	<i>Vcab Liquinca</i>	<i>Vcab Liquinca</i>	<i>Vcab Liquin Ca</i>	<i>Vcab Liquin Ca</i>
<i>Rucatoeie</i>	<i>Nab Pach</i>	<i>Nabe Pach</i>	<i>Nabe Pach</i>	<i>Pach</i>
<i>Nabeipach</i>	<i>Vcab Pach</i>	<i>Ucab Pach</i>	<i>Vcab Pach</i>	<i>Vcab Pach</i>
<i>Rucanpach</i>	<i>4,ičilakam</i>	<i>4,ičilakam</i>	<i>4isi Lakam</i>	<i>4,ičilakan</i>
<i>4,iquin eih</i>	<i>4,iquin eih</i>	<i>4,iquin eih</i>	<i>4,iquin eih</i>	<i>4,iquin eih</i>
<i>Cakan</i>	<i>Cakam</i>	<i>Cakam</i>	<i>Cakam</i>	<i>Cakam</i>
<i>Ibota</i>	<i>Botam</i>	<i>Botam</i>	<i>Botam</i>	<i>Botam</i>
<i>Katic</i>	<i>Nabe eih</i>	<i>Nabeçih</i>	<i>Nabeçih</i>	<i>Çih</i>
<i>Yzcal</i>	<i>Ucab Çih</i>	<i>Vcabçih</i>	<i>Vcabçih</i>	<i>Vcab Çih</i>
	<i>Rox Çih</i>	<i>Roxçih</i>	<i>Rox Çih</i>	<i>Urox Çih</i>
<i>Pariche</i>	<i>Chee</i>	<i>Chee</i>	<i>Chee</i>	<i>Chee</i>
<i>Tacaxepual</i>	<i>Tequexepual</i>	<i>Tequexe pual</i>	<i>Tequexe pual</i>	<i>Tequexpual</i>
<i>Nabeitumuzuz</i>	<i>4,ib'apopp</i>	<i>4,ibapp</i>	<i>4ibapopp</i>	<i>4,ibapopp</i>
<i>Rukantumuzuz</i>	<i>Cac</i>	<i>Çak</i>	<i>Çak</i>	<i>Çak</i>
<i>Cibixie</i>	<i>4hab</i>	<i>4hab</i>	<i>4hab</i>	<i>4hab</i>
<i>Vchum</i>				
<i>Tzapieih</i>	<i>4isbal rech</i>	<i>4,apieihih</i>	<i>4,apieih</i>	<i>4,api eih</i>

Dresden, one of the four surviving prehispanic Maya codices, consists of thirty-nine leaves painted, in color, on both sides with glyphs and portraits of deities. The contents are divided into several major parts, including seventy-six 260-day almanacs and 364-day counts of divination that indicate good, bad, and indifferent days and the benevolent or adverse influence of the presiding deities in matters of agriculture, weather, disease, and medicine. The codex is a condensed book of divination of good and bad days for human enterprise with directions to propitiate the gods (Thompson 1972). Similarly, the Books of Chilam Balam, written in the Yucatec Maya language anywhere from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, are a genre unique to post-conquest Yucatán. They have been named for the prehispanic Chilam Balam, the Jaguar Prophet, who made prophecies based on historical knowledge and a cyclical view of time. The manuscripts are compilations of history, myth, prognostication, farmers' almanacs, medical diagnoses, and herbal recipes. Each manuscript appears to be a compilation of passages copied from other texts. A great deal of calendrical material, including weather predictions, prognostics of "good" and "bad" days, warnings of sickness and death, and various other portents, occur in various of these Books of Chilam Balam (Scholes et al. 1946). For example, the Chilam Balam of Ixil, which dates from the late eighteenth century, includes a Catholic calendar, which is not translated, giving the days of each month together with the pacts and dominical letters. Except for a few church festivals, the saint for

each day is named, which was useful in naming children. Accompanying this calendar is a Maya treatise on the European zodiac. Beneath a picture of each sign is the usual information found in European almanacs, such as the day when the sun enters the sign, the number of stars in that sign, the hours of daylight and darkness, and other information for the guidance of a person born under this sign. To this are added a chart with some tables and other material on zodiacal anatomy, so that a healer might avoid bleeding any part of the body while the sun is passing through the sign of the zodiac ascribed to that part. There are two calendar wheels, one of which represents an alleged *katun*, or period of thirteen years. Similarly, the so-called Codex Perez consists of extracts that Juan Pío Pérez copied from various Maya manuscripts during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. A large part of it was taken from the Book of Chilam Balam of Mani. The first third of the manuscript is composed of Maya translations of European astrological and calendrical material. Much attention is given to augural or divinatory aspects of the Maya calendar.

After the imposition of Spanish rule in the sixteenth century, the calendrical system persisted throughout the Colonial period. In some areas calendrical knowledge was maintained on an oral basis, whereas in others it was retained with the aid of written schematic drawings or calendar wheels. A calendar wheel is a Colonial period image that displays cycles of time in a circular format.³ Its use is mentioned in the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (1953:98–159) and other early narratives. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians describe its use (Ximénez 1929–1931, 1:102–103). Pedro Cortés y Larraz (1958:2:57), bishop of Guatemala between 1768 and 1781, undertook an administrative visit to 113 curatos in his dioceses and stated that the traditional calendar was in use “in all the parishes of the K’iche’ and Kaqchikel.” He made specific reference to the ancient calendar in his descriptions of the parishes of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de Zamayac, Quezaltenango, San Pedro La Laguna, and Santa Cruz del Quiche.

We find evidence for the retention of the ancient Maya calendar in many contemporary communities (Miles 1952), and these data have great potential for inferences about the function and meaning of the ancient Maya calendar. Scholars have traditionally assumed that in ancient times the common Maya knew little of calendrical ritual. This ignorance was thought to extend to all parts of the calendar, explaining its apparent total disappearance since the conquest. However, evidence collected at least in the highlands of Guatemala by Robert Burkitt (1930–1931), Samuel K. Lothrop (1929, 1930), and Oliver La Farge (1947:75) indicates that the basic components of the calendar were common knowledge. Lothrop reports that the calendar was so vigorously in use that a storekeeper wrote the indigenous dates on his calendar for reference in dealing with the K’iche’ Maya of Momostenango (La Farge 1947:75–76). Burkitt (n.d.:387) gives the following assessment of the retention of the indigenous calendar in the Ixil-speaking community of Chajul: “Éh, Noh, Iq, and Txéh, are the lucky days. The other 16 indifferent. Everybody knows

these days. Servant girls are hired by periods of 20 days. Certain people make it a business to keep the right count of the days. Today (1913 August 30, Saturday) is Txéh."

Although the calendar is no longer in use in Zinacantán in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, evidence indicates that the solar-year calendar was in use there as late as 1688; there are no data on the divinatory calendar (Vogt 1969:603–604). Sacristans in the church at Zinacantán are usually literate, and their long experience makes them important advisors (*mayordomos*) to the ranked members of the religious fraternities devoted to the worship of specific saints. Because they are able to read the church calendar, which is printed in Spanish, they are still responsible for telling the mayordomos the dates on which they must perform rituals (Cancian 1965:45). Alfonso Villa Rojas obtained information in 1936–1937 on the nineteen-month calendar and its use in connection with the agricultural round in Oxchuc, a Tzeltal community in Chiapas (Andrade et al. 1938).

Manuel García Elgueta (1962) describes the use of the traditional calendar among the K'iche' during the late nineteenth century. By the middle of the twentieth century the original calendrical system, or parts of it, existed in many communities in the Mexican states of Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Chiapas, as well as the highland region of Guatemala.

Ethnohistorian Suzanna W. Miles (1952:273–275) identified almost ninety communities known to have retained calendars into the middle of the twentieth century. Of these, eighty-two have been described in some detail. In the western highlands of Guatemala a total of thirty-four Chuj, Ixil, Jakaltec (Popti), Mam, and Poqomchi' communities have calendars defined by year bearers, the 365-day year with eighteen cycles of twenty named days, and the thirteen numbers. More to the east in the central highlands of Guatemala are twenty-three Mam, Awakateko, K'iche' and Kaqchikel, and Poqomchi' and Q'eqchi' communities with calendars defined by the 260-day count, the permutation of the twenty named days and the thirteen numbers.

Many other anthropologists have noted the importance of the calendar for contemporary indigenous communities (Bunzel 1952; Burkitt 1930–1931; Falla 1975; Gates 1932a, 1932b; Goubaud Carrera 1935; La Farge 1930, 1947:123, 164; La Farge and Byers 1931:116, 659, 660; Lehmann 1910; Lincoln 1942:103; 1945:121; Lothrop 1930; Miles 1952, 1957, 1965; Rodríguez and Crespo 1957; Rosales 1949a:48, 55; 1949b:683; Sapper 1925; Schultze Jena 1933, 1946; Tax 1947a:34; 1947b:416; Tedlock 1982, 1992; Termer 1930; Thompson 1932; Wagley 1941).

Miles also observed that in areas of highland Guatemala where the thirteen numbers of the 260-day count had been lost, the twenty named days survived as a cycle and assumed the divinatory functions of the 260-day count as a whole. This element, the twenty day names of the 260-day count, is the lowest surviving form

of the Maya calendar count and represents the ultimate reduction of the calendrical structure.

Such is also the case with the prognostication tables, which have come down to us in the literary tradition of the Maya of Yucatan. In the Books of Chilam Balam of the eighteenth century we find lists of days, each day with its specific properties and prognostications annotated. These prognostication tables are written in Yukatek by means of an adapted Latin alphabet, but as a comparison with passages of similar content in the Codex Dresden shows, they no doubt have their origin in the hieroglyphic books from prehispanic times (Gubler and Bolles 2000:8–9; La Farge 1947:180–181). The most precise, and also the most extensive, divinatory list in the Books of Chilam Balam is List no. 1 from the Book of the Chilam Balam of K'awa, a small village near Chichén Itzá. It consists of the names of the twenty days and the specific properties that these days have in shaping the destinies, qualities, basic behaviors, and future occupations of men and women who were born under their influence.

CALENDRIAL PRACTICE IN HIGHLAND GUATEMALA

For the past thirty years most of the K'iche'an communities in the central and western highlands have been brutally repressed by the national government of Guatemala, resulting in a reduction of the influence of traditional religion (Figure 1.1). However, daykeepers still remain among the surviving Maya. These calendar priests continue to calculate the days and interpret their qualities in order to reveal answers about mental and physical dispositions, the causes of evil or success and failure of events, and consequently the best day for undertaking such essential activities as planting and harvesting or marriage. Several investigators have fortunately published the results of their field investigations of calendrical divination and its effect on local indigenous society.

North American anthropologist Barbara Tedlock, working with the K'iche' of Momostenango, undertook formal training and, together with her husband, was initiated as a calendar diviner in 1976. Her *Time and the Highland Maya* (1982, 1992) focuses on the concepts and the procedures involved in the training of a K'iche' calendar diviner. It not only presents insights into the significance of ceremonial time, location, and meaning, but it also provides a glimpse at the mental processes involved in the minds of both diviner and client during the process of a calendrical divination.

German anthropologist Eike Hinz spent fifteen months of fieldwork between 1980 and 1983 in the Q'anjob'al community of San Juan Ixcoy in the northwestern highlands of Guatemala, during which time he collaborated with a diviner who used the prehispanic 260-day calendar in his consultations. Hinz examined the Q'anjob'al concept of "illness" and analyzed the psychical, psychotherapeutic,



I.1. HIGHLAND REGION OF GUATEMALA.

and socio-therapeutical effects of healing in calendrical divination. The diviner's consultation constitutes a type of psycho-sociotherapy in which he not only interprets the existential problems and preoccupations of clients but also attempts to resolve them. During fieldwork, Hinz was also trained and initiated by a calendar diviner-healer. In his monograph, *Misstrauen führt zum Tod* (1991), Hinz presents twelve complete cases (of a total of fifty recorded) of calendrical divination and healing. He recorded all divinations and ensuing therapeutical dialogues between healer and patient in Q'anjob'al and then transcribed them in both Q'anjob'al and German.

North American anthropologists Benjamin N. Colby and Lore M. Colby, working during the late 1960s and early 1970s with an Ixil daykeeper, published *The Daykeeper: The Life and Discourse of an Ixil Diviner* (1981), a magnificent study that documents the cultural principles organizing the daykeeper's methods of divination and guiding his interpretation of dreams and his cures for the sick. They identify and define cultural patterns underlying the stories he relates and the morals he draws from them. These patterns are used to inform our perception of the daykeeper's experience of life, and the reader gains an understanding of the relation between culture and thought.

Participatory investigations by Tedlock and Hinz and detailed observations made by Colby and Colby and others (Bunzel 1952; La Farge 1947; La Farge and Byers 1931; Lincoln 1945; Sapper 1925; Schultze Jena 1933, 1946, 1947; Termer 1930) on the beliefs and practices associated with the calendar, particularly the role of the daykeeper, explain much about highland Maya behavior and ethics.

Divination and the management of time have a fundamental role in Maya culture and have been practiced from ancient times through the present. Historical and ethnographic accounts provide information about diviners and other types of non-Catholic religious specialists (Table 1.3). The shaman priest determines the days on which both communal religious ceremonies and *cofradia* ceremonies are to be held. The prayer sayer requests good providence or assists in effecting cures of sick clients and functions in dawn ceremonies of various kinds. The daykeeper, or calendar priest, uses a divining bundle of *tz'ite'* seeds to count the days and make diagnoses. A subcategory of diviner includes those who use crystals instead of *tz'ite'* seeds.

K'ICHE'AN DAYKEEPERS

Only the *ajq'ij*, daykeeper, or calendar priest, knows how to properly interpret the causal relationship between an event and the quality of the day. The quality of a particular day is defined by the combination of the quality associated with the day sign and the quality associated with its number coefficient. Thus, each day of the 260-day count has its individual prognostication. The day gods reveal the underlying

THREE K'ICHE'AN DIVINATORY CALENDARS

Table 1.3. Religious specialists identified in K'iche'an dictionaries.

<i>K'iche'an gloss</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Ab'ay ruq'a</i>	Soothsayer for luck (Solano 1580)
<i>Ajaq'om</i>	Curer (Coto 1983)
<i>Ajawalin q'ij</i>	Soothsayer with luck or omens (Barrera 1745)
<i>Ajilab'al q'ij</i>	Lot caster; he who counts the days, or omens, or the months in ancient times (Vico 1550)
<i>Ajilanel</i>	Soothsayer for luck (Solano 1580)
<i>Aj'itz</i>	Witch, warlock (Coto 1983; Solano 1580)
<i>Ajkun</i>	Curer (Solano 1580)
<i>Ajmalola'</i>	Soothsayer for luck (Solano 1580)
<i>Ajq'ij</i>	Master of the calendar, soothsayer, diviner (Barrera 1745; Coto 1983; Solano 1580; Vico 1550); witch, warlock (Coto 1983; Solano 1580); the K'iche' high priest who keeps the day count and decides on the dates of ceremonies (Vico 1550)
<i>Ajtoq'ol</i>	Soothsayer (Solano 1580; Vico 1550)
<i>B'alam</i>	Witch (Solano 1580)
<i>Cholol q'ij</i>	There are Indians who, according to the count of the days, know and announce (Coto 1983); soothsayer; they are esteemed among the Indians as those who count the days and make predictions (Coto 1983)
<i>Cholol tz'itz'</i>	Soothsayer for luck (Solano 1580)
<i>Jalom</i>	Witch, warlock (Coto 1983:74; Solano 1580)
<i>Ki cholo q'ij</i>	Soothsayer for dreams and omens (Solano 1580)
<i>Kinawalin</i>	Soothsayer for luck or omens (Solano 1580)
<i>Kiq'ijin</i>	Soothsayer for luck or omens (Solano 1580)
<i>Kisaqiwachin</i>	Soothsayer for luck or omens (Solano 1580)
<i>Makajik xuqul</i>	Soothsayer for luck (Solano 1580)
<i>Nawal</i>	Witch, warlock (Coto 1983; Solano 1580)
<i>Nik' wachi' ruwach pa ya'</i>	Soothsayer with water (Solano 1580)
<i>Saq tijax</i>	Witch who travels through the sky like a comet (Coto 1983)
<i>Saqiwachinel</i>	Soothsayer (Barrera 1745; Solano 1580)
<i>Tz'etom pa ya'l</i>	Soothsayer who looks in water (Solano 1580)

cause of a sickness or misfortune to the daykeeper, and he passes this information on to the client. Knowing the variables associated with the day, the calendar priest can interpret dispositions and events. Divination is used to determine the cause and cure of sickness, to interpret dreams, to recover lost or stolen objects, and to determine times and places for ritual. A calendar priest is consulted for advice in all situations of emergency and stress, such as illness, land disputes, lost property, commerce, travel, adultery, death, birth, dreams, omens, or marriage (Colby and Colby 1981:222; Tedlock 1982:153).

The calendar and associated beliefs facilitate communication between people and supernaturals. This communication is possible through several techniques, all well documented throughout most of Mesoamerica. These included sortilege, or the casting of a handful of bean-shaped seeds to divine information about past, present, and future; the interpretation of dreams; the reading of signs and omens; the belief in lucky and unlucky days; and observations of reflections.

Divination continues to be a key feature of contemporary Mesoamerican indigenous and non-indigenous magico-religious practice. Maize sortilege is widespread; dream and vision interpretation continue to occupy an important place in indigenous belief. Other common techniques of performing divination, such as crystal gazing, observing reflections in obsidian, breaking eggs, pulsing, and interpreting patterns of water vapor and incense smoke to determine the cause of disease, do not appear to occur among K'iche'an peoples.

The seventeenth-century "Vocabulario de la lengua cakchiquel" by the Franciscan Tomas de Coto, gives the following entry for *pronostico* (prediction): "The ancient vocabulary gives natajik . . . The Indians among them, who prognosticate, are called cholol q'ij, or ajq'ij. Lab', is an omen or bad prognostic . . . wachik' is the vision which they dream . . . they prognosticate with reflections on water . . . the birds foretell rain when they sing" (Coto 1983:443).

For *sortilege*, Coto (1983:110) gives:

to draw lots or to throw for luck with kernels of maize, or with some beans, or with small sticks of a tree called tz'ite' . . . tin chol ixim, or tz'ite', which is putting these small grains in order, according to counts or sorcery. And, these who do this are called cholol ixim, or cholol tz'ite' . . . This is for the good or bad days according to their astrology . . . And, therefore, to refer to the ancients who knew these days and sorcery, ajq'ij, or cholol q'ij. They use also, with the toes of the foot to count these maize kernels, and with the toes of the feet are able to make their absurd ideas. And these usually make these ancients liars . . . count by maize kernels, to settle accounts, the count of the ancients: tiwiximaj.

Although supernaturals are usually punishing beings, they are often seen as beneficial and will sometimes send warnings through dreams and protect or reward people. Dreams are the private medium to receive instructions and messages from the supernatural power or from one's ancestors or if danger threatens one's family. Various members may dream about the possible causes and seek help accordingly. Although harmless or benevolent dreams are often interpreted by the dreamer himself or an older relative or friend, more complex or threatening dreams are formally presented to the professional interpreter of dreams, the daykeeper. He will take the proper measures needed to restore the personal equilibrium of his clients by searching or reestablishing vulnerable ties in the dreamer's human and superhuman *Umwelt*. Dreams provide a kind of interface between individual concerns and socially shared religious activities.

For the interpretation of signs and omens, Coto (1983:522) writes,

According to the astrology of these Indians, there are many falsehoods given when they are counting the days or predicting because each town has its own way of counting. According to the predictions based on the signs of their calendar, they use the name of the day of birth for the people who were born on that day. All of the days of the year have a sign. The boys receive the name of the sign without adding anything; for the girls, they add an x before the name; for example, for a boy they give Pedro Kanel; for a girl, Maria Xkanel . . . B'alam, Kan, K'at, Kamey, Q'anil, Iq' are the names of the days. Likinka, is the name of a month in which they sow their maize; Mam, is a bad sign, because those who are born under this day stay deteriorated; Uchum is a day good for storage and to sow vegetables; Tumuxux, this is for the first rains of the winter; Moh, Pay, and Pach are other month names; Taxepual, is also for the sowing of milpas; Tz'api Q'ij, is the name for the five missing days; Tz'ikin Q'ij, is another month name. These are the principal ones, or most of them. With the count they make the first K'at or B'alam, the second and third, and then they adjust the days of the year. And some last 20 days and some others, seven, which we, including me, never understood, although they have their masters in this faculty who are called Cholol Q'ij, those who announce the days. And among them the names of these soothsayers are kept secret, and are never revealed. They are held in reverence, and are consulted about illnesses and future contingencies, in which they intervene with some deceit of the Devil. The sign of a birth is called, generally, Ruq'ij wi, or Ralaxik wi, Rik'il, Ru chumilal P[edr]o, Juan, etc.

Births and occurrences of general interest were recorded and even predicted using the calendar. Both the K'iche' and Kaqchikel gave to their children the name of the calendar day on which they were born. "The personal name was always that of the day of birth, this being adopted for astrological reasons. There was a perception that the temperament and fortunes of the individual were controlled by the supposed character of his birthday, and its name and number were therefore prefixed to his family name" (Coto 1983:372). "They have surnames which they take from the day or sign of their birth, which are many, according to the count of their calendar; in the sign they are able to find meaning. They also have the surnames of their chinamitales or parcialidades which are signs as well" (Coto 1983:482).

PROGNOSTICATION

The twenty day gods occupy an important place in K'iche'an religion. All ritual, whether for the family, neighborhood groups, or the entire municipality, is done according to the calendar. The twenty day gods have differing attributes and domains of operation. Each god is said to reign when his day comes, and attributes and special interests of the god are associated with the day. The following compilation presents information from several sources concerning the characters of the various

day gods. “Good” days are for ceremonies of commemoration; “bad” days are for ceremonies of defense.

The numbers associated with day names also have meaning. According to Bunzel (1952:283), the low numbers of 1, 2, and 3 are “gentle,” that is, days for giving thanks and asking for favors. The high numbers of 11, 12, and 13 are “violent,” and these are days for “strong ceremonies” involving defense, vengeance, and evil sorcery. The middle numbers of 7, 8, and 9 are “indifferent,” neither gentle nor violent. It is on these middle days that regularly recurring ritual to ensure tranquility of life is performed. These are rituals of “commemoration” rather than rituals of “personal crisis.”

- *Junapu* or *Ajpu'*, indifferent day (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of the punitive power of the ancestors, embodied in their ownership of house and hearth (Bunzel 1952:280; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:37; Tedlock 1992:124–25).
- *Imox*, bad day; the priests of the sun, the *Ajq'ijab'*, on this day pray to the spirits of evil against their enemies (Hernández Spina 1854). A bad and dangerous day, symbolic of the hidden forces in the universe made manifest in insanity. Divinations in 7 *Junapu*, 8 *Imox*, and 9 *Iq'* indicate a failure or confusion regarding the idols in one's house (Bunzel 1952:280; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:34; Tedlock 1992:125–126).
- *Iq'*, bad day, the same as preceding (Hernández Spina 1854). Bad day, symbolic of the destructive forces of the universe embodied in the stone idols, and they must be honored with offerings of incense, aguardiente, roses, pine needles, and candles. Painful swellings and cancer are attributed to this day (Bunzel 1952:280–281; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:126–127).
- *Aq'ab'al*, bad day; the *Ajq'ijab'* seek the shrines against their enemies (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of evil, the day of slanderers. The day 8 *Aq'ab'al* is a time to ask protection against slanderers. The days 12 and 13 *Aq'ab'al* are strong days for working evil against others, and for requesting justice that enemies be punished (Bunzel 1952:281; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:108–110).
- *K'at*, bad day, the same as the preceding (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of evil in general. The days 7 *Aq'ab'al* and 8 *K'at* were bad days when one can pray for protection against the envy of others (Bunzel 1952:281; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:110–111).

- *Kan*, bad day, the same as the preceding (Hernández Spina 1854). Bad day that brings sickness and is symbolic of the arbitrary cruelty of the universe (Bunzel 1952:281; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:111–112).
- *Kame* or *Keme*, bad day, the same as the preceding (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of the ultimate dissolution of all things, good and evil, in death. The day above all others for forgiveness or pardon for all the evil deeds that one has committed. Bunzel notes that for some it is a good day, for it signifies that one's evil deeds will be forgiven and that sickness will pass (Bunzel 1952:281–282; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:112–113).
- *Keej* or *Kiej*, good day, on which beneficial things are asked for the suppliant (Hernández Spina 1854). A good day above all others for requesting favors, it symbolizes the transfiguration and fulfillment in death, as manifested in the ancestors. The day 8 Kej is the day of commemoration of the ancestors (Bunzel 1952:282; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:113–114).
- *Q'anil*, good day, sacred to the spirits of agriculture; on this day are supplicated all those things that serve man's sustenance (Hernández Spina 1854). A good day symbolic of the regeneration of the earth, of rebirth after death, and seen in the growth of corn. It is the day of the milpa. After the harvest one waits for the day Q'anil to give thanks (Bunzel 1952:282; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35; Tedlock 1992:114–115).
- *Toj*, bad day; unfortunate he who is born thereon; by inevitable destiny he is doomed to be perverse (Hernández Spina 1854). A bad day, a day of sickness, symbolizes the suffering caused by sin. Toj is also the day for calling sickness to punish an enemy (Bunzel 1952:282; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:35–36; Tedlock 1992:115–116).
- *Tz'i*, bad day; on it is sought the undoing of one's enemies (Hernández Spina 1854). An evil day symbolizes sin, especially sexual impurity. There are no ceremonies on this day because it is evil (Bunzel 1952:283; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:116).
- *B'atz'*, bad day, on which sicknesses, and particularly paralysis, is prayed to fall on one's enemies (Hernández Spina 1854); good day, symbolic of continuity with the past or ancestors (Bunzel 1952:277–278; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:116–117).
- *E*, good day; on this day contracts of marriage are entered into, preceded by many sacrifices to the benign powers (Hernández Spina 1854); good

day, symbolic of destiny as embodied in the day of birth, of one's personality and fortune (Bunzel 1952:278; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:117–118).

- *Aj*, again a good day, and also consecrated to the gods of agriculture, and to those presiding over the flocks and domestic animals (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of destiny as embodied in the nawal; the day of one's destiny (Bunzel 1952:278; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:118–119).
- *I'x*, good day. This day is sacred to the spirits of the mountains and forests; on it protection is sought for flocks and animals at the favor of those spirits who rule over the wolves and other carnivorous beasts (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of the creative forces of the universe as embodied in the concept of the earth. The days 8 I'x and 9 Tz'ikin are days when people give thanks for their lodging, for land acquired either by inheritance or by purchase, and to the former owners of the land (Bunzel 1952:279; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:119–120).
- *Tz'ikin*, most excellent of days. On this day double offerings are made; in the church of the good and supreme deity and to the saints in the churches; also offerings are made in the caves, the profound barrancas, and in deep and somber woods. On this day they pray for all that is beneficial and useful to man; also seek pardon for all sins against the two great powers, the Good and the Evil. This is also the day for the conclusion of marriage contracts and for the beginning of all important affairs (Hernández Spina 1854). Symbolic of good luck in material affairs, including money. The days 8 I'x and 9 Tz'ikin are days to give thanks for one's lodging; the days 7 I'x and 8 Tz'ikin are days to give thanks and to ask for good fortune in money (Bunzel 1952:279; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:120–121).
- *Ajmaq*, also a most excellent day, the same as the one before. It is also especially consecrated to the spirits presiding over good health (Hernández Spina 1854). A day without defined character but symbolic of the moral forces as embodied in penitential rituals. The days 7 Tz'ikin, 8 Ajmaq, and 9 No'j are days in which to pray for protection, for from these days evil may come to one for his sins or his evil thoughts (Bunzel 1952:279; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:36; Tedlock 1992:121–122).
- *No'j*, a propitious day, dedicated to the presiding genius of the soul. On this day they pray that the suppliant and his family may be endowed with good judgment (Hernández Spina 1854). This day is symbolic of the ambivalent moral forces in the human mind. The day 8 No'j is when to

Table 1.4. Phonetic symbols found in Colonial K'iche'an orthography.

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Documents</i>	<i>Modern</i>	<i>Phonetic</i>
tresillo	ε	q	[q]
cuatrillo	4	k'	[k']
cuatrillo with <i>h</i>	4h	ch'	[ç']
cuatrillo with cedilla	4,	tz'	[ç']
<i>k</i>	k	q'	[q']

ask for good thoughts (Bunzel 1952:279; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:37; Tedlock 1992:122).

- *Tijax*, good day, the same as the preceding (Hernández Spina 1854). The day of quarrels and evil words. The day 8 Tijax is a good day to confess sins, especially quarrels with one's wife, relatives, or parents (Bunzel 1952:280; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:37; Tedlock 1992:122–123).
- *Kawoq*, indifferent day (Hernández Spina 1854); bad day, symbolic of evil embodied in the malice of the dead (Bunzel 1952:280; Edmonson 1997:121; Schultze Jena 1946:37; Tedlock 1992:123–124).

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

The following chapters present English translations from the original K'iche', Kaqchikel, or Spanish texts of calendar manuscripts. The texts are given in parallel columns with the transcription of the manuscript text in the left column and the English translation in the right. Word boundaries and line arrangement of the manuscript text have been adjusted and orthographic abbreviations are indicated in round brackets (—). Otherwise the transcription preserves the original orthography, which is based on Colonial Spanish spelling conventions. An additional five special characters were developed in the sixteenth century by Fr. Francisco de la Parra to designate glottalized consonants not found in Spanish. These symbols are given in Table 1.4.

Place-names are modernized to conform to current Instituto Geográfico Nacional standards (e.g., “Nebah” to “Nebaj”; “Ixtlavacan” to “Ixtahuacan”), and Spanish diacritics have been eliminated.

The major difficulty with any translation from an indigenous language is the reconstruction of original forms from unstandardized orthography. Although Karl Hermann Berendt and Vicente Hernández Spina were very faithful transcribers, they made some errors or copied misspellings from the original calendar manuscripts. Some of these transcription errors are straightforward and have been corrected in the text without further comment. All instances in which the orthography

allows for more than one interpretation are discussed in the notes. Reconstructions, additions, and expansions of the text are indicated in brackets [—].

English language translations are given for all K'iche' or Kaqchikel text, with the exception of day and month names, as well as place-names. The meaning of day and month terms often involves multiple layers of meaning that would not be adequately reflected in an English translation. Similarly, the translation of place-names would hinder the recognition of the actual places. Likely translations of day and month names as well as place-names are therefore given as notes.

Some of the translations may appear to be flat prose. However, like most oral peoples the Colonial highland Maya depended on imagery to express their thoughts; therefore, the English translations may be filled with partially understood graphic similes and metaphors.

All K'iche'an terms within the English translation as well as analytical forms in the annotations are given in the standardized orthography for Mayan languages preferred by the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala. The use of arrowed brackets <—> in the annotations indicates that a referenced form preserves its original spelling.