

The Emergence of the Ancient Kaqchikel Polity: A case of Ethnogenesis in the Guatemalan
Highlands

By

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Ri wuj re' are jun sipanik kwaj kinya' chike K'iche' winäq er Kaqchikel winaq k'aslik na xuquje e are' xeq'ax chik ch'aqan ja'. Rajawaxik man qatzaq taj qab'anoqil.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On Good Friday in the K'iche' municipality of Chichicastenango, it is the tradition to hang an effigy representing Judas Iscariot in the upper part of the Catholic church. At nightfall, it is lowered and burned in the town plaza. From the flames that emanate when the effigy is burned, cloth balls are lit to start a game like soccer. Fireballs are kicked all over the square until they are consumed completely just like the effigy, commonly called Xutix. A couple of decades ago, this mannequin was dressed in the traditional masculine suit of Solola, a Kaqchikel town. This act had its origin in territorial conflicts between the populations of Chichicastenango and those Kaqchikel neighbors of Solola, who were equated with Judas Iscariote. In the popular knowledge of Guatemalans and in public education, the erroneous idea of equating the Kaqchikel with traitors persists because in the Contact period, they were allied with the Spaniards to avoid a violent confrontation with the newcomers and to get help in defeating their enemies, among them the K'iche'. The rivalry that existed between the K'iche' and Kaqchikel was closely linked to the rivalry between their political units that were centralized in Chi Iximche' and in Q'umarkaj in pre-Columbian times. Despite this, both groups described in their origin stories that their ancestors came from a common place called Tulan, that they experienced the primordial dawn all together and that they had a strong political alliance. How and when did these polities emerge and what was the root of their rivalry?

This dissertation explores the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis as an expression of resistance against the K'iche during the Late Postclassic period (1200 -1524 C.E.) in the highlands of Guatemala. Ethnogenesis is understood as a dynamic model of identity formation that involves both change

and continuity (Voss 2015:656), rather than the emergence of new ethnonyms. Specifically, this study seeks to discuss the internal and external factors that fostered the inception of the Kaqchikel political unit and to trace the social relationships between the Kaqchikel and the K'iche' to better understand how the former managed to go from being dependent allies and military auxiliaries for the K'iche' elite to becoming an expansionist polity. Robert Hill and Judith Maxwell propose that both the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel reached the most complex sociopolitical organization that existed in the Guatemalan highlands called *Winaq* (Hill II 1997; Maxwell and Hill 2006). The *Winaq* translates to "human beings", but it can be understood as "nation" (Maxwell and Hill 2006:4). However, some scholars still debate whether the Kaqchikel people, who lived in Chi Iximche', really formed a nation or an ethnic group due to existing rivalries among their main confederations. This position is based on the study of events that took place in the last Kaqchikel capital, Chi Iximche', which comprised the main literature about them (Borg 1999; Guillemin 1977; Hill 2001; Lovell et al. 2013; Maxwell and Hill 2006; C. Roger Nance, Whittington, and Jones-Borg 2003; Polo Sifontes 2005; Paz Cárcamo 2014; Paz Cárcamo 2013). However, these publications completely omit the early history of the Kaqchikel and the effort they made to construct their own polity and gain their independence in a political landscape controlled by the K'iche'. This is a gap that this dissertation intends to fill from a diachronic and interdisciplinary perspective.

In Mesoamerica, during the Postclassic period, there were two scales of ethnicity. The largest scale corresponds to the respective languages (ethnolinguistic groups). There are several peoples in Mesoamerica that are known for the languages they spoke, such as the Zapotec, Mixtec, Tarascan and Otomi. The preponderance of a language was closely related to expansionist or imperialist processes, where a dominant culture prevails over others hiding linguistic and cultural

mosaics. Expansionist processes driven by empires or expansionist states tend to create ranks and stereotypes about ethnic groups and their languages, which will eventually serve to legitimize a group's domination. For instance, the "Totonaque" are those who "spoke a barbarous tongue". The other ethnicity scale corresponds to the affiliation to city-states, which was more flexible. Due to the presence of migrations, wars, marriages and alliances, many families or social groups were incorporated into new political units. These newly incorporated groups would be identified or affiliated with their new political unit, discarding their ancient origin (Berdan et al. 2008:38–41).

In the Guatemalan highlands, there was a certain overlap between expansionist political units and ethnolinguistic groups. Usually, the name of the strongest confederation of a political unite was used to identify their language and sometimes their territories. For example, from the Nima' K'iche' confederation settled in Q'umarkaj derived the name of their language and their territory, currently called Santa Cruz de El Quiche. The same situation happened with other expansionist political units, such as the Kaqchikel and Tz'utujil confederations, whose languages have the same names today. It is necessary to mention that the rivalry and competition between groups for resources can produced the development of differentiated symbolic features—ceremonial practices, ceramics, patterns of settlement, and the delimitation of territories—which will generate a conscience of difference between groups.

The importance of territory for the development of identity was very important in the Postclassic period. The territory could consist of a simple *calpul* or *chinamit* to the territory accumulated by expansionist polities such as the K'iche', Kaqchikel, and Tz'utujil, whose authorities were living in a *tinamit* or 'citadel'. *Tinamits* in the highlands were generally surrounded by small rural villages called *amaq'*. The word *amaq'* is derived from *am* that means 'spider', since the physiognomy of this animal resembles this type of settlement pattern. It is

interesting to know that the concepts used to designate territorial units such as *chinamit* and *amaq'* were also used to conceptualize forms of social organization. This suggests that territory played an essential role in shaping a social group. For this reason, the study of the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis has focused on understanding the strategies that the Kaqchikel carried out to obtain new territories, build their political organization that would be centralized in a *tinamit* and how they counteract the power of the K'iche' who were the main competition in the Guatemalan highlands. Some of the strategies that the Kaqchikel used to build their *tinamit* included the establishment of strategic alliances, the practice of exogamy, the reenactment of foundational rituals, and their specialization in the military field. The latter was critical since the Kaqchikel were aware that they could improve their status by serving as military auxiliaries since warfare was the most important sphere that allows social mobilization in Postclassic Mesoamerica (Florescano 2009).

The first Kaqchikel *tinamit* was Chi Awär. This site was given to the Kaqchikel by the K'iche' elite as a reward for their service as military auxiliaries in their expansionist campaigns. In Chi Awär, the Kaqchikel established a new centralized government that included representatives of four allied confederations, the Kaqchikel, Sotz'il, Aqajal and Tuquche. The unity that the four confederations maintained was a mechanism of resistance against the K'iche' hegemony since, as a group of confederations: they were able to demand from the K'iche' certain privileges and rewards that other subordinate allied groups did not achieve. Unfortunately, native documents do not provide much information about the occupation of this site that could inform us how the Kaqchikel lived this new stage of their socio-political development. That is why the archaeological research carried out in Chi Awär, Chichicastenango, in 2016 was of vital importance to reconstruct the early history of the Kaqchikel and corroborate ethnohistorical information. The archaeological evidence collected in Chi Awär confirms that the site had a short occupation, and that although the

Kaqchikel established their own government in Chi Awär, they were still within the sphere of influence of the K'iche'. This was reflected in the use of same ceramics types, the presence of double and twin temples in their main plazas and the use of K'iche' as the official language in the Quiche basin, which includes Chichicastenango. Despite this, the Kaqchikel and their allies maintained their own settlement pattern and showed variations in their ceramics and cultural practices.

It was after almost 70 years that the alliance between K'iche' and Kaqchikel came to an end because the Kaqchikel and their allies grew in power and were seen as a threat to certain factions of the K'iche' political unit. When the Kaqchikel left Chi Awär and founded their last capital, Chi Iximche' in 1470, a series of endemic wars broke out between the two groups. The Kaqchikel fought to protect their autonomy and the territories they had managed to accumulate. The military experience that the Kaqchikel obtained fighting alongside the K'iche' gave them the advantage to protect their territories and expand to obtain more, especially on the shores of Lake Atitlan and the Pacific Coast. The territory of the Kaqchikel polity as a whole, bordered on the east by the Guatemalan Valley, on the west by Lake Atitlan, on the south by the Boca Costa and the north by the Motagua River. However, internally, this territory was divided into lands that belong to the different nations that comprised the Kaqchikel polity. The territorial borders that the Kaqchikel defended against the K'iche' and other highland groups became their political, cultural and linguistic boundaries, which were very flexible (See figure 1). In summary, in the highlands of Guatemala, ethnic identity was deeply rooted in territory or a polity and shared historical experiences, instead of a common sense of origin.

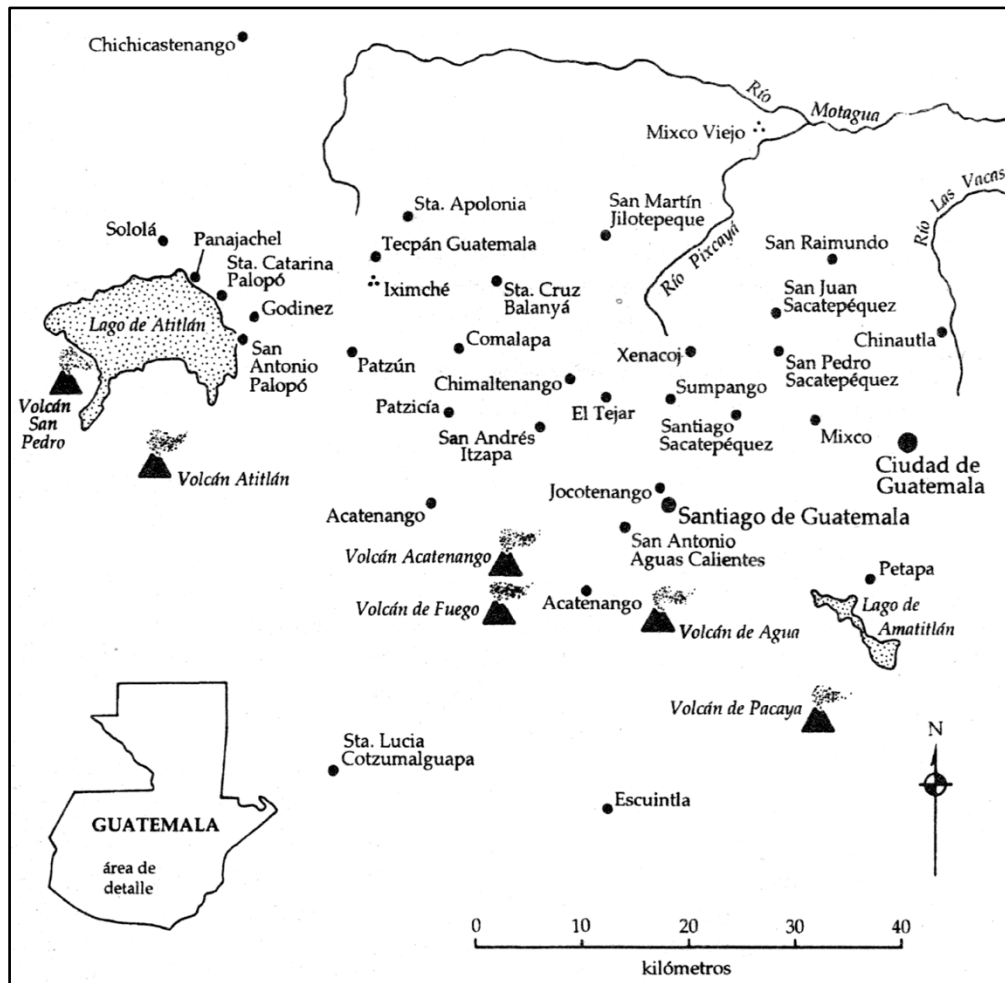


Figure 1. K'achikel region and its main settlements (Hill 2001:12)

The Ethnogenesis concept

In anthropology, it is now well recognized that identities including ethnicity are multidimensional, contested and negotiated (Conzen et al. 1992; Nagel 1994), and in a constant process of making, unmaking and sometimes disappearing (Hu 2013:2). Therefore there is more interest in studying processes such as ethnogenesis, ethnic maintenance, ethnic disappearance (Berdan et al. 2008:2), ethnomorphosis (Scott 2009:241), transnationalism, creolization and hybridity (Voss 2008:15) than focusing entirely on the concept of ethnicity. These concepts challenge the traditional static view of ethnicity and draw attention to the continuing

transformation of social identities by taking a diachronic perspective. In the last decades, ethnogenesis has been understood as the transformation of a group of individuals into an ethnic group that believes in a common history. In other words, it is the process that eventually leads to the formation of an ethnic group taking into account the processes, transformations, causes, and politics of social identity making (Gowricharn 2013:388). However, more recently, ethnogenesis has been used as a dynamic model of identity formation that encompasses both change and continuity. In order to use this concept properly, it is necessary to show not only that social and cultural practices have changed over time, but also that these changes are transformative beyond the normal fluctuations and adaptations typical of social identity maintenance. In many cases, the application of ethnogenesis theories have illuminated hidden stories, restored lost genealogies and challenged ethnic essentialism by exposing the social construction of identity (Voss 2015:656).

Studies on the emergence of social or ethnic groups have been carried out from different perspectives, the most important is the primordialist (Geertz 1973; Shils 1957; den Berghe 1976) and the constructivist perspectives (Barth 1969; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Conzen et al. 1992; Gowricharn 2013; Sarna 1978; Scott 2009; Voss 2008). The former explains ethnicity as a set of shared characteristics between members of a group that includes a common history, language, religion, traditions and territory, which contribute to setting deep emotional and psychological ties between them. The membership to the group is ascribed at birth and the characteristics are inherited and reinforced through shared experiences (Cipolla 2017; Voss 2008). Primordialism can be addressed from two views: the sociobiological and the cultural. The first emphasizes the importance of kinship in determining ethnicity, and the latter highlights the importance of a common culture in the determination of ethnic group membership (Yang 2000:43). For Ruben Gowricharn (2013) the primordial perspective has primacy over the other perspectives since the

ethnic groups are constituted by the contents of ethnicity that make up the ‘limits’ that separate them from other groups. Gowricharn explains that there are three categories of primordial forces that are important for the formation of ethnic groups: ethnic institutions (family structures, language, religion, recreation and social life, values, among others); communal networks (relationships between ethnic groups, between members of ethnic groups and ethnic institutions); and finally group identities (expressed in collective preferences such as food, music, language and clothing). These categories together constitute the “stuff” or content of an “ethnic community” that allows a social cohesion of the ethnic group that would otherwise be impossible (Gowricharn 2013: 396). Some investigations that follow this approach include the recovery of African surnames among the Seminole Negroes of a community in Florida as a means of exalting their ethnic roots (Bateman 2002); the formation of an ethnic community of British Indians who immigrated to Suriname to serve as a workforce (Gowricharn 2013); and the development of houses with particular characteristics among the Cherokee as means to identify themselves as a people, and to distinguish themselves from other indigenous groups of the southwestern United States before and during the European invasion (Rodning 2009).

The second perspective, constructivist, proposes that ethnicity is socially constructed, and its limits are flexible and dynamic. So, ethnicity is considered as an emerging phenomenon created by changing structural condition (Yang 2000). Constructivism is also equated with the instrumentalist perspective. This perspective also sees ethnicity as an instrument for the achievement of the group’s objectives. In this sense, it becomes a means of political mobilization for advancing group interests (Barth 1969; Braswell 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Conzen et al. 1992; Sarna 1978; Scott 2009; Voss 2008). Some scholars argue that there is not a clear cut division between these two perspectives since both are not exclusive of each other and may be

aspects of a dynamic history (Berdan et al. 2008; Yang 2000), but also because primordialism can also be “constructed” by the incorporation of external elements into the primordial ontology that eventually will be acquired only by birth (Gowricharn 2013:395). A conclusion derived from these ideas is that ethnicity is seen as reactive and lacks autonomous existence and development (Gowricharn 2013:394; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:50)

Since identity studies are relational and reactive, cases of ethnogenesis usually requires attention to the interplay of local and broad contexts, in a particular historical and cultural setting (Barth 1969; Cipolla 2017; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:50; Gowricharn 2013:394; Hu 2013; Kurien 1994; Scott 1990; Voss 2008). According to Dennis Ogburn (2008), the emergence of new ethnic identities, in the supra-local context, is a political phenomenon that can be the result of the interaction between subpopulations and a dominant polity, such as what happened in colonial or national processes. This means that ethnicity only exists in a hierarchical society, in which one group extends its dominance over another by some form of coercion, violence or otherwise. In a local context, a new ethnic identity could emerge driven by the agency of the individuals, and ethnic identities can be redefined by political, cultural, social and historical conditions (Ogburn 2008:289). Following this line of thought, Jonathan Sarna states that ethnicization is the result of ascription and adversity. Ascription refers to the categorization set by outsiders to avoid dealing with diversity, which is accepted by the subjects themselves as part of the defense against hostility; therefore, ethnic unity is pursued as a social defense by the new ethnic group. Adversity implies the existence of agency and resistance against the external categorization (Sarna 1978:373–375). According to Barbara Voss, ethnogenesis is a “powerful metaphor for creativity of oppressed and marginalized people birthing a new cultural space for themselves amidst their desperate struggle to survive”(Voss 2008:36). The resistance against the dominant groups may encourage the

formation of political communities based on primordial narratives (Hu 2013:385–386), as it occurred among the Seminole (Bateman 2002; Weisman 2007), Saraguro (Ogburn 2008), Maya (Restall 2004), and Oromo (Keller 1995). However, ethnogenesis not only happens as a means of resistance, but it also can occur to consolidate economic and social domination over other groups (Bell 2005; Braswell 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Voss 2008). In other words, “new forms of ethnic identification can be used to assert power over other groups and consolidate institutionalized forms of domination”(Voss 2008:34). Ethnogenesis also commonly occurs in contexts of the diaspora (Cipolla 2017) and frontiers along imperial or colonial borders (Alconini 2004; Hu 2013; Curta 2005; Chappell 1993; Gruzinski 2013; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). In both contexts, differences might be emphasized between newcomers and the host population, or between social groups belonging to different geographical areas during the time of war and rupture, which can potentially develop ‘ethnic boundaries’ and different ethnic groups (Cipolla 2017; Hu 2013).

Theoretical tension between primordialism and instrumentalism, and even other perspectives such as isolationist and interactionist, can be bridged through the concept of ethnogenesis (Hu 2013:377; Voss 2008:26). In other words, it is possible to trace whether social relations became more insular, interactive, primordialist or instrumental over time. In studying ethnicity, scholars should be aware that the presence of these contexts, like diasporas, contested borders and situations of resistance and domination do not necessarily lead to ethnogenesis. For Voss, it is critical to understand that studies of ethnogenesis necessarily involve two components: whether ethnic identities were important in these contexts, and whether ethnic identities were substantively transformed. In other words, the emergence of new identities must show evidence

of breaks, ruptures and other structural transformation of identity practices that goes beyond the normal changes of social and ethnic identities (Voss 2015:658).

The study of the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis offers an innovative contribution to the ethnicity scholarship by challenging its traditional synchronic view and by bridging different perspectives on ethnicity that have been considered antagonists through the introduction of diachronic change. This study also has the potential to contribute to the understanding of the proliferation of small polities both in the Maya highlands and in Mesoamerica and how this affected the ethnic configuration of the region. In this dissertation, it is proposed that the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis resulted as an expression of resistance against the K'iche', but also as a means of dominance after the Kaqchikel reproduced the K'iche' expansionist model to survive and to achieve their own goals in a highly competitive environment. During the heyday of the Kaqchikel in Chi Iximche', they managed to agglomerate territories that belonged to allied *chinamit* and *amaq'*, who were settled mainly in the central highlands. Their territorial limits were also cultural limits, where the material culture showed local variations and the use of only one language predominated.

The differences in the cultural material present in the territories belonging to the different highland groups can only be corroborated through archaeological research where cultural elements, such as settlement patterns, architectural features, utilitarian ceramic types, among others can be compared. However, it is necessary to highlight that this task is becoming increasingly difficult because of the political, social and economic contexts that exist in Guatemala, especially in those communities hit by the armed conflict where the social fabric was damaged and hidden groups of power prevail. In the last chapter of this dissertation, I share my experience in fieldwork while I directed the Chi Awär Archaeological Project in Chontala,

Chichicastenango, in order to enrich the discussion about the future of archaeology in the highlands of Guatemala.

Methodology

The methodology presented in this section corresponds to the work that was carried out in Chi Awär without including the complete analysis of the archaeological materials collected during the Archaeological project (2016) since they were stored by Chichicastenango's authorities before all steps of the project were completed. However, alternative methodologies were established to ascertain about the identity and cultural practices of the people who occupied this settlement.

Ethnohistorical analysis

The reconstruction of the early history of the Kaqchikel resulted from the cross-comparison of documents written by different K'iche' and Kaqchikel groups, and some Spanish chronicles as well. With the use of a variety of primary source documents, I analyzed specific historical events from different points of view. To be able to organize the main historical events of the Kaqchikel before the occupation of Chi Iximche' in a general chronological order, I first identified the sequence of places where the Kaqchikel reenacted the *saqarik* or the primordial dawn ceremony. Once the identification of these places was established, I then could recount the main events that happened in each of those places using K'iche' and Kaqchikel documents and Spanish chronicles. In other words, the history of the Kaqchikel is presented based on the events that occurred in each settlement where the Kaqchikel witnessed the dawn. The metaphor of the dawn was a widespread tradition in Mesoamerica that was closely linked to foundation rituals (Boone 2000; Jansen 1997). Foundation rituals are ceremonial activities carried out to establish new polities or dynastic rules

at a specific place (Boone 2009: 99). Among K'iche'an groups (K'iche', Kaqchikel, Rab'inaleb' and Tz'utujil), foundation rituals relating to the sunrise are performed on altars oriented toward the four cardinal points. These altars are usually built around new settlements and are used for fire ceremonies. Altars of this type are dedicated to protector deities and are generally called *saqirib'al* (dawning place) in K'iche', although they sometimes have individual names. In the Xajil Chronicle, the Kaqchikel *amaq'* declared that they experienced the dawn at the following places: Pantzik, Pa Raxone' Yalab'ey Simajijay Pa Sibaqul, Pa Kaweq Kejil; Pan Che', Chi Q'ojom, (and Muqb'al sib'); Chi Awär Tz'upitaq'aj, Nik'aya' and K'otoxul (Maxwell and Hill 2006:150). From the Sotz'il perspective, they indicated through the Xpantzay documents, that the Sotz'il experienced the dawn at Chi Awär Tz'upitaq'aj, Ismachi'-Chi Q'umarkaj, Pa Xajil Ya', Chan Puak Ayin che', Tun Ab'aj and Chi Iximche' (Recinos 2001:123).

Geographic delimitation of the Chi Awär archaeological project

The Chi Awär archaeological site is divided in small land plots called as 'cuerdas' (33x33 meters) and 'manzanas' (6 cuerdas), that belong to approximately fifty families from Chontala, Chichicastenango. The land in Chi Awär is used to grow corn, apples, plums, and peach trees for their consumption and commerce. The excavation I carried out in 2016 was fulfilled with permission from local authorities and one extended family who allowed me to investigate three different areas of the site. Included in the design of my project, I decided to conduct a small archaeological project not only due to the limited budget I had, but also to avoid creating an intrusive environment in the community since my project was the first of its type in Chi Awär. Fortunately, the family who supported my project has small land plots in three different zones of

Chi Awär, which helped us to have a general idea about the occupation of the site (See figure 21).

The three excavated areas were:

1. Mound on a small plateau located at the southwest side of Chi Awär's entrance
2. North zone of Plaza A
3. Northeast elongation of the site

Topographic survey

The topographic survey was carried out by an archeology student specialized in this field who provided his services for two days on February 13 and 14, 2016. The topographic survey had two purposes: First, to document the existence of specific archaeological traits of the site and their current conditions, as well as their dimensions and characteristics. Second, the topographic survey was also used to select the location of the excavation pits more conveniently. For the topographic survey, the specialist used a total station, a prism and a GPS to take points from the surface of the land to create a digital map in AutoCAD and GIS. This equipment was loaned by the department of archeology of the University of the Valley of Guatemala. The person responsible for the preparation of the map was archaeologist Jorge Eduardo Bustamante (See appendix A).

The excavation units Chi Awär

The procedure applied to all the excavation units consisting of pits with dimensions of 1 x 2 meters, oriented from north to south (with the exception of unit 1B with east-west orientation) that were excavated following arbitrary levels of 20 cm. This was decided based on the limited knowledge we have about the natural stratigraphy of the site. The soil samples extracted were sifted to recover the greatest possible amount of cultural material, and the counts of the ceramic material include only the sherds equal to or greater than a 25-centimeter chip. Because the site

was occupied for a short time period (1430-1470), the plan was to conduct extensive excavation instead of intensive in the three authorized areas. Each stratigraphy sample that was recorded at arbitrary levels were identified with the following nomenclature:

Chi Awär CHWR

Unit No.

Level No.

All the excavation units and its four profiles were photographed and drawn with scale 1:25. The information collected from the excavation units was recorded in field notebooks and excavation forms. Unfortunately, most of the drawings and my field notebook were taken by Chichicastenango COCODES in the incident on May 4th, 2016. However, the students who collaborated with my project kept their documents, which were used to write the chapter on excavations at Chi Awär.

Ceramic analysis

To compensate for the lack of pottery, I collected information from bibliographical sources about the main Postclassic diagnostic ceramic types and their geographic distribution, to then focus on the ceramics present in important sites related to the history of the Kaqchikel. Among these sites are Q'umarkaj, Jilotepeque Viejo and Chi Iximche'. Archaeological reports on these sites revealed the level of interaction between them and helped to explain why the ceramic from Chi Awär shares a lot of similarities with Q'umarkaj and also with Jilotepeque Viejo. Besides this, it is necessary to mention that one bag full of ceramic sherds from Chi Awär (CHWAR 12A-8) was left after the laboratory was emptied, which has helped to identify ceramic types in Chi Awär and compare them with ceramics from other sites.

Chapters summary

This dissertation research is comprised of seven chapters that contain information from different sources of information necessary to carry out a dichromic and interdisciplinary study of the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis.

Chapter I: Introduction. This chapter provides a background of the ancient Kaqchikel history where the existing gaps in the early history of this polity are identified. The theoretical focus that guided this research was based on the concept of ethnogenesis which is defined, including its main trends and how it is applied to ancient processes of identity formation and transformation. The second half of this chapter covers the methodology used for this research, and a summary of the content of each chapter.

Chapter II: The Saqarik or the dawn tradition among the K'iche'an groups and the early Kaqchikel sites. This chapter interprets the dawn tradition that was practiced by several peoples from Mesoamerica during the Postclassic period. The dawn is a metaphor that is closely related to foundational rituals; therefore, it has political, cultural and territorial implications for the people who witness or reenact it. After discussing the meaning of the dawn, I proceed to identify the places where the Kaqchikel and their allies experienced the dawn and situate them in the Guatemalan geography. The identification process of the Kaqchikel *Saqarib'al*, interestingly allowed me to better understand the nucleation process that several scholars affirm for this period.

Chapter III: The early history of the Kaqchikel according to primary source documents. Based on ethnohistorical information, this chapter reconstructs and discusses the main historical events that took place in the settlements where the Kaqchikel dawned through the analysis and comparison of

native documents. In this chapter, it is visualized how the Kaqchikel internal organization changed from being a confederation with six *chinamit* at the service of the K'iche' to becoming an independent polity with a quadripartite system of organization, and how it persisted in Chi Awär and Chi Iximche'. In this chapter, the variables of resistance and domination are integrated into the discussion.

Chapter IV: Chi Awär and the Postclassic period in the Guatemalan highlands. In this chapter, the Postclassic archaeology of the Guatemalan highlands is discussed, paying special attention to the settlement pattern and architectural features. This chapter also presents information about the geographical distribution of the main Kaqchikel sites and how their settlement patterns inform about cultural and historical affiliation. The last part of this chapter includes a description of the excavation units carried out during the first field season of the Chi Awär Archaeological project and some insight about the inhabitants of this site.

Chapter V: Pottery of the Quiche basin and Chi Awär. This chapter explores two ceramic traditions for the Postclassic period in the Quiche basin: Wukaqmaq' period (700-1200 CE), and Quiche period (1200-1524 CE). The second ceramic period corresponds with the K'iche' expansionism period, is compared with ceramics from Postclassic sites (Q'umarkaj, Chi Awär and Chi Iximche') related to the Kaqchikel history to know how the changing dynamics between the K'iche' and Kaqchikel were reflected in the material culture of these sites.

Chapter VI: Linguistic traces of the Kaqchikel occupation of Chichicastenango. In this chapter I discuss the fact that the K'iche' was the official language in the Quiche basin during the Late

Postclassic period, and that the K'aqchikel had to speak this language while occupying the Chichicastenango territory. Since their mother tongue was Kaqchikel, they transferred some elements of their language into the second or recipient language (RL-K'iche'), principally the lax and tense vowels. This process can be explained with the transfer type called imposition, where the source language (SL- Kaqchikel) is the dominant language of the speaker, from which material is transferred into a recipient language (RL-K'iche') in which the speaker is less proficient. The result of the imposition transfer was the inception of the K'iche' variant of Chichicastenango. This variant can be considered as evidence of the occupation of the Chichicastenango territory by Kaqchikel groups in pre-Columbian times.

Chapter VII: Archaeology in Postwar Guatemala: The Case of Chontala, Chichicastenango. In this last chapter I intend to reconstruct the recent history of Chichicastenango, specifically the development of the civil war in this municipality and Chontala. I argue that repressive institutions created during the civil war, such as the PACs and military commissioners, still continue exerting power and control in several communities but with new identities. Specifically, they reproduce the ideology of the "internal enemy" to delegitimize any initiative that is not aligned with their interests. These institutions persist today because the signature of the Peace Accord was a symbolic act that did not bring justice to the people affected by the war, so victims and victimizers still live together creating an unstable environment to work together, and worse yet, to work together for the wellbeing of the community.

CHAPTER II

THE SAQARIK OR THE DAWN TRADITION AMONG THE K'ICHE'AN GROUPS AND THE EARLY KAQCHIKEL SITES

Native documents and Spanish chronicles written during the Colonial period in Guatemala constitute the main source of information to learn about the history and culture of the Postclassic highland groups. Native documents were written by representatives of the indigenous nobility who were instructed by Christian missionaries to learn Spanish and to use the Latin alphabet. The first archbishop of Guatemala, Francisco Marroquín, promoted this effort as a means for the conversion of indigenous people to Christianity and to learn more about their culture. The main indigenous documents of Guatemala, such as the Popol Wuj, the Title of Totonicapán and the Memorial de Solola (Chronicle Xajil), are collections of documents (Maxwell and Hill 2006:13), so they contain diverse topics related to their theology and history. I agree with Allen Christensen when he affirms that the Popol Wuj has very little Christian influence (Christenson 2007a:26), which also happens with the Xajil Chronicle, with the exception of the last sections that covers the Spanish invasion. It is important to mention that most of the native documents of Guatemala were prepared for official use and were signed by their authors as a testimony of their veracity to maintain or demand privileges in the new colonial system. Unlike them, the Popol Wuj and the Xajil Chronicle were written by a group who knew the history of their groups, like the *Nim Ch'okoj* for the case of the K'iche' (Ibid 2007: 28). Both documents, and other with similar content, could be classified as Primordial documents. These documents were written in indigenous languages in the first centuries of the Colonial period and they generally cover the origin of indigenous peoples and their histories. These documents are part of a Mesoamerican genre that has remained through time and space

changing shape but retaining its core that consists of protecting peoples' territory and identity (Oudijk and Frizzi 2003:26).

The analysis of native documents addressed in this dissertation involved the comparison of information from various documents to review different versions of specific historical events. For this comparative exercise, I consulted mainly K'iche', Kaqchikel and Spanish chronicles to reduce the biases that might exist when using only one source. Another procedure used was to consider the K'iche' and Kaqchikel oral tradition to interpret key concepts or metaphors that appear frequently in native documents. According to Judith Maxwell and Robert M. Hill, metaphors appear generally in the sections on the origin, migrations and early history of the highland groups (Maxwell and Hill 2006:30). For example, a metaphor that appears frequently in the K'iche' and Kaqchikel's origin stories is the *Saqarik* or primordial dawn, which will be discussed in this chapter.

I propose that the *saqarik*, or the dawn episode described in the native documents from Guatemala, is a metaphor that represented a transition in sociopolitical development of a people and the beginning of a newly established political order. The metaphor of the dawn was closely linked to foundation rituals (Boone 2000; Jansen 1997). Foundation rituals are ceremonial activities carried out to establish new polities or dynastic rules at a specific place (Boone 2009: 99). Among the K'iche'an groups (K'iche', Kaqchikel, Rab'inaleb' and Tz'utujil), foundation rituals included the location of four to five *saqarib'al* or foundational altars toward the four cardinal points of a new settlement. This group of foundational altars was dedicated to the ruling *chinamit* or lineages of a specific settlement and to their respective protector deities. The *saqarib'al* were important to the Kaqchikel history since they not only legitimized the possession of new territories, but also these altars, where their protector deities were situated, represented the source

of protection and sustenance for the community. Both the Kaqchikel and the K'iche' presented themselves as immigrants of the Guatemalan highlands who colonized new territories and inaugurated new settlements through the reenactment of the dawn tradition.

The second part of this chapter corresponds to the geographical identification of the list of settlements where the Kaqchikel dawned and where they placed their *saqarib'al*. Unlike the K'iche' who claimed that there was only one sunrise for all highland peoples, the Kaqchikel indicated that they experienced the dawn in a sequence of places, which constituted their main settlements. The occupation of these settlements follows a chronological order, therefore, the identification of the main historical events that took place in each settlement was key to reconstruct the early history of the Kaqchikel and understand the roots of the Kaqchikel first as a confederation and later as a polity.

A significant result from the task of identifying the Kaqchikel *saqarib'al* or foundational altars is that they revealed a process of nucleation. At the beginning of the Kaqchikel history, along with their allies, they reenacted the dawn tradition in a group of hills that became their *saqarib'al*. However, when the Kaqchikel and their allies improved their socioeconomic situation and elevated their status, they reenacted the *saqarik* in a single citadel or *tinamit* instead of a group of hills. This phenomenon seems to be linked to a process of nucleation that several archeologists (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:100; Fox 1978; Stewart 1977:80) have identified in the highlands of Guatemala during the Late Postclassic period.

The *Saqarik* or the dawn tradition in Mesoamerica

The ethnohistorical sources of the K'iche'an, Mixtec and Nahua peoples attest a consistent tradition of dividing the history of humankind into successive creations marked by different suns.

Maarten Jansen (1997) argues that the history of the various ethnolinguistic groups, empires and reigns in Mesoamerica was organized stratigraphically into epochs or suns. Taking into account the history narrated in their ancient books, the contemporary Mixtec, for example, divide the human past into three periods: 1. Recent history, or the history of their deceased grandparents, corresponding to the Viceroyalty-Republican period dominated by Christianity and Spanish rule; 2. The Precolonial epoch, in which the ancestors constructed the ancient cities or archaeological sites known today; and 3. The primordial epoch, when the first sun had not yet risen, and darkness prevailed. This period ended with the dawn, which marked the time of foundation when the earth, as well as human culture, were organized. More specifically, the dawn is tied to the birth of the founding fathers and their division according to the four directions. Newly-acquired lands occupied by the founders were established by re-enacting the first dawn through ceremonies of New Fire (Jansen 1997:12–15).

In the same line of interpretation, Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján (1999) explain that the origin myths of the Postclassical Mesoamerican peoples (900-1524 C.E.) have a similar structure that can be divided into three phases: *nocturnal*, *auroral* and *sunrise*. The *nocturnal* phase consists of the creation of humans by the creator deities. During this stage, all human beings were united as one group, spoke the same language and did not yet know their particular protector deity. The authors indicate that this phase can be compared to life *in utero*, from gestation to the moment before birth. In the next phase, called the auroral, humans left their places of origin (Chicomoztoc, Seven Caves, Seven Ravines, Tulan, Apoala, or Tamoanchan) in search of their lands. After they witnessed the dawn, they received their protector deities, and consequently their different languages, cultural practices and professions. In many documents, they may also be seen as impoverished, ignorant or savage. This phase is equated with childbirth.

In the last phase, the human groups took possession of the earth, established their settlements and adopted a sedentary life. This stage corresponds to the beginning of life. Both authors conclude that the last two phases—auroral and sunrise—can be likened to the cultural classifications of *Chichimecayotl* and *Toltecáyotl*. The *Chichimecayotl* condition corresponds to nomadic life, where people had no possessions, were ignorant and lacked knowledge about cultivating maize. However, this situation changed when they ended their mythical journey, established their settlements and adopted a sedentary and civilized lifestyle. Therefore, it is during this sunrise phase that the way of life changed from *Chichimecayotl* to *Toltecayotl* (López Austin and López Luján 1999:51–78). It is important to know the meaning and extension of the dawn tradition since the Kaqchikel, as well as the K'iche', incorporated it into their origin stories. The incorporation of this tradition can be considered as an effort to position themselves as an elite class but also as inheritors of an ancient and prestigious tradition that was practiced perhaps since the foundation of Teotihuacan.

The anticipation of the dawn by the K'iche' and Kaqchikel founding fathers

The authors of the Popol Wuj described that in the time of darkness, before the birth of the sun and the moon, the creator deities, *Alom*, *K'ajolom*, *Tz'aqol*, *B'itol*, *Tepew* and *Q'uqumatz*, fashioned the first humans out of ground white and yellow maize. These humans were the K'iche' founding fathers, named *B'alam K'itz'e*, *B'alam Aq'ab'*, *Majukutaj* and *Ik'i B'alam*, who along with their wives, gave birth to the K'iche' groups. The creation of the founder couples and the multiplication of different peoples occurred in the east, but they were worried because they lacked protector deities (carved of wood and stone) to worship, which meant that they had no one to protect them or their descendants. The Popol Wuj describes this grief:

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Maja b'i k'u jab'i'oq che'-ab'aj</i> [gods] | There was not therefore in existence wood/stone |
| <i>Chichajin e qanab'e chuch, qajaw.</i> | To protect our first mothers, our first fathers. |
| <i>E xa k'u xkos kik'ux chiri'</i> | But their hearts were tired here |
| <i>Chi royob'ejxik q'ij.</i> | As they awaited the sun. |
| <i>E k'i chik ronojel amaq',</i> | The people were already very numerous, |
| <i>Ruk' Yaqi winaq, ajk'ix, ajk'aj.</i> | Including the Yaqui people, and the bloodletters and sacrificers. |
| <i>"Xa jo', Oj qatzukuj,</i> | "Merely Let us go, we shall search, |
| <i>Oj pu qila' we k'o chi chajin qetala.</i> | We shall look to see if there is one who will guard us. |
| <i>Chi qarik ri kojtzijon ta chuwach!</i> | We may find one that we can speak before his face! |
| <i>Xaki K'eje oj k'olik,</i> | It is as if we did not exist, |
| <i>Maja b'i chajal qel!" Xecha k'ut</i> | For there is no guardian for us!" said |
| <i>E B'alam Kitze', B'alam Aq'ab',</i> | B'alam K'iche', B'alam |
| <i>Majukutaj, Ik'i B'alam.</i> | Aq'ab, Majukutaj and Ik'i B'alam. |
| | (modified from Christenson 2003: lines 5340-5350) |

It was then that the K'iche' fathers heard of the existence of a city called *Tulan Zuywa*, Seven Caves and Seven Ravines, and they journeyed towards it. In *Tulan* many important events occurred: the reception of the protector deities, the differentiation of languages and the configuration of a political hierarchy among the polities in the highlands. It was in this place that *B'alam K'itz'e* received his deity, *Tojil*; *B'alam Aq'ab'* was assigned to the deity *Awilix*; *Q'aaq'awitz* appeared to *Majukutaj*; and finally, *Ik'i B'alam* received the deity *Nik'aaqaj Taq'aj*. However, their hearts were still troubled because they had yet to witness the dawn, so they left *Tulan* (Sam Colop 2008: 141-142).

According to the *Popol Wuj*, the first fathers needed to prepare themselves to witness the dawn. This preparation consisted of placing their protector deities in safe places, where they would not be stolen but would still be within reach of their followers. The founding fathers followed their protector deities' instructions and each one placed the image of his god in specific locations. *B'alam Aq'ab'* deposited the god *Awilix* in a place called *Ewab'al Siwan* (Hidden Ravine),

Majukutaj set the god *Q'aq'awitz* in a site called *Kaqja* (Red House). Immediately thereafter, *B'alam K'itze'* placed *Tojil* on a mountain called Pa Tohil. *Ik'i B'alam* is no longer mentioned after this point, possibly because he did not have descendants (Recinos 1998: 160, note 271). The existence of four founding fathers and their particular protector deities who were the representatives of their *chinamits* or linages, reflected the quadripartite political system that the K'iche'an groups developed during the Postclassic period. However, alliances with other confederations could also be tripartite.

Once they placed their protector deities in their corresponding mountains, the K'iche' founding fathers were ready to experience the dawn.

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Xawi k'u chiri' xek'oje' wi</i> | Only, there they were |
| <i>Pa k'echelaj,</i> | In the forest, |
| <i>Are Saqirib'al,</i> | In the dawning places, |
| <i>Pa Tojil,</i> | At Tojil, |
| <i>Pa Awilix,</i> | At Awilix, |
| <i>Pa Jaq'awitz, kucha'xik wakamik.</i> | At Jaq'awitz, as they are called today. |
| <i>Are k'ut xechawax wi,</i> | There therefore they were sown, |
| <i>Xesaqir wi, qamam, qaqajaw.</i> | They dawned, our grandfathers, our fathers. |
| | (modified from Christenson 2003: lines 6030-6040) |

There is a direct relationship between the Dawn and the placement of the deities on their respective mountains. After the dawn, the mountains where the protector deities were located became foundational altars considered as energy places conducive to communication with ancestors or the protector deities. It is said in the *Título de Totonicapán* that the mountains where the K'iche' people dawned were called as followed: *Saqirib'al Tohil* or 'dawning place of Tojil,' *Saqirib'al Awilix* or 'dawning place of Awilix' and *Saqirib'al Q'aq'awitz*, or 'dawning place of *Q'aq'awitz*' (Carmack and Mondloch 1983a:109). Of these three mountains, it was on *Q'aq'awitz* where the K'iche' founding fathers remained for some time and where they gave birth to several generations. The anthropologist Robert Carmack (2001) identified these three *saqirib'al* in what

is now the village of Santa Rosa Chujuyub in the Department of Quiché (See figure 2). Carmack indicates that while the hills of Pa Tohil and Pa Awilix still have the same names, the hill of *Q'aq'awitz* could be the one that is now called *Chi Tinamit* and where there are still remnants of occupation (Carmack 2001:138).

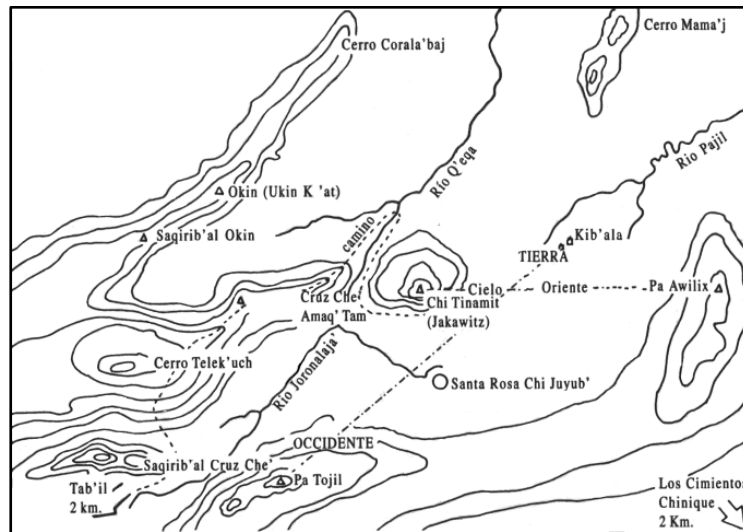


Figure 2. First K'iche' *saqarib'al* at the Santa Rosa Chujub' Valley (Carmack 2001)

Although the K'iche' claimed that there was only a dawn for all peoples in the highlands, this event was reproduced several times through foundation rituals and in different places by other groups within the K'iche' polity as well as other highland groups. The Xajil Chronicle lists the places where other linguistic groups, allied to the K'iche', experienced the dawn.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Chwi k'a juyu' Tojojil xsaqer wi</i> K'iche' winäq <i>Chuwi' k'a juyu' Samaneb' xsaqer wi</i> <i>Chi ri' k'a xrajsaqer wi Tz'utujile</i> <i>Pa Tz'ala'</i> <i>Xa maja tutzin rutz'aq</i> <i>toq xsaqer kuma ruchinamit.</i></p> | <p>Atop the hill Tojojil dawned the K'iche' nation The Rab'inal dawned atop the hill Samaneb' The Tz'utujil almost dawned there at Pa Tz'ala', but their buildings were not yet completed when it dawned, on account of his chinamit. (Maxwell and Hill 2006:120)</p> |
|---|---|

It is necessary to mention that the Guatemalan indigenous texts implicitly state that only when the *chinamits* of a confederation were completed—following a quadripartite model—were they able to experience the dawn. Possibly the Tz’utujil did not experience the dawn because they had not yet established enough alliances with other *chinamits* to start their own settlement. In the Late Postclassic period, alliances were key for the survival of social groups who sought to augment their number and strengthen their sociopolitical organization to stop the attack of rivals and to be able to fight to get the best resources of the area. The K’iche’ and eventually the Kaqchikel established complex alliances that allowed them to create their polities, colonize new territories and experience the dawn multiple times.

It is said in the Xajil Chronicle that when Kaqchikel founding fathers Q’aq’awitz and Saqtekaw arrived at Lake Atitlán² to divide up the territory, they ordered their followers to build their edifices because the dawn was about to break.

*Nab’ey k’a xepe Q’eqak’uch, Bak’ajol,
Sib’akijay, Kaweq;
xetaq pe.
“Kixnab’eyaj, ix nujay, nu chinamit.
Tib’ana’ apon qatz’aq, qib’aj.
Xa jala chik tisaqer.
Ujix” xe’uche’ex.
Xepe k’a, xe’ul
chi ri pa seqerib’al.
Pan Tzik, Pa Roxone’, Sinajijay,
Pa Sub’aqul (y) Pa Kaweq Kejil
Rub’i juyu’ xesaqer wi.
Xtiker k’a rub’anik tz’aq kuma.*

*K’ulb’al richin kajpop,
nimajay rub’i,
nab’ey kitz’aq.*

First then, came the Q’eqak’uch, the Bak’ajol, the Sib’aqijay and the Kaweq; they were sent forth. “You go first, you my house, my chinamit. Make our buildings, our house foundations. In just a little while, it will dawn. Go forth! They were told”. They came then, they arrived there at the place of dawning. Pan Tzik, Pa Roxone’, Sinajijay, Pa Sub’aqul (and) Pa Kaweq Kejil were the names of the hills where they dawned. The construction of the buildings was begun for them. The meeting place of their Ajpops, (which was) named Nimajay, was their first building.

(Maxwell and Hill 2006: 112-113)

This tradition survived in some communities in the highlands. Oral tradition collected by the French anthropologist Alain Breton among the Achi people from the town of Rabinal gives us an example of this continuation. The Achi or Rabinaleb' people, also appear in the ethnohistoric documents as having witnessed the primordial dawn along with the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel.

At the beginning of the world, our forefathers lived on the mountaintops that surround the village, there where the ruins of Kaqyub are found. In those days the valley was covered by water and the world was dark.

When the lagoon dried up, some of our ancestors came down and began to build the church. Only when construction was finished did the sun appear and all became illuminated. Their work finished, our ancestors buried themselves at the foot of the church (Breton 2013:309).

In this story, the church has replaced the altars where the protector deities were located, but still it preserved the same function as a place of worship of the ancestors who ensured the wellbeing of the community.

During my interviews with *ajq'ijab'* from Chichicastenango in 2014, I was told that the word *saqarib'al/saqirib'al* is the generic term for all Maya altars in Chichicastenango, though most of them are better known by their specific names. According to *ajq'ij* José María Tol, all Maya altars are *saqarib'al* because the *ajq'ijab'* ask for clarity, that the truth or the issue may be revealed clearly to help the person who comes to him or her. For the *ajq'ij* Juana Xiloj, Maya altars are *saqarib'al* because that is where the awakening happens and where people assume the responsibility that they have in life. When I asked the *ajq'ijab'* which are the main altars of Chichicastenango, four out of thirteen told me that although all of them are important, four to five altars stand out. These were established when Chichicastenango was founded and they surround the communities at its four cardinal points with an additional one in the center. In Chichicastenango, the altar located in the east is called *Chuoj* "among the avocado trees;" the altar

in the west is located in the cemetery and it is named *Chu Kumsanto* “among the holy yard” or *Chu Kaminaq* “among the deceased;” in the north the altar of Don Martín (former name unknown) is found (Figure 3); the altar of the south is called *Chuwi’ la Turk’a*; and the central altar is the one located at the Calvary in the main plaza of the town.

According to Don Tomás Calvo, the former Indigenous Mayor in Chichicastenango, these altars were connected, but due to the closure of access to one of them at some point in time, the connection between them was severed. In December of 2012, in commemoration of the completion of Bak’tun 13, permission was requested from the owner of the land to carry out a ceremony at the altar that had been isolated. After the ceremony, the altars were “tied” (*xuxim rib’*) into one unified group (See figure 3).



Figure 3. North altar of Chichicastenango (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

When I asked Don Tomás whether he knew of any place called *saqirib’al*, he said that each town has its own *saqirib’al* mountain, like in the town of Lemoa.

Lemoa k'o kajib' juyub' chila' re. (Chu)chi t'uyt'aq juyub' b'anom. (¿Su kib'i?) K'oja juyub' cha'. Kajib' ub'anom. T'uyt'aq juyub', (chu)chi k'o mes puwi'.

(In) Lemoa there are four mountains there. They are like mounds. (What are they called?) Mountains (shaped like) granaries, they say. There are four. They are mountains shaped like hillocks, where there are altars on top.

Ronojel tinamit k'o usaqirib'al, machit xew chichicastenango. Quiche, Lemoa, Patzite, Chiche ko kisaqirib'al chila'. K'o releb'al q'ij, kajb'al q'ij, xukut kaj, xukut ulew.

Every town has its saqarib'al, not just Chichicastenango. Quiche, Lemoa, Patzite, Chiché they have their saqarib'al there. They are (the saqirib'al mountains) in the east, west, north and south (Tomás Calvo, 2014).

Lemoa is the abbreviation for the town called San Sebastián Lemoa, which is located six kilometers from the department of Santa Cruz del Quiche. In Lemoa Russell Stewart found pre-K'iche' sites located in this town. He also noticed that sites with a single mound have ritual altars dedicated to lineages (*chinamit*). The most important of these are four altars that form a cross since they are oriented toward the cardinal points (Carmack 2001: 124). In the north the *Kukab'aj Julumuy* altar can be seen; in the south *Chisis*; in the east *Q'alel*; and in the west *Chikroy* (See figure 4). In Chisis, the altar located at the south of the site, the quadripartite model is also replicated (See figure 5). Chisis is composed of four artificial hills with altars on top of them that as a whole are called as *K'oja* among the *ajq'ijab'* from Chichicastenango.

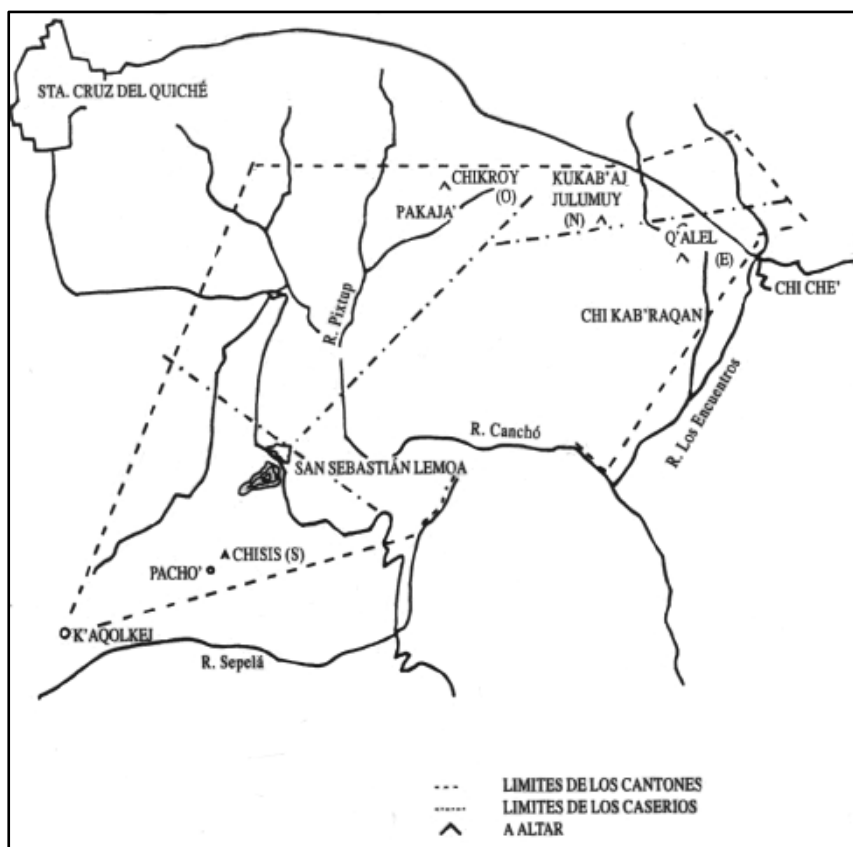


Figure 4. Map showing the Chisis, Q'alel, Chikroy and Kukab'aj altars at Lemoa (Carmack, 2001)

K'oja is a granary where corn is stored and usually has four supports (See figure 6). The analogy between the K'oja, or granary, and the altars at Chisis possibly resulted from the idea that both are sources of sustenance and have a quadripartite shape.

Oral tradition conserved by Ajq'ijab' about the saqarib'al, reveal the importance of these altars for the wellbeing of a community and its connection with the religious sphere. However, the Saqarik tradition was also connected with other contexts as will be shown in the following section.



Figure 5. Four altars/hills at Chisis, Lemoa (Photo taken by the author)



Figure 6. Modern K'oja or granary (Photo taken by Juan Vidal)

These altars, present in figures 2 and 4, are clearly foundational altars or *saqarib'al*, which are separated considerably from each other. K'iche' native documents inform that the K'iche' *saqarib'al*, located at Santa rosa Chujuyub, were dedicated to their protector deities Tojil, Awilix, Q'aq'awitz and Nik'aj Taq'aj, in addition to their main *chinamit*. This pattern of settlement was

also present among the Kaqchikel, but it changed to a nucleated pattern when they became powerful and founded their *tinamit* or citadel. Then, their foundational altars were situated in the core of their *tinamits* instead of being located on top of a groups of hills.

Political implications of the dawn tradition

The dawn tradition, which was linked with the possession of new territories and the establishment of new polities or dynastic rules at a specific place, was not reenacted equally by the highland groups because it could be banned for some groups. During the Late Postclassic (1200 – 1524 CE) the K’iche’ polity led by the *Nima’ K’iche’ confederation* and its main *chinamit* (Kaweq, Nijaib’, Ajaw K’iche’ and Saqik), dominated the political and military fields of the region under the direction of their god *Tojil*. *Tojil* was not only their protector deity and guide but was also a symbol of identity and unity among the three K’iche’ allied confederations (Nima K’iche’, Tamub’ and Ilokab’). In the Popol Wuj, *Tojil* instructed his followers to exert their control over the small and big towns as it is described in the next paragraph.

“Xa wi waral qa juyub’al,
 Qa taq’ajal chuxik.
 Oj iwech chik, Mi xuxik.
Nim qaq’ij, Nim pu qalaxik
Rumal ronojel winaq iwech,
Ri ronojel amaq’
Chich’ak ri ronojel amaq’.
Chikuk’aj
Ukik’el,
U komajil chiqawach.
Chul wi, kojkiq’aluj.
E qech chik,”
Xcha’ k’u ri Tojil.

“Only here our mountains,
 Our plains shall come to be.
 We have now come to be yours.
 Great is our day, great as well is our birth
 Because of all the people that are yours,
 All the nations.....
 You will conquer all the nations.
 They shall bring to you
 Their blood,
 Their gore before our faces.
 They shall come, they shall embrace us.
 They are ours now,”
 Said therefore Tojil.

(modified from Christenson 2003: lines 6320-6362)

K'iche' expansionism was facilitated by the support of other groups who played the role of allies during war, especially the Kaqchikel confederation who provided services to the K'iche' elite as military auxiliaries and subordinated allies. This alliance began during the reign of the K'iche' ruler Q'ukumatz (1400-1425 C.E.) and continued with K'iq'ab' (1425-1475 C.E.). During K'iq'ab's reign, he ordered the protection of his territories from enemy attack by deploying military outposts on the mountain tops surrounding the K'iche' basin and the nearby newly-conquered territories. These small settlements were named *calpul*, and their main purpose was to alert K'iche' rulers of enemy incursions and to gather military forces in times of war (Ximénez 1965: 48-50). The authority of the K'iche' over the *calpul* was reinforced by sending K'iche' captains to lead these small settlements and by imposing several rules that had to be obeyed. Some of the rules explicitly prohibited the veneration of other deities different from those of the K'iche', and denied the *calpul* the right to build temples or altars to their protector deities. Other rules prohibited local authorities from governing without K'iche' elite authorization, and principally, to reenact the dawn due to its political implications (Sam Colop 2008: 202, 203; Ximénez 1965: 48-50). In this context, the Kaqchikel who occupied several *calpuls*, lacked autonomy and the possibility to have their protector deity to protect and to guide them, thus limiting their sense of unity and identity. Maarten Jansen further observed that the periodization of history can be used for purposes of legitimization. For example, a current government can be connected to the prevailing sun while a subjugated population can be condemned to a previous era, relegating all their rights to the past (Jansen 1997: 16). Even though it is said in the Popol Wuj that all highland groups experienced the primordial dawn, its ritual re-enactment was restricted among subjugated groups as a potential act of self-determination, cultural development and geographical expansion. Even though the Kaqchikel settled in military outposts within K'iche' territories during the reign

of Q'uqumatz and K'iq'ab', they still claimed the possession of these small settlements by the reenactment of the dawn there, which can be seen as an act of resistance and rebellion against the K'iche' authority.

Places where the Kaqchikel experienced the Saqarik

In this section, the places where the Kaqchikel dawned and placed their Saqarib'al are identified. This task is important to better understand not only the territories they occupied during the Late Postclassic period but also the places where they established their main settlements during their early history, before the occupation of Chi Iximche'.

Unlike the K'iche' who claimed that there was only one sunrise for all highland peoples, the Kaqchikel indicated that they experienced the dawn in a sequence of places along with their closest allies the Sotz'il, Tuquche' and Akajal. Despite that they all experienced the dawn together, their origin stories show some variation, especially in the list of places where they dawned. Until now, we only know how the Kaqchikel and the Sotz'il *amaq'* experienced the dawn since no document written by the Tuquche' has been found yet, and the Akajal's documents do not provide information about where they experienced the dawn, they only provide the names of their main settlements. In the Xajil Chronicle, the Kaqchikel *amaq'* declared that they experienced the dawn at the following places: Pantzik, Pa Raxone' Yalab'ey Simajijay, Pa Sibaqul and Pa Kaweq Kejil; Pan Che', Chi Q'ojom (Muqb'al sib' and Chuwila'); Chi Awär Tz'upitaq'aj, Nik'aya' and K'otoxul¹(Maxwell and Hill 2006:150). From the Sotz'il perspective, they indicated in their document Historia de los Xpantzay, that they experienced the dawn at Chi Awär Tz'upitaq'aj,

¹ It is very possible that these last two settlements were located at Sololá since the Kaqchikel occupied this territory after leaving Chi Awär (Francisco 1937), while the Sotz'il moved to Chi Iximche'.

Ismachi'-Chi Q'umarkaj, Pa Xajil Ya', Chan Puak Ayin che', Tun Ab'aj² and Chi Iximche' (Recinos 2001:123). It is interesting to note that the Kaqchikel, unlike the Sotz'il, included places where they dawned before the occupation of Chi Awär (their first citadel), while the Sotz'il started their list with the occupation of Chi Awär. The Sotz'il's list is consistent with the fact that the four allied groups only gained a high level of autonomy after the K'iche' authorized them to govern themselves and have their first citadel at Chi Awär. The Sotz'il realized that the necessary condition to ensure the dawn only existed in Chi Awär, which consisted of freedom to have their settlement, government and protector deities. The Kaqchikel claimed that they experienced the dawn in many settlements before they occupied Chi Awär, despite that the same places were considered part of the K'iche' territory and under the K'iche' control. This could be an effort to claim possession of the south zone of the Quiche basin, now Chichicastenango, where the Kaqchikel erected their first settlements.

To identify the Kaqchikel and Sotz'il *saqarib'al* it is necessary to take into consideration that the oldest *saqarib'al* mentioned in native documents were dedicated to the main *chinamits* of a confederation and to their protector deities. Therefore, the early *saqarib'al* appeared as a group of places, usually four to five hills with altars on top that were close to a new settlement. This pattern changed progressively to follow a more centralized or nucleated pattern of settlement. In other words, when the Kaqchikel polity was consolidated, they celebrated the dawn not in a group of hills but in a single *tinamit* such as Chi Awär and Chi Iximche'.

Primordial dawn at the hills Pantzik Pa Raxone', Yalab'ey Simajijay, Pa Sibaqul, Pa Kaweq Kejil

² The sites Pan Xajil Ya, Chan Puak Ayin che' and Tun Ab'aj probably are located between Q'umarkaj and Chi Iximche'. Currently in Chichicastenango there is a river called Xajil, which could correspond to Pan Xajil Ya'.

The Kaqchikel, as a confederation experience the dawn for the first time in a group of hills that became their *saqirib'al* dedicated to their main *chinamit* or linages: the Xajil, Q'eqak'uch, Sibaquijay and B'akajol and two new allied K'iche' *chinamit* named Kaweq and the Kejay. I postulate that Pan Tzik might be the *saqirib'al* of the Xajil, Paraxone' could be the *saqirib'al* of the Q'eqak'uch, Yalab'ey Sinajijay is identified in the Xajil Chronicle as the *saqirib'al* of the B'akajol, and Sib'aqul might be the foundation altar of the Sib'acijay. Also, the Kaweq-Kejil hill belongs to the newly incorporated *chinamits*, the Kaweq and the Kejay.

These hills have not been identified yet, but it is suggested that they were distributed in the territory that covers the borders of Chichicastenango, Sololá and Tecpán. Some clues about the location of the first altar are mentioned in the Xajil chronicle. The document includes the account that the Kaqchikel forefathers arrived at the Tz'utujil territory and established alliances with them. As a result, Lake Atitlan was divided among them. This event took place before the dawn when they were still living in darkness. Eventually they arrive at Pulch'ich' and from there they were sent out to their dawning place (Maxwell and Hill 2006:112). Nowadays Pulch'ich' is a very well-known Maya altar and a pilgrimage site that is located between the borders of Sololá and Panimache' III, Chichicastenango. After leaving Pulch'ich, the Kaqchikel forefathers arrived at this groups of hills to witness their primordial dawn. The Kaqchikel used the metaphor of darkness to express that they had not yet found their territories to live in a sedentary way and build the altars dedicated to their protective deities.

Pantzic and Paraxone' (Xajil and Q'eqak'uch's saqirib'al)

It is told in the Xajil Chronicle that the Kaqchikel forefathers Q'aq'awitz and Saktekaw declared that the hills where they experienced the dawn were Pantzic and Paraxone'. These hills

could be located in Sololá because the Xajil chronicle mentions that Paraxone' appears together with Pujujil (Maxwell and Hill 2006:116). Pujujil is the name of three hamlets in Sololá located in the Km 123 of the Interamerican Road. According to Judith Maxwell & Ixmata there was a major altar at the original Pujujil site but it was moved to a nearby place because the spot was used as a look-out point for tourists. I agree with Maxwell that this could be the place from where Q'aq'awitz, the Kaqchikel founder father, and his people colonized the Quiche basin (Maxwell and García Ixmata 2008:11). According to John Fox, Paraxone' is located in the current village of Paraxquim in the municipality of Tecpán (Fox 1978:51). Another option could be a hill located in the municipality of Nahuala', Sololá called Raxón (Diccionario Geográfico de Guatemala Tomo III 1983:72).

Yalab'ey Simajijay Motzorey (Bakajol's saqarib'al)

The Bakajol dawned at Sinajijay according to the Xajil chronicle (Maxwell and Hill 2006: 129). According to Robert Carmack, Sinajijay Hill is located in the current Semeja village in Chichicastenango. An ancient and small settlement was located in Semeja that laid over a ridgetop and is comprised of five mounds aligned from east to west (See figure 7). The mounds are distributed at different levels but the distance among them is not significant. The north mound is the largest and the south the smallest. The site is situated one kilometer west of Los Encuentros-Chichicastenango road, approximately three kilometers from Los Encuentros bifurcation. The ceramic samples found in the site and the surrounding areas can be dated to the Early Postclassic period, except for "one piece" of Late Postclassic Fortress White-on-Red ware (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:75). Based on ethnohistorical information, Fox provides evidence to locate Simajijay in Semeja. The Xajil Chronicle states that the site Simajijay was close to a source of

water because in that place the leader of the Bakajol took a bath before being invested as the Ajpop (Maxwell and Hill 2006:118).

The current site of Semeja is nearby a river named Pixabaj that is a tributary of the Motagua River. The second clue is that before the B'ak'ajol settled in Yalab'ey Simajijay Motzorey, the original inhabitants were the Kupilkat and Kanalaqam who resisted the invasion of the newcomers. These peoples were defeated by the Kaqchikel and eventually one of the two Kupilkat survivors was incorporated into the Kaqchikel confederation while the other joined the K'iche' (Maxwell and Hill 2006:129). These two local groups have been identified as the native occupants of the Chichicastenango territory (Carmack and Mondloch 1983a:192, note 217) whose land was taken by the Kaqchikel, which included their small settlement. The small site identified at Semeja could be the *Nimajay* or 'Great House' mentioned in the Xajil Chronicle as the first settlement of the Kaqchikel and where a member of the B'ak'ajol proclaimed himself as the leader or Ajpop. The Bakajol continue to be a predominant patronymic in Sololá and Santo Domingo Xenacoj, and in smaller numbers in Chichicastenango.

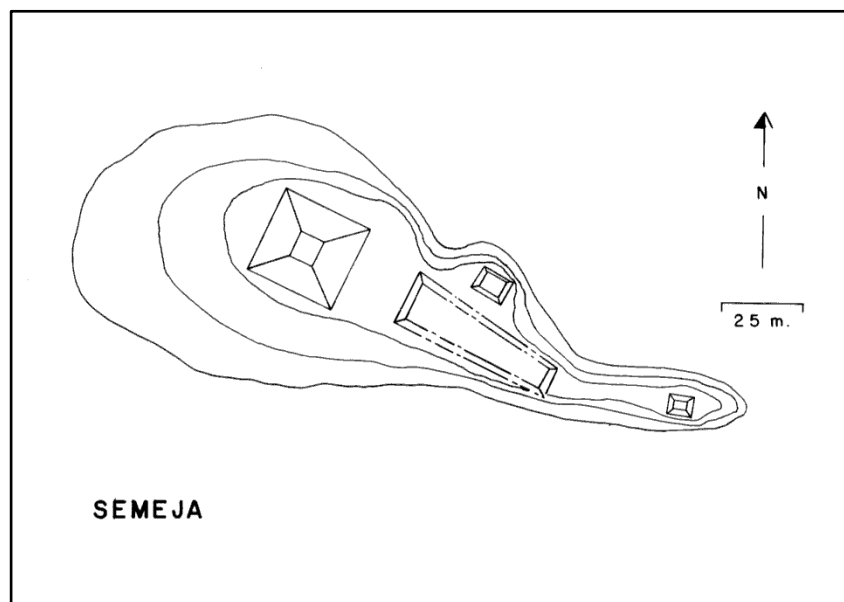


Figure 7. Semeja, Chichicastenango (Fox, 1978).

Sibaqul (Sib'acijay altar)

In Sibaqul dawned the Sib'acijay. Sebakijay is a common patronymic in Santa María Cauque village of Santiago Saqatepequez. According to the Titulo de Jilotepeque, six groups named the Chichajoma (Kaqchikel speakers) originated in Joyab'aj (municipality of El Quiche) while they were under the authority of the K'iche'. Eventually, they departed from this place and colonized the current territories of San Martín Jilotepeque and the Sacatepequez towns. From oral tradition in Santa María Cauque, Sacatepequez explains that because their ancestors came from Joyab'aj and had a close interaction with the K'iche', the Kaqchikel variant of this municipality shows a strong influence of the K'iche' in linguistic terms (López Hernández 1999). The Xajil Chronicle indicates that the people who engendered the Sib'acijayi' were the Yaki Ajaw and Chajom Ajaw, which is consistent with their affiliation with the Chajoma (Otzoy 1999:155). I suggest that Sibaqul could be located in the north of the Quiche basin, either in or close to Joyabaj.

Pa Kaweq-Kejil (Kaweq and Kejay's altars)

Both the Kaweq and Kejay were K'iche' *chinamits* that were incorporated into the Kaqchikel confederation. The Kaweq were encountered at the hills named Xe Nimachaj and Ximb'al Xuk. Ximbaxuk has been identified by Robert Carmack as a village in the current municipality of Chinique, El Quiche. There was a strong relationship between the Kaweq and the Kajay, but the nature of it is not totally clear, only that they shared the same saqarib'al. Carmack and colleagues propose that the place where the Kejay were found corresponds to the current village of Quiejel at the east of Chichicastenango (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:42). In Quiejel there is a hill where documentation states the location of the ancient town of Chichicastenango

(Schultze 1954:82). Both Ximbaxuk and Quiejel are located at the east of the Quiche basin, but future surveys in both areas would be necessary to confirm the exact location of this hill.

This first group of hills where the Kaqchikel's *chinamits* experienced their first dawn, was abandoned to move to Chi Q'ojom, Panche', Muqb'al Sib and Chuwila'. The Kaqchikel leaders likely abandoned their first settlement after the destruction of the Nimajay or 'Great House' due an internal conflict between the B'ak'ajol and the other *chinamits* of the Kaqchikel confederation.

Pan Che', Chi Q'ojom and Muqbal Sib' (and Chuwila')

The second group of places where the Kaqchikel experienced the dawn includes Pan che' (Panimache'), Chi Q'ojom (Chu Q'ojom), Muqb'al sib' and Chuwila'. All of them are located at the southern point of the current Chichicastenango municipality. The majority of villages in Chichicastenango were ancient *calpuls*, or *chinamits*, that have preserved their original names and locations. Pan che' corresponds to the Panimache' village, which is situated at the southern border between Chichicastenango and Sololá. Panimache' is now divided into three smaller villages numbered from one to three. In Panimache' third there are two important Maya altars called Chwi Campana and Pulch'ich' (ALMG 2003: 126). No archaeological survey has been carried out in these villages to confirm the existence of an ancient settlement besides the two Maya altars.

Chi Q'ojom might be the current village of Chu Q'ojom in Chichicastenango, which is in the northeast of Semeja (Simajijay). Chu Q'ojom (Chuwi Q'ojom) can be translated as 'Over the Marimba place.' In this village, there is an important Maya altar called Chumes (ALMG 2003:89) but surveys in the area carried out by Carmack et al (1975), Gruhn (1976) and Shook (1969), did not report any archaeological feature in this village.

Muqb'alsib is another village in the Chichicastenango and its name means "buried smoke". Muqb'al sib' has a strategic location since from this village the Quiche basin can be viewed, which includes the K'iche' capital of Q'umarkaj (See figure 8). Carmack and Mondloch suggest that from this place smoke messages were exchanged between Q'umarkaj and the south of Chichicastenango (Carmack and Mondloch 2007:192, note 222). A survey made by Carmack et al., revealed that Muqb'al sib' is an isolated temple type settlement. Most archaeological sites found in Chichicastenango belong to this type of settlement and there is a chain of isolated temples at the east section of the town. Currently in Muqb'al Sib' an ancient altar is still visible located over an artificial elevation on a prominent hill. Ceramic was not found during this survey (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:95).



Figure 8. View of the Quiche basin and its urban center seen from Muqb'al Sib' hill (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

Identification of Chuwila'

Chuwila' was an important Kaqchikel settlement, despite that the Kaqchikel did not include it in their list of places where they dawned. Perhaps because this settlement was controlled by the K'iche' and became an important military outpost at the service of the Nima' K'iche' from Q'umarkaj. The Popol Wuj accounts that the K'iche' polity defeated the small and big towns in the highlands during their expansionist campaigns launched from Q'umarkaj. This document also provides a short list of the main defeated towns, including Chuwila' identified as the territory of the Kaqchikel.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Are puch xpaxinik usiwan | In this way were fragmented their ravines, |
| Utinamit Ch'uti amaq', nima amaq'; | their towns of those small and big peoples |
| Naqaj taq uxol k'o tinamit ojer. | Were citadels anciently |
| Are ujuyub'al Q'aqchekeleb' | The settlement of the Kaqchikel |
| Ri Chuwila' wakamik | was the current Chuwila' (Colop 2008:185) |

This paragraph indicates that Chuwila' was a Kaqchikel settlement, but at the time the Popol Wuj was written, they no longer lived there. Chuwila' means "over the nettle sting place" and today corresponds to the Chichicastenango municipality in the department of El Quiche (See Figure 9). The K'iche' claimed that Chuwila', Uwila' or Wila' was part of a group of *calpuls* called as the *Oxlajuj ch'ob' ajilab'al* or 'the thirteen divisions of warriors,' that was under the administration of the Nima' K'iche' from Q'umarkaj. K'iche' and Kaqchikel documents describe the identity of the members of these *calpuls* as warriors that used different weapons for war including arrows, bows, spears and slings, in order to protect the K'iche' citadel and support their expansionist campaigns.

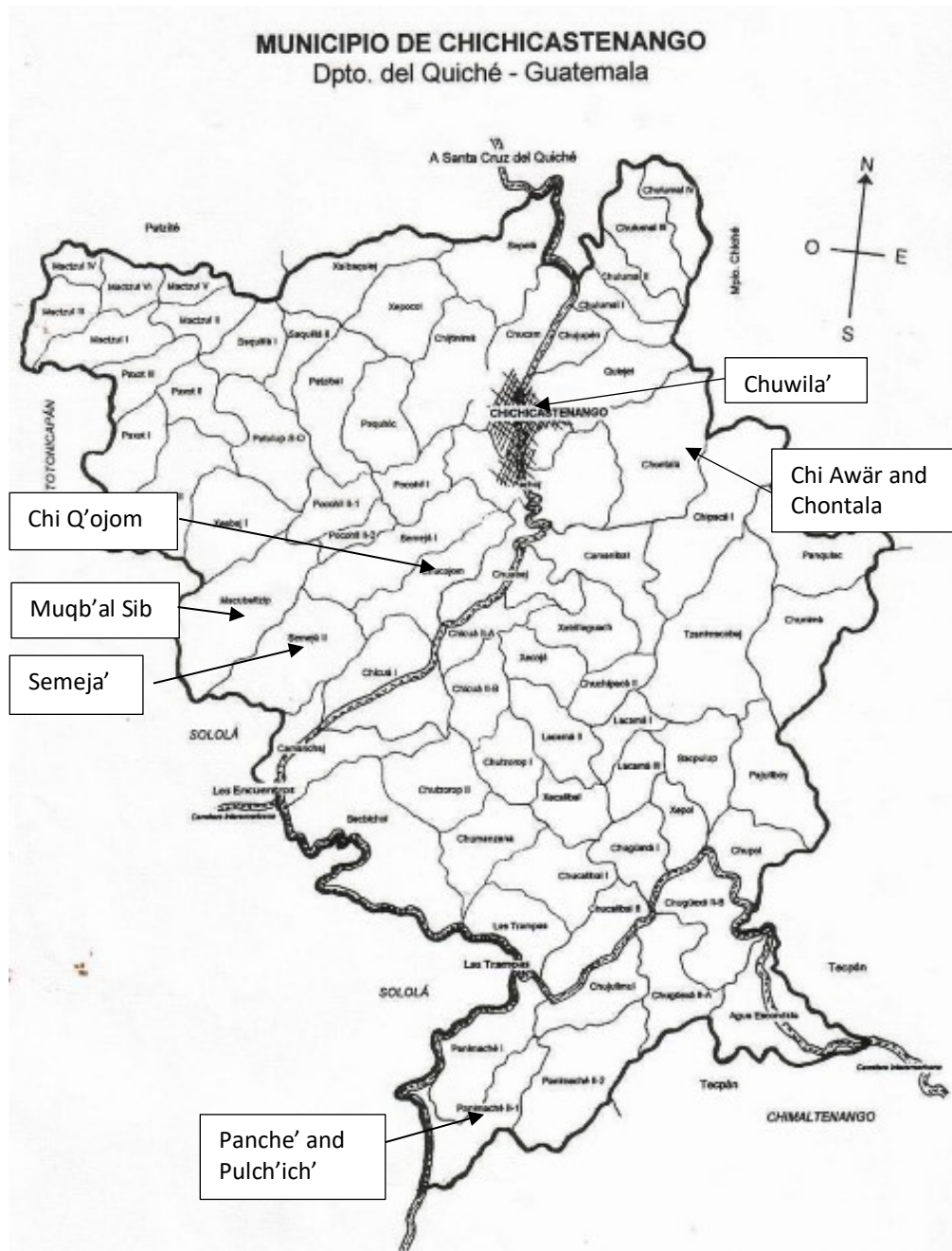


Figure 9. Map of Chichicastenango and the location of Kaqchikel settlements

The specialization of military duties of the people who occupied these military *calpuls*, suggest the existence of an army or the inception of one. Chuwila', Uwila' or Wila' was a *calpul* that specifically protected the main route that leads to the K'iche' capital of Q'umarkaj. In the

following chart is the list of military *calpuls* at the service of the Nima' K'iche' confederation (See table 1).

| Popol Wuj (Colop 1999:187–188). | Utítulo rajawarem awaj Don Francisco Iskin Nija'ib' (Matsumoto 2017:187–192). | Historia Quiché de don Juan de Torres (Recinos 2001:54–57). | Título Ixquin Nehabib, Señora Otzoya (Cabezas Carcache 2009:100) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Aj Wila' | Ajuwila' | Aj Uwila' | Aj Uwila' |
| Aj Chulimal | Ajchwimal | Chutinal | Aj Chulimal |
| Saqiya' | | Aj Saqiya' | Saqiya' |
| Xajbakej | Aj Xojb'akej | Aj Xajb'akech | Xajb'akej |
| Chitemaj | Ajtemaj | Aj Chitemaj | |
| Wajxalajuj | Aj Wajxaqlajuj | Aj Wajxaqlajuj | Wajxaqlajuj |
| Kab'raqan | Ajkab'raqan | Aj Kab'raqan | Aj Kab'raqan |
| Chab'iq'aq' | Ajchab'iq'aq' | | Aj Ch'ab'iq'aq' |
| Chi Junajpu | Chijunajpu | | Chi Junajpu' |
| Aj Maq'a | | | |
| Aj Xayab'aj | | | |
| Aj Saqkab'aja' | | | |
| Aj Siyaja' | | | |
| Aj Miq'ina' | | | |
| Aj Xelajuj | | | |
| | Aj Tuqab'ala Tz'ikin | Walik Tz'ikin | Rukab'ala Tz'ikin |
| | Aj Utzaqib'al Ja' | | |
| | Ajtinamit | | Aj Tinamit |
| | Aj Pa Chiki | | Aj Patiki' |
| | AjChob'olo | | Aj Kojb'olo' |
| | Ajk'aqol Kej | | Aj Kaqojkej |
| | AjK'ulch'ip | | Aj Kuluch'ip |
| | Ajrxacha | Aj Racha | Raxaja' |
| | Ajtukurub' | Aj Tukurub' | Aj Tukurub' |
| | AjK'oyoy | | K'oyoy, Aj |
| | Saqk'orowach | | Korobek |
| | Uxe'ki Uxe'oj | | Aj Uxe'ki Uxe'oj |
| | Ajamaq' | | |
| | Ajsaqmolob' | | |
| | Ajtab'il | | Aj Tab'il |
| | Aj K'u--- | | |
| | Ahq'aq'alaj | | |
| | Ajnacxit | | |
| | Ajamaq' Mes | | |
| | Ajpokob'a | | |
| | Ajq'ojomeb' | | Aj Kojomel |
| | Ajchi Ch'alib' | | Aj Chijalib' |
| | Ajtz'utub'aja | | Aj Tzutub'ala' |
| | Ajkaq Q'inom | | Aj Kaq Q'inom |
| | | Aj K'olok'ik Tinamit | |

| | | | |
|--|--|------------------|---------------|
| | | Aj Tzukaj | |
| | | Aj Chinik | |
| | | Aj Meb'a K'isik' | |
| | | | Aj Omatz |
| | | | Aj Korob'ek |
| | | | Aj Kiliyaj |
| | | | Ak Kakalaj |
| | | | Aj Nejaib' |
| | | | Ah Makmes |
| | | | Aj Amaq' Tami |
| | | | Aj Kaqb'olob' |

Table 1. List of *calpuls* at the service of the Nima' K'iche' confederation

Originally, this institution at the service of the K'iche' polity, specifically the Nima' K'iche' confederation, only had thirteen to fifteen *calpuls* distributed in the Quiche basin. But as long the K'iche' were expanding into new territories, they were creating more *calpuls* to protect their new borders outside the basin. Of this list of *calpuls*, at least three were occupied by the Kaqchikel and their allies: Chuwila', Saqiya' and Xoyab'aj. It seems possible that when the Kaqchikel experienced the dawn for the second time, their leaders settled in Chuwila' while secondary leaders and commoners settled in Panche', Chi Q'ojom and Muqb'al sib'. The presence of Kaqchikel people in Saqiya' is suggested because this toponym is comprised of Kaqchikel words which means "pure or clear water". Xoyaba'aj (currently Joyab'aj) is mentioned in the Titulo de Jilotepeque as the origin place of the Akajal/Chajoma confederation that later occupied Chuwa' Nima'ab'aj or Jilotepeque Viejo (Cabezas Carcache 2008:160). It is very likely that the Kaqchikel settlements of Panche', Chi Q'ojom and Muqb'alsib also functioned as military *calpuls* in times of war and were reinforced with K'iche' warriors during the reigns of Q'ukumatz and K'iq'ab'.

Several scholars (Recinos, 2001: 10; Cabezas 1974:23, Diccionario Geográfico 673, Polo Sifontes, 153) have proposed that the fist Kaqchikel *tinamit* named Chi Awär corresponds to the

Chuwila' *calpul*. However, I believe this correlation is incorrect for many reasons: First, Chuwila' (ca.1300 CE) was occupied before Chi Awär (ca. 1430 CE). The Kaqchikel abandoned Chuwila' and the other settlements to move to Chi Awär, but they were not occupied by the Kaqchikel leaders at the same time. The Juan de Torres document confirms this information with the account that the thirteen divisions of warriors or the military *calpuls* were sons and grandsons of the Nima' K'iche' lords, but none of the Aj Uwila' and Aj Amaq' left (in their original settlements) (Recinos 2001:57) This text indicates that the former occupant of Uwila' abandoned this territory, probably when they moved to Chi Awär. Second, the Kaqchikel and their allies moved to Chi Awär only after they were rewarded by the K'iche' for supporting their expansionist campaigns. In Chi Awär the Kaqchikel held power and had their own government. In Chuwila', the Kaqchikel were only warriors and members of the Oxlajuj Ch'ob' Ajilab'al. Third, the Guerras Comunes document says that when the Kaqchikel settled in Chi Awär no one could bother them (Recinos 2001:147). This means that Chi Awär was isolated and distant, while Chuwila' was located along the main road that connects Q'umarkaj with the Tz'utujil territories, and other Kaqchikel towns from the central highlands. Additional evidence to confirm the location of Chuwila' appears in the *Título de Quetzaltenango y Momostenango y conquista de nuestros antepasados (2017)*. This text describes that after the K'iche' military conquered many towns in the western region of the highlands and the Pacific Coast, the K'iche' military leader Don Francisco Iskin Neja'ib' placed boundary marks that indicate the scope of their conquest. Eventually, the Capitan together with his soldiers returned to the Quiché basin to deliver the booty of war and inform the rulers of Q'umarkaj about their achievements. The text says:

There (they were) resting for then days, the cacique Don Francisco Iskin and Don Majokotaj, princes (and) cacique(s), and he dispatched a messenger from (the) village of this aforementioned cacique (to) inform how it was going ...for them and that they remained (there) resting, that they sould go out to receive thirteen banners,

that within two days had to enter into the aforementioned, their village,
that also all of them should go out armed with their bows and arrows,
and that also three crowned caciques should go out also from (the) same village of this
cacique,

That everyone should go out to receive him with their log drums, each (with) a banner.

And the names of each cacique of those who went out to receive them are these:

Don B'alam Aq'ab' and Don Ikib'alam and don Majokotaj

These three caciques were crowned, as they were like kings

Then this cacique went out of this hill with all of his people

And they passed through the middle of (a) lake, which is that of Atitlan

They went indicating their boundary markers

And they passed through where the church of Tecpan Atitlan is.

There he put (a) boundary marker of his lands that he had won,

And from there he went to a village called **Chwi La'**.

There they came to a halt until another day. And then from there he entered his palace in
his village,

Where the three caciques went out to receive him with much noise from (the) people,

And they entered (the)castle of the aforementioned caciques of Chi Q'umarkaj (and) Chi
Ismachi'.

And then (he) began, this cacique Don Majokotaj, to give (an) account to his King

Of all of that which he had won and conquered (Matsumoto 2017:353).

In this text, Chuwila' is the previous settlement before they arrived to Q'umarkaj, and it is
on the main road that leads to the K'iche' *tinamit*. Therefore, Chi Awär and Chuwila' cannot be
the same settlement.

Identification of Chi Awär

Chi Awär has been identified in the village of Chontala, Chichicastenango, and currently
is called Patz'aq (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:47; Fox 1978:187) or "the walled place." Its
coordinates are 14°56'04.38" N 91°04'12.17" W. This identification was suggested since that the
southern zone of Chichicastenango was populated by the Kaqchikel and their allies. It is necessary
to highlight that while the Kaqchikel were allied with the K'iche', they did not enjoy enough
autonomy to decide where to settle. The K'iche' ruler K'iq'ab' usually decided where the

Kaqchikel and their allies would live within his territories. Therefore, Chi Awär was built close to Q'umakaj. The Titulo Tamub indicates that the Kaqchikel leaders Chakaj and Kaletam were born in Chi Awär and together with K'iq'ab' (a K'iche' leader) ruled in El Quiché (Recinos 2001:49). El Quiché, in this context, was the territory that surrounds Q'umarkaj. From Chi Awär and other Kaqchikel settlement such as Chuwila' and Muqb'al Sib, Q'umarkaj was visible in the distance.

John Fox postulates that during the Late Postclassic period, the main Kaqchikel, Sotz'il, Tuquche' and Aqajal settlements were situated around the Motagua River and its tributaries, which connect the east and west of the Guatemalan highlands. Specifically, the Western Kaqchikel (Tuquche', Sotz'il and Kaqchikel) located their main settlements along the Molino, Chipaca and Sacpulub rivers in Chichicastenango, which flow into the Motagua River. The Aqajal or the Eastern Kaqchikel settled around the Pixkaya' river which is also a tributary of the Motagua River. Lastly, the Canaqya' river served as a border between the two groups (Fox 1978:220, 221). Chi Awär or Patz'aq is located between the Chipaca and Motagua rivers (See figure 10).

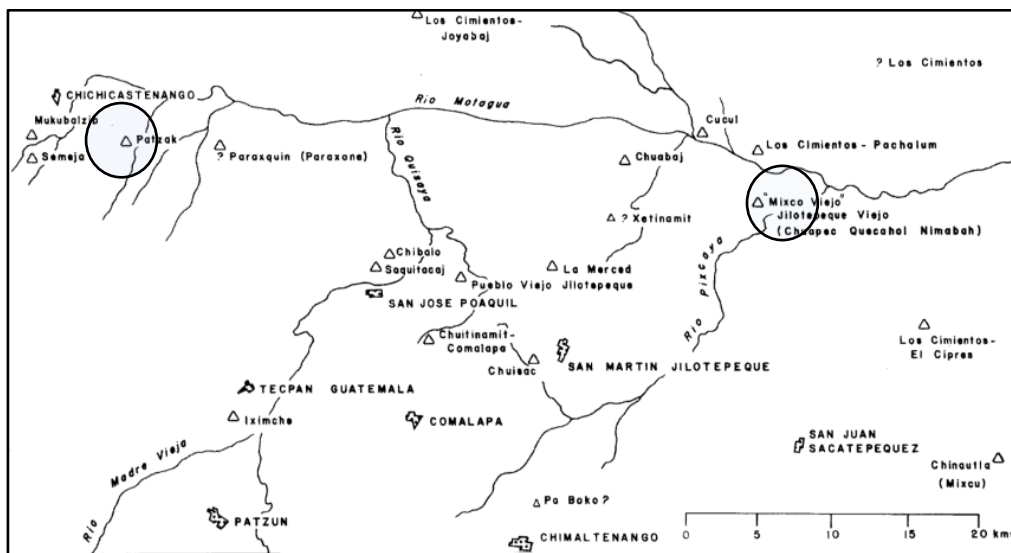


Figure 10. Archaeological sites surrounding the Motagua River and tributary rivers (Fox 1978).

Additional evidence provided by Fox that supports the hypothesis that Patz'aq was the Kaqchikel site of Chi Awär is the affinity that existed between this settlement and other Kaqchikel and Aqajal sites in terms of settlements patterns and architectural features. For instance, both Chi Awär and Chi Iximche' (the last Kaqchikel *tinamit*) have three main plazas surrounded by architectural complexes. These three plazas are adjacent and follow a rectilinear orientation. This rectilinear pattern also appears in Aqajal settlements that pre-date Jilotepeque Viejo, such as Cucul, Cimientos-Pachalum, Chuisac, Pueblo Viejo Jilotepeque. Semeja, which is an early Kaqchikel site also follows this pattern. In both Chi Awär and Chi iximche' there are two bulwarks and two moats at the entrances of each site that lead to a 'greeting plaza.' Chi Awär is half the size of Chi Iximche', perhaps because of its political position or the adaptation to the size of the plateau. (See figures 11 and 12) (Fox 1978:220).

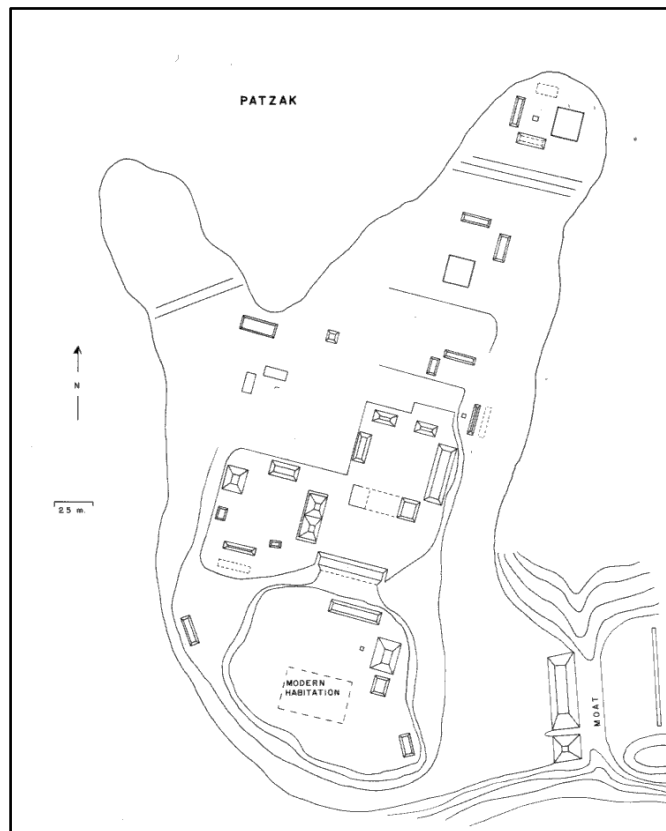


Figure 11. Patz'aq or Chi Awär (Fox 1978).

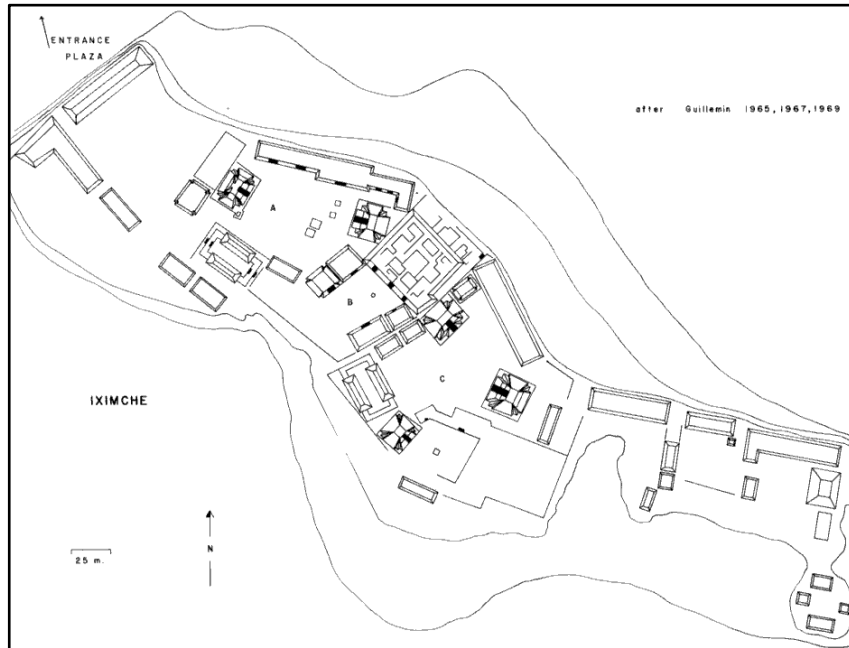


Figure 12. Chi Iximche' (Fox 1978).

In comparison with Jilotepeque Viejo, both sites have twin temples in their central plazas that have been associated with K'iche' colonization or symbols of alliance between two polities or confederations (See figure 13).

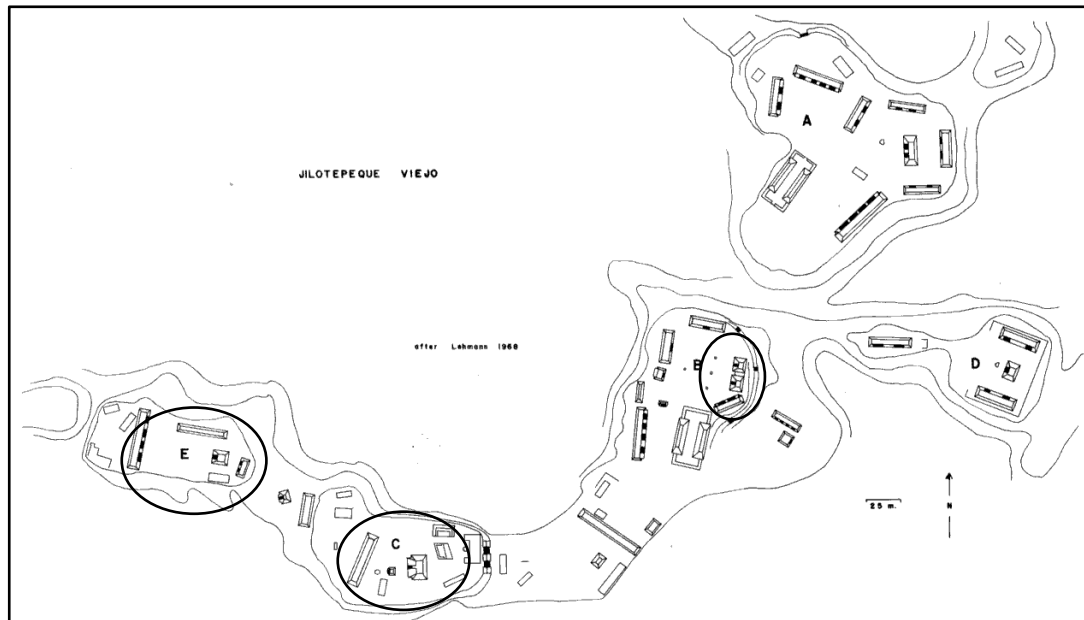


Figure 13. Jilotepeque Viejo o Chwa' Nima' Ab'aj (Fox, 1978).

At the end of each settlement, existed a small architectural group comprised of platforms oriented to the four cardinal points forming an isolated square plaza. This architectural arrangement has a square temple facing east which is in a perpendicular position to a long structure. Fox considers that this arrangement is of Kaqchikel origin. It appears in the greeting plaza of Chi Iximche', and in plaza C and E of Jilotepeque Viejo, which can be interpreted as a Kaqchikel occupation in this last place when the Aqajal fell under their control. This isolated square pattern is also present at the Pakaman site in Q'umarkaj (Fox 1978:226) (See figure 14). A significant difference between Jilotepeque Viejo and Chi Awär and Chi Iximche' is that in the first settlement the architectural complexes are more separated from one another as in Q'umarkaj, which might suggest that the competition between kin groups was more acute; while the existence in Chi Iximche' and Chi Awär of walls and moats at their entrance could reflect an effort to enhance class division (Fox 1978:223–226). The shared settlement pattern and architectural traits between Chi Awär and two other Kaqchikel and Aqajal sites suggest that Chi Awär was culturally affiliated with them. Linguistic evidence (see chapter 6) also supports the hypothesis that Kaqchikel settled in the Chichicastenango territory and founded their main settlements there.

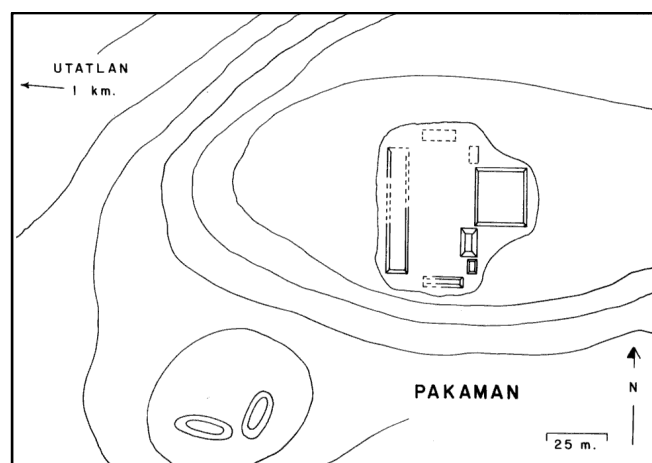


Figure 14. Pakaman Plaza in Q'umarkaj associated with Kaqchikel occupation (Fox 1978:30).

After the abandonment of Chi Awär, the Kaqchikel and their allies moved to Chi Iximche' where they also experienced the dawn. This archaeological site is located 3 kilometers south of the municipality of Tecpan, Chimaltenango. This citadel was occupied for about 56 years until the Spanish arrived.

In summary, the primordial titles of the Kaqchikel, describe that after a long migration they found new territories and began to colonize, which corresponds to the current municipalities of Tecpán and Chichicastenango, and the east of Solola. The possession and colonization of these territories were legitimized through the placement of foundational altars, or *saqarib'al*, where they performed rituals to experience the sunrise. The dawn, or *saqarik*, was a metaphor that represented the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Kaqchikel, where they begin a sedentary life and establish a new political organization after taking possession of a territory. As Jansen (1997) and López Austin and López Lujan (1998) proposed, Mesoamerican peoples tend to divide their history into strata or suns, where the people who have experienced the sunrise live in the cultural stage known as *Totecayotl* characterized by an orderly and sedentary life.

According to the analysis of the Kaqchikel's native documents, they experienced the dawn for the first time in a group of mountains located on the border between Solola and Chichicastenango. Later, when their alliance with the K'iche' was strengthened, they placed their *saqarib'al* in another group of mountains located within the municipality of Chichicastenango. It wasn't until the Kaqchikel and their allies began to have more power that the Kaqchikel moved to live in a citadel or *tinamit* where each confederation had its plaza and architectural complex. The first Kaqchikel citadel was Chi Awär and after its abandonment, the Kaqchikel and their allies moved to other citadels such as Chi Iximche' (Tecpan) and Nik'aya' and K'otoxul in Solola. Although in this research I will focus on the archeology of Chi Awär, which is the first Kaqchikel

citadel, the identification of the places where the Kaqchikel dawned was necessary to reconstruct their early history and understand how they went from being a confederation comprised of six *chinamit* at the service of the K'iche' to becoming an expansionist political unit at the eve of the Spaniards arrival.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE KAQCHIKEL ACCORDING TO PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

“Ke re’ mani qqajinäq wi ruq’ij ralaxik tinamit, kecha’ qatata’

K’a ma, xe re wi ri Sotz’il, Kaqchikel, Tuquche’, Aqajal winäq.

Kaji’ chi ajawa’ qarisam najt naqaj” IV

“May the glory of the people’s offspring never decay. So, said

our grandparents and parents, the Sotz’il, Kaqchikel, Tuquche’ Aqajal peoples.

Four lords conquered the near and distant towns”

Guerras Comunes entre K’iche’s y Kaqchikeles (2001:148)

Through the review and analysis of primary source documents written in K’iche’ and Kaqchikel, it has been possible to reconstruct the early history of the Kaqchikel. Due to the absence of dates in the Kaqchikel origin story, it was proposed to organize their history from the occupation of their main settlements that were organized in chronological order. The sites that were included in this sequence were those where the Kaqchikel experienced the dawn. The ethnohistorical study presented in this chapter addresses the centralization process of the Kaqchikel sociopolitical organization and the nucleation of their settlements. This process did not occur in isolation since the conformation of their new centralized polity took place as a means of resistance against the K’iche’ domain. Therefore, the Kaqchikel ethnogenesis can be understood as the emergence of a new centralized sociopolitical organization comprised of four confederations and the development of a collective identity that started after the foundation of its first citadel or *tinamit* named Chi Awär. In Chi Awär, the Kaqchikel and their allied confederations began to live together and had the opportunity to have their own government. Even though the fact that the Kaqchikel *tinamit* was located within the K’iche’ area of influence, they maintained their cultural practices.

During the Late Postclassic period in the Guatemalan highlands, populations' identity developed around their territory and their citadels to which they were affiliated. For this reason, it is important to ascertain when and where the Kaqchikel founded their first *tinamit* and how they governed from there. Even though the Kaqchikel claimed that they experienced their dawn in multiple places, I postulate that the Kaqchikel and their allies experienced their first dawn in Chi Awär as the Sotz'il stated.

Before the primordial dawn

Rulers: Q'aq'awitz and Saqtekaw (ca.1350-1400)

Before the Kaqchikel moved to the south of the Quiche basin after having started an alliance with the K'iche' ca 1400, it is very probable that they lived in the Aqajal territories that included the current territories of Joyab'aj (El Quiche'), the north of San José Poaquil and Comalapa, San Martin Jilotepeque and the Sacatepequez department. While they were living in the Aqajal territories, they incorporated two *chinamit* into their confederation, the Sibaqijay and the B'ak'ajol. Nowadays, these two *chinamit* are patronymics in the Sacatepequez department. Sibaqijay is a strong surname in Santa Maria Cauqué, while Bakajol is a common surname in Santo Domingo Xenacoj. At this point, the Kaqchikel was a single *amaq'*, or a confederation comprised of four *chinamit* or lineages: the Xajil, Q'eqak'uch, Sib'aqijay and Bakajol (See Figure 15).

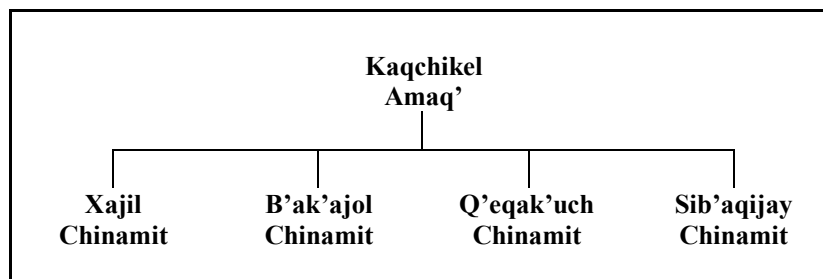


Figure 15. Kaqchikel confederation and its chinamit

The Título de Jilotepeque informs that when the Aqajal or Chajoma’—as they identify themselves—colonized new territories in the central highlands, they were accompanied by the Kaqchiquele’ (Cabezas Carcache 2008:163). Another group who had a close relationship with the Aqajal were the Xpantzay. The Xpantzay, members of the Sotz’il confederation, claimed that their forefathers named Chimalakan and Chikb’al married two Aqajal women—Xkujay and Xtz’ikinajay—who were members of the Raxonijay and Chokojoy *chinamits*. During this alliance, the Xpantzay lived temporarily at Chi Koraj, Chi Sase’ and Och’al Kab’awil Siwan (Recinos 2001:155). Och’al Kab’awil Siwan corresponds to the archaeology site of Chuisac, which is a few kilometers south of the current town of Panochal in San Martin Jilotepequez (Carmack 1975:136). It is still unknown for how many years the Xpantzay and Kaqchikel remained in the Aqajal territory, but they eventually abandoned Och’al because the Aqajal supposedly started to sacrifice their women and eventually they tried to kill them (Recinos 2001:157). After abandoning Och’al, the Kaqchikel embarked on a journey to find new allies to strengthen their confederation starting with the Poqom territory.

The Poqom territory covered the Veaparaces (Baja and Alta Verapaz), which was a very coveted area for the K’iche’an groups because of their important fluvial axes—the Chixoy and Motagua— and their resources (See figure 16). When the Kaqchikel arrived to what is now Baja Verapaz, they found those of Nim Poqom³ and those of Raxch’ich⁴ in a hill named Tzaqtzuy⁵. The native peoples of that zone were Poqom speakers⁶ who were called by the Kaqchikel and

³ Nimpoqom has been identified as the site of Chuitinamit (Ichon 1978:175), which was occupied during the Late Postclassic period and is located to the east of the Rabinal river in Baja Verapaz (Popenoe and Ivic 1996:244).

⁴ Alian Ichon et al (1978:154), suggest that Raxch’ich corresponds to the site Pueblo Viejo Chixoy. This site was occupied since the Pre-classic period and was uninterruptedly inhabited until the Late Postclassic period. Its strategic position between the confluence of three rivers make this place very defensive and strategic for communication.

⁵ Saqtzuy could be the Epiclassic site of Los Encuentros located to the west of Pueblo Viejo Chixoy (Ichon 1978:175)

⁶ The Poqom was a Maya language that was spoken in the territory of La Verapaz in Guatemala. After the K’iche’ invasion, this linguistic group was split in two giving birth to two linguistic groups: the Pokomchi’ and the Pokomam.

K'iche' as the *Wukamaq'*, 'the allies'⁷. During this encounter, the Kaqchikel adorned themselves as warriors and defeated the Poqom, however they did not stay to colonize the zone.



Figure 16. Map of the highlands showing the main Postclassic settlements (INTECAP 2007:252)

There is a possibility that the Kaqchikel were supporting the Rabinal'eb' in their expansionist campaign into this region. The Rab'inal'eb' lived in their first capital named Samaneb

The first language is spoken in Alta Verapaz (San Cristobal Verapaz, Santa Cruz Verapaz, Tactic, Tamahú and Tukurú) and in Baja Verapaz (Purulhá); and the second language is spoken in Escuintla (Palín), Guatemala (Chinaulta, Mixco, Petapa, Amatitlán, Pinula), Jalapa (San Luis Jilotepeque, San Pedro Pinula, San Carlos Alzate), and Jutiapa (Asunción Mita) (Richards and Macario 2003:70–72)

⁷ The *Wuqamaq'* included the Aq'ab', Ajkejaj, Rotzjayib', Uxab', K'ib'aja, B'akaj, Keb'atzunja, Ikomaki and Poq'omab' (Breton 2007:21). This term formerly was translate as the seven tribes (*wukub'* 'seven' and *amaq'* 'peoples', but I support Sam Colop idea that this word is derived from *Wuk'* 'with me' and *amaq'* 'people', which can be understood as the allied peoples (Colop 2008:193).

or Tzamaneb' which corresponds to the current archaeological site of Tres Cruces situated between Joyabaj and Cubulco, a border area amid the departments of El Quiché and Baja Verapaz. (Arnauld and Breton 1993:287). Eventually, the Rab'inaleb ventured into the Baja Verapaz territory and there constructed their new citadel named Kajyub' and possibly recouped Chuitinamit (Nimpoqom) (Breton 2007:21).

The document *Guerras Comunes* mentions the existence of an alliance between the Kaqchikel and the Rab'inaleb. It affirms that the Sotz'il, Tuquche' (Kaqchikel and Aqajal), did not wage wars against the Rab'inal because they were relatives (Recinos 2001:147). Both Rabinaleb' and Kaqchikel had lower status in comparison with K'ich'e and the Tz'tujil, and both also were identified as groups of warriors with their political organization.

Still being in the Poqom territory, the Kaqchikel found two persons named Loch and Xet who offered themselves in servitude to avoid being defeated. These two individuals were the forefathers of the Kejay who became the fifth *chinamit* of the Kaqchikel confederation. Further south of the Poqom territory, the Kaqchikel also found another couple named Totunay and Xurkaj who were the forefathers of the Kaweq and were living at Xe Nimachäj and Ximbäl Xuk⁸ (Maxwell and Hill 2006:76–80). After this meeting, the Kaweq became the sixth Kaqchikel *chinamit* of the Kaqchikel confederation (See Figure 17).

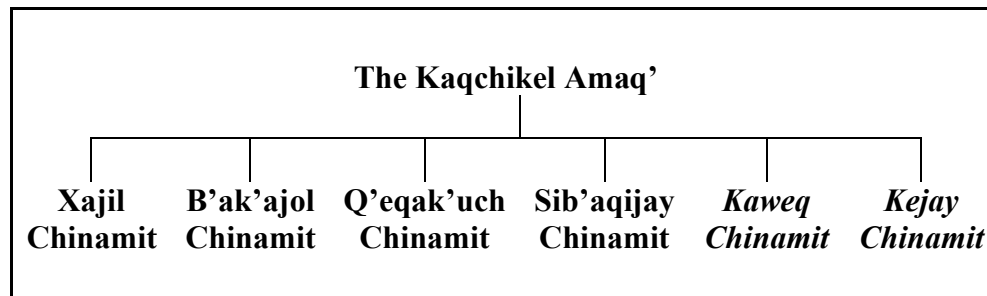


Figure 17. The Kaqchikel confederation after their alliance with two K'iche' chinamit

⁸ Ximb'axuk has been identified at the current municipality of Chiniqué, El Quiché (Carmack 2001:225).

The Xajil Chronicle indicates that the Kaweq were left behind by the Ajaw K'iche' (Maxwell and Hill 2006:79). The Ajaw K'iche' was a *chinamit* of the Nima' K'iche' confederation, along with the Kaweq, Nijaib' and Saqik. When the Nima' K'iche' founded their first citadel or *tinamit* named Q'aq'awitz in the Santa Rosa Chujuyub Valley, El Quiche, the Ajaw K'iche' was the leading *chinamit* while the other three held secondary positions. The alliance between the Kaqchikel and the Kaweq meant the beginning of a new stage in their history which coincided with the occupation of the south of the Quiche basin and the experience of their first dawn. The Xajil Chronicle provides detailed information regarding where the first dawn for the Kaqchikel took place and who attended the ceremony.

First then, came the Q'eqak'uch, the Bak'ajol,
the Sib'aqijay and the Kaweq;
they were sent forth.
You go first, you my house, my chinamit.
Make our buildings, our house foundations.
In just a little while, it will dawn.
Go forth! They were told".
They came then, they arrived
there at the place of dawning.
Pan Tzik, Pa Roxone', Sinajijay,
Pa Sub'aqul (and) Pa Kaweq Kejl
were the names of the hills where they dawned.
The construction of the buildings was begun for them.
The meeting place of their Ajpops,
(which was) named Nimajay,
was their first building (Maxwell and Hill 2006: 112-113).

After leaving Ximbäl Xuk, where the Kaweq were found, the Kaqchikel continued their journey towards Lake Atitlan. In this journey they established new alliances but not for increasing their own confederation, instead to configure their own political unity and eventually construct their citadel, or *tinamit*. Around Lake Atitlan, the Kaqchikel found a couple named K'ulawi Sochoj and K'ulawi' K'anti' who were the forefathers of the Iqomaq'i'. Before the imminent risk of being

attacked, the Iqomaq'i' surrendered in a place named Chi Q'alib'al⁹ and gave to the Kaqchikel their vassals named Kaqixajay and the K'ub'ulajay¹⁰ (Maxwell and Hill 2006:91–93). The Iqomaq'i' were relevant to the Kaqchikel history because they engendered the Sotz'il, the confederation that became the strongest allies of the Kaqchikel inside their new polity.

The Kaqchikel and the Sotz'il desired to get territories at the Lake Atitlán. For this purpose, they defeated some towns around the lake and agreed with the Tz'ikinajay (a Tz'utujil group) about the division of the lake. This agreement involved the marriage between Q'aq'awitz's sister and a Tz'ikinajay leader, therefore, the Kaqchikel and the Tz'ikinajay became *older brothers and younger brothers*. This phrase means that both groups established a relationship of kinship that was somewhat tense because eventually, Q'aq'awitz wanted to take his sister back with him, but she decided to stay with her husband. Another important event that took place in the Tz'utujil territory was the establishment of another alliance with the Tuquche', the last confederation with whom the Kaqchikel established a new system of quadripartite organization. The Xajil Chronicle describes the marriage between Q'aq'awitz—the Kaqchikel forefather—and a woman from the Tuquche' confederation named K'omaqa'. She was considered the first grandmother of the Xajil—the main Kaqchikel *chinamit*—and she gave birth to two sons named Kai'No'j and Kai' B'atz (Maxwell and Hill 2006:125), who were the following rulers of the Kaqchikel confederation. Robert Wauchope proposes that Q'aq'awitz ruled in 1383, so we can estimate that this alliance took place around this time (Wauchope 1975a:18). The Kaqchikel highlighted that these events occurred when they were still living in darkness. When the sunrise was about to break, they arrived

⁹ Chi Q'alib'al could correspond to the current village of Chucalibal in Chichicastenango. The name means 'the place of the royal sit or throne'.

¹⁰ Kaqixajay is the name of a current village in the municipality of Tecpán, which was and is still occupied by the Xpantay who had a strong relationship with both the Aqajal and the Sotz'il. The Kub'ulajay were the inhabitants from the current town of Cubulco, El Quiché.

at Pulch'ich', close to their place of dawn. The mention of Pulch'ich' is important because this place is a well-known sacred Maya altar located at the border between Sololá and Chichicastenango, and it is a geographic reference about where the Kaqchikel witnessed their first dawn. As was stated in the previous chapter, the Kaqchikel used metaphors to explain important events. When they expressed that they were leaving in darkness, they were saying that they had not yet found their territories to settle and where they could deposit their protector deities and experience the dawn.

During this early stage of the Kaqchikel's history, there is no mention of permanent or semi-permanent settlements. The Kaqchikel put a lot of effort into establishing new alliances to strengthen their organization and be able to found their citadel and experience their dawn. Without any settlement, they had no chance to grow and play an important role in the political landscape of the highlands of Guatemala. Even though they gained some territories at the Lake Atitlan, it seemed that the Tz'ikinajay still dominated their territories around the lake. By the end of their migration, the Kaqchikel completed both, their confederation and their system of quadripartite organization (See Figure 18); however, they were still living dispersed and they did not have power. Because these events described in the native texts are not accompanied by dates, this historical reconstruction is hypothetical. Only future archaeological research in the aforementioned sites could confirm or refute the information presented.

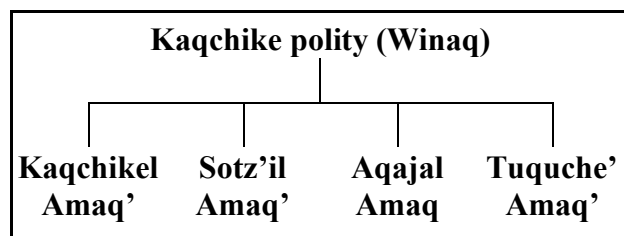


Figure 18. Members of the new Kaqchikel polity or winaq 'nation'

Primordial dawn at Pantzik, Pa Raxone', Simajijay, Pa Sib'aquj and Pa Kaweq-Kejil

The following section will list the main historical events that happened in the settlements where the Kaqchikel and their allies experienced the dawn, paying special attention to how the alliance between the K'iche' and Kaqchikel evolved through time, and how the first group influenced the inception of the Kaqchikel polity. According to the *Xajil Chronicle*, the Kaqchikel experienced the dawn multiple times in the following places: Pan Tzik Pa Raxone' Yalab'ey Simajijay, Pa Sib'aqul and Pa Kaweq-Kejil; Pan Che' and Chi Q'ojom; Chi Awär Tz'ipitaq'aj; Nik'aya' and K'otoxul (Maxwell and Hill 2006:150). I propose that Pan Tzik might be the *saqirib'al* or the foundational altar of the Xajil, Paraxone' could be the *saqirib'al* of the Q'eqak'uch, Yalab'ey Sinajijay is identified in the Xajil Chronicle as the *saqarib'al* of the B'akajol (Ibid, 129) and Sib'aqul might be the foundation altar of the Sib'aqijay. Also, the Kaweq-Kejil Hill correspond to the *saqirib'al* of the newly incorporated *chinamits*, the Kaweq and the Kejay. These hills where the Kaqchikel located their saqarib'al and where they experienced their primordial dawn have been located at the bordering area of Chichicastenango, Tecpán and Sololá. The Kaqchikel affirmed that together with the Kaqchikel, Sotz'il and Tuquche', they experienced their primordial dawn at Pantzik Pa Raxone', only the Aqajal experienced this event in a nearby site (Otzoy 1999:167), possibly in their own territories close to the Pixcaya' river.

When the Kaqchikel entered to the Chichicastenango territory, they found the original inhabitants called as the Kupilkat and Kanalaqam. This encounter developed into a confrontation that ended with the defeat of the locals at the B'akajol's place of dawn, Yalab'ey Simajijay. Eventually, the Kaqchikel incorporated one of the two Kupilkat survivors into their political organization and the other joined the K'iche' (Maxwell and Hill 2006:129). There is a possibility that when the Kaqchikel lived in the Aqajal territories, the B'ak'ajol were the leading *chinamit*. However, when they were established in the Chichicastenango territory, the other *chinamits* did

not agree with the continuation of the Bak'ajol's representative as the Ajpop, so there was an internal conflict at the Nima' Jay, which possibly caused its abandonment. After leaving the Nima' Jay, where Q'aq'awitz was buried, his sons Ka'i' No'j and Ka'i' B'atz' established their new site in another group of hills within the Chichicastenango territory where they experienced the dawn for the second time.

Pan Che, Chi Q'ojom, Muqb'al sib' and Chuwila'

Rulers: Ka'i' No'j and Ka'i' B'atz' (1400-1415 CE)

Following the abandonment of Pan Tzik Pa Raxone', the Kaqchikel indicated that they again experienced the dawn at Pan Che', Chi Q'ojom, Muqb'al sib', (and Chuwila')¹¹. All these settlements can be found in the current Chichicastenango municipality (Carmack 2001:235). While living in Pa Che' and Chi Q'ojom, Ka'i' Noj and Ka'i' B'atz' introduced themselves before an important ruler named Tepew who was the lord of the Ka'uqs (Kaweq). When this lord learned that Ka'i' Noj and Ka'i' B'atz' were Q'aq'awitz's sons, he offered them elevated tasks, including collecting taxes from subordinated peoples in the highlands. Scholars have suggested that Tepew was a ruler from the site of San Andres Sajcabaja' (Carmack 2001:158; Ichon 1993:115), however, I consider him a member of the Nima' K'iche', the predominant K'iche' confederation in the highlands during the fifteenth century. Tepew was likely a tittle carried by the K'iche' ruler Q'ukumatz (1400-425), who founded the last K'iche' capital Q'umarkaj. This title exalted not only his power as a ruler and conqueror but also its connection with Mesoamerican gods. According to the *Título Nijaib' I*, after the K'iche' captains launched a successful expansionist campaign toward

¹¹ Chuwila' does not appear in Kaqchikel documents as one of their settlement, perhaps because it was incorporated into the military calpules at the service of the Nima' K'iche'.

the Mam territory of Oztzoya in the fifteenth century, the K'iche' captains and heads of *calpuls* delivered the booties of war and the collected taxes from Tepew and Q'ukumatz.

“And then they ordered that they should go and guard all of the gold, pearls, and diamonds, emeralds, and all of the jewels that the conquerors (had) (taken) from all of the villages That they had conquered and the gift (s) that (they) had given them and the taxes. (All) of this (the) heads of (the) *calpul* ordered all of these leaders.... That they should guard it, that nothing should be lost, (these) two were called the treasurer (and) the accountant, the one Tepew and the other Q'ukumatz. And then came all the villages that these caciques had conquered, which are (mentioned) above, to pay them tribute, they agreed to leave it, all of them, without any village remaining because they all were already subject to these caciques, their conquerors” (Matsumoto 2017:355 & 356).

In this text, Tepew and Q'uk'umatz appears as administrative officials in charge of gathering and protecting the booties of war, but also as a cacique to whom taxes were delivered in Q'umarkaj. The combination of the names Tepew and Q'ukumatz has its root in the K'iche' religious beliefs. In the *Popol Wuj*, the section that addresses the K'iche' cosmology, a list of creators' gods appears in couples who were responsible for creating the universe and life on earth. This list includes Tz'aqol, B'itol; Alom, K'ajolom; Junajpu Wuch', Junajpu' Utiw; Saqinim Aq, Saqinim Sis; Tepew, Q'ukumatz; among others (Colop 1999:21). The K'iche' rulers sometimes adopted names of gods to present themselves as the reincarnation or the continuation of them on earth. Q'ukumatz 'Quetzal Serpent' is the K'iche' version of Quetzalcoatl. Quetzalcoatl was a Mesoamerican deity who was worshipped by different ethnolinguistic groups, principally by the people who inhabited the city of Tula, Hidalgo. Additional evidence that supports the correspondence between Tepew and the K'iche' ruler Q'ukumatz, is the fact that Ka'i' Noj and Ka'i' B'atz' were given the task to collect taxes among the Tz'utujil. The Titulo de Totonicapán describes how an alliance was initiated between the K'iche' and the Tz'utujil of Majal. This document includes an account that Q'ukumatz Kotuja sent offerings through messengers to the people from Malaj to request

permission to get married with Xlem, a Tz'utujil woman. Malaj is a town located at the piedmont between the Lake Atitlán and the Pacific Coast, who had an antagonistic relationship with those of Tz'ikinajay. This alliance, which brought more benefits to the K'iche' than to the Tz'tujil, also linked the K'iche' with small towns located at the Pacific Coast that were under the control of the Malaj people, including Xetulul (San Marrín Zapotitlán), Yab'akoj (Cuyotenango), K'aqolkej (Mazatenango), Yatza (place in Chicacao), among others. The same document mentions that the Malaj confronted and defeated the Tz'ikinajay from Atitlán, an event that resulted in the incorporation of the latter as vassal of Q'ukumatz while the Malaj were granted with titles of authority (Carmack and Mondloch 2007:131–133). It is very probable that the Tz'ikinajay paid taxes to Q'ukumatz and that this ruler assigned Ka'i' Noj and Ka'i' B'atz to carry out the duty of collecting tributes among the people from Atitlán.

When the Kaqchikel brothers went to the Tz'ikinajay's territory to collect taxes, the local leaders convinced the two brothers to become their sons-in-law by marrying them with their daughters named B'ub'atz'o and Ikxiw. Because the marriages took place without the knowledge of Tepew, the two brothers were afraid of his reaction. With that in mind, they hid inside a cave until they were found by some relatives who begged them to return with Tepew. A messenger was sent to inform Tepew about the existence of the two brothers and to express that they would return if their rivals, named Q'alel Xajil and Ajuchan Xajil,¹²would perish. Apparently, Tepew agreed to the deal and welcomed them with joy. In this way, the brothers returned with their wives to Pan Che' and Chi Q'ojom, became lords and begat sons and daughters. The veracity of this story can be questioned; however, it is known with certainty that the Kaqchikel celebrated several marriages with the Tz'ikinajay and from that alliance they were able to obtain the east side of Lake Atitlán.

¹² Q'alel Xajil and Ajuchan Xajil were secondary titles in the Kaqchikel *amaq'*, which was held by Saktekaw's sons, the second Kaqchikel forefathers who died before their arrival to Lake Atitlán.

However, the locals always showed resistance towards the Kaqchikel, which lasted until the arrival of the Spaniards. With the establishment of this alliance and marriages with noble women, the Kaqchikel started to configure their internal political organization comprised of four positions of leaderships: the Ajpop Xajil, the Ajpop K'amaja, the Ajuchan Xajil, and the Q'alel Xajil. The first two positions held the real power in the organization, while the last two were more administrative positions usually performed by firstborn sons (See Figure 19).

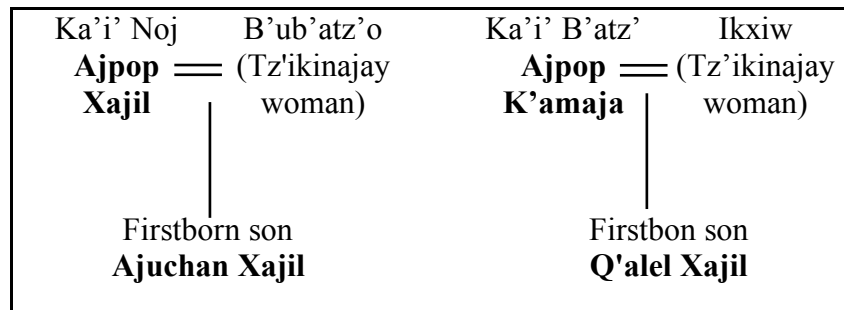


Figure 19. Government structure inside the Kaqchikel confederation

This quadripartite system inside the Kaqchikel confederation continued while they remained in Panche' and Chi Q'ojom, but it is possible that these authorities lived at Chuwila'. The Popol Wuj identified Chuwila' as the main territory of the Kaqchikel (Colop 2008:185). The close relationship between Tepew Q'ukumatz and the two Kaqchikel brothers was possible because Q'ukumatz was a member of the Kaweq *chinamit*, which previously was incorporated into the Kaqchikel confederation and with whom they experienced their primordial dawn at Pantzik and Paraxone'. When the Kaqchikel started an alliance with the Kaweq, the latter had no power. But when Q'ukumatz started to rule, the Kaweq became the most powerful K'iche' *chinamit* who ruled from Q'umarkaj. Despite that the Kaqchikel affirmed that they had a privileged position inside the K'che' polity because of their close relationship with the Kaweq and Q'ukumatz, it is very likely that they were also controlled and exploited like the rest of the

subordinate groups. The documents written by the Sotz'il, who also lived in the Chichicasteñango territory, contain a more critical approach about their relationship with the K'iche'.

Muqb'al sib

Ruler: Xpantzay No'j (1400-1415 CE)

The Xpantzay, a *chinamit* member of the Sotz'il confederation, lived at Muqb'al Sib' B'itol Amaq' and unlike the Kaqchikel, they described the ordeals they experienced while they were subordinate allies of Q'ukumatz. According to the document *Guerras comunes de Quiches y Cakchiqueles* and the *Testamento de Xpantzay*, when the Sotz'il and the Tuquche' arrived at Muqb'al Sib', they had no weapons and no experience with war. They lived humbly inside hollow trunks and they only practiced their magic arts until the dawn (Recinos 2001:133). Q'ukumatz convinced them to take weapons—arrows and shields—and fight against the K'iche's vassals and enemies, starting with those from K'oja'. Q'ukumatz had a daughter who married to Tecum Siqom Puwaq, ruler of K'oja. The location of this town is still unknown. The context of this story suggests that Tecum wanted to break the alliance with the K'iche since subordinate allies usually paid taxes and provided different kind of services when needed. When the K'iche' ruler asked the Sotz'il and their allies to attack Tecum's town, they immediately refused because they had no weapons and they were certain that they would die because they did not know how to fight. After Q'ukumatz ordered them to go for the second time, the Sotz'il, together with the Kaqchikel, the Tuquche' and the Aqajal left reluctantly. It is told in the document *Guerras Comunes* that “the K'iche' dragged them into the war, and this was the order they were forced to carry out” (Recinos 2001:137). This situation coincides with what the Spanish chronicler and catholic priest Francisco Ximénez wrote in his chronicle *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapas y Guatemala* (1965), about the

military strategies of the K'iche'. He accounts that the K'iche' forced other confederations to ally with them and then together wrest the lands from their neighbors. Those who dared to challenge them were enslaved and sacrificed in front of their gods and if they refused the payment of the taxes, the sum of it was multiplied (Ximénez 1965:47).

When they were in battle, the Sotz'il and allies complained that the K'iche' warriors returned leaving them alone enduring the war. The Sotz'il claimed that they only succeeded in the battle thanks to their supernatural gifts and the help of natural elements such as the haze, darkness and rain. Shortly after, Q'ukumatz again requested the Kaqchikel to attack Tecum because this time he killed his daughter. In this campaign, approximately 400-800 warriors went to war but they were defeated by the K'oja and Q'uqumatz died in this battle (Recinos 2001:137–139).

As the K'iche' polity of Q'umarkaj grew and expanded, its administrative system was developing, as well as its military strategies. Ximénez also wrote that during Q'ukumatz rulership, he delimited the borders of his territories and protected them by installing garrison sites, or *calpuls*, occupied by warriors and military leaders. Their main function was to alert K'iche' rulers of enemy incursions and to gather military forces in time of war (Ximénez 1999:132). As the K'iche' were expanding to new territories, they were locating new *calpuls* at the borders of their newly acquired territories. The K'iche' polity was comprised of three *amaq'*, or confederations—the Nima' K'iche', Ilokab' and Tamub'—being the first the ruling *amaq'* in Q'umarkaj. In turn, this confederation was composed of four *chinamits*: the Kaweq, Neja'ib, Ajaw K'iche' and Saqik. The K'iche' *winäq*, or nation, did not have a formal army at the service of their nation, instead each confederation had a group of *calpuls*, or small villages, that performed as garrison sites at strategic points. The inhabitants of these calpuls were called as the *Oxlajuj Ch'ob Ajilab'al* 'the thirteen

division of warriors’; they also appear as the *B’anol lab’al* ‘the war makers’, or the *Chajal juyub’* the ‘guardians of mountains.’

The K’iche’ reinforced their authority over these *calpuls* by sending K’iche’ captains to lead these small settlements and by imposing several rules that had to be obeyed. Some of the rules explicitly prohibited the veneration of other gods different from those of the K’iche’, and denied the *calpuls* the right to build temples or altars to their gods. Other rules prohibited local authorities from governing without K’iche’ elite authorization, to reenacting the dawn due to its political implications (Sam Colop 2008: 202, 203; Ximénez 1965: 48-50). The K’iche’ documents present the list of the main *calpuls* or *chinamits* who served the Nima’ K’iche’ elite: Aj Wila’, Aj Chulimal, Saqiya’, Xajbakyej, Wajxalajuj, Kab’raqan, Chab’iq’aq’, Chi Junajpu, Aj Maq’a, Aj Xayab’aj, Aj Saqkab’aja’, Aj Siyaja’, Aj Miq’ina and Aj Xelajuj (Colop 2008:187, 188). See table 1 where the names of military *calpuls* at the service of the Nima’ K’iche’ are listed.

It was during the rulership of Q’ukumatz (ca 1400-1425 CE) that the Kaqchikel and allies were incorporated into this system of military *calpuls*, even though the K’iche’ did not say this explicitly. The Kaqchikel claimed that as part of the *Oxlajuj Ch’ob’ Ajilabal*, they traveled to Tulan to bring their symbols and titles, according to their identity and social position in the region. In Tulan, the Kaqchikel received a set of weapons that included, *ch’a’or* ‘arrow’; *pokob’ or* ‘shield’; *setesik che’ or* ‘rounded wood’; *q’i’om aj or* ‘straight cane’; *k’uk’um or* ‘bright feathers’ and the *saqkab’ or* ‘white clay.’ As warriors, they also were called as *Aj Chay* ‘those of the obsidian’ and *Aj K’am* ‘those of the rope’, because both elements were associated with warfare. Because they were only warriors, they were the last group to enter and leave Tulan after the K’iche’, the Tz’utujil and other groups (Maxwell and Hill 2006:26–38). In ancient Mesamerica, the most important political and ceremonial centers were granted with the title of Tollan, Tolan,

Tulan, Seven Caves Seven Ravines. According to Alfredo López and Leonardo López, Tulan is part of an ancient and widespread ideology (that they named Zuyua) where the multiethnic centers were in charge of establishing order in the world. An important characteristic of this ideology is that the rulers of these powerful centers presented themselves as the incarnation of the god Quetzalcoatl ‘Quetzal-serpent’, or feathered serpent’. Along the history of Mesoamerica, the rules that led the polities that epitomize Tulan, established military, tributary and sometimes expansionist states. Some ancient centers that were recognized as Tulan in Mesoamerica were Teotihuacán, Xochicalco, Tula -Hidalgo, Cholula, Chichen Itza (López Austin and López Luján 1999) and possibly Q’umarkaj. Therefore, it is very possible that the Kaqchikel traveled to Q’umarkaj, the highland Tulan, to bring the symbol of their profession and identity.

The control the K’iche’ exerted over the military calpuls, including the Kaqchikel who joined this institution, was observed not only by the set of rules imposed on them but with instructions about where they have to settled and live. When the Kaqchikel and allies arrived at the territory of Chichicastenango after leaving Pantzik and Pa Raxone’, apparently they were instructed by the K’iche’ to occupy strategic positions in the Chichicastenango territory as indicated by the following evidence. First, Panche’, Chi Q’ojom , Muqb’alsib’ and Chuwila’, appear in the *Titulo de Totonicapán* as K’iche’ settlements¹³. Second, when the Kaqchikel ventured in this territory, they mentioned that they defeated the native inhabitants called Kupilkat and Kanalaqam. The K’iche’, specifically, the Tamub’ confederation, similarly declared that they defeated these local groups in Muqub’al sib’, a village next to Simajijay, the place where the

¹³ List of K’iche’ settlements according to the *Titulo de Totonicapán*. See numbers eighteen and nineteen. 1. Q’aq’awitz and Patojil, 2. Sibakija, 3. Chiwaj, 4. Pacayá Xejoyán, 5. In blank (in the original doc), 6. Barabic Chún, 7. Panbilil Pantz’okan, 8. Tikaj ch’alib’, 9. Tibatzi’ Rajawich’e, 10. Jobalam Q’anulew, 11. Chiwa’n Chik’uk’, 12. Xech’ayab’ Ximbaxuk, 13. Tz’utuja’, 14. K’utub’e Chuk’abal, 15. Yumukutu’ Raxajnaj, 16. Chitzak’eb Chiyaki, 17. K’alemiat Kukurab’aj, 18. Pa Che’ Chi Q’ojom, 19. Chik’ab’awilanik, Muqb’al Sib’, 20. Jumetaja’, 21. K’ulba’ Kawinal, 21. Chi Ismachi’ or Pismachi’(Carmack and Mondloch 1983a:188, 189)

Kaqchikel faced the same groups (Carmack and Mondloch 2007:117–119). Third, the K'iche' identified Chuwila' not only as the main Kaqchikel settlement, but also as one of the most important military calpul of the Nima' K'iche' confederation. This evidence suggests that both K'iche' and Kaqchikel were together when they colonized this territory and that they lived together in Panche', Chi Q'ojom, Muqch'alsib' and Chuwila', possibly protecting the southern frontier of the K'iche' capital of Q'umarkaj together. In order to consolidate this alliance, the Testamento de los Xpantzay mentions that during the rulership of Q'uqumatz, the Sotz'il, Tuquche' and Kaqchikel celebrated marriages with members of the Kaweq *chinamit*. Therefore, the K'iche' women Toj and Q'anel became their new grandmothers, instead of Xkujay and Xtzikinajay of the Aqajal people (Recinos 2001:161).

The information provided by indigenous texts about the relationship between Q'ukumatz and the Kaqchikel, showed that marriages between the Kaweq and the Kaqchikel did not assure a life full of opportunities or privileges. However, this alliance allowed the Kaqchikel to be part of the K'iche' administration and perform important duties in the military field. The Kaqchikel were aware that they could improve their status by serving as military auxiliaries since warfare was the most important sphere that allows social mobilization in Postclassic Mesoamerica. Although the K'iche' documents do not mention the Kaqchikel in their expansionist campaigns, it is very likely that they accompanied Q'ukumatz in this venture. During the rulership of Q'ukumatz, he and his people conquered the Rab'inaleb', Aqajal, Aq'aab', Aguacatec, Uspantec, Mam and perhaps the Ixil (Fox 1978:3), and the Tz'ikinajay from Lake Atitlán. During the rulership of Q'ukumatz the power of the Kaqchikel and their allies were very limited, but their situation improved with the next K'iche' government.

The rulership of K'iq'ab' (1425-14750) and the rise of the Kaqchikel polity

K'iq'ab' was born a little after the death of Q'ukumatz¹⁴ and he governed Q'umarkaj between 1425 to 1475 CE. The document *Guerras comunes* narrates how K'iq'ab' avenged Q'ukumatz's murder and how he recovered his bone remains in Koja. When K'iq'ab' entered to govern, he requested that his people, the K'iche', go back to Koja to recover the bones of his predecessor and to take control of that territory. K'iq'ab's people refused to go because they were scared to die as Q'ukumatz did. Also, they suggested that the Kaqchikel should be asked to fulfill this duty. Given this response, K'iq'ab complained saying that they should have gone with the Kaqchikel principally because he already had rewarded his people with glory and lordship. The next day, K'iq'ab's people together with the Kaqchikel departed for Koja where they were able to burn the town, kill Tecum and finally recover the bones of Q'ukumatz. The document also mentions that the booties of war were hidden by the K'iche', an act that was condemned by the Sotz'il and their allies (Recinos 2001:143–145). K'iq'ab, unlike Q'ukumatz, made greater efforts to reward the support provided by the Kaqchikel, considering that his own people were sometimes reluctant to fight. He and Kawisimaj—the Ajpop Kamja'—were the rulers who expanded the K'iche' polity to its maximum with the Kaqchikel support. The *Popol Wuj* briefly lists the most important places that both rulers defeated. Among them is the homeland of the Kaqchikel named Chuwila' (Chichicastenango), the homeland of the Rabinaleb' which is known as Pa Maka' (Zacualpa), they defeated those of Kawkeb' (Santa María Cauqué), those of Saqkabaja (San Andrés Sajcabaja'), the citadels of the Saqulewab' (Huehuetenango), Chuwi' Meq'ena (Totonicapán), Xelaju (Quetzaltenango), Chuwa Tz'aq (Momostenango) and Tz'ojol Che' (Santa

¹⁴ The *Título de los Señores de Totonicapan* indicates that K'iq'ab' was the son of Kotuja II and not Q'ukumatz (Carmack and Mondloch 1983a). Kotuja II was the Ajpop Kamja, the second in command in the K'iche' polity, who possibly took temporarily the leadership of the K'iche' polity after the murder of Q'ukumatz.

María Chiquimula) (Colop 2008:199 & 200). The Kaqchikel claimed that the K'iche' did not fight alone, instead both joined arrows and shields to conquer these towns.

“Lord K'iq'ab' was powerful in lordship. They were there above the town Q'umarkaj Chi Ismachi. All the amaq' was paying tribute to him. Because of this, the thirteen divisions of warriors were gathering there at Q'umarkaj. Then they were testing the strength of their bows, their shields. They defeated the small amaq's, the large amaq's, all the ravines and towns. The K'iche' winäq did not do it alone; thirteen divisions of warriors defeated the amaq' or peoples. Thus, lord K'iq'ab' became powerful there” (Maxwell and Hill 2006:158–159).

Both documents, the *Xajil Chronicle* and the *Guerras Comunes*, list the places and peoples that were defeated by the K'iche' in collaboration with the Kaqchikel confederations in more detail. The first document, written by members of the Kaqchikel confederation, lists the defeated towns in the first expansionist wave that covered the north and east of the highlands. These places were: Jalik, Witawm, Lajub' B'elej Kwijay, Xub'ab'al, Q'aq'alix, Jultukur, K'ama, Q'eq'um, Chik'otuc, chi Kaquyuc' (Baja Verapaz) K'oja, Ajtzuruya', Sutum, Ch'ixnal (Baja Verapaz), Molob'aq, Toxk'omine, Tujalajay (Sacapulas), Uchab'ajay (Lago Atitlán), Ajch'umilajay (Sololá), Lamaq'ib' (Santiago Atitlán), Kumatz (Possibly close to Maria Tecun in Sololá), Rapaq, Chichaj, Uxa', Ajalkil, Molomik Ab'aj, Nim Poqom (Baja and Alta Verapaz), Nakuxkux, B'ulb'ux Ya' (Almolonga), Pan Aj, Chi Jolom, Q'eqasiwan, Q'uq'u Juyu', K'axk'an (Aqajal towns), Wuqu' Siwan, and Xe Rajapit. (Otzoy 1999:174). The second document, written by the Xpantzay, lists the sites that were related to the second and greatest expansionist campaigns of the K'iche' into the west highlands and the Pacific Coast: Kumatz, Tujal Winaq (Sacapulas), Bajay, Tzitzol, Zaqulew (Huehuetenango), Chuwi Meq'ena' (Totonicapán) and Xelajub' (Quetzaltenango), Jalik and Tabajal. Some of them were defeated by the Aj Chiyu' and the Aj Chi Kakix which are *chinamits* of the Sotz'il amaq' (Recinos 2001:145). The Titulo Nejai'b' I, a K'iche' document, provides a more detailed list of places that were conquered in the second

K'iche' expansionist campaign. Several places have not been identified yet. This list includes the Sotz'il- Tz'oloch'e' (Santa María Chiquimula), Rwakaq, Postera, Tzutz'u-Qulb'alja', Bobos, Kiej Ab'aj, Sija' (San Carlos Sija), Palin Kiej, Iloka-Ab'aj, Xekul (San Andrés Xecul), B'ab'akaj, Paxchum, Sija' Chukul Juyub', Paxtoka' (Totonicapán), Xetzalamchoch, Kantel (Cantel), Chikiab'aj, Zunil (Zunil), Kajpoklaj and some Mam towns (Cabezas Carcache 2009:101). During this incursion, the K'iche' forced the Mam to move out from their lands, that were eventually colonized by the K'iche'. The Kaqchikel did not participate in the colonization process of this area.

The success that the K'iche' reached under K'iq'ab' rulership had an impact on the Kaqchikel's lives, since their status and their political position in the highlands also improved. One notable change was that the Kaqchikel and allies' leaders no longer occupied simple *calpuls* as part of the thirteen divisions of warriors, because they obtained the right to have their own polity and a citadel or *tinamit*. In around ca. 1430 CE, K'iq'ab' allowed the Kaqchikel to settle in Chi Awär. This new settlement is located on a small plateau surrounded by deep ravines in the current hamlet of Chontala in Chichicastenango. I agree with the Sotz'il when they affirmed that they experienced the dawn for the first time in Chi Awär because it was not until they moved to this place that they had the freedom to have their own government and the right to rule. In this *tinamit*, the four allied confederations started to live together and started to configure their own government.

Chi Awär Tzupitaq'aj (ca.1430-1470 C.E.)

Chi Awär can be considered as the first citadel of the Kaqchikel with a quadripartite system of government comprised by representatives of four confederations that can also be considered as *winäq* or nations. These confederations—Kaqchikel, Sotz'il, Aqajal and Tuquche'—as a unit was

called by other highland groups as the Kaqchikel, but inside the polity each confederation exalted their own nation. The origin story of the Kaqchikel reflects this quadripartite organization. The Kaqchikel forefathers Q'aq'awitz and Saqtekaw explained to their sons that "people come from four Tulans: from the east one Tulan; another from the nadir; another from the west, thence came we, from the west; another came from the zenith. Thus, there are four Tulans, you, my sons," they say (Maxwell and Hill 2006:6,7). The Aqajal was the only group that remained in their own territory at the east, but still maintained a political alliance with the Kaqchikel, which was visible in times of crisis¹⁵. This quadripartite alliance that started in Pantzik Paroxone' was consolidated in Chi Awär and lasted until the foundation of Chi Iximche', the last Kaqchikel capital.

The Kaqchikel polity founded Chi Awär around 1430 after Kiq'ab rewarded them with lands to construct their *tinamit* and the opportunity to have their own government. Kiq'ab was conscious that members of the Kaqchikel, Sotz'il, Aqajal and Tuquche' were worthy to govern (Otzoy 1999:173). During the short occupation of Chi Awär, there were two government periods that lasted an average of 15-20 years each. It is important to highlight that before the occupation of Chi Awär, the members of the Kaqchikel Winäq lived separately in their own settlements. The Kaqchikel were settled in Panche', Chu Q'ojom and possibly in Chuwila'; the Sotzil and Xpantzay lived in Muqb'al Sib' and nearby Q'umarkaj; the Aqajal were in Och'al and then in Chwa' Nima' Pek; and in regards of the Tuquche', there is no information about their main settlements but since their leaders got married with the Kaqchikel, it is possible that they lived together. In Chi Awär, each confederation (except for the Aqajal) had their own plaza and architectural complex which were located one next to the other (See figure 10). About this new pattern of settlement, I wonder

¹⁵ Another case took place at Chi iximche', the last Kaqchikel capital, when the Tuquche' started an internal revolt in 1493 because they were disputing some territories against the Aqajal. On this opportunity, the Kaqchikel showed their support to the Aqajal which resulted in the abandonment of chi Iximche by the Tuquche'.

whether the Kaqchikel decided to live in this centralized manner, or if it was the K'iche' leaders who imposed this new lifestyle. It is more likely that the Kaqchikel decided to live in commonality since they reproduced this settlement pattern as an independent polity when they moved to Chi Iximche'. Unlike the Kaqchikel, the K'iche' had three separated citadels—Q'umarkaja, Ismachi and Chisalin—one for each of their confederations instead of having three architectonic groups within a single site. In Chi Awär, the representatives of each confederation received titles of authority: the Ajpo(p)Xajil, Ajpo(p)Sotz'il, Ajpo(p) Tuquche' and Ajpo(p)Raxonijay. The Raxonijay was an Aqajal *chinamit* with whom the Xpantzay celebrated marriages when both groups lived at Och'al.

Xitayul Yax, Sitan Tijax Kab'alaj, Rajamun and Xikitzal (1430-1455)

Two events stand out from the government period of these leaders: the conquest of more territories around Lake Atitlan and the conquering of some Aqajal enemy factions. The document *Guerras Comunes* narrates that the Kaqchikel and allies occupied the following settlements at the east of lake Atitlán: Tzololá, Ajachel, Coón y Payán Chocol. Because of the great impact of this campaign, these zones were called *Bakil Juyu'*, *Bakil Tinamit* 'Mountain of bones,' 'Town of bones (Recinos 2001:147, 148). Perhaps in this battle the Kaqchikel needed to reconquer their territories obtained previously around lake Atitlan. Regarding the second event, the Memorial de Sololá indicates that during the rulership of Rajamun and Xikitzal there were two military leaders, Jun Toj and Wuqu' B'at', who defeated important Aqajal settlements. For this enterprise, Jun Toj went to B'oq'oiya' and Wuqu B'atz' headed to Xek'is che' from where they waged an attack against the people from Pan Aj and Chi Jolom that were occupied by Ich'al Amullak's people. This Aqajal ruler was behind a former attack toward other Aqajal groups who lived in Och'al and

forced its abandonment. The Kaqchikel managed to seize these settlements, but Ramamuj and Xikitzal died in battle. Because Jun Toj and Wuqu' B'atz showed courage and had a good performance as warriors, they were chosen as the following rulers of Chi Awär. As their predecessors, Jun Toj and Wuqu' B'atz' exalted that they had magic powers, wisdom, courage and power to conquer lands (Otzoy 1999:173).

When the Kaqchikel moved to Chi Awär they were free to worship their own Kab'awilab' or protector deities, and have temples dedicated to them, which previously were banned while they lived in *calpuls* as part of the thirteen division of warriors. The Kaqchikel explained that when they traveled to Tulan, they and their allies received their own Kab'awil. The Kab'awil were supernatural beings, sometimes renowned ancestors, who have the mission to protect and guide their followers and promote the wellbeing of their community. It is told in the Xajil Chronicle that when they arrived at Tulan, they faced a battle with animated elements, therefore they sought refuge and hid in specific places, from which they derived their protector gods' particular names

The K'iche' people said: 'Thundering and sliding, I went into the sky. Just into the sky, I went to save myself', he said. Thus, this protector god was named Tojojil (Tojil).

The Sotz'il people said: 'I just remained there. I just saved myself in the beak of the Macaw' he said. Thus, their protector god was named Kaqix Kan.

The Kaqchikel people said: 'Just in the middle of the plain I saved myself; I just descended into the earth'. Thus, this one protector god was named Chi Taq'aj (In the plain).

Another protector god called Q'ukumatz, just in the water he saved himself.

Then the Tuquche' people said: 'I just saved myself above, within an amaq', he said. Thus, this one was named Ajsik Amaq'.

Then the Aqajal people said: 'I just saved myself inside a wasps' nest', he said. Thus, this one protector god was named Aqalajay¹⁶ (Maxwell and Hill, 2006: 51 -53).

¹⁶ This paragraph is important because it identifies the names of the Kaqchikel's strongest allies and their gods. These allies are the K'iche' (specifically the chinamit Kaweq of the Nima' K'iche' confederation), the Sotz'il, the Tuquche' and the Aqajal. Although the alliance between these amaq' are mentioned since the Kaqchikel origin story, it is more likely that the alliance with each group took place in different moments.

This text shows the list of allied *amaq*'s of the Kaqchikel and their Kab'awils. Even though each confederation had their particular gods, they also exalted a common god for the new polity named Chamalakan, who has the image of a bat. For instance, the *Popol Wuj* tells the story about the K'iche' predominance over the peoples in the highlands and how the Kaqchikel resisted their control. After leaving Tulan, there was a long period of rain and frost that negatively impacted the peoples' lives in the highlands. To save themselves, various highland groups came before the K'iche' to ask for fire to overcome the cold. Tojil, the main protector god of the K'iche', ordered their people to request bodies for sacrifice as offerings in exchange for fire. The highland groups agreed, and they offered themselves in sacrifice which symbolized the defeat of these people. However, Chamalkan, the god of the Kaqchikel, whose image was a bat, stole the fire without accepting the agreement, thus the Kaqchikel remained undefeated (Colop 2008:147–148). Even though every confederation of the Kaqchikel polity had their own protector deity, they worshiped a supreme one who had the image of a bat, which was another sign of centralization.

Jun Toj and Wuqub Batz/ Chuluk and Xitamal Kej (1455-1470 CE)

When Jun Toj and Wuqub' B'atz' were ruling, an internal revolt took place at Q'umarkaj against K'iq'ab' and his closest allies. K'iq'ab's sons—Tata' Yak, Aj Itza', Chituy and Kejnay—were the instigators of the revolt because they desired their father's jades, precious metals, slaves and his people known as the Nima'q Achi'. Presumably, the detractors did not agree with the way the Nima'q Achi' had been treated and administrated. According to Judith Maxwell and Robert Hill II, who cited Thomas de Coto's dictionary, the *Nima'q Achi'* are “those who have been captives and who later settled and remained there free are called: je nima'q achij” (Coto, 94). They were distinguished enemy warriors captured during the K'iche' expansionist campaigns and

they were different from the regular captives named *Teleche'* or *Kana'*. These peoples provided sustenance exclusively to K'iq'ab, which infuriated the K'iche' people who wanted them to become *alk'ajol* 'vassals' of all the K'iche' polity (Maxwell and Hill 2006:168). According to Robert Carmack, the *Nima'q Achi'* were captives that started to live in the lands of the K'iche' while they provided different services and pay taxes. During the colonial period, some descendants of the K'iche' elite struggled to keep their rights over their Nima'q Achi' after the Spanish wanted them to pay more taxes (Carmack 2001:411). After a council among the K'iche', they decided to kill the lords of the *Nima'q Achi'*, including some Xajil Ajpop without K'iq'ab consent.

Faced with this tragedy, K'iq'ab took refuge in Pan Peta'q but later surrendered before the K'iche' warriors and returned to Q'umarkaj. Back in his capital, K'iq'ab' was forced to give up his possessions and to award the divisions of warriors with Ajpop titles. From the Kaqchikel point of view, the warriors who rebelled against K'iq'ab' could carry the Ajpop titles but they only had strength, they did not have knowledge and wisdom because they did not come from Tulan (Xajil Chronicle 2006: 179, 180). This statement reveals that peoples connected with Tulan had the legitimacy to rule and possessed the knowledge to have a sedentary lifestyle. It was very clear that the divisions of warriors who participated in the revolt were angry because they were not rewarded as they should have been after supporting K'iche' expansionist campaigns. Besides this, it is possible that these *calpuls* or divisions of warriors, were not willing to endure the rules established by the K'iche anymore. Some of the restrictions, according to the *Popol Wuj*, were that they could not experience the dawn and consequently, they were not allowed to worship their own protector deities (Colop 2008:202), or have their own territories and titles of authority. Despite the Kaqchikel were part of the *oxlajuj ch'ob ajlab'al*, it seems that they were able to demand rewards for the services rendered that guaranteed the K'iche' military expansion. It is evident that the

Kaqchikel got more rewards than the rest of the warriors, which caused discontent among other divisions of warriors who were mostly K'iche'. The K'iche' also witnessed how the Kaqchikel gained more power and saw them as potentially dangerous rivals.

The abandonment of Chi Awär (13 Iq' – 1470)

The power that the Kaqchikel achieved during K'iq'ab's rulership was a threat to the K'iche' people. This situation was reflected in a story related with a fight between a Kaqchikel woman and a K'iche' guard which also triggered the departure of the Kaqchikel from Chi Awär. The *Xajil Chronicle* accounts that a Kaqchikel woman named Ixkakaw was selling tortillas close to Q'umarkaj and a K'iche' vassal wanted to seize her tortillas. She reacted striking him down and almost killing him. After this incident, the K'iche' wanted the woman to die, but the Kaqchikel lords Jun Toj and Wuqu' B'atz' did not allow it. This situation made the K'iche' realize that the Kaqchikel no longer respected the authority of the K'iche' and that they did not obey them. K'iq'ab was fearful that the Kaqchikel rulers could be killed, so he advised them to abandon Chi Awär and to move at Ratz'am Ut plateau and construct a new citadel. The Kaqchikel obeyed and on the day 13 Iq' they abandoned Chi Awär. During this process, it seems that the Wuqamaq' 'allies' showed their loyalty to the Kaqchikel leaving the K'iche' with few allies. The Kaqchikel saw this event as the beginning of the decline of the K'iche' nation. When the power of the K'iche' started to crumble, the highland groups subjugated by the K'iche' started to flourish including the Kaqchikel. In Chi Iximche', the Kaqchikel became an independent expansionist polity, and here the four confederations experienced the dawn for the last time.

The Independent capital of Chi Iximche' (1470-1524)

The abandonment of Chi Awär represented the end of the alliance between the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel that had lasted more than 50 years. In Chi Iximche', they kept their quadripartite system of government and expanded to new territories including the Pacific coast. Once Kiq'ab died, an endemic war began with the K'iche'. When the alliance between the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel came to an end, the former tried to take control of some Kaqchikel settlements such as K'isk'ab', Chaqij Ya', Pa Xiwanul, Xe chi B'oyo' and Xe Chi Tuj. In response, the Kaqchikel attacked the K'iche' who had seized K'isk'ab and Xe Chi Tuj, and shortly after the K'iche' ran away from these places (Otzoy 1999:176). The exact location of these sites is still unknown. Only K'isk'ab and Chaqij Ya' have been located in the department of Sololá, and it is very likely that the other sites were nearby. This episode suggests that the Kaqchikel started to protect their northeastern borders against the K'iche' with military outposts. Certainly, the Kaqchikel was already a powerful polity now centralized in Chi Iximche'. They defeated the K'iche' in every encounter they had after they left Chi Awär. In order to strengthen their polity, the Kaqchikel *amaq'* replicated the K'iche' expansionist model to control some territories in the Pacific Coast — Escuintla, Tz'ikinala and Patulul—Chimaltenango and Sololá. In the XVI century, at the time of the Spanish invasion, the main enemies of the Kaqchikel were the K'iche', Pipil and Tz'utujil who were competing to gain more lands at the Pacific Coast and struggling to survive independently. The Spanish initially helped the Kaqchikel to defeat these peoples and their towns, but eventually they demanded high quantities of tribute and forced labor from the Kaqchikel. This situation broke the alliance between them and the Kaqchikel started a revolt against the Spanish that lasted six years (1524-1530).

In summary, the reconstruction of the early history of the Kaqchikel resulted from the cross-comparison of documents written by different K'iche' and Kaqchikel groups and some Spanish chronicles. The use of a variety of primary source documents made the analysis of specific historical events possible from different points of view. Unfortunately, we do not have any documents written by the Tuquche' that can provide another perspective about the alliance between the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel and their historical development. Due to the absence of dates in the origin stories of both the Kaqchikel and the K'iche', it has been proposed to reconstruct their history from the occupation of their main settlements, specifically where they experienced the *saqarik* or dawn. I have decided to reconstruct Kaqchikel's early history using this procedure, since the review of native documents revealed that collective identities had developed around territories and citadels called *tinamit*. *Tinamit* were generally surrounded by small rural settlements called *amaq'*.

The Kaqchikel were able to achieve a centralized government and the founding of a *tinamit* through the establishment of several alliances and from the success they had in the military field. The Kaqchikel and their allies knew that within the military field they would have the possibility to raise their status and improve their political and economic situation. Therefore, when they were incorporated into the military institution called Oxlajuj Ch'ob'Ajilab'al or the thirteen divisions of warriors at the service of the Nima' K'iche', they sought to specialize and excel in this profession. During the government of Q'ukumatz (1400-1425), the Kaqchikel had no power and did not obtain privileges even though they had celebrated marriages with the Kaweq. It was not until K'iq'ab' (1425-1524) entered to govern that the Kaqchikel and their allies were rewarded with land, and with the K'iche' authorization to have their own *tinamit* and government. The reward obtained by the Kaqchikel from the K'iche' was possible because the former was able to strengthen their

organization and use that strength to demand rights and rewards. The Xajil chronicle accounts an interesting case where a group of warriors in alliance with K'iche' nobles led an internal revolt against K'iq'ab' to demand titles of authority (Ajpop). This case shows that many warriors and military authorities were not always guaranteed rewards for their services, which encouraged this kind of revolts. Although the native documents do not explicitly say that the Kaqchikel launched rebellions against the K'iche', it is highly probable that the Kaqchikel put pressure on K'iq'ab' to obtain the rewards they deserved for accompanying them in their expansionist campaigns.

Kaqchikel and K'iche' documents do not provide much information about the life of the Kaqchikel in Chi Awär. Perhaps because its occupation was very short (ca 1430-1470), or because the Kaqchikel wanted to exalt their history as an independent polity settled in Chi Iximche'. Only archaeological research in Chi Awär could inform how the Kaqchikel lived in this new sociopolitical stage and how independent they were from the K'iche' since this *tinamit* was still situated within the K'iche' territory. These are some questions what will be covered in the following chapters.

Several scholars believe that only the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel reached the most complex sociopolitical organization that existed in the Guatemalan highlands called Winäq (Hill II 1997; Maxwell and Hill 2006). *Winaq* translates to “human being”, but it can be understood as “nation” (Maxwell and Hill 2006: 4). The K'iche' managed to form a united nation where they exalted a common territory also called K'iche', a common language, a supreme protector deity and a hierarchical and centralized government in their *tinamit* Q'umarkaj, which was considered the Tulan from the highlands. The Kaqchikel, on the other hand, started with a more egalitarian political system, but once they started their own expansionist campaigns power struggles emerged within the polity. From the etic point of view, the Kaqchikel *winaq* or nation referred to the alliance

of four confederations, the Kaqchikel, Aqajal, Sotz'il and Tuquche', who settled together for the first time in Chi Awär and had Chimalkan as principal protector deity. From the emic perspective, each confederation exalted their own history and achievements, but also the common accomplishments of their quadripartite organization, with which was possible the defeat of many peoples including the K'iche'. As the Xpantzay claimed:

*“May the glory of the people’s offspring never decay. So said
our grandparents and parents, the Sotz’il, Kaqchikel, Tuquche’ Aqajal peoples.*

Four lords conquered the near and distant towns”

Guerras Comunes entre K'iche's y Kaqchikeles (2001:148)

CHAPTER IV

CHI AWÄR AND THE POSTCLASSIC PERIOD IN THE GUATEMALAN HIGHLANDS

The archaeological site of Chi Awär is currently called *Patz'aq* by the local population and means 'walled place'. The entire archaeological site is divided into cultivation plots that belong to around 50 families. Since the beginning of the Chi Awär Archaeological Project in 2016, this was planned as a small project because it was the first of its kind in the Chontala community. For this reason, only three small areas of the site were excavated with the authorization and support of their owners and local authorities. This chapter presents the results of the excavations of these three zones, which are: a platform to the southwest of the epicenter, the north zone of plaza A and the northeast wing of the site. The excavations confirmed that the site was occupied for a short period of time indicated by the stratigraphic evidence and the low amount of cultural material, although the existence of elitist burials in various parts of the site was confirmed. In the back of structure 2 of plaza A, specifically in the excavation unit 12, a collective burial was found with a minimum number of 2 individuals, which according to the evidence could have been Kaqchikel leaders, although it is not known to which confederation they belonged. The archaeological information of this and the following chapter show that although the Kaqchikel managed to build their own *tinamit* in Chi Awär and have their own government, they were still within the zone of K'iche' political and cultural influence. *Tinamit* is defined as a citadel or as a fortified center occupied by ruling lineages (Carmack 1980:23; Christenson 2007b:50), as opposed to *amaq'* which corresponded to small and rural settlements occupied by commoners that generally surround a *tinamit*.

The Late Postclassic period (1200-1524 CE)

The Postclassic period in the Maya highlands of Guatemala, as in other areas of Mesoamerica, was characterized by population growth, the proliferation of small polities, an increased volume of long-distance exchange, and new forms of writing and iconography (Smith 2012; Smith and Berdan 2003). The small polities that emerged during the Late Postclassic period also presented two new characteristics in terms of settlement pattern: the location of their citadels in defensive places and a more nucleated pattern. It seems that the Postclassic populations sought to construct their settlement in safe places, beyond the reach of external dangers, perhaps, from internal forces too. Defensive places include high hills, plateaus surrounded by ravines or cliffs, artificial moats, removable bridges, and terraces. Security issues are related to nucleation since it is very likely that people in rural areas settled around urban centers in search of protection or other advantages, which also was beneficial for the elite sectors living in these places (Stewart 1977:80). Another factor that propelled nucleation would be the need for a more efficient and specialized administrative apparatus to control close and distant peoples and territories. The result of this nucleation process was the emergence of *tinamits* translates to citadel or fortified center characterized for its defensive location and permanent construction. Contrary to them, there were the *amaq'* that were rural populations that spread like spider legs around an urban center. Another important concept in the territorial administration of the highlands was *chinamit*. *Chinamit*, or *calpul*, was the basic territorial unit of the highlands whose members, nor necessarily related, shared and worked the communal land and benefited from its resources. In each *chinamit* there was a predominant family from where the leader of the *chinamit* was elected. This leader was called as the *utzam chinamital* or the head of the *chinamit*. His main duty was to be the intermediary between rulers and commoners who lived in his *chinamit*. The most common duties

requested by the *utzam chinamital* were to guide his people to carry out construction work, to fight in time of war, and collect taxes (Ximénez 1965). Keneth Brown and Teresa Majeski indicated that in the Quiché basin¹⁷, there was a process of forced nucleation due to the decrease of sites in the area and the appearance of citadels and secondary sites. Secondary sites consisted of villages of four to six mounds with a plaza and small villages surrounding it (Carmack and Santos 1983:224). These authors do not elaborate on why they considered that this process of nucleation was something forced. It is possible that it was related to the arrival of small groups of migrants who introduced new forms of organization, labor specialization, and administrative centralization. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the concepts used to designate new forms of political and territorial organization, such as *tinamit*, *tecpan*, *chinamit* and *calpul*, are Nahuatl-derived words (Campbell 1983:85).

During this period, a set of architectural traits that had been considered of Mexican origin appeared in the highlands. This set of traits included Mexican I shaped ball games, twin/double temples, the use of balustraded stairways and colonnaded flanking structures. According to Stewart, these architectural traits have originated in the Guatemalan highlands since the Early Postclassic and that the earliest samples were found at the north and west of the highlands, in sites such as Huehuetenango, Rio Negro, Sacapulas, Cuchumatanes, Nebaj and the Rio Motagua, but reappeared with more frequency during the Late Postclassic period (Stewart 1977:79). Regarding the twin pyramids (two identical superstructures on a low base) and double temples (two superstructures placed on a sub-structure temple), there are interesting studies that link the twin pyramids with new forms of sociopolitical organization and new religious practices that resulted

¹⁷ The Quiché basin is an area of 750 Km² that is formed by an old depression that lied between the Mother Sierra and Cuchumatanes mountain chains. This depression between the two mountain ranges is what forms the basin (Carmack and Santos 1983:218)

from the expansion of some highland groups. This trait is present in several areas in the Guatemalan highlands, especially in sites surrounding the Motagua and Negro rivers, including Rabinal'eb' sites (Cawinal y Cahjup); Aqajal sites (Jilotepeque Viejo, Chuisac, and foundations-El Cypress); Pokom sites (Fox 1978:286) , and the Sacapulas region (Chuitinamit, Xolpacol, Pacot and Comitancillo) (Ibid 1987: 77-87).

It is important to highlight that this architectonic trait did not appear in K'iche' settlements, and it is also absent in the Kaqchikel capital of Chi Iximche'. This particularity, made Florentine Sloane proposes that the emergence of this architectonic trait consisted of local innovation in response to the K'iche' political expansion and as an aspect of the complex changes that were happening at the regional level (Sloane n.d.). In other words, the K'iche' political influence on several sites identified in native texts, also involved the adoption of the cult of Tojil, the supreme protector deity of the K'iche', along with their own protector deity. This duality of protector deities was reflected in the appearance of double or twin temples at citadels' main plazas. This pair of deities can be the religious expression of an alliance between two lineages, polities or even ethnic groups. For instance, native documents describe many cases of alliances between Kaqchikel/Akajal, K'iche'/Aq'ab', K'iche'/Tz'utujil, K'iche'/Kaqchikel, Kaqchikel/ Pokom, Kaqchikel / Tz'utujil, among others. Twin temples and double temples are both present in Chi Awär, which could reflect the link with other highland groups. During the occupation of Chi Awär, the Kaqchikel, Tuquche', Sotz'il had strong ties with the Aqajal who lived in Och'al and Chwa' Nimab'aj (Jilotepeque Viejo) and the K'iche' from Q'umarakaj, which coincide with the archaeological evidence collected in this site.

Chi Awär (ca 1430-1470 CE)

The name Chi Awär can be translated in Kaqchikel as “the milpa place”. Chi Awär is located in the current village of Chontala, which is one of the 94 villages that comprise the municipality of Chichicastenango, El Quiché. Chontala is 5 km to the east of the urban center of Chichicastenango and its geography corresponds to an elongated plateau crossed by a main road surrounded by the locals’ residences. The inhabitants of Chontala are Maya-K’iche’ speakers and their main economic activities include the practice of agriculture, day labor and commerce (ALMG 2003:83). The archaeological site of Chi Awär is specifically situated at the north end of Chontala plateau and the site was built on a smaller plateau of 400x200 meters in diameter that can be found in the following coordinates: N 14°56’04.38” W 91°04’12.17” (See figure 20). Chontala’s neighbors call the site as Patz’aq which means “the walled place” which is also a generic term for ancient constructions.

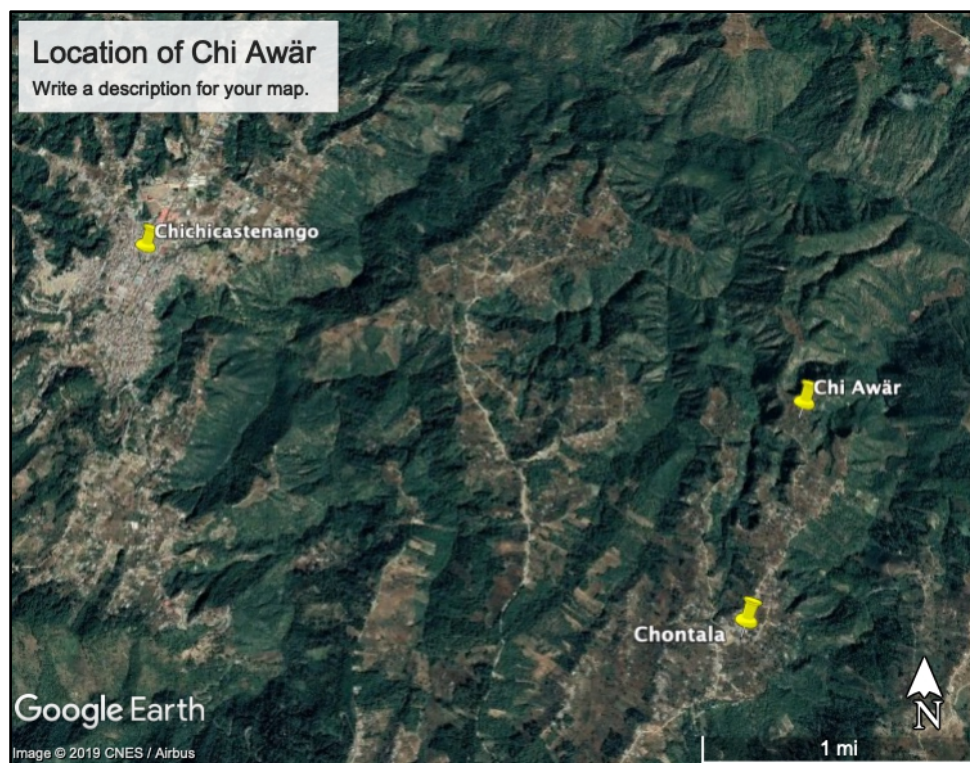


Figure 20. Location of Chi Awär, Chichicastenango

In 1969 the Canadian archaeologist Ruth Gruhn and her husband Alan Lyle Bryan conducted the first archaeological survey in the territory of Chichicastenango and surrounding areas. During this survey, they collected pottery sherds to date archaeological traits including isolated mounds, a few platforms of ancient buildings, and the archaeological site of Patz'aq. The latter was called 'Chichicastenango Antiguo' and they explained that according to the tradition (source not specified) this was an important K'iche' site that functioned as a fortress during the wars between the K'iche' and Kaqchikel¹⁸. In her report, Gruhn briefly describes the site. She observed that the access zone of the site was surrounded by a small stone wall that flanked the only entrance and that inside there were several low mounds (Gruhn 1969:233). In another publication, she mentions that the entire site area was under intensive cultivation, therefore it was difficult to see the structures because of the presence of trees and crops. However, she was able to identify mounds that were relatively small with approximately two to four meters in height. The tallest one was about five meters high, and all of them were roughly constructed with stones (Gruhn and Bryan 1976:90). In the same year of the survey, the American archaeologist Edwin Shook visited the site after being informed by Gruhn about the existence of Patz'aq in Chontala. Shook, who kept a record of his visits and surveys in Guatemala, wrote about 'Chichicastenango Antiguo' that it was a Late Postclassic defensive site with a ditch along its entrance. He also highlighted that there was little pottery inside the site, but that it was abundant outside the site, specifically in the southwest zone (Shook 1969).

A few years later, a team of anthropologists and archaeologists from the State University of New York at Albany carried out studies in the Quiché basin and neighboring towns including

¹⁸ Contemporary oral tradition explains that Chichicastenango was originally settled in Patz'aq, but because of population growth, it was transfer where currently is the urban center of Chichicastenango or Chuwila'. This is not possible since Chuwila' or Chichicastenango existed even before the construction of Patz'aq or Chi Awär.

Chichicastenango from 1970 to 1973. In 1975, this team composed of Robert Carmack, John Fox and Russel Stewart, published their results including data collected during a short survey in Chichicastenango. They were the first to connect Patz'aq with the ancient Kaqchikel capital of Chi Awär as indicated in native texts from Guatemala. They also proposed that the south part of the Chichicastenango municipality was the territory of the Kaqchikel during the Quiche phase (1200-1524) (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:48 & 95). Despite that the site was visited by several scholars who conducted short surveys in the site, their reports did not include pictures, maps or any descriptions of the architecture or ceramic types of Chi Awär. It was not until the publication of John W. Fox's PhD dissertation, whose research was based on the Postclassic highland sites of Guatemala, that there was a map of the site and a better description of its architectonic groups (See Figure 21). Fox dated Patz'aq to the Late Post-classic or Protohistoric period and also confirmed again that the ancient Kaqchikel site of Chi Awär is the current site of Patz'aq. He also observed the presence of thin-walled and red slipped types of pottery (e.g. double-groove rim) typical of this period (Fox 1978:188).

Description of the site

Patz'aq or Chi Awär epitomize the defensive Postclassic sites of the Guatemalan highlands. The site is surrounded by deep cliffs with a single entrance on its south side. The access of the site is narrow and flanked by walls resulted from the combination of modified boulders and the construction of walls with blocks. Remains of these walls and some architecture can still be seen today from a distance, but access to see it closely is restricted by neighbors of Chontala. Besides this, the entrance was secured by a deep ditch that crossed the entrance from east to west (Shook 1969).

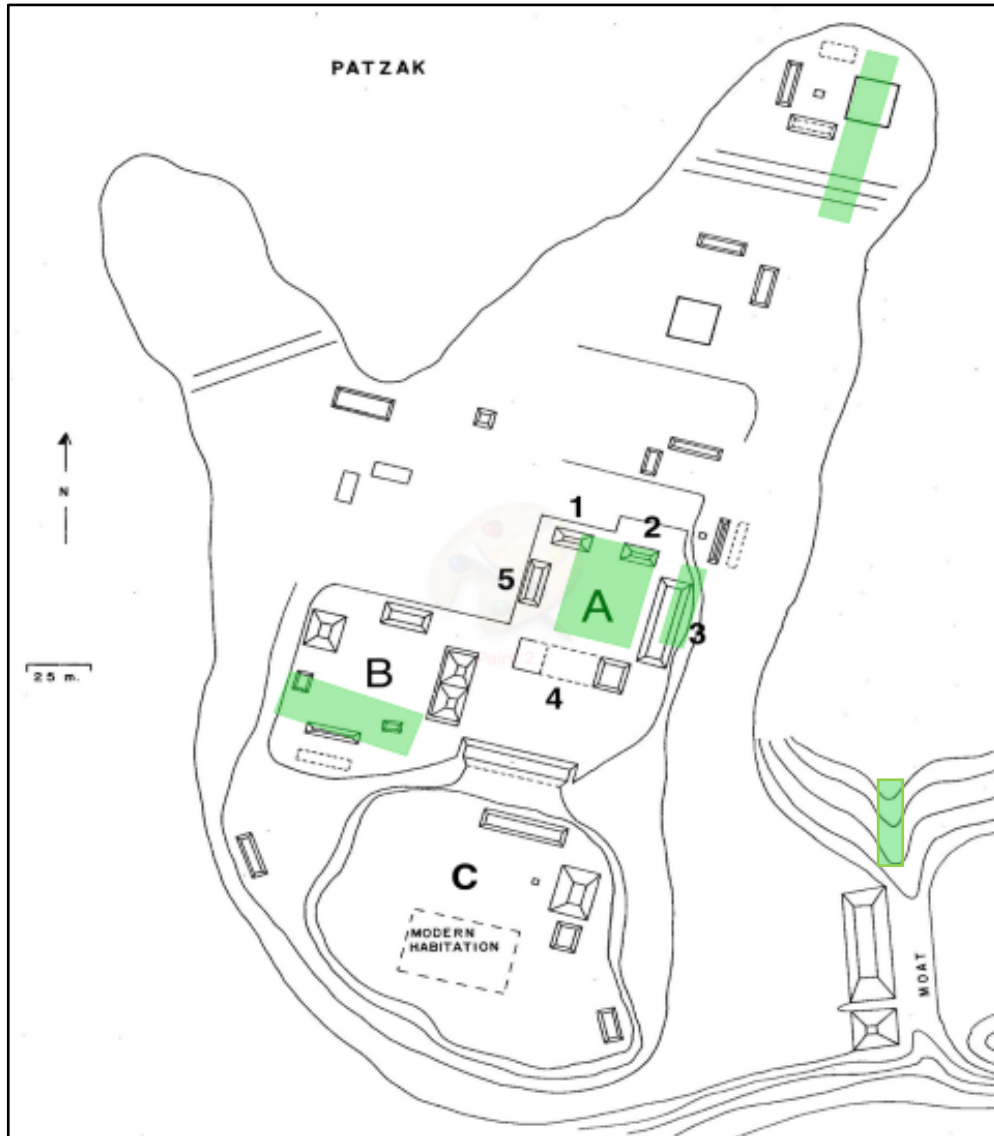


Figure 21: Map of Chi Awär. In green, mapped and excavated areas with the exception of Plaza B (Fox 1978Ñ 189).

John Fox, who mapped the site in the 70s, mentions that Chi Awär’s entrance is fortified by two moats, about 40 meters apart. He observed that inside the outer moat was a low wall while at the second moat was a massive ‘bulwark’ nearly 10-meters high (See Figure 22).



Figure 22. View of the bulwark's remains and the east side of a moat (Photo by José Pérez Algua, 2017)

Nowadays, these moats are almost all covered with soil, but neighbors of Chontala call this area as Chuk'otoj or 'at the dug place'. These defensive traits, bulwarks and moats, were also identified by George Guillemin during his archaeological project at Chi Iximche' (Guillemin 1965:14 and 15) and they also appear in a map of Chi Iximche' made by the Spanish chronicler Francisco Fuentes and Guzman (See figure 23).

Fox also observed that between the two moats, immediately south of the causeway, was an elevated area whose structures were beyond recognition. This elevation or mound between the two moats was excavated during the Chi Awär archaeological project, but no remains of architecture were found except for one stone block discarded in a possible dump. Chi Awär has three plazas (A, B and C) oriented north to south, specifically 10° toward the northwest, and are surrounded by groups of buildings. During the Chi Awär archaeological project these plazas were named with lettered of the alphabet starting with the plaza located at the extreme north of the site.

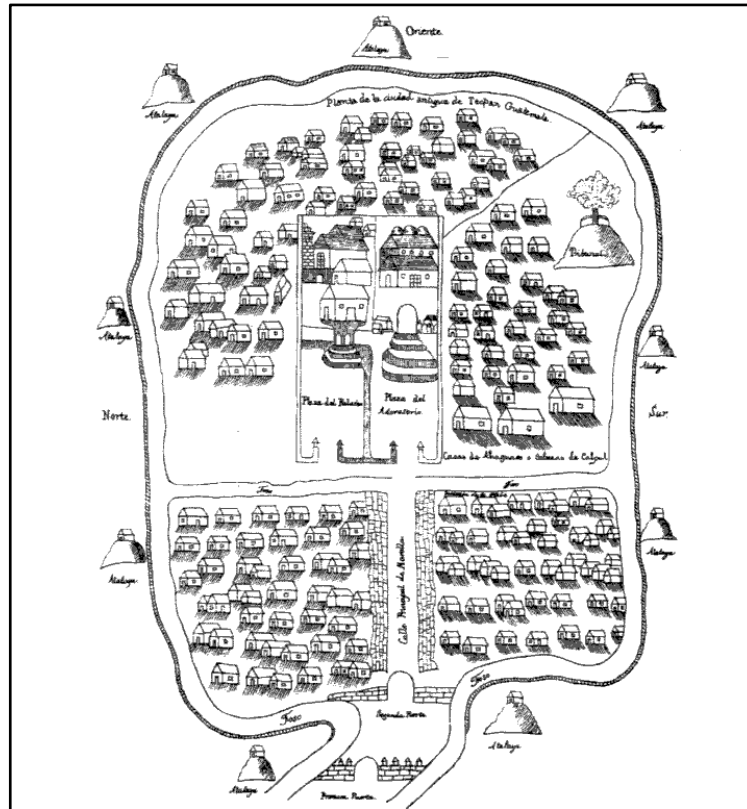


Figure 23. Map of Iximché according to Francisco Fuentes y Guzmán (2012:568).

Plaza A: This plaza is located approximately at the center of the site, but a little closer to the east of the site. The dimensions of this plaza are approximately 50-meters-long by 45-meter-wide, and it is comprised of five structures. In the east, west and south of the plaza there are three long structures, the east structure being the longest one, similar to a *Nim ja'* or great house. In the north of the plaza, there is a double temple of similar size with individual bases. Both are in bad condition, but the lower part of the temples can still be seen as well as the core of the structures made with irregular stones. Even though ceramic is scarce in this plaza, in the back of one of the double temples was found an elite tomb was found showing a mortuary pattern similar to Chi Iximché but with K'iche' ceramic types.

Plaza B: This plaza has three buildings located at the west, north and east sides, and with small structures at its south. The outstanding structure of this plaza is a twin temple located at the west of the plaza, which has the same size and position of the twin temples at Jilotepeque Viejo (plaza B). Both plazas, A and B, have elevated floors that were built approximately one meter in height.

Plaza C: This plaza is the most destroyed because of the presence of a modern house in its center. Only four structures are discernible at the west of the plaza, which appear in Fox's map. I did not request permission to enter this plaza, so the archaeological project did not explore this part of the site.

Chi Awär archaeological project

In 2016 I started the Chi Awär Archaeological Project to ascertain the history and the sociopolitical organization of the Kaqchikel before the occupation of Chi Iximche'. More specifically, I wanted to ascertain how the dynamics between the Kaqchikel and K'iche' influenced the inception of the Kaqchikel polity and how this process was manifested in the material culture of the site. The literature regarding the history of the ancient Kaqchikel is principally focused on the events that happened in Chi Iximche', which is the last Kaqchikel capital founded in 1470 and abandoned during the contact period with the Spanish in the sixteenth century. The history of Chi Iximche' is well known because of the existence of indigenous and Spanish texts that address the occupation of this site and because Chi Iximche' was investigated archaeologically by Jorge Guillemin from 1960-1972. However, nothing has been written about the inception of the Kaqchikel polity or their early settlements occupied before Chi Iximche'. This is a gap that I attempt to fill with my research.

When Ruth Gruhn visited the site in 1969, she observed an undetermined number of mounds roughly constructed of stones (Gruhn and Bryan 1976:90). When I visited the site and toured the epicenter for the first time in 2015, I observed several stacks of irregular stones distributed throughout the site that corresponded to the remains of buildings. Some of them were made by farmers who cleared the area to plant maize and other plants. However, in the northeast zone of the site, I observed a few stone blocks that were carved with a rectangular shape (See figure 24). These blocks were moved for agriculture purposes, but like Chi Iximche' and Chwa Nima' Ab'aj, they were part of the architecture's revetment that now is almost destroyed except for the foundation of the structures that are still buried.



Figure 24. Stone block and adobe from Chi Awär (Juan Vidal 2015).

According to the locals, there is a quarry located in a slope of the site from where is very likely that the material to carve the blocks was extracted. The stone material looks like limestone and it is easy to shape with a machete. The existence of the quarry in Chontala is confirmed in the Guatemalan Geographic Dictionary. This document says about the etymology of Chontala that it means 'Place where stone is carved.' The dictionary additionally mentions that during the population census in 1980 in Guatemala, Chontala appears with the name Cantalá. Cantalá is

associated with ‘cantera’ the Spanish word for quarry (Instituto Geográfico Nacional 1976:796). However, the majority of Chichicastenango’s villages have K’iche’ names, therefore, this etymology is incorrect, but the idea of its meaning in this dictionary could come from the presence of a quarry in this village.

The Chi Awär archaeological site is divided into small land plots called as ‘cuerdas’ (33x33 meters) and ‘manzanas’ (6 cuerdas), that belong to an approximated of fifty families from Chontala. The excavation I carried out in 2016 was under the permission of local authorities and one extended family who allowed me to investigate three different areas of the site. Since the design of my project, I decided to conduct a small archaeological project not only for the limited budget I had but also to avoid creating an intrusive environment since my project was the first of its type in Chi Awär. Also, I knew that different scholars had tried to enter Chontala and investigate the site, but after their first days of research, they were expelled with no clear reasons. Fortunately, the Perez Algua family has small land plots in three different zones of Chi Awär, which helped us to have a general idea about the occupation of the site.

In the following section the stratigraphy of the three excavated zones will be described along with the identification of important archaeological traits. The three excavated areas were:

- Mound on a small plateau located at the southwest of Chi Awär’s entrance
- North zone of Plaza A
- Northeast elongation of the site

It is necessary to mention that I was not able to completely analyze the materials of the project due the decision of several leaders to take the materials from the laboratory and deposit them on a counter at the COCODE’s meeting room inside the Chontala elementary school. For more details, see chapter seven of this text.

Excavations on a small plateau at the southwest of Chi Awär's entrance

Outside the epicenter of Chi Awär and between the two moats that protect the entrance of the site, a small and square shaped plateau is located, which has a small mound in its center. It can be found with the following coordinates: N 14.932919 W-19.070557. This small square-shaped plateau is surrounded by ravines in its north, west and south sides, while on the east side is connected with the main road that leads to the Chi Awär epicenter. Currently this small mound is part of the back yard of a contemporary house where there are peach trees and animal corrals. During the CHWAR project, this mound was excavated with a total of 9 excavations pits. Of the 9 excavations pits, only cultural material was only recovered in the units located at the top of the small mound, which includes: Units 1, 1A, 1B and 2.

In this mound, a possible trash pit was identified of what could be a trash pit because of the high quantity of pottery discarded in a specific place. This mound possibly functioned as a surveillance point due to its strategic location at the entrance of the site. There are no architectural remains in the surface of this mound. Only one rectangular stone block was found under a group of irregular stones inside a possible trash pit. The stone block was likely a part of the architecture that existed on top of this mound. John Fox did not map the structures outside the epicenter, however he commented that between the two moats there was an elevated structure that corresponds with the area where Shook identified the presence of abundant pottery sherds (See Figure 25). This mound could be an atalaya or lookout intended to guard the main entrance of the site. Similarly, Chi Iximche' was surrounded by atalayas in strategic locations including some in its entrance (John W. Fox 1978: 184) as are depicted in Fuentes y Guzman's map (See Figure 23).

The main objective of the excavations in this mound is to recover utilitarian pottery that would inform us about the identity of the local population and to corroborate the function of this mound. All excavation units are 1x2 meters in dimension oriented from North to South (except for unit 1B with an east-west orientation), and they were excavated by arbitrary levels of 20 centimeters. The earth extracted was sifted to recover the greatest amount of cultural material. The count of the ceramic material only includes sherds of the size equal to or greater than a 25 cents coin.



Figure 25. Excavation of unit 1 (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

Units 1, 1B, and 2A

Unit 1: It was located at the top of the mound and closer to its north end. Its coordinates are N 14.932983 W-91.070587. The dimensions of the excavation pit were 2 x 1 meters and it was excavated through arbitrary levels of 20 centimeters each until reaching the sterile soil. This unit had a maximum depth of 59 centimeters.

Level 1 (CHWR 1-1): This level went from 0-20 centimeters and corresponds to the humus, with coarse granulometry, loose consistency and with organic remains. The soil's color was Dark Yellowish Brown (10 YR 4/4). The material that came out of this first stratum was not very abundant and consisted of 46 ceramic sherds and nine obsidian samples.

Level 2 (CHWR 1-2): This level ranged from 20-40 centimeters and the soil present at this level has some compact areas while others were loose. The soil's color was Dark Yellowish Brown (10 YR 4/6). On the south side a pile of stones was found with irregular shapes that did not follow a specific pattern. To better know the origin of these stones, it was decided to make an extension at its south side to verify if they correspond to some archaeological feature. The material recovered in this level corresponded to 44 sherds and five obsidian samples.

Level 3 (CHWR 1-3): This level had a depth of 40-59 centimeters and corresponds to the third arbitrary level composed of sandy soil with fine granulometry, it is compact, and its color is Yellow (10 YR 7/6). In this level, 23 ceramic sherds and one obsidian sample were collected. After a half meter of excavation, it was noticed that the soil was sterile, so this was the last level excavated in this unit.

Unit 1B: This unit was located to the south of units 1 and 1A. This extension was excavated horizontally with an orientation from west to east. This pit had three levels and a maximum depth of 63 centimeters. The objective of this pit was to uncover the groups of stones that appeared in unit 1 and verify whether there was a trash pit on top of this mound.

Level 1 (CHWR 1B-1): This level went from 0 to 20 centimeters. The soil of this level was compact, clayey, and Brown color (10 YR 5/3). On the east side of the pit there was a portion of loose soil with fine granulometry and Yellow color (10YR 7/6). The material recovered in this level corresponded to 350 ceramic sherds, 30 obsidian samples, one pumice stone without any specific shape, and one carbon sample.

Level 2 (CHWR 1B-2): The second level went from 20 to 40 centimeters and corresponded to clayey and compact soil and Dark Brown color (7.5 YR 3/4). This level had abundant charcoal particles and ceramic sherds. The material recovered included 592 ceramic sherds, 24 obsidian samples, one charcoal sample, four unidentified bone fragments, nine samples of burned clay, and six lithic fragments to be analyzed at the laboratory to see if they were manipulated by humans. This level had the highest quantity of cultural material in comparison with the rest of the levels and pits.

Level 3 (CHWR 1B-3): This unit went from 40 to 60 centimeters. It corresponded to a sandy and loose yellowish soil of Pale Brown color (10 YR 7/4) according to the Munsell chart. At this level the cultural material began to be reduced considerably with the collection of only 164 sherds, four obsidian samples, one charcoal sample, eight unidentified animal bones fragments, and five samples of burned clay. In this level, the continuation of the groups of stones from pit 1 was identified. Similarly, they did not follow any pattern of organization and they had different sizes and shapes. Only one rectangular block stone was found, with the dimensions of 47 cm in length, 27 cm in width and 14 cm in thickness (See figures 26). This stone's characteristics are very similar to those blocks found in structure 2 from Plaza A, which will be described later. The accumulation of material in this unit suggests the existence of a dumpster that in the past was

located at the back of a small structure that faced to the south or the entrance of the site. No evidence of architecture was found around this mound, but the content of this ancient pit suggests that on top of this mound was a small construction that included stone blocks, but they no longer exist because of the presence of contemporary habitations and animal corrals.



Figure 26. Unit 1. (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

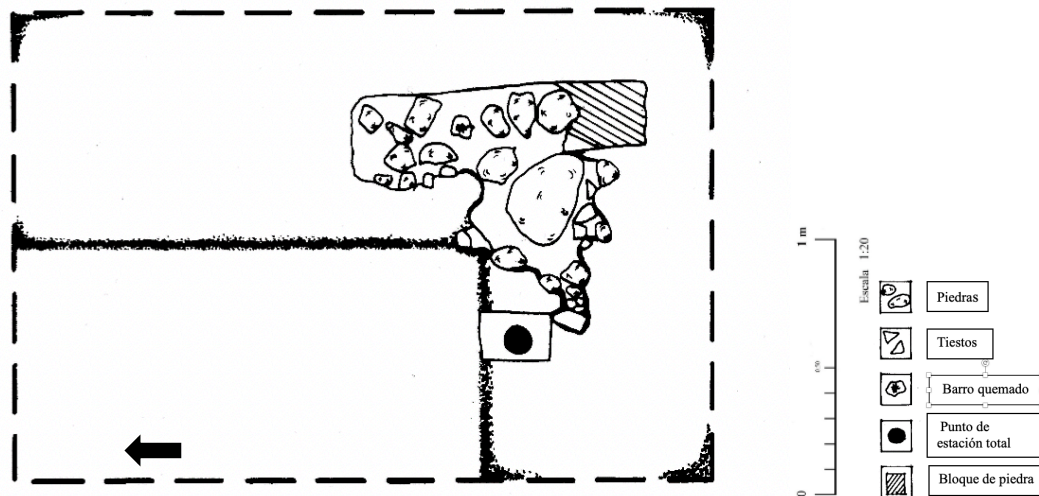


Figure 27. Drawing of unit 1 and 1B (Drawing by Esteban Gómez)

Unit 2: This unit was located in the central and highest part of the mound, which had the following coordinates: N 14.932919 W -91.070557. This pit was oriented north to south, with dimensions of 2x1 meters, and with a maximum depth of 70 cm resulted from the excavations of 4 arbitrary levels. Of the 9 units excavated in this mound, only unit 1 and 2 presented significant cultural material, which suggests that human activity was concentrated only at the top of this mound (See figure 28).

Level 1 (CHWR 2-1): With a depth of 0 to 19 centimeters, this level corresponds to the humus that is characterized by its loose soil, coarse granulometry and mixed with organic elements. Its color is Dark Yellowish Brown (10YR 4/6) according to the Munsell chart. The material collected in this level included 94 ceramic sherds and 6 obsidian samples. No stones were found in this unit nor any trace of ancient architecture.

Level 2 (CHWR 2-2): This second arbitrary level went from 19 to 39 centimeters deep. It corresponds to compact soil of fine granulometry that when excavated tends to come out in large ‘bodoques’ of Brown color (7.5 YR 4/4). The collected material were 112 ceramic sherds and 7 obsidian samples.

Level 3 (CHWR 2-3): The third arbitrary level went from 39 to 59 centimeters and consisted of a very compact soil with fine granulometry of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10YR 4/4). The cultural material recovered corresponded to 380 sherds and 17 obsidian specimens, 1 carbon sample and 1 unidentified bone fragment.

Level 4 (CHWR 2-4): The fourth level had a depth ranging from 59 to 70 centimeters. This level corresponded to sandy and loose soil that had coarse granulometry of Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 6/6). The amount of cultural material was considerably reduced, recovering only 26 sherds, 2

obsidian samples, 1 unidentified bone and 1 carbon sample. This sandy soil is generally sterile in most of the wells that were dug in this mound.



Figure 28. Unit 2 located at the top of the mound. Photo by Iyaxel Cojti

The excavation in this small plateau and mound, revealed that human activity was restricted to the top of the mound in an area of approximately 14x 6 meters. Since it has not been possible to carry out the laboratory analysis of the recovered materials, it is still difficult to confirm the type of activity that took place; however, a trash pit likely existed at the back of an ancient small structure. In the dumpster and around it was recovered abundant material including a group of stones over a rectangular block stone that may belong to an ancient structure. In the south profile can be seen the cut that was made for the trash pit.

Excavation at the north section of Plaza A

This section includes the excavations carried out in Plaza A that include the units from 10 to 19. Plaza A is surrounded by 5 structures, with a double temple at its north side of and three long

buildings on its remaining sides. The longest building is on the east side, which resembles a Nim Ja or 'great house'. These structures were enumerated following the clockwise direction starting with the double temples which are structures 1 and 2, and the rest are structures 3 to 5. During season 2016, only the northeast and center of Plaza A was excavated because the permits were restricted to this area. The land plots where structures 1, 3, 4 and 5 are, belong to different landowners. In the center of the plaza A were located the excavations units 10, 13 and 14.

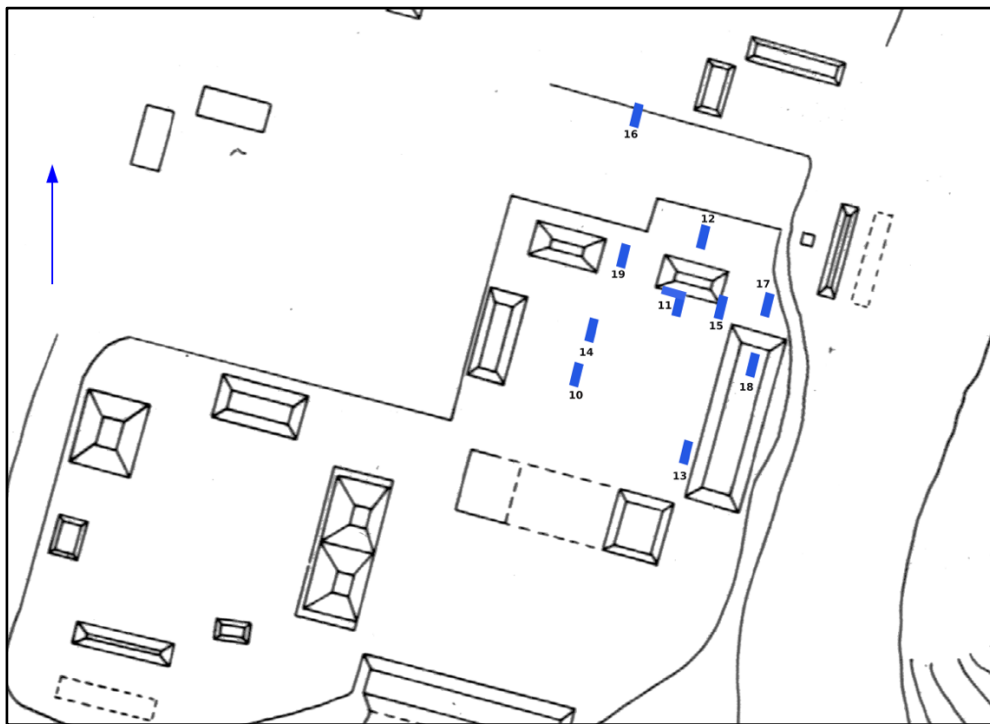


Figure 29. Excavation unit at plaza A

Surprisingly, the materials collected in this zone were minimal, which can be resulted from two circumstances: the plaza was kept clean in ancient times, therefore there is no evidence of the activities that took place there. A second possibility is that Plaza A was occupied for a short time after the construction of the city was completed. Beside this, it is also necessary to consider that this plaza has been used for centuries for agricultural practices, therefore the floor or any other

material left were completely destroyed. These three excavation spits were very shallow because the sterile soil was found no deeper than 40 centimeters. In the profiles of these pits can be found small fragments of plaster that could belong to the ancient floor or fragments of the building located in this plaza (See figure 29). To get a better idea of the stratigraphy of the plaza, the excavation pit No.10 will be described. If interested in the data of the rest of the pits that are not described in this chapter (See appendix B).

Unit 10: This unit was located south of plaza A and has the following coordinates N 14.935258 W -91.070419. As mentioned above, very little cultural material was collected in this and other units in the plaza. The Plaza's floor could have been at a depth of 20 centimeters from the surface since below this depth appears the sterile soil. This unit has three levels, with a maximum depth of 62 centimeters.

Level 1 (CHWR 10-1): This first level has a depth ranging from 0 to 20 centimeters and is composed of loose, coarse granulometry and of Dark Brown color 7.5 YR 3/3. The collected material consists of 18 ceramic sherds, two obsidian samples, and seven fragments of plaster that possibly belong to the ancient floor or the buildings.

Level 2 (CHWR 10-2): The second arbitrary level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters and corresponds to sandy, loose, fine granulometry soil, of light Yellowish-Brown 10 YR 6/4 color. The material recovered from this area is very scarce with only 10 ceramic sherds.

Level 3 (CHWR 10-3): The third arbitrary level ranges from 40 to 62 centimeters, and only the southern half of the excavation unit (1x1 meter) was excavated to verify that the soil was

completely sterile. This level corresponds to loose, sandy soil with fine granulometry, of Very Pale Brown 10YR 7/4 color. No materials were collected (See figure 30).



Figure 30. Unit 10 located at the south of Plaza A (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

Unit 11 and extensions 11A, 11B, unit 15, 15A, and 19: This group of excavation units was located in the front side of structure 2, covering its south, east and west sides. Each unit will be described to identify better the architectural traits of this building and the cultural material associated with its occupation (See figure 31).



Figure 31. Structure 2, and units 11, 11A, 11 B (center), 15 (east) and 19 (west) (Photo by Esteban Gómez)

Unit 11: This unit was located to the south of structure 2 and has the following coordinates N 14.935441 W -91.070358. This unit has a total of five levels reaching a maximum depth of 100 centimeters and has 1 x 2 meters of diameter. The main finding of this unit was a small wall composed of limestone carved stones, which could be part of the platform on which the structure number 2 was based. The ceramic material collected is very scarce.

Level 1 (CHWR-11-1): This level ranges from 0 to 20 centimeters and is composed of semi-compact soil with a coarse granulometry of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 3/6). In this level was collected 10 ceramic sherds, 1 obsidian sample, as well as 1 charcoal sample. In the north zone of the pit, only 12 centimeters were excavated due to the discovery of a wall of carved blocks made of a sort of limestone material, while the excavation continued on the south side.

Level 2 (CHWR-11-2): This level went from 20 to 40 centimeters and was excavated around the wall that appeared on the north side of the unit. The soil of this level had a semi-compact consistency, with coarse granulometry of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/6). Regarding the cultural material, only 10 ceramic sherds, one obsidian sample and a small sample of charcoal were recovered. As the excavation progressed, more carved stones were found but they did not follow any specific order. They could have resulted from architecture collapse or contemporary human activity. One of the landowners told us that he knows where the ancient inhabitants of the site extracted the material for the stone blocks. This place was like a quarry; however, we did not have time to go to this place at the slopes of the site. Small and irregular stones that appeared in the south side of the pit were photographed, drawn and removed to continue with the excavation.

Level 3 (CHWR-11-3): This level ranged from 40 to 60 centimeters and the excavation revealed two parallel rows of limestone carved blocks oriented perpendicularly (NS) to the wall that is oriented OE. These blocks could be part of a platform on which structure number 2 rested. These blocks remained in their original place, so only the southern part of the unit that was free of blocks was excavated. The soil of this level is semi-compact with coarse granulometry and of Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 5/6). The material recovered in this level corresponds to 11 ceramic sherds, three obsidian samples and one flint sample.

Level 4 (CHWR-11-4): This level ranged from 60 to 80 centimeters. Following the same excavation procedure as in the previous level, only the southern area of the unit was excavated. When the excavation pit went deeper, it was possible to visualize that below the blocks of masonry oriented from north to south existed other rows of blocks with the same shape, orientation and dimensions (Approximately 30 and 55 cm long x 23 to 30 cm wide). The soil had a compact consistency with coarse granulometry and of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/6). From this pit, we collected eight ceramic sherds, one obsidian sample, and one charcoal sample.

Level 5 (Chwr-11-5): The last level goes from 80 to 100 centimeters. Like the previous levels, it was excavated only in the southern part of the pit. At this depth, it was possible to see that under the second row of carved blocks, no more blocks were found and also the earth was totally sterile of cultural material. For this reason, the operation was terminated. The soil at this level is compact, with a clayish consistency and a of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/6).

Extension 11A: This 1x1 excavation pit was located at the south of unit 11 (See figure 32). The purpose of this extension was to identify the existence of a floor connecting the plaza with structure 2, and to verify if the carved blocks oriented North to South continue towards the plaza. This unit had a total of four levels, and a maximum of 80 centimeters in depth. In summary, the stratigraphy of this unit is similar to that of unit 11. In this unit was discovered more rectangular blocks scattered without any specific pattern that could be part of either the structure 2 or the stone path that was perpendicularly connected with the center of the structure. By the end of this excavation, it was clear that the carved stones block oriented north to south in a perpendicular position to the platform of the structure 2, possibly were part of a smaller platform that only covered the entrance or the center portion of temple 2. This evidence suggests that this temple could have a staircase in its centers, with fewer probabilities of having other in its remaining sides.



Figure 32. Excavation unit 11 and 11B (Photo by Esteban Gomez).

Extension 11B: This unit was traced to the west side of units 11 and it was 1 x 3 meters in diameter. This extension aimed to verify the length of a masonry wall that appeared to the north of unit 11, as well as to identify the southwest corner of structure 2. This unit has a total of 4 levels with a maximum depth of 80 centimeters. During the excavation of these extensions, it was found that the masonry wall that extended from east to west in the north profile of the pit. From the excavation of these extensions it can be deduced that the double temples had a core made of irregular river and pumice stones of different sizes stuck together with some type of mortar. The façade of the building was built on this core with blocks carved from a limestone material, the smallest ones measuring between 30 and 40 cm long and the largest between 50 and 60 centimeters, and between 23 and 30 cm wide and between 10 and 15 cm thick. We did not find evidence of the use of stucco to recover the main buildings' walls of Plaza A, so it seems that carved stones were displayed as part of the decoration of the building (See figures 33 and 34).



Figure 33. Units 11, 11A and 11 B (Photo by Esteban Gómez)

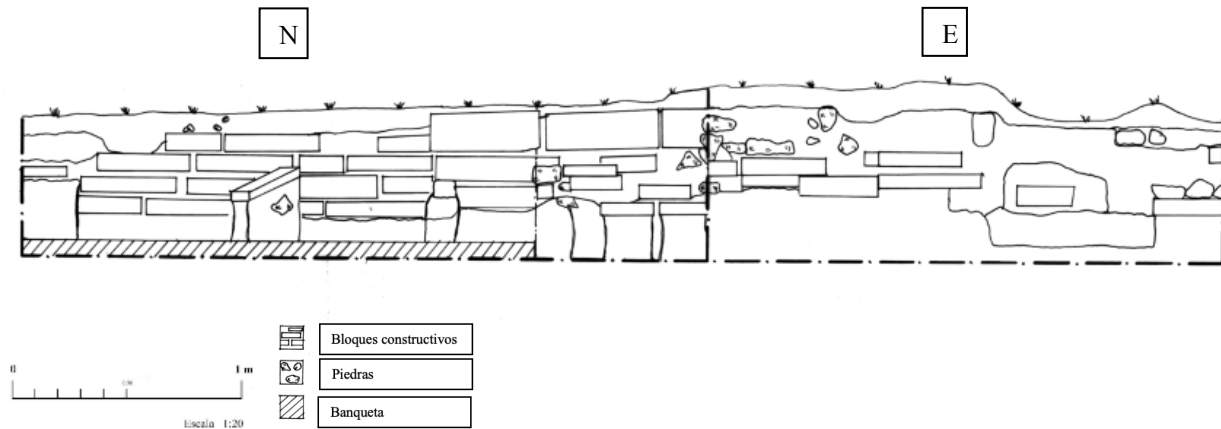


Figure 34. Drawings of units 11, 11A and 11B (Drawing by Esteban Gómez)

Unit 15, 15A: Both excavations pits were located approximately at the southeast corner of structure 2 with the following coordinates N 14.935465 W -91.070335 in its northeast corner. The purpose of this pit was to locate the southeast corner of structure 2 to calculate its size and know more about the architectural traits of the building. Unit 15 had the dimensions of 1 x 2 meters oriented from north to south, with a total of 5 levels and a depth of 1 meter. It was approximately 4 meters toward the east of pit 11. Its extension 15A was located at the west side of pit 15, and it was 1x1.5 meters of diameter. Through the excavation of these pits, it was found that there was a change made in the orientation of the rectangular stones from east to west to north to south. Considering that the distance from the center of structure 2 and its southeast corner was a little more than 5 meters, it is estimated that the platform or base of structure 2 was 10 to 11 meters long. Below this corner, we did not find another row of stones, which suggests that this was the first step of this building (See figures 35 and 36).



Figure 35. Corner of structure 2 found in unit 15 (Photo by Esteban Gómez)

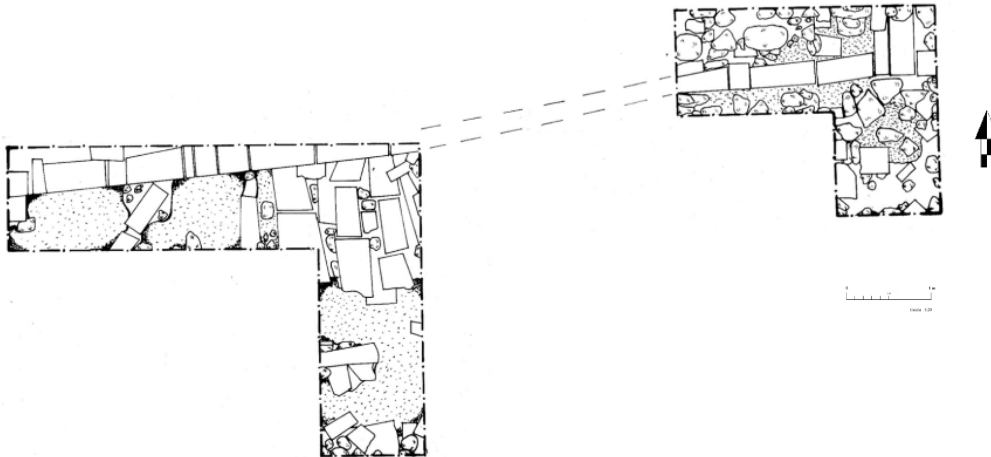


Figure 36. Drawing of Units 11, 15 and their extensions (Drawing by Esteban Gómez)

Unit 19: This excavation unit was located between structures 1 and 2 (double temples) of plaza A, whose coordinates are N 14.936755 W -91.069122. The objective of this unit was to corroborate if the platform on which structure 2 is based is shared with structure 1 as is the case with the twin

temples of the Chwa Nima'Ab'aj site or Jilotepeque Viejo. Only one level was excavated from this unit because at a depth of 15 centimeters, a cluster of collapsed stones appeared that prevented it from being systematically deepened. Many stones were carved, while others were not modified. The stones were not removed because the excavation phase was coming to an end, so it was decided to leave them in their place, and then clean, photograph and draw them. Likely, these double temples did not share the same platform since they are very separate from each other, and Fox's map also showed that both temples were individual buildings (See figure 37).



Figure 37. Unit 19 located between structure 1 and 2 (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

Excavation units 12, 12A, 12B: This unit was located on the north side of Structure 2, which is one of the double temples of Plaza A. This unit was excavated to find a dumpster on the back side of the temple, since we already found one in the excavation unit No. 1. The location of this unit corresponds to the following coordinates: N 14.935612 W -91.070274. It had a maximum depth of 180 centimeters, it had 9 levels, and it was oriented north to south with 1 x 2 meters in diameter.

The most important finding of this unit was an elite collective burial which was deposited with a variety of offerings, including a copper ornament. The main question to answer about this burial, is when these individuals were buried, and were they K'iche' or Kaqchikel authorities, and what the burial can say about the occupation of Chi Awär?

Unit 12

Level 1 (CHWR 12-1): This level goes from 0 to 20 centimeters and corresponds to loose sandy soil of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10 YR 4/4). The collected material consisted of 92 ceramic sherds, five obsidian samples and two burned clay samples.

Level 2 (CHWR 12-2): With a depth ranging from 20 to 40 centimeters, the soil of this level was compact with a clayish consistency of Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 5/4). During its excavation, stones of different sizes were discovered as a result of the collapse of Structure 2. The recovered cultural material consisted of 140 ceramic sherds, nine obsidian specimens, two burned clay samples, one lithic specimen, and one charcoal sample.

Level 3 (CHWR 12-3): In the following 20 centimeters of excavation, many limestone rocks of different sizes were present without a specific pattern, only some of them show features of having been worked. The soil of this level was compact, with a clayish consistency of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/4). The recovered material consisted of 70 ceramic sherds, eight obsidian samples, and one carbon sample.

Level 4 (CHWR 12-4): This level went from 60 to 80 centimeters and corresponds to a clayey and compact soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 3/4). When advancing with the excavation,

more accumulated limestone blocks were identified towards its north side without any specific order. The material collected consisted of 36 ceramic sherds, four obsidian samples, and one carbon sample.

Level 5 (CHWR 12-5): With a depth ranging from 80 to 100 centimeters, in this level a change in color and consistency of the soil was identified. The level started with a compact, clayey soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/6) to a looser consistency soil of Very Pale Brown (10 YR 7/3). On the north side of the pit, under the group of stones were found the parts of a ladle censer and other ceramic fragments, in addition to abundant charcoal (See figure 38). In the northwest corner was the traces of an ancient hole were visible that cut the stratigraphy corresponding to loose sandy soil. On the south side of the unit, no cultural material was observed, only charcoal remains. The cultural material collected in this level consisted of 42 ceramic sherds, 10 obsidian specimens and three charcoal samples. The presence of this handle censer and the high amount of charcoal in situ suggests that this was the level corresponding to the time when the burial was done at the back of structure 2.

Level 6 (CHWR 12-6): With a depth ranging from 1 to 1.22 meters, the soil seems mixed between the sandy soil and the compact, clayey Brown soil (10 YR 4/3). The recovered material consisted of 140 ceramic sherds, 12 obsidian specimens, one lithic specimen, and a charcoal sample. In regards to the accumulation of stones, it was possible to see in the north profile of the pit that they were part of the core of the structure 2, because next to them there was a small wall made of rows of stones that could have comprised the back edge of the platform where structure 2 rested.



Figure 38. Ladle censer on top of a collective burial at Plaza A (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

Level 7 (CHWR 12-7): This level went from 1.22 meters to 1.43 meters, and is characterized by the presence of loose, wet-appearing, Dark Brown soil (10 YR 3/3). This soil, which starts at the previous level, only continues in the first five centimeters, since in the last 15 cm a drastic change in the stratigraphy is manifested by the appearance of the sandy soil of very pale brown color (10 YR 6/3) of sterile nature. Also, on the north side of the unit three stones appeared whose position suggests that they were thrown from above. As the excavation progressed, an intrusion or cut in the north profile was visible that indicates the presence of an ancient hole that was used as a trash pit or other archaeological feature. Only two of the three mentioned stones show features of having been worked to obtain a rectangular shape. The material collected in this level corresponds to 45 ceramic sherds, nine obsidian samples and a carbon sample.

Level 8 (CHWR 12-8): Due to the sterile nature of the soil it was decided to excavate only one square meter in the northern part of the unit where the three stones were located and where an intrusion was observed in the profile. This level goes from 1.43 to 1.63 meters. In the southern portion of the pit, the soil was sandy, loose, Very Pale Brown color (10 YR 6/3) and was sterile. It is like the northern portion where the intrusion was. The soil was also loose, but with a wet-appearing and of dark brown color (10 YR 3/3). The material recovered in this level consists of 40 ceramic sherds, four obsidian specimens and one carbon sample (See figure 39).



Figure 39. Surface of the intrusive burial (Photo by Oswaldo Avila).

Level 9 (CHWR 12-9): This is the last level of unit 12 and goes from 1.63 to 1.80 meters. The three stones mentioned above were removed and below them pieces of what could be a funeral offering were found. At this level, the sandy, loose, very pale brown soil (10 YR 3/3) predominated while the intrusive hole continues showing a different soil color, dark brown color (10 YR 6/3). The collected material corresponds to 10 ceramic sherds, one complete vessel, one obsidian

specimen and one carbon sample. The complete vessel has the shape of a jar with two necks, two handles, and decoration using the application technique (See Figure 62).

Unite 12A: In order learn more about the context where a red monochrome jar was found in unit 12, we decided to start an extension pit to the north of it with a diameter of 1x1 meters. This unit had 10 arbitrary levels and had a maximum depth of 2 meters.

Level 1 (CHWR 12A-1): This first level goes from 0 to 20 centimeters, and corresponds to the humus which is loose soil, with coarse granulometry and color dark brown (10 YR 3/4). The materials recovered consisted of 15 ceramic sherds and three obsidian specimens.

Level 2 (CHWR 12A-2): This level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters. The soil of this level appeared with a compact and clayey consistency of dark brown color (10 YR 3/3). As in unit 12, at this level was present a group of stones with irregular shapes that belonged to structure 2. The materials recovered were 36 ceramic sherds and two obsidian specimens.

Level 3 (CHWR 12A-3): With a depth ranging from 40 to 60 centimeters, this soil of this level appeared with a clayey consistency and of dark brown color (10 YR 3/3). At this level, an alignment of stone blocks oriented from east to west was more visible. Curiously, these rectangular stones were smaller than those found at the anterior part of temple 2. There is a high possibility that these stones were positioned in a north-south orientation rather than horizontally. This would be the reason why they look smaller than the average stone size of this area and will follow the same pattern of the group of stones located at the entrance and center of temple 2.

Level 4 (CHWR 12A-4): This level goes from 60 to 80 centimeters and presented a clayey, loose and Dark Brown color soil (10 YR 3/2). The irregular stones were removed to better expose the row of stones that crossed the unit from east to west. The stones were worked and had a width of 60 cm. Below this stone arrangement can be seen the intrusive hole in the west side of the profile. The recovered material consisted of 48 ceramic sherds, six obsidian specimens and one carbon sample (See Figure 40).



Figure 40. Remains of platform on the back of structure 2. (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

Level 5 (CHWR 12A-5): This level had a depth ranging from 80 to 100 centimeters and consisted of Brown soil (7.5 YR 4/4). The material recovered in this stratum corresponds to 39 ceramic sherds, six obsidian specimens and one sample of charcoal. The row of stones was removed after taking pictures and drawing them to continue excavating the unit. This decision was authorized by the supervisor Carmen Ramos after having a phone call with her.

Level 6 (CHWR 12A-6): With a depth between 100 to 120 centimeters, this level is composed of a moist, compact and clayey soil of Brown color (7.5 4 /4). As the excavation progressed, a layer of yellowish sandy soil appeared, which continued in the next stratum. The recovered material consisted of 25 ceramic sherds, one sample of coal and one unidentified bone.

Level 7 (CHWR 12A-7): This level goes from 120 to 140 centimeters, and its soil appeared mixed with two types of interspersed soils. The zone where the intrusive hole was located, the soil had a sandy and moist consistency of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10YR 3/6) and it contains many small stones. The other soil, which is the most abundant, was sandy, loose and of lighter color, very pale brown (10YR 6/3) and sterile. At this level, only five ceramic sherds and one sample of carbon were recovered.

Level 8 (CHWR 12A-8): This level has a depth ranging from 140 to 170 centimeters and like the previous level, two types of soils that appeared as interspersed layers. At a depth of 160 cm, on the south side of the unit, a charcoal deposit was discovered and a sample of it was obtained. From this point on, large fragments of ceramic started to appear and also fragments of human's bones. The materials collected from this level were: 41 ceramic sherds, eight obsidian samples, three fragments of a possible floor, and one sample of charcoal. Besides this, eight human bone fragments were recovered.

Level 9 (CHWR 12A-10 and CHWR 12-9): This is the last level of excavation for both unit 12A and unit 12. Because unit 12 was in a higher location than unit 12A there is one level of difference,

therefore level 12A-9 corresponds to level 12-10. The soil of this stratum is similar to the previous one (See Figure 41).



Figure 41. Burial 1 and 2, Chi Awär (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

Burial description

Individual 1: The bone remains of the main subject, who certainly was a ruler, were located at the center of the burial surrounded by special offerings following an east-west orientation. This interment corresponds to a secondary burial because the bones of at least two individuals did not show anatomical arrangement, instead superior and inferior limbs were positioned arbitrarily. The only pattern seen, is that the skulls' fragments were located toward the east of the burial. Because of the limited time we have for fieldwork, the bones were not identified in situ because we expected to analyze them at the laboratory where they would be cleaned and analyzed. The first impression we had is that the skeletal remains belong to males who died as adults; however, a detailed

examination could confirm it. The state of preservation of the skeletal remains is very precarious since they are very fragile to the touch due to the humidity of the environment and the passage of time. The mortuary offering associated with the remains is varied, which includes the following artifacts. These offerings are not strictly exclusive of the individual 1 but are shared among the individuals that together make up the burial.

1 envelope with small bone fragments not determined

1 ceramic seal

1 earplug possibly copper (the oxide that accompanied it is turquoise blue).

1 the upper part of jar type vessel with applied decoration similar to a bat

1 complete vessel, type tinaja with double neck and a zoomorphic face at the neck level

1 obsidian core

1 obsidian spear

Ceramic offering with an approximate of 50 fragments. Located on the left side of the main remains (north of the unit).

Sample of charcoal

A grinding stone

Individual 2: The presence of a second individual was deduced by the presence of more skull fragments that were located below a pot-like vessel that was fragmented and full of ashes. It is not possible to determine the number of individuals in the burial, but the number of limbs indicate that there were at least two individuals. It is necessary to say that we only excavated the east half of the burial, the other half is still intact for future research (See Figure 42).



Figure 42. Burial 1 and 2 with offerings (Photo by Juan Luis)

Some insights about Chi Awär's burials

Through the Kaqchikel documents we know the names of the Kaqchikel rulers who ruled in Chi Awär, which of them died during the occupation of this site, and who survived and witnessed its abandonment. As was presented in Chapter three, the first group of leaders that ruled in Chi Awär included Xitayul Yax, Sitan Tijax Kab'laj, Rajamun and Xikitza (1430-1455), while the second and last group of rulers was comprised by Jun Toj, Wuqu B'atz', Chulik and Xitamal Xej (1455-1470). Of the first groups, it is known that Rajamun and Xikitza died while they participated in a battle against an Aqajal faction who were settled in Chi Jolom and Pan Aj. These two rulers were members of the Tuquche' and Aqajal (Raxonijay) confederations. In regards of the Xpantzay lineage, it is known that their leaders got married with K'iche' women named Toj and

Q'anel. When Chi Awär was constructed, the ruler Xpantzay Ajmaq started to live in this city after abandoning Muq'b'al sib'. Here, he begot his son Julajuj Kan, and then died in Chi Awär. It is very possible that other secondary rulers died in this settlement too, but their names do not appear in the Kaqchikel documents. The elite status of the occupants of Chi Awär can be deduced by the presence of prestigious offerings including gold and copper artifacts that have been discovered by neighbors of Chontala (Gruhn 1969).

The persons buried at the back of structure 2 were likely Kaqchikel leaders because of the mortuary pattern present in this interment. Chi Awär's burials along with the interments from Chi Iximche' share characteristics such as that they were intrusive and they were usually located below domestic or temples' platforms. Some of them are burials 27-A, 27-B, 9-A, 9-B, 9-C, 38-A, 39-A, 38-A from Iximche' (Nance, Whittington, and Jones-Borg 2003:206–229). In Q'umarkaj, there were at least four burial types that were identified by John Weeks: simple burials, cist, crypt, and dedicatory burial (Weeks 1980). This diversity of mortuary patterns resulted from the multi-ethnic compositions of Q'umarkaj's population, related with the presence of different groups of Nimaq Achi' and allies that came from different parts of the Guatemalan highlands. Therefore, it is hard to determine which type or types of burial patterns are actually of K'iche' origin.

Excavations at the northeast elongation of the site

The third excavation zone corresponded to the northeast elongation of the site. In this area four excavation units were made, from unit 20 to unit 23 (See figure 43).

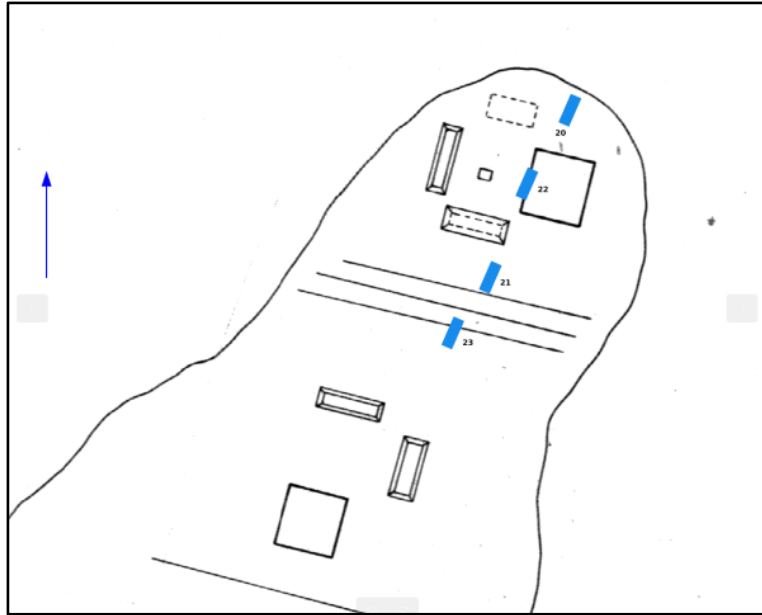


Figure 43. Location of excavation pits at the northeast zona of the site.

Unit 20 (N 14.937301 W -91.068619) and unit 21 (N 14.936859 W -91.069016) show a very shallow stratigraphy since below the 20 cm of excavation, the sterile soil was present (See figure 44).



Figure 44. Unit 20 located at the northeast end of the site (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

Unit 22: In this zone, Fox identified an architectonic group that surrounds an isolated plaza. In this plaza, there was a square structure at the east of the plaza, that we partially excavated. This unit was located at the west of this square structure and had the following coordinates N 14.937078 W -91.068886. During the excavation a stairway with two steps made of limestone carved blocks that were arranged as a keyboard with a north-south orientation was identified. The amount of ceramic collected in this pit was very low (See Figure 45).



Figure 45. Stairway in unit 22 (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

Unit 23: This unit was located in a leveled area also at the northeast end of the site and had the following coordinates N14.936759 W-91.069138. This unit has 7 levels in which abundant ceramics were collected. No architectural feature was found, but due to the presence of utilitarian ceramics, it is suggested that in this zone were residences constructed with perishable materials. This pattern is similar to what was found in unit 16, which was located on a platform on the back side of the double temples in plaza A. This unit, with coordinates N 14.936759 W -91.069138, has five levels and a lot of utilitarian ceramics of coarse and micaceous aspect were extracted, that contrasts with the scarcity of materials inside the square A (See Figure 46).



Figure 46. Photo of unit 23 (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

In summary, it can be affirmed that Patz'aq is a Postclassic site (1250-1524 CE) because of its defensive settlement pattern and its Postclassic diagnostic pottery that will be detailed in the next chapter. The location of the site is surrounded by cliffs, and the construction of walls and moats at its entrance, indicates that this site was designed to be impenetrable. Also, the site was possibly surrounded by watchtowers located in strategic points. One of them was situated in an artificial mound to the southeast of the epicenter, between the two moats. In this watchtower, we identified a dumpster (in excavation unit 1) on the back of a structure, that no longer exists, but had a diameter of approximately 14 x 6 meters. It is possible that more watchtowers were similarly surrounding the site as they appear on the map of Chi Iximche' drawn by the Spanish chronicler Antonio Fuentes y Guzman. In this area John Fox identified the existence of architecture, however, because of the presence of contemporary houses and crops, nothing remains but the mound. I

consider that although the relationship between the Kaqchikel and the Kaweq was stable and to some extent symbiotic, this did not happen with the other K'iche' confederations with whom there was a tense relationship and a constant struggle for power. I postulate that the Kaqchikel and their allies designed Chi Awär with defensive characteristics to protect themselves from other sections of the K'iche' population. They remained in Chi Awär for about forty years until an internal revolt took place in Q'umarkaj in about 1470 CE that forced their expulsion from this site.

With the excavations in plaza A (units from 10-19) it was possible to confirm the short occupation of Chi Awär by the little material collected and the shallow stratigraphy. However, it is necessary to mention that excavation units 16 and 23 showed a stratigraphy with older cultural evidence. In these units, there were up to 7 arbitrary levels of 20 centimeters excavated. This evidence suggests that in Chi Awär there was a pre-K'iche' occupation where ceramic is present without slip and very eroded red monochrome. This pottery was possibly produced by groups that the K'iche' and Kaqchikel attacked and incorporated into their political administration. The main discovery in plaza A was a collective burial located at the back of structure 2. The excavation of unit 12 shows that the intrusive type burial was made below the back platform of structure 2. In the north profile a row of broken limestone blocks that had a north to south orientation, instead of east to west can be clearly seen. The order of these blocks located in the center of the structure, resemble those found in the front of the building that also had a north-south orientation. Therefore, it could be suggested that structure two, had stairways on its back and front sides flanked by alfardas. When the burial was deposited and covered with earth, ceremonial acts were carried out because of the presence of charcoal and fragments of a ladle censer located in situ at level CHR 12-5. This offering is located below the platform level of structure 2. On extension 12A, on the same level, fragments of red monochrome vessels were found, also associated with the ritual acts

dedicated to the burial. It is difficult to establish if the individuals buried were K'iche' or Kaqchikel, however, some clues suggest a Kaqchikel affiliation. For instance, the intrusive type burial is also common in Chi Iximche' and the offerings associated with the collective burial are very similar to the artifacts associated with the burials found in Pakaman and the Resguardo in Q'umarkaj. As will be addressed in the next chapter, both sites in Q'umarkaj present evidence that they were occupied by Kaqchikel groups settled in the K'iche' capital. According to the evidence found in the burial, it can be considered that the people buried were Kaqchikel but it is difficult to determine to which confederation they belonged, since Chi Awär was occupied by representatives of the Kaqchikel, Aqajal, Sotz'il, and Tuquche'. When the Kaqchikel and their allies left Chi Awär to settle in Chi Iximche', they reproduced many architectural features including the construction of three to four adjacent plazas, the presence of moats and bulwarks in the site's main entrance, and the location of intrusive burials at the back of their main temples. A very notable difference between Chi Awär and Chi Iximche' was that in the latter no double or twin temples were built, which could symbolize the beginning of their independent political unit.

CHAPTER V

POTTERY OF THE QUICHE BASIN AND CHI AWÄR

The cultural material from the western highlands of Guatemala has shown an interrupted cultural development from Late Pre-classic up to the Late Postclassic period (De Hatch 1998; Ponce and Ciudad Ruiz 2013; Rands and Smith 1965; Wauchope 1975b). However, it was during the Late Postclassic period when significant changes in ceramics occurred in comparison with previous periods, which has been associated with the arrival of small groups of warriors into the highlands. According to Robert Wauchope, who conducted a systematic and exhaustive archaeological project in Zacualpa, El Quiche, there was a reduction in the number of ceramic wares and shapes in this period, and he also noticed a process of standardization of ceramic types that differed radically from all that had preceded them. In other words, Late Postclassic pottery types were more standardized and crossed geographic, national and linguistic boundaries, but local variation existed (Wauchope 1975b:75). This local variation could express ethnic identity and also class but as a part of a sphere of interaction, trade, and communication.

When the K'iche' and Kaqchikel arrived at the Poqom territory and the Quiche basin around 1200 CE, they found a diversity of groups that they called the Wukamaq'. This encounter resulted in the incorporation of these groups into the K'iche' and Kaqchikel organizations, and the colonization of their territories. Archaeologists have equated these expansionist campaigns with the cessation of ceramic production by locals, and its replacement with new wares that were progressively expanding geographically. The Postclassic period for the Quiche basin has been divided into two phases, the Wukamaq' period (700-1200 CE) and the Quiché period (1200-1524

CE). To see the changes in pottery from one period to another, the ceramic typology of each period will be explained.

The Wukamaq' period (700-1200 CE)

A team of anthropologists from SUNY, Albany led by Robert Carmack surveyed the Quiché basin in 1970. During this survey, Carmack's team identified the geographical location of important places that appeared in native documents, but also, they were able to distinguish two ceramic complexes—the Early and the Late Complexes—in the Quiché basin that they described broadly. They established that the Early complex was associated with the Wukamaq' who were the native peoples from the highlands, and the Late complex was related to the emergence of the K'iche' polity and their expansionism. The Early complex is characterized by the use of points and incisions as decoration, and bichrome and polychrome wares. The points and incisions that commonly showed a weaving pattern that varies in size were made with sticks before the recipient was fired. Both designs can be present alone or together. This complex also included bichrome and polychrome wares. The bichrome pottery corresponds to red on an orange or pale-yellow slip. The polychrome ceramic is red and brown on orange or pale-yellow called commonly 'buff'. The designs on bichrome pottery are more geometrical than in polychrome pottery (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:58,59). It is interesting to note that no Plumbate pottery was found in the Quiché basin although it was present in Zacualpa, El Quiché (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975; Gruhn and Lyle 1976:57–58). Carmack and team think that it is more likely that the inception of the K'iche' polity took place after the use of the Plumbate pottery in the Early Postclassic period. This idea is supported by the fact that pottery of the Early Complex is mixed with pottery from the Late Postclassic. Lastly, they also observed that during this period of time, people from the basin had

limited relationships with other regions evidenced by the few samples of foreign wares (Carmack et al 1975: 57-58). In summary, the diagnostic wares that they identified for the Wukamaq' period are:

- Fine orange without slip
- Bichrome red on orange/pale yellow
- Polychrome red and brown on orange/pale yellow or “buff”
- Mixtec style tripods
- Vase with circular base
- Points and incisions as decoration
- Thick micaceous ware

In 1973, Russel Steward conducted a second survey in the Quiché basin to better understand the cultural development of the local peoples from the Late Classic to Late Postclassic. He argues that because of the strong cultural homogeneity through time in the Quiché basin, the division between Late Classic and the Early Postclassic periods in terms of ceramics has not been successful. Therefore, the Wukamaq' period ranges from 700 to 1200 CE until new studies could corroborate or dismiss this chronology. The diagnostic markers of this period include the following ceramic wares:

- Red-on-orange and red-on-buff decorated wares¹⁹
- Brown and red wares with zone punctate and raked wavy line incisions
- Red-on-white wares
- Micaceous ware (Stewart 1977).

Regarding the transition from the Early to Late Postclassic, Robert Wauchope argued that “in contrast to the gradual transition between all earlier ceramic epochs in the highlands, the change from Early Postclassic to Protohistoric was abrupt and almost complete; this has usually been

¹⁹ The bichrome ceramic Red on cream, buff or orange is present in the valleys of Quetzaltenango and Totonicapán and are usually decorated with two types of motifs: zoomorphic figures and geometric designs. This ceramic ware appeared in the highlands from the Pre-classic period and reached its maximum use during the Late Classic. This ceramic was distributed in the west and north of the highlands (Ponce and Ciudad Ruiz 2013:384).

attributed to wholesale abandonment of valley sites for hilltop fortresses, but even at sites like Zaculeu, occupied during both periods, the change from onset of ceramic styles to the other was not gradual” (Wauchope 1975a:62). However, he also indicates that some Protohistoric or Late Postclassic ceramic features, such as animal-effigy-head feet, have recognizable ancestors in Early Postclassic, but not many. Along the same line, Carmack and team state that even though the Wukamaq’ complex remained until 1200 CE, the most used wares did not disappear completely. For instance, the micaceous ware and the polychrome red and brown on orange continued in the following period (Carmack, Fox, and Stewart 1975:57–60). For Russel Stewart, another member of the SUNY team, Late Postclassic K’iche’ material culture was influenced not by foreign peoples but from pre-K’iche’ peoples from the Wukamaq’ period. Early K’iche’ groups may likely have engaged in economic and political interaction with Wukamaq’ peoples or adopted their ceramic styles into their ceramic industry. Stewart identified that some motifs present in the Dull Polychrome ware from the Quiche period were also present in the Red on Buff, and Red and Black on Buff wares of the Wukamaq’ period. These motifs include a helix design as well as concentric circles and recurved rays radiating from the central motif. In addition, the characteristic decoration with points and dots continued during the Quiché period until the construction of Q’umarkaj in the 14th century. Stewart concluded that the Wukamaq’ people played a stronger role in the development of the K’iche’ groups, this is an aspect that has been poorly studied and interpreted from archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence (Stewart 1977:79).

The Quiche period (1300-1524 CE)

The Quiché period begins 1300 CE and continues until the Spanish conquest in 1524 CE. This period has been divided into three sub-phases named after the three main K’iche’ settlements

Q'aq'awitz (1300-1350), Ismachi (1350-1400) and Q'umarkaj (1400-1524). The Q'aq'awitz sub-phase represented a transition from the Wukamaq' to the Quiché period when new changes took place either in the material culture or settlement patterns. For Steward, the main diagnostic ware for this period was the White on Red ware also called the Fortress White-on-Red because they usually appear in citadels located in defensive sites. However, new radiocarbon analysis carried out by Thomas Babcock revealed that these K'iche' settlements were occupied earlier than scholars have calculated based on the interpretation of native documents. The new data indicates that the Chujuyub valley was occupied during the Late Classic period AD 500-800 and that the first K'iche' settlement named Chitinamit was constructed within this valley and was occupied in 800 CE. Q'umarkaj does not present a very different dating since the new data indicates that this settlement was occupied around 1300 CE (Babcock 2019:1). This information indicates that the occupation of Q'aq'awitz, now called Chitinamit, falls in the Wukamaq' period instead of the Quiché period. However, the radiocarbon dates only indicate when the valleys of the Quiche basin were occupied, but this occupation may be associated by Wuqamak groups who inhabited this area before the so-called K'iche'.

Regarding the Quiché period, the team from SUNY, Albany equates this period with the Late complex. Pottery of this complex usually appears in closed places located in defensive locations. The predominant wares produced in this period were the Monochrome Red and Brown slip wares, bichrome Fortress white-on-red ware, and the micaceous pottery with different thickness. Common shapes include vessels' rims with double groove, pots with high necks and ladle censers with a figurine at the end of the handle (Carmack, et al 1975:50-61). In summary, the diagnostic pottery for this period includes:

- Monochrome red and brown slip
- Fortress white on red

- Chinautla polychrome bright and matte
- Zoomorphic tripod supports
- Censers made with molds
- Micaceous different thickness
- Ceramic stamps
- Rims with double groove

Wauchope commented about the Protohistoric pottery that it is understandable the extensive use of the red and brown monochrome ceramic and the white on red wares was because of their technical superiority. They are thin and hard in contrast to the previous types. The fact that Protohistoric groups were using molds to decorate handle censers suggests the establishment of more efficient ways of manufacturing. However, the bichrome and polychrome do not seem to be superior in either technical or aesthetic quality to those of the Early Postclassic, and the ranges of shapes, colors, and decoration of other ceramics were sharply reduced. He got the impression that the entirely new set of values, put more emphasis on standardization and far less attention to artistic excellence. These new values are linked with the appearance of twin temples on single platforms, closed ball courts, and other new architectural features, plus the first strong development of metallurgy, and the practice of cremation, which revealed a picture of abrupt and massive cultural change (Wauchope 1975b:63, 64).

Q'umarkaj pottery

In 1947, Robert Wauchope and Ray Marino, from Tulane University, excavated nine test pits at Q'umarkaj to determine the extent of stratification of the site, if any, to obtain a sample of pottery from the layers discovered, and to compare the results with the ceramic of other sites. The results of their fieldwork are presented in the following table (See table 2).

| No. | Ceramic ware | Number of Sherds | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | White-on-red/ White-on-brown | 168 | 12.5% |
| 2 | Monochrome red, orange-brown | 882 | 62.9% |
| 3. | Comales, dishes and plates | 102 | 7.6% |
| 4 | Polychrome | 22 | 1.6% |
| 5 | Mica ware | 55 | 4.1% |
| 6 | Red-on-tan | 1 | 0.2% |
| 7 | Red-on-white | 21 | 1.6% |
| 8 | Ladle censers | 25 | 1.9 % |
| 9 | Others | | 7.6 % |

Table 2. Distribution of ceramic wares in Q'umarkaj (Wauchope 1970:182–203)

The ceramic analysis that Wauchope and Marino carried out revealed that the two ceramics most used at Q'umarkaj were Monochrome red, orange or brown (62.9%), and White on red (12.5%), which coincides with the Late Complex described by the SUNY team. The last archaeological project carried out in Q'umarkaj was led by the K'iche' archaeologist Raquel Macario from 2002 to 2004. Macario and her team set the goal of investigating the city's periphery to know more about how people with less power lived and were integrated into this settlement. In 2004 she focused her research on the architectural group at the northern end of the city where she found domestic platforms. During her project two zones were excavated identified as G1 and Pit1. The analysis of the ceramics collected during the project was compared with the ceramic from Q'umarkaj stored at the Archaeology National Museum and the ceramic collection at the Institute of Anthropology and Historia (IDAEH). Macario's final report included a ceramic typology and the distribution of ceramic wares in percentages (See figure 47). According to her study, the most popular wares in the first location, G1, were Xola Orange (22.27%) and Quiejche unslipped (20.04%), while in the second place excavated, the most used ceramic were Xoja Orange (29.61%), Pascuc Red-Brown (17.34%) and Raxaca Red (15.32%) (Macario 2005).

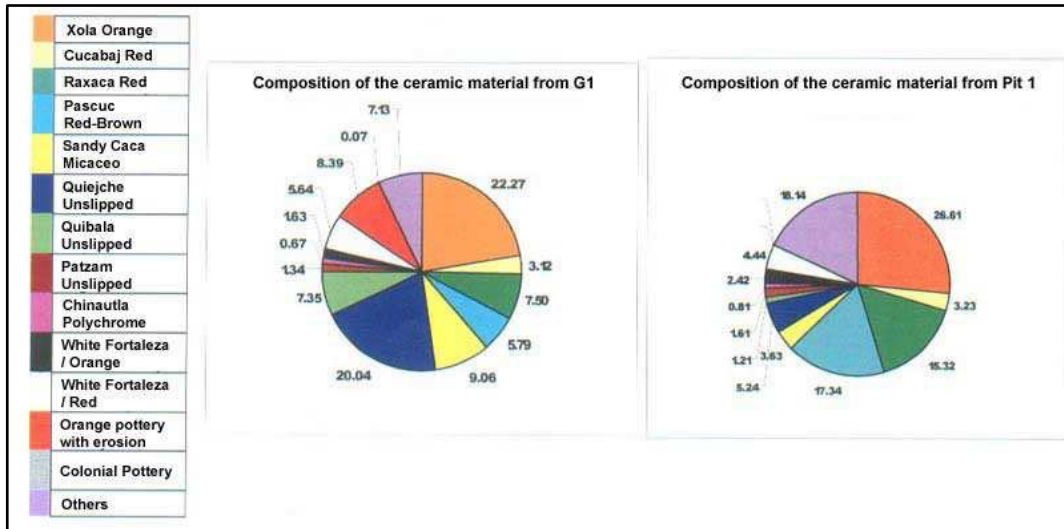


Figure 47. Distribution of ceramics in two zones of Q'umarkaj (G1 and Pit 1). (Macario Raquel, 2004)

In 2009, Macario and Walter Burgos presented a paper at the Archaeology Symposium in Guatemala where they presented an updated ceramic analysis of Q'umarkaj. The first step of the ceramic analysis was to form groups based on the surface finish: unslipped, monochrome, bichrome and polychrome. Then, each group was divided into types and variations following the Type-Variety method. The Monochrome Red and Brown were the most abundant ceramics and were divided into five groups: Xola, Raxaca, Jorronilaja, Tzununa and Balam. Less used ceramic groups include Bichrome Fortress White on Red, White on Orange, Pachitac Red on White, and Chinautla Polychrome. In this paper they presented a detailed description of the ceramic groups they identified (Macario and Burgos 2009).

Monochrome red, orange, brown ceramic

1. Jorronilaja Group

Type: Reddish Brown Jorronilaja

Characteristics: a) jars and comales, b) dark red to polished brown (See figure 48).

Variety: Grooved

Variety: Globular neck

Type: *Cucabaj*

Characteristics: a) bowls, comales and jars, b) dark red mate, c) with some mica inclusions

Variety: Grooved

Type: *Black Balam*

Characteristics: a) jars, b) orange-gray, c) with metallic look



Figure 48. Reddish Brown Jorronijala ceramic type (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

2. *Tzununa group*

Type: *Matte Red Tzununa* (See figure 49).

Characteristics: a) bowls, jars, pots, b) dark red slip with matte finish

Variety: Grooved

Variety: Applique

Type: *Pachun thick walls*

Variety: Grooved



Figure 49. Matte Red Tzununa ceramic type (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

3. *Xola Group*

Type: Orange Xola (See figure 50).

Characteristics: a) bowls, pots, jars and censers, b) red and orange polished slip; c) surface with great amount of mica particles.

Variety: Grooves

Variety: Globular neck



Figure 50. Xola ceramic type (Macario, Raquel: 2004).

4. *Raxaca Group*

Type: Red Polished Raxaca (See figure 51).

Characteristics: a) pots, bowls, jars and comales, b) glossy red slip with mica

Variety: Grooved
Variety: Incised
Variety: Applique
Variety: Globular neck



Figure 51. Red polished Raxaca ceramic type (Macario, Raquel: 2004)

Unslipped ceramic

1. Quiejche group

Type: Unslipped Quiejchej (See figure 52).

Characteristics: a) bowls, pots and comales, b) roughly smoothed surface

Type: Quibalá

Characteristics: a) censers with, b) roughly smoothed surface, c) molded and applique decoration.

Variety: Grooved

Variety: Thick walls

Type: Patzam

Characteristics: a) bowls, jars, and pots, b) coarse texture showing the degreaser on the surface.



Figure 52. Unslipped Quiejchej ceramic type (Macario, Raquel: 2004)

2. *Micaceous group*

Type: *Caca micaceous* (See figure 53).

Characteristics: a) bowls, jars and comales, b) a high concentration of mica.

Variety: soapy (jabonoso).



Figure 53. Caca micaceous ceramic type (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

Bichrome ceramic

1. Type: *Fortress white-on-red* (See figure 54)

Characteristics: a) jars and bowls, b) red slip with, c) white color decoration

Variety: Fortress white-on-orange

Variety: Grooved

Variety: Applique

2. Type: *Pachitac red-on-white*

Characteristics: a) bowls, b) with white slip c) decoration with red paint.

3. Type: *Chicho Nero on Red*

Characteristics: a) bowls and pots, b) red slip, c) decoration with black paint.



Figure 54. Fortress white-on-red ceramic type (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti).

Polychrome ceramic

1.Type: Chinautla (See figure 55).

Characteristics: a) jars and bowls, b) white slip, c) designs with red and black paint



Figure 55. Chinautla polychrome ceramic type (Macario, Raquel: 2004)

In this study, Raquel and Burgos (2009) identified the most used utilitarian ceramic wares in Q'umarkaj, among them, monochrome Jorronilajá, Tzununá, Raxacá and unslipped Quibalá, unfortunately the percentages for each group are not present in the graphic (See figure 56).

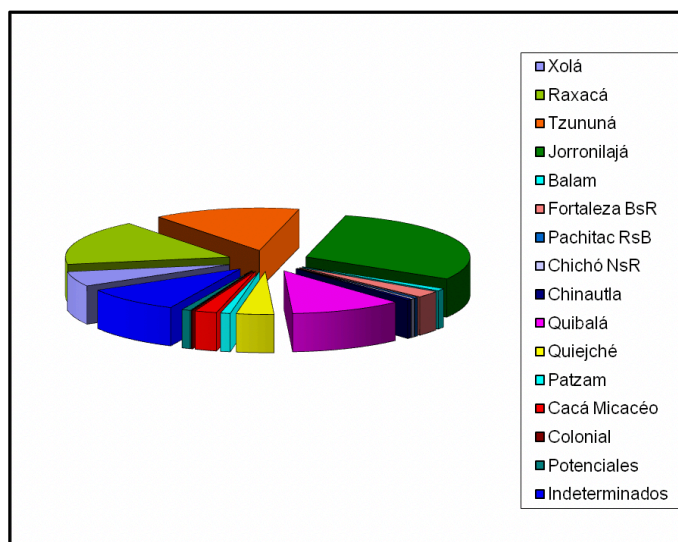


Figure 56. Detailed distribution of ceramics at Q'umarkaj (Macario, Raquel, 2009).

In the previous chapter, some architectural traits were described that have been thought to be of Kaqchikel origin including the adjacent plazas and isolated plazas comprised by four to five platforms, where there is a square temple perpendicular to a long structure. This isolated plaza in strategic points has been considered to be military wards. A similar architectural group appears in Pakaman, situated 1 kilometer east of Q'umarkaj. Pakaman and El Resguardo have been considered peripheral sectors but still integrated to Q'umarkaj. In 1973, John Weeks conducted archaeological research in both sites as part as his master dissertation. El Resguardo, situated only 250 meters east of Q'umarkaj, is a highly defensive architectural assemblage which consists of an elevated plaza arrangement including a ball court, two opposed temple structures and three flanking rectangular structures. This architectural group was located in a defensive location. According to John Weeks, obsidian chips and exhausted nuclei were found in this area which presumably resulted from military-related activities or it corresponded to an ancient obsidian workshop. Unlike El Resguardo, Pakaman was found unprotected on a slight knoll on the valley floor. Because of its location, it could have functioned as a military outpost while El Resguardo was a kind of fort that protected the entrance of Q'umarkaj (Weeks 1975:27–29). John Fox, who

mapped both sites, noted that east to El Resguardo was a zone with a disproportionately heavy deposit of obsidian cores, blades and projectile points that probably resulted from intensive military or craft activity. He also hypothesizes that Pakaman could be the site of Panpetak, where according to the Xajil Chronicle, K'iq'ab' took refuge when the internal revolt occurred in Q'umarkaj (Fox 1978:29,38).

Weeks' ceramic analysis of Pakaman and Resguardo, provided data similar to those provided by the Q'umarkaj archaeological project led by Raquel Macario. At El Resguardo, monochrome Red has the highest percentage with 85.3%, followed by Fortress white-on-red with 8.3%, and Monochrome Tan with 2.2%. In Pakaman, similarly, Monochrome Red was the most used ware with 91.9% followed by Fortress white-on-red with 4.7% (Weeks 1975). In El Resguardo, Weeks also found archaeological evidence of the practice of metallurgy. In mound 8, Weeks discovered 26 mold fragments that seemed to be used to work with cooper. He submitted a sample of a mold to the Brookhaven National Laboratory for analysis and the results indicated that the molds were used for casting copper into bars or ingots because of the presence of small droplets and corrosion residues in the molds. Besides this evidence, a crushed Fortress white-on-red- globular jar was found near the southwest balustrade of mound 8 in El Resguardo (See figure 57). The principal decoration consists of a modeled figure, seated with elbows on knees, and with a thick shaft extending from the mouth to the vessel's body wall. Parallel white bands are painted across finger, toes and limbs. There is a painted tail, suggestive of a monkey, who appears in the Popol Wuj as the patron deity of artists and craftsmen (Weeks, Wallace, and Carmack 1977:64) Most metals used in the manufacture of metal ornaments appear to have been channeled into the K'iche' capital through a system of taxes from other regions of the Guatemala highlands, possibly

Quetzaltenango, and by an active exchange in metals, possibly in the form of finished products, with southern Mexico (Weeks 1975:66, 67).



Figure 57. Fortress red-on-white jar from El Resguardo (Weeks, 1975).

Jars with similar decoration are scarce, only three examples have been found in the K'iche' territory. In Q'umarkaj a funerary urn was excavated (the specific location is unknown) depicting a subject with zoomorphic traits with a similar position holding a shaft (See figure 58). This subject has the face of a feline and also has the same body paint but of light blue color. By now, it is hard to say if this iconography is related to the practice of metallurgy, or if it has an independent meaning. Another example was found in the burial 1 from Chi Awär, which was located behind structure 2 in Plaza A (See figure 59). This example, broken in its lower part, is a monochrome red jar and also depicts a subject with zoomorphic features holding a shaft with the same squatting position. At the backside of the jar, was a figurine of the same subject but with an open mouth. In the Guatemala highlands, jaguar iconography is very common in funerary urns, because of its association with the night, darkness and the underworld. In the Popol Wuj a story is described by

the hero twins going to the underworld and passing through different houses, including the house of the jaguars. Every house represented a test imposed by the underworld's lords, who wanted their death, however they managed to escape and survive with the help of fireflies.

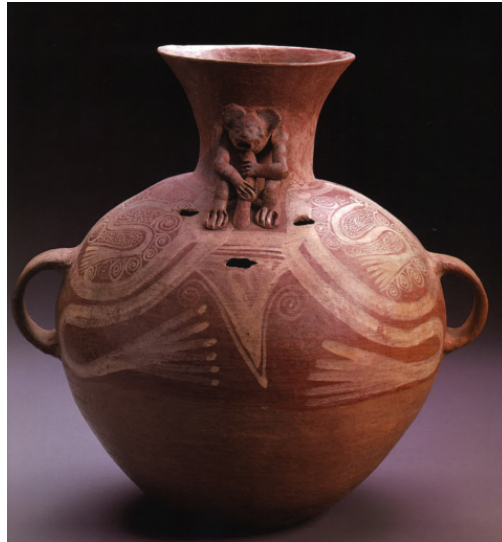


Figure 58. Fortress white-on-red Funerary urn from Q'umarkaj (1996)



Figure 59. Monochrome red jar from Chi Awär (Photo by Oswalso Avila)

During Weeks' archaeological project, he did not find pieces of gold or silver ornaments at El Resguardo or in Pakaman. However, a few years later, the archaeologist Thomas Babcock

conducted a multi-year project in both sites, discovering elite burials with rich gold ornaments that has no comparison in the highlands. Between the El Resguardo and Pakaman, nearby the zone where Fox reported a high frequency of obsidian artifacts (sector 310) is located a mound (sector 290) that was ignored previously by the SUNY team. The excavation of this isolated mound revealed two plaster floors, the first with a depth of 1.30 meters, and the second 40 centimeters deeper. Below the second floor, was observed in the pit profile a rectangular cut. As the excavation progressed, below the level of the floor, human remains of at least three individuals were encountered. This interment was called Burial 1. Next to burial 1 was an articulated skeleton of an individual who was in a sitting position and was identified as burial 2. Burial 2 was atop a rectangular plaster-covered structure, like a stone box, made with pumice blocks. After removing the lid, Babcock found two funerary urns numbered as Burial 2 and 3. The two individuals belong to the elite sector and were cremated completely, except for a jaw fragment in burial 3. These last two burials were very distinctive based on two factors. First, both urns were covered by gold bowls and fancy offerings never seen before in the highlands. For instance, burial 3 contained jade beads, gold ear spools, spherical gold beads, twenty-three star-shaped gold beads, as well as twenty-two jade beads, shell beads, and four shell plaques, two of which were carved. Burial 4 had two cast-gold eagle warrior pendants, two gold ear spools, seventeen spherical gold beads, thirty-three discs made of gold foil with two perforations on each and in three sizes, twenty-three pieces of gold foil some folded over and others flat, lacking any specific forms, and four copper artifacts were found in the form of a small, shallow bowl (Babcock 2012:187–197). Unfortunately, Babcock only published some pictures of these offerings and burials, which would be of great interest to archaeologists focused on the Guatemalan highlands. The second factor that stands out from these burials is that one of the two urns does not follow the traditional K'iche' style urns, instead it seems

to be an Aqajal urn commonly found in Jilotepeque Viejo or Chwa' Nima' ab'aj (See figure 60). Aqajal urns usually are Chinautla polychrome jars, with high necks, and with feline figurines as decoration on both handles (See figure 61). Similar examples of these polychrome urns have been found also in Chiantla and Cauinal. The second urn, according to Babcock, was a plain orange jar, with three holes near the top resembling a human face. Inside the jar were an additional six eagle-warrior pendants, all charred. There was also an uncharred elaborate gold filigree bead, and eleven jade beads some with designs (Ibid, 197). The presence of two different urn styles in this burial at Q'umarkaj could suggest an existing alliance between the K'iche' and the Aqajal, and the presence of Kaqchikel groups in Q'umarkaj, specifically at Pakaman and El Resguardo as Carmack suggested.

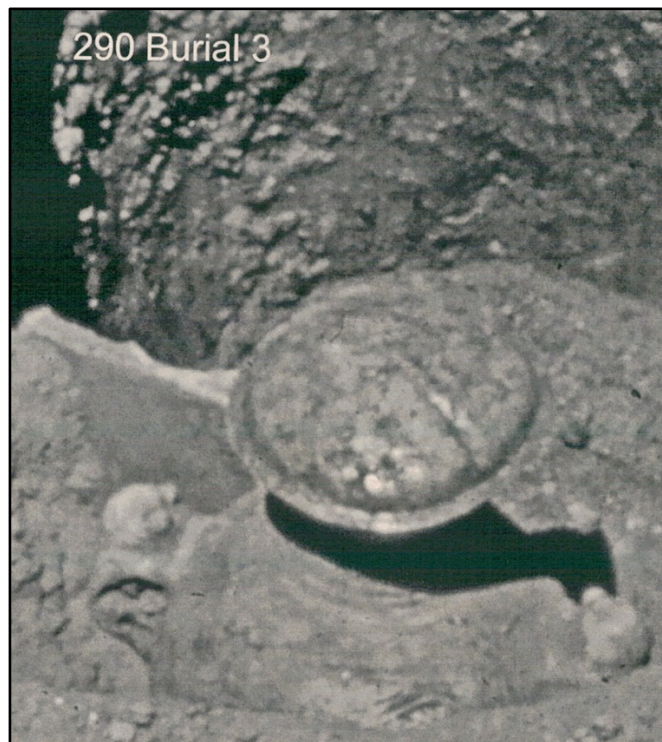


Figure 60. Resguardo-Pakaman ridge 290 and burial 3 (Babcock 2012:193)



Figure 61. Chinautla polychrome Funerary urns from Jilotepeque Viejo at the Archaeology Museum of Guatemala (Photo taken by Juan Luis).

In El Resguardo, Weeks also found some figurines and pottery with applique decoration (See figure 62). In the first picture, the artifact ‘b’, shows a fragment of a jar that depicts the head of a being with goggle eyes, long nose and two long earrings. An identical figurine is present in a red monochrome jar found in burial 1 from Chi Awär, which possibly correspond to a funerary urn. There are only two examples of this motif that were found at Chi Awär and el Resguardo, which suggest a strong connection between these two sites. Pakaman and El Resguardo were likely Kaqchikel residences but at the same time, military outposts intended to protect the entrance of Q’umarkaj. Perhaps only Pakaman was a military outpost for its strategic position. It is interesting to notice that the document *Historia de los Xpantzay* indicates that the Kaqchikel also experienced the dawn in Chi Ismachi’ Q’umakaj, which means that they occupied a spot within the K’iche’ capital.



Figure 62. Pictures of special artifacts from El Resguardo (Weeks 1975) and Monochrome red jar with double neck from Chi Awär. (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

An alliance between the K'iche' and the Aqajal is possible since the obsidian distributed throughout the K'iche' and Kaqchikel territories came mainly from San Martin Jilotepeque and El Chayal as a secondary source (Norris 2001). For instance, two obsidian samples were collected on the surface of the Chi Awär site and other two fragments were found in the bag of level 12A-8 that was left in the laboratory after the incident occurred on May 4, 2016. Taking advantage of this obsidian analysis, one sample coming from Chucam, Chichicastenango and three from Santa Apolonia, Chimaltenango were added. This very preliminary analysis shows that almost all the samples were made with obsidian that came from San Martin Jilotepeque except for one obsidian sample (CHWR 12A-8) that came from Ixtepeque as illustrated in the following chart (See table 3 and figure 63).

This result was expected since the main source of obsidian of the Postclassic sites located in the Quiche basin (Zacualpa, Chiche, Chutixtiox, Q'umakaj), including the Kaqchikel *tinamit* Chi Iximche', came from San Martin Jilotepeque (Smith and Berdan 2003:149). Pakaman and El

Resguardo were likely Kaqchikel residences but at the same time military outposts intended to protect the entrance of Q'umarkaj

| Site | Source: El Chayal | Source: Ixtepeque | San Martin Jilopoteque |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| CHWSurface1 | | | X |
| CHWSurface2 | | | X |
| CHW12A-8 | | X | |
| CHW12A-8.2 | | | X |
| Chucam | | | X |
| StApolonia1 | | | X |
| StApolonia2 | | | X |
| StApolonia3 | | | X |

Table 3. Source of obsidian of artifacts found at Chi Awär, Chucam and Santa Apolonia

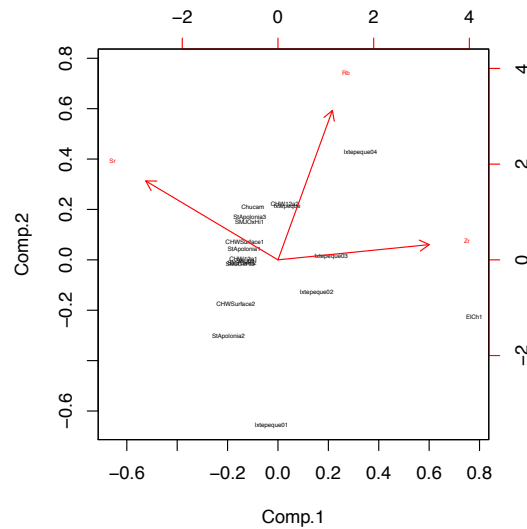


Figure 63. pXRF analysis of obsidian samples of Chi Awär and other sites

Diagnostic ceramic types from Chi Awär

This section contains a preliminary typology of Chi Awär ceramics based on the careful revision of pictures and notes taken during fieldwork and the analysis of a bag with ceramic sherds from the unit CHWR 12A-8 that were left at the laboratory in Chontala. The ceramic of Chi Awär

is similar to the pottery from Q'umarkaj, however the presence of Mica and the unslipped Quiejche groups, appeared with higher quantity than the K'iche' capital. The following pictures of ceramic types come from the bag (CHWR 12A-8).

Fortress white on red ware: This pottery has been found commonly in Late Postclassic fortified hilltop sites. Because of this characteristic, this ceramic was named Fortress White-on-red (Woodbory and Trik, 1953: 173). This group includes all sherds with a white or near-white decorative element painted on red, orange, red-brown, or tan base slip (Babcock 2012:67). The principle forms associated with this type are tripod bowls, some with effigy-head support, and tall-necked jars. This pottery is abundant in Q'umarkaj and at Chuitinamit, capital of the Tz'tujil. By far the highest frequency of this ceramic was at Xolpacot in Sacapulas (30.7%), Patzac in San Andrés Sajcabaja (17.6%), Pacot in Sacapulas (16.3%), Chutixtiox in Sacapulas (16.3%), Cajyup in Rabinal (14.3%) and Q'umarkaj (12.5%). The smallest recorded percentages were at Iximche' (2.8%), Jilotepeque Viejo (2.3%) and Chuitinamit in Sololá (4.9 %). Decorative motifs include stripes, parallel horizontal or diagonal lines, spots, circles with small spots or “teeth” attached, concentric circles, scrolls or spirals, zigzags, nested diamonds, and chevrons (Rands and Smith 1965:101) (See figures 64).

Chinautla Polychrome ware: This is the second significant diagnostic of Late Postclassic Pottery in the Guatemalan Highlands. This ware can be found with more frequency in the Northern Zone than the Southern part of the highlands. There are at least four or five varieties or styles: a dull paint style, a bright paint style, a white-outlined red-on-tan style, a black-outlined red-on-white style, and a style that occurs almost exclusively on hemispherical bowls (See figure 65).



Figure 64. Fortress white-on-red from Burial 1, Chi Awär (Photo taken by Juan Luis)

The sites that show the highest percentage of polychrome ceramic are Chinautla (Poqomam site) with (18.8%) and Q'umarkaj (1.6%) (Wauchope 1970:108). In Chi Awär, this type of ceramic is very scarce. This ceramic sherd (See figure 64) was found in the Atalaya at Chi Awär.



Figure 65. A Chinautla polychrome sherd found at Chi Awär (Photo by Oswaldo Avila)

Monochrome red, tan or brown: This ceramic comes from the same sites that produce White on red ceramic. Monochrome ceramic appears at Saqulew, Xolchun (Huehuetenango), Pacot,

Comitancillo, Xolpacol, Chutixtiox, chutinamit, Patzac, Chuitinamit, Patzac, Q'umarkaj, Cajyup, Iximche', Chinautla, Mixco Viejo, Chukumuk, and Chitinamit (Sololá). The highest frequencies were at Chutixtiox in Sacapulas (71.1%), Q'umarkaj (62.9%), Chutinamit in Sacapulas (48.1%), and Cajyup in Rabinal (40.0%). The Lowest frequencies were at Xolpacot in Sacapulas (21.3%), which also has the highest percentage of white-on-red, and Patzac in Sacapulas (17.6). This circumstance possibly resulted from chronological factors. For instance, that white-on-red waned in popularity as that of Monochrome red persisted (Rands and Smith 1965:103). According to Macario, red/orange monochrome ceramic can be divided into different types, which have been identified in Chi Awär (CHWR 12A-8) (See Figures 66).



Figure 66. Orange Xola ceramic sherds collected from CHWR 12A-8 (Photo by Juan Luis)

Raxaca Slipped ceramic (See figure 67).



Figure 67. Raxaca Slipped sherd collected from CHWR 12A-8 (Photo by Juan Luis)

Red Tzununa mate ceramic (See figure 68).



Figure 68. Red Tzununa mate sherds collected from CHWR 12A-8 (Photo by Juan Luis)

Jorronilaja ceramic (See figure 69).



Figure 69. Jorronilaja ceramic sherds collected from CHWR 12A-8 (Photo by Juan Luis)

Unslipped ceramic: The unslipped ceramic and its three types appear abundantly in all the excavation pits made during the Chi Awär archaeological project. These three types are Quiejchej, Quibalá and Patzam (See figures 70 and 71). The first two types have a roughly smoothed surface, while the last type shows a coarse texture where the degreaser is visible on the surface.



Figure 70. Quiejchej unslipped sherds (Photo by Juan Luis)



Figure 71. Patzám ceramic sherds from Chi Awär (Picture by Iyaxel Cojti)

Micaceous ware: This ware is typically Protohistoric or Later Postclassic. Sherds are classified as mica ware if one can quickly recognize the shiny mica inclusions. Mica refers to any bright, reflective clear or white particle in the temper (Babcock 2012:71). Some sites with the highest percentage of this ceramic are Cajyup in Rabinal (34.3 %) and Jilotepeque Viejo, Chimaltenango (27.6%) (Wauchope 1970:116). In Chi Awär, mica ceramic is very common, and sherds usually appear with different thicknesses and with a variety of finishes (See figure 72).



Figure 72. Mica sherds from Chi Awär (Photo by Juan Vidal).

Red on White: This ware has a lustrous finish with a red or orange design over a white or cream base (See figure 73). Because this type of ceramic is rare in Postclassic sites, it is not considered a diagnostic for this time period. The appearance of quantities of red-on-white ceramics with a lack of other ware that is Late Postclassic diagnostics may indicate a unit from an earlier time period (Babcock 2012:70).



Figure 73. Red-on-white bowl from Chi Awär (Photo by Juan Luis).

Stamps: The most common shape of stamps are rectangular, oval to circular and narrow with a small lump-shaped handle. They are unslipped and range from 4-12 mm. thick. The decoration they applied consists usually of carved or possibly mold made fine-line motifs, both rectilinear and curvilinear, including double-line flattened loops, frets, nested wedge-shaped elements, m-shaped elements, serpent head, forked tongue, rattles, and the hole frequently surrounded in part with a row of tiny circles. During the Late Postclassic period, stamps are very common in Saqulew, Q'umarkaj, Jilotepeque Viejo and Chuitinamit (Sololá), and other nearby Postclassic sites (Wauchope 1970:119). Although it has not been fully corroborated, the most accepted hypothesis

about the function of stamps is their use for body and textile decoration. They are usually found in burials or trash pits (Field 1967). In Chi Awär two stamps were found made with different materials and sizes (See figures 74 and 75).



Figure 74. Stamp from Chi Awär found in Burial 1 (Phot by Oswaldo Avila)



Figure 75. Stamps from Chi Awär and Jilotepeque Viejo with similar design (Photo by Iyaxel Cojti)

Kaqchikel ceramics from Iximche'

The ceramic in Chi Iximche' differentiated considerably from that of Q'umarkaj. According to Robert Wauchope, despite both citadels sharing shapes and details in the decoration, their ceramic types are very different since common ceramics in Q'umarkaj are present in low percentages in Iximche' (Wauchope 1975a:12). In 1947 Wauchope and Mr. Marino visited Iximche' and because of the lousy weather, they carried out a brief superficial survey to collect pottery. The results indicated the use of Monochrome red or tan, 262 (81.1%), Mica ware (23 sherds 7.1%), Comales, Dishes and Plates (19 sherds 5.9%), white on red (9 sherds, 2.8%), Red-on-white (3 sherds 0.9%), flanged tile ware (3 sherds 0.9%), thick-walled white slipped censer (1 shard 0.3%), % (Wauchope 1970:227–228). Jorge Guillemin, who excavated this site in 1959, briefly lists Iximche's main ceramic types as micaceous ware, Chinautla Polychrome, and Fortress white-on-red (Fox 1978:184).

Nance et al., also confirms that the brown and red wares tend to predominate in Chi Iximche'. The polychrome decoration is all but absent, and bichrome types constitute a small minority of sherds. Unlike K'iche' sites, bichrome in Chi Iximche' is Orange-on-Gray-Buff instead of White-on-red. They also observed that in the east, where the Aqajal and Pokomam settled, Chinautla Polychrome predominates over bichrome types in sites such as Jilotepeque Viejo and Chinautla Viejo (Charles Roger Nance, Whittington, and Jones-Borg 2003:178–179). Interestingly, in Jilotepeque Viejo, there is a low percentage of red-slipped ceramics in general, contrasting with western Kaqchikel and K'iche' sites, which suggests that not much pottery was imported from Iximche' or from the K'iche' capital (Fox 1978:207). These differences are essential since it is possible that bichrome and polychrome types will prove important to defining

cultural and/or linguistic territories for the Highland Late Postclassic (Rands and Smith 1965:139–142). Regarding the Micaceous ceramic, there is a large amount of it in Jilotepeque Viejo and the surrounding areas, which indicate that this type was produced locally. The micaceous pottery seemed to be produced in the Chuacús region, specifically in the department of Baja Verapaz, and the north of Chimaltenango (Navarrete 1961:26). In Iximche', there seems to be much more micaceous paste pottery, and the same is true of black slipped and black polished utility and solid white painted or slipped types (Charles Roger Nance, Whittington, and Jones-Borg 2003:178).

In summary, the Quiché period (1200-1524 CE), is associated with the expansion of the K'iche' population in the Quiche basin and beyond its borders. Although, some ceramic types of the previous period continue in the Quiche period, such as the micaceous and bichrome ceramics, a clear trend towards the standardization of ceramics and the reduction of shapes was observed. However, local ceramic variations were observed, which may indicate the presence of different political spheres that could correspond to territorial limits. For instance, Chi Awär was within the K'iche' territory, therefore under their political and cultural influence that is reflected in the similarity in the ceramic types of both sites. Once, the Kaqchikel and their allies left Chi Awär to settle in Chi Iximche' around 1470, they begin to produce ceramics that would differ from the ceramics used in the Quiché basin. This could be expected result since both groups, K'iche's and Kaqchikel, defended their territorial borders and also established independent commercial dynamics. As Robert Wauchope observed “The pottery of Iximche' is quite different from that of Q'umarkaj, with which it was contemporary, at least from the time of K'iq'ab'(K'iche') and Jun Toj and Wuqub'atz' (Kaqchikel) onwards. The common pottery of Q'umarkaj belonged to a smaller trade in Iximche'” (Wauchope 1975a:12). Pottery in this context can help to identify

political and cultural spheres, rather than ethnic groups, because members from different ethnolinguistic groups may settle in big polities as a result of alliances, marriages or warfare. For instance, the ceramic offerings found at burial 1 of Chi Awär (See drawings of some ceramic artifacts in Annex), suggests that Q'umarkaj was a multicultural city as a result of its economic and political alliances, and the settlement of the Animaq' Achi within this capital. As mentioned in chapter 3, the Nimaq' achi were prisoners of war with high status, who settled in Q'umarkaj and sustained the K'iche' rulers through the payment of taxes and services. These captives eventually became close allies and could obtain more privileges than the Q'umarkaj's vassals (Carmack 2001:188, 189, 411, 419). The archaeological evidence in Pakaman and El Resguardo suggest that members of the Kaqchikel, Aqajal and possibly Sotz'il and Tuquche' confederations resided in those areas and, at the same time, protected the eastern entrance of the site. It is difficult to establish whether the Kaqchikel were also Nimaq' Achi who lived near or inside Q'umarkaj providing services for the sustenance of K'iq'ab', but further investigation could corroborate this. Once the Kaqchikel moved from the Quiche basin to Chi Iximche', they started to display new symbols of authority, such as gold and copper ornaments, murals with elite paraphernalia, censers depicting individuals with pierced noses, which in Mesoamerica is associated with rulership, the production and control of cacao fields in the south coast, and the possession of their own Nima'q Achis. Lastly, it is interesting to note that in Chi Iximche', the Kaqchikel reproduced their settlement pattern with adjacent plazas and that there was no double or twin temple, which represented their complete independence from other highland groups.

CHAPTER VI

LINGUISTIC TRACES OF THE ANCIENT KAQCHIKEL OCCUPATION OF CHICHICASTENANGO

The south of the territory of Chichicastenango was occupied by the Kaqchikel around 1400 when their alliance with the K'iche' started. Although the Kaqchikel placed their founding altars in several settlements (Pan Che ', Chi Q'ojom, Muqb'al Sib', Chuwila') in this area, the K'iche' ruling groups claimed that those territories belonged to them. Two possibilities explain the presence of K'iche' and Kaqchikel in the southern zone of Chichicastenango. The first is that both groups invaded this area together, defeating and incorporating the local population into their political units. The second is that the Kaqchikel have arrived before and that their settlements have been conquered by the K'iche' as it is stated in the Popol Wuj. I think it was the first, but then when the alliance is lost, the Kaqchikel leaders, who spoke also K'iche', were expelled from this territory, leaving the rest of the population in Chichicastenango. This idea is supported by the fact that other K'iche' variants from municipalities that had pre-Columbian Kaqchikel occupation such as Joyabaj and Zacualpa show influence of the Kaqchikel language in their vocal systems (tense and lax vowels) in comparison with other K'iche' towns whose populations continue using the system of long and short vowels.

In this chapter, I present that K'iche' was the official language in the Quiché basin during the Late Postclassic period and that the Kaqchikel had to speak K'iche' while occupying the Chichicastenango territory. Since their mother language was the Kaqchikel, they transferred some elements of their language into the second or recipient language (RL-K'iche'), principally the lax and tense vowels. This process can be explained with the transfer type called imposition, where the source language (SL- Kaqchikel) is the dominant language of the speaker, from which material

is transferred into a recipient language (RL-K'iche'), in which the speaker is less proficient. The result of the imposition transfer was the inception of the K'iche' variant of Chichicastenango.

Kaqchikel in Chichicastenango

According to native documents, the Kaqchikel did not originate from the Chichicastenango territory. If the association between the Kaqchikel linguistic group and the south division of the Solano ceramic tradition is correct, then the territories where the Kaqchikel settled and developed since the Late Pre-classic period would be the Central highlands. This zone covers the current departments of Chimaltenango, Guatemala, and Sacatepéquez. When the Kaqchikel arrived at the south of the Quiché basin around 1400, they found local groups named the Kupilkat and Kanalaqam who were K'iche' speakers and possibly inhabited the entire basin. The K'iche' also narrated in their documents that they had found members of these groups in the Santa Rosa Chujuyub valley who attacked the K'iche' when they settled in their first capital Q'aq'awitz. Along with the Kaqchikel, the K'iche' also colonized the Chichicastenango territory as both groups claimed to have occupied the same settlements. Therefore, both K'iche' and Kaqchikel warriors protected the south border of the K'iche' capital, while the Kaqchikel leaders lived at the Chuwila' *calpul*. When the alliance between the K'iche' and the Kaqchikel came to an end in 1470, the Kaqchikel together with the Tuquche' and the Sotz'il, abandoned Chi Awär and Chuwila' and other settlements in the Chichicastenango territory. When this event happened, the K'iche' took total control of this area and also tried to occupy territories that belonged to the Kaqchikel in the Sololá territory. The Xajil Chronicle explains how the Kaqchikel expelled the K'iche' from K'isk'ab', Chaqij Ya', Pa Xiwanul, Xe chi B'ojo' and Xe Chi Tuj (located at Sololá). This event suggests that the Kaqchikel were defending their territorial borders also through military outposts.

The native documents do not provide information about what happened with the Kaqchikel residents who lived in the Chichicastenango territory. People who belonged to K'iche' *calpuls* likely stayed, being mainly the elite who abandoned the zone. Also, it is important to notice that archaeological surveys conducted in Chichicastenango revealed a very low percentage of Late Postclassic pottery, which means that only strategic points were occupied where ceramic is concentrated.

The presence of Kaqchikel people in Chichicastenango is also supported by the presence of a few toponyms in Kaqchikel language in Chichicastenango. They are Saqiya' and Chokoya'. Saqiya, *saq* 'white' + *ya* 'water', means 'pure or clear water', and Chokoya, *chokoy* 'wild parrot' + *ya* 'water', and means 'river of parrots'. The Saqiya' village, was named after a wellspring located at this community while Chokoya' is a well-known recreational park in Chichicastenango where there are small waterfalls, wellsprings and creeks that feed the Quijuel river, which is a tributary of the Motagua River. There must have been more places occupied by the Kaqchikel in Chichicastenango, but we only know the places occupied by the elite, who eventually abandoned the area.

The Kaqchikel only inhabited Chichicastenango during pre-Columbian times. After the arrival of the Spanish, the town was registered as a K'iche' town and the municipality was founded with the reduction (Reducción) of K'iche' *calpuls* including Cabrakan (Lemoa), Chulimal (Chulimal), Huyla' (Uwila'), and other nearby villages (Cabezas 1974:25). It is very possible that the Kaqchikel were bilingual and were forced to speak K'iche' while they lived within K'iche' territories. This could explain the existence of Kaqchikel influence in the K'iche' linguistic variation of Chichicastenango.

Contact-induced changes: borrowing and imposition

In regards to the outcomes of language contact, Donald Winford highlights the importance of clarifying the definition of two types of cross-linguistic influence: borrowing and imposition. These two transfer types were originally proposed by Van Coetsem (2016), who considered that in a contact context there is a source or donor language (SL) and a recipient language (RL). The direction of transfer materials is always from the SL to the RL, and the agent of the transfer is either the RL speaker (RL agentively) or the SL speaker (SL agentively). For Van Coetsem a borrowing occurs when the recipient language (RL) is the agent, for instance when an English speaker uses French words while speaking English. In this process, the transfer from a non-dominant source language (French) is imported into a RL via the agency of the speakers for whom the latter (English) is the dominant language (RL agentively). Transfer of this type typically involves mostly vocabulary, though some degree of structural borrowing is possible (Winford 2005:376–377). Learners employ features of their first language L1 to compensate for their limited proficiency in a second language L2.

In an imposition case, a French speaker (SL- agentively) will impose his articulatory habits while speaking English (RL). This example shows the source language being the dominant language of the speaker, from which elements are transferred into the English or the recipient language, in which the speaker is less proficient. This type of transfer usually involves mainly phonology and grammatical features, but vocabulary as well. Van Coetsem also identified the different effects of borrowing and imposition which he called the ‘stability gradient’ of language. He noticed that phonology and grammar are more stable, while lexicon is less stable; and that speakers tend to preserve the more stable components of the language in which they are more

proficient. In the imposition transfer type, the effects tend to be systematic and produce an abrupt change in the recipient language. On the other hand, borrowing tends to be mostly lexical, and does not usually affect the RL grammar (Van Coetsem 2016). Another important aspect of Van Coetsem's work, it that he identified two mechanisms subjacent in the two transfer types: imitation and adaptation. Both mechanisms are in play in both of the transfer types, but in borrowing, imitation occurs before adaptation, while the opposite happens in imposition. In imposition, adaptation generally entails a clear change in the RL by adapting the materials of the RL to the rules of his dominant language (SL).

According to Winford, the two transfer types provide a coherent empirical framework to investigate outcomes of language contact. The two major transfer types and their associated types of agentivity are universal across contact situations. From this perspective, there are in general only three broad categories of contact languages:

1. Those that arose primarily through RL agentivity (borrowing).
2. Those in which imposition via SL agentivity played a major role.
3. Those that arose from varying combinations of RL and SL agentivity (Winford 2005:421).

The K'iche' variant from Chichicastenango, which shares the lax/tense vocalic system with the Kaqchikel language, resulted from the imposition transfer type. In this case, the Source Language (agentivity) was the Kaqchikel, the dominant language, which transferred material to the Recipient language that was the K'iche' or L2. In the next section is a detailed explanation of the linguistic changes in the K'iche' variant of Chichicastenango as a case of imposition transfer type.

The K'iche' language and the Chichicastenango variant

The Mayan linguistic family has approximately 30 languages that are spoken in the south of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. There is still no consensus on how many Mayan languages are spoken today because scholars still debate if some dialectic variations are different languages or dialects of the same language. For instance, the Achi is a variant (linguistically) of K'iche', but Achi speakers claim that they speak a different language based on historical and political factors. The Mayan languages developed from a common ancestor, the Proto Mayan. The Proto-Mayan probably was spoken in the northwest of the highlands of Guatemala, and from this territory the languages started to disperse but have retained a territorial unity except for the Huastek, which is spoken in the north of Mexico (England 1996:6–9).

According to Terrence Kaufman, the Proto-Mayan started to be diversified around 4200 years ago in the current Maya territory. This ancestral language separated in four divisions, with the Huastecan the first to separate, followed by the Yucatecan around c.3900 BP, and then the East and West divisions in 3600 BP. The Eastern division eventually branched into Greater K'iche'an and Mamean c. 3400 BP. Both Greater K'iche'an and Mamean began to diversify internally around 2600 BP into different languages. The K'iche' group or complex started to separate in the tenth century into six languages: K'ichee', Sipakapense, Sakapulteko, Tz'utujil, and Kaqchikel (Kaufman 1974). The K'iche'an groups expanded into eastern and southern Guatemala a little after 1200 CE (Campbell 1997) (See figure 76).

- Huastecan
 - Huastec, Chicomuseltec
- Core Mayan (Central Mayan)
 - Yucatecan
 - Maya (Yucatec Maya), Lacandón
 - Itzaj (Itzá, Itza'), Mopan
 - Western Mayan
 - Cholan-Tzeltalan
 - Cholan
 - Ch'ol, Chontal (Yokot'an)
 - Choltí (extinct), Ch'orti'
 - Tzeltalan
 - Tzeltal, Tsotsil
 - Greater Q'anjob'alán (Q'anjob'alán-Chujean)
 - Q'anjob'alán
 - Q'anjob'al, Akatek, Jakaltek (Popti')
 - Mocho' (Motozintlec) (with Tuzantec)
 - Chuj-Tojolabal
 - Chuj, Tojolabal (Tojol-ab'al)
 - K'ichean-Mamean (Eastern Mayan)
 - K'ichean
 - Q'eqchi'
 - Uspantek
 - Poqom
 - Poqomam, Poqomchi'
 - Central K'ichean (K'ichean Proper)
 - K'iche'
 - Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil
 - Sakapultek
 - Sipakapense
 - Mamean
 - Mam, Tektitek (Teko)
 - Awakatek, Ixil

Figure 76. Mayan Linguistic Family (Aissen, England, and Maldonado 2017)

The K'iche' linguistic group, with 992,378 members according to the census 2001, is the language that has the highest number of members. The K'iche' language is spoken in six departments including El Quiché, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Sololá, and the north zones of Suchitepéquez and Retalhuleu. K'iche' people are concentrated in the northwest of the Guatemalan highlands (Richards and Macario 2003:62). According to the government decree 1046-87, the K'iche' language has 32 phonemes, comprised of 22 consonants and 10 vowels (See figure 77).

| | <i>Bilabial</i> | <i>Alveolar</i> | <i>Alveopalatal</i> | <i>Palatal</i> | <i>Velar</i> | <i>Uvular</i> | <i>Glottal</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Plosive | p b' [b̥] | t t' | | | k k' | q q' [q', ɢ] | ' [ʔ] |
| Nasal | m | n | | | | | |
| Flap | | r | | | | | |
| Fricative | | s | x [ʃ] | | | j [χ] | |
| Affricate | | tz [ts] tz' [ts'] | ch [tʃ] ch' [tʃ'] | | | | |
| Lateral | | l | | | | | |
| Approximant | w | | | y [j] | | | |

Figure 77. K'iche' consonants. Can Pixabaj (2017:462)

Each language has its variants, but all of them share traits and characteristics that allow the inter-relationship among their speakers. However, for different factors or influences, innovations are present which cause changes in the grammatical structure. These changes could happen in any language's system and can be morphological, phonological, syntactic, and/or semantic, among others. The K'iche' variation from Chichicastenango and Chiché clearly show a phonetic variation in the vocals as a result of the history of this territory. The majority of the Mayan languages have ten vowels, five short vowels plus five long vowels. All of the Eastern languages except Kaqchikel and two dialects of K'iche'—Chichicastenango and Chiché²⁰—have long and short vowels. It is important to mention that the distinction between tense and lax vowels only occurs in final syllables, where tense vowels correspond to historical long vowels and lax vowels correspond to historical short vowels. The Chichicastenango and Chiché variants also make a distinction between tense and lax rather than long and short vowels and have ten vowels (Aissen, England, and Maldonado 2017; Ixcoy and Dominga 1994; Par Sapón and Can Pixabaj 2000).

²⁰ The municipality of Chiche was founded by people coming from Chichicasteanngo who were looking for more lands to practice agriculture. In oral tradition Saint Tomas in Chiché is called as the Small Santo Tomas and its feast is celebrated 7 day after Chichicastenango feast.

K'iche' vowels

| | | |
|------|----------|----------|
| High | i, ii, ɪ | u, uu, ʊ |
| Mid | e, ee, ε | o, oo, ɔ |
| Low | a, aa, ə | |

The K'iche' short and long vowels, used in the majority of K'iche' variants, can be represented with this format V (short) and VV (long).

| | | | |
|---|---|----|----|
| i | u | ii | uu |
| e | o | ee | oo |
| a | | aa | |

Tense and lax vowels of the Kaqchikel language, and K'iche' variants of Chichicastenango and Chiché, are presented with this format: v (tense) and v̄ (lax).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| i | u | ĩ | ü |
| e | o | ě | ö |
| a | | ä | |

According to Thelma Can, the K'iche' language originally only had short and long vowels, but nowadays, some variants are changing towards the tense and lax vowel system. Can argues that this innovation could be the result of contact between K'iche' and Kaqchikel speakers (Par Sapón and Can Pixabaj 2000:42). A classification of twenty-one variants that use one or a combination of both systems was carried out by a team of linguists of OKMA:

- Thirteen variants use long and short vowels: Santa Lucia Uatlán, Nahualá, Momostenango, Santa Clara la Laguna, Rabinal, Santa Cruz del Quiché, Argueta, Cubulco, Zunil, San Miguel Chicaj, Santa María Chiquimula, San José Chiquilajá, e Ilotenango.
- Six use some lax vowels, besides the long and short vowels: Zacualpa, Totonicapán, Cunén, Cantel, Samayac and Joyab'aj.
- Only two variants use tense and lax vowels: Chichicastenango and Chiché. Chichicastenango is the dialect that has completely changed the vocalic system, using the tense and lax vowels. This resulted from the direct contact with variants of the Kaqchikel language (Par Sapón and Can Pixabaj 2000:42,47).

Despite, the existence of some influence of the Kaqchikel language in a few K'iche' variants in terms of vowel systems, this process has not been fully observed except for the K'iche' variant of Chichicastenango and Chiché, where the vowel system completely changed from long/short to tense/lax. The following variants used some lax vowels in addition to the long and short vowels.

- In Joyabaj four lax vowels are used: ĩ, ü, ä, and ö. The ö vowel was found only in two words. This change possibly responded to a more recent influence of the Kaqchikel language.
- In Zacualpa, the lax vowels ĩ, ä, and ö were found. The last vowel was found only in one word.
- In Totonicapán the use of ä was found in two words.
- In Samayac was registered only the use of vocal ĩ.
- In Cunén was found four lax vowels, ä, ĩ, ü, and ö. The most used vowels are ĩ and ü, while ä is less frequent.
- In Cantel only ĩ and ä are used (Par Sapón and Can Pixabaj 2000:43).

The following examples show the use of the vowels system in the K'iche' variants of Chichicastenango and Santa Cruz del Quiché.

ä # a

| | V.Chichi⁸ | V.Sta. Cruz⁹ | Castellano |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [rəš] /räs/ | [raš] /ras/ | Verde |
| 2 | [ʔəm] /äm/ | [ʔam] /am/ | Araña |
| 3 | [kəɾ] /kär/ | [kaɾ] /kar/ | Pescado |
| 4 | [səq ^x] /säq/ | [saq ^x] /saq/ | blanco |
| 5 | [ɟən] /q'än/ | [ɟan] /q'an/ | Amarrillo |
| 6 | [xəb̥] /jäb'/ | [xəb̥] /jab'/ | Lluvia |
| 7 | [ləq ^x] /läq/ | [laq ^x] /laq/ | Trastos |
| 8 | [čʔəm] /ch'äm/ | [čʔam] /ch'am/ | Ácido. |
| 9 | [nəx] /näj/ | [naχ] /naj/ | Lejos |
| 10 | [pəq ^x] /päq/ | [pwaq ^x] /pwaq/ | Dinero |

ë # e

| | V.Chichi | V.Sta. Cruz | Castellano |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [šəb̥] /xëb'/ | [šyaβ̥] /xyab'/ | Peine |

ï # i

| | V.Chichi | V.Sta. Cruz | Castellano |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [nim] /nīm/ | [nim] /nim/ | Grande |
| 2 | [sɪβ̥] /sīb'/ | [siβ̥] /sib'/ | Humo |
| 3 | [piš] /pīx/ | [piš] /pix/ | tomate |

ö # o

| | V.Chichi | V.Sta. Cruz | Castellano |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [k ^h lɔβ̥] /klöb'/ | [koloβ̥] /kolob'/ | Lazo |
| 2 | [ronxɛl̥] /rönjel/ | [ronoxɛl̥] /ronojel | Todos. |

ü # u

| | V.Chichi | V.Sta. Cruz | Castellano |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [puχ] /püj/ | [puχ] /puj/ | Materia |

In the Chichicastenango variant, the use of lax and tense vowels fulfills the same function as the long and short vowels in terms of differentiating the meaning of words as is shown in the following examples from this variant.

| V.Chichi | Castallano | V.Chichi | Castellano |
|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| [ʔəɣ̃] /äj/ | Elote | [ʔaɣ̃] /aj/ | Caña |
| [čəɣ̃] /chäj/ | Pino, ocote | [čaɣ̃] /chaj/ | Ceniza |
| [p ^h təŋ] /ptän/ | Mecapal | [p ^h taŋ] /patan/ | Servicio |
| [čʔəɖ] /ch'äq'/ | Maduro | [čʔaɖ] /chaq'/ | Hermano menor |
| [šəɖ ^x] /säq/ | Terrón | [šaɖ ^x] /xaq/ | Tizne |
| [k ^h mɪk ^h] /kmik/ | Muerte | [k ^h mik ^h] /kmik/ | Hoy |

The same words using the long and short vowel system, would be written as follows:

| V.Sta.Cruz o Nahualá | Castallano | V.Sta.Cruz o Nahualá | Castellano |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| [ʔaɣ̃] /aj/ | Elote | [ʔa:ɣ̃] [ʔaɣ̃iɣ̃] /aaj/ /ajij/ | Caña |
| [čaɣ̃] /chaj/ | Pino, ocote | [ča:ɣ̃] /chaaj/ | Ceniza |
| [patan] /patan/ | Mecapal | [pata:n] /pataan/ | Servicio |
| [čʔaɖ] /ch'äq'/ | Maduro | [čʔa:ɖ] [waɖ] /chaaq/ /watz/ | Hermano menor |
| [ɣ̃aɖ ^x] /xaq/ | Terrón | [ɣ̃a:ɖ ^x] /xaaq/ | tizne |
| [kamik ^h] /kamik/ | Muerte | [kami:k ^h] /kamiik/ | Hoy |

The last two sets of examples demonstrate the existence of different vowel systems between the Chichicastenango variant and other K'iche' communities such as Santa Cruz del Quiche and Nahuala.

Nowadays, the municipality of Chichicastenango adjoins Kaqchikel towns at its west (Tecpan) and south sides (Sololá and Concepción). It could be thought that this current contact

could have produced the Kaqchikel influence in the vowel system of the Chichicastenango variant. However, the use of the tense/lax vowel system does not appear exclusively in this frontier area, but it is present homogeneously in the 90 cantones or villages that comprise the municipality, which has been observed by several scholars. In the north side of Chichicastenango, which adjoins only K'iche' towns that use the long/short vocal system, were located the ancient *calpuls* that provided services exclusively to the Nima' K'iche' confederation. Among them are Chuwila', Chulimal, Xalbaquiej, Kab'raq'an and Saqiya' (whose names persist today) which is very likely that were occupied by Kaqchikel people in the past beside the Kaqchikel settlement further south.

The Chichicastenango variant has other particular elements that differentiate it from the other K'iche' variants. First, the Chichicastenango variant, and also the Mam language, have rules that drop vowels in non-stressed syllables, resulting in longer and more frequent consonant clusters or phonotactics (Aissen, England, and Maldonado 2017:186). Although K'iche' people from Chichicastenango usually drop vowels when they speak, it seems that this phenomenon occurs in other K'iche' communities. According to Par and Can, in twenty K'iche' variants that they investigated, all of them showed loss and changes in consonants and vowels in different ways. The dropping of vowels regularly happens according to the following rules:

- a) In words that have more than a syllable.
- b) In syllables that are not in the last position.
- c) In polysyllabic words, regularly in intermediate syllables.

In the Chichicastenango variant, the drop of vowels happens mostly in the antepenultimate syllable.

| | V. Chichi | V. Sta. Cruz | Castellano |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | [wərnəqˣ] /wärnäq/ | [warnaqˣ] /warnaq/ | Dormido |
| 2 | [noʁnəqˣ] /nojnäq/ | [noʁinaqˣ] /nojnaq/ | Lleno |
| 3 | [q'əb̥re] /q'äb'rel/ | [q'aḃare] /q'ab'arel/ | Ebrio |
| 4 | [wiʃqi] /wixqil/ | [wiʃoqi] /wixoqil/ | Mi esposa |
| 5 | [wəčxi] /wächjil/ | [wačaxi] /wachajil/ | Mi esposo |
| 6 | [ʔelqom] /elq'om/ | [ʔelaqom] /elaq'om/ | Ladrón |
| 7 | [ʔišqib̥] /ixqib'/ | [ʔišoqib̥] /ixoqib'/ | Mujeres |
| 8 | [ʔačxaḃ] /achjab'/ | [ʔačixaḃ] /achijab'/ | hombres |
| 9 | [mlu] /mlöl/ | [mulu] /mulul/ | Jícara |
| 10 | [wnəqˣ] /wnäq/ | [winaqˣ] /winaq/ | Gente |
| 11 | [qnum] /wärnäq/ | [qenum] /q'equm/ | Jocote |
| 12 | [wnoŋ] /wnon/ | [wonoŋ] /wonoŋ/ | Abeja mielera |

Second, in Chichicastenango people do not use the formal pronoun for second person singular and plural (lal and alaq) (Larsen 100, henne 1980). In K'iche' language there are three sets of affixes: Set A and Set B and independent pronouns. The independent pronouns indicate a noun that is not mentioned in grammatical construction.

| <i>Number</i> | <i>Person</i> | <i>Form</i> |
|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Singular | 1st | in |
| | 2nd | at |
| | 2nd FOR | laal |
| | 3rd | ri are' (ra're') |
| Plural | 1st | (ri) oj |
| | 2nd | (ri) ix |
| | 2nd FOR | alaq |
| | 3rd | ri e are' (ri a're', ra're') |

The second person singular pronoun in formal treatment (lal) is used in the majority of K'iche' variants except for four: Chichicastenango, Joyabaj, Cunén and Cubulco. The use of lal is also inconsistent in Zacualpa, Samayac and Santa Maria Chiquimula. The second person in plural and formal treatment (alaq) is not present in five variants: Chichicastenango, Joyabaj, Zacualpa, Cunén and Cubulco. The Kaqchikel language and all its variants, do not have the formal treatment for the second person singular and plural. It is interesting to note that coincidentally the three K'iche'

municipalities that use lax vowels also lack the formal treatment for the second person plural and singular similarly to Chichicastenango: Joyabaj, Zacualpa, and Cunen (Par Sapón and Can Pixabaj 2000:112–113). According to the Titulo de Jilotepeque the Aqajal or Chajoma winäq originated in Xoyab’aj or Joyabal, and from there they started a journey until they arrived at the current municipality of San Martín Jilotepeque and Sacatepequez where they founded their main settlements (Cabezas Carcache 2008:160). This story is corroborated by a XVI century document (AEG, Depto. Sololá, Sección de Tierras, Paquete 1), which describes that an Aqajal *chinamit* from San Juan Sacatepequez claimed that they still have lands in Xoyabaj. Specifically, their lands were situated at the north of the Motagua River, in Pachalum and Saqikiej (Carmack 1975:136). Pachalum was a Joyabaj village but it became an independent municipality in 1986. The Dominican Fray Francisco Ximenez described, in his chronicle *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala*, that from the ancient Kaqchikel who allied the K’iche’, descended the people who live currently in Xoyabaj, Zacualpa and Santo Tomás Chichicastenango (Ximénez 1999:133).

The linguistic and historical information presented in this chapter supports the hypothesis that the territories abandoned by the Kaqchikel in the Quiché basin in pre-Columbian times, corresponds with K’iche’ municipalities with more influence of the Kaqchikel language. As Coetsem proposed, the transferred material resulted from the imposition type tending to make changes in phonology and grammar that are more stable than those resulting from the borrowing type. The variant from Chichicastenango can be considered as evidence of the Kaqchikel occupation of this municipality, and it also suggests that the ancient Kaqchikel were bilingual, and that they spoke K’iche’ while living within the K’iche’ territory. The last topic to consider, is that the Kaqchikel commoners who also lived in Chuwila’, Pan Che’ Chu Q’ojom, Muqb’al Sib’ and

Chi Awär, did not necessarily abandon these settlements when their rulers were forced to move to Chi Iximche'. Currently, the surface surveys that have been carried out in the Chichicastenango do not support the dense occupation of Chichicastenango during the Late Postclassic period, but perhaps future excavation could corroborate this proposal.

CHAPTER VII

ARCHAEOLOGY IN POSTWAR GUATEMALA: THE CASE OF CHONTALA, CHICHICASTENANGO²¹

I am a K'iche' Maya woman from Chichicastenango, specifically from a village named Chucam. I wrote this chapter to share my experience with people interested in the archaeology of the highlands of Guatemala, especially because there are only a few publications (Carmack 1988) about the practice of archaeology in the highlands that take into account the current political and social context. This chapter also intends to recover part of the recent history of Chichicastenango related to the civil war in the highlands and its aftermath. In this chapter, I explore how the idea of the 'internal enemy', which was the ideology that catalyzed the armed conflict, severely impacted the social fabric of several communities in Guatemala dividing the population between communists and anti-communists but even worse creating rivals between families, neighbors, and religious groups. This divisions still persist and are enhanced by a weak and corrupt justice system that ignores criminal acts currently committed by community leaders linked in some way with the army who hide and justify their actions behind the customary law. A second point that will be discussed is how the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 failed to demobilize the self-defense Civil Patrollers and military commissioners, and how they hold new positions of leadership, at least in some villages of Chichicastenango, from where they can exert influence on the community decisions and also keeping old tactics of control. El Quiché is one of the departments with the highest number of archaeological sites in Guatemala, despite this, people know more about mining

²¹ The municipality of Chichicastenango is located in the Km 144 from Guatemala City and belong to the Department of El Quiché. It has an estimated and approximately population of 137,363 inhabitants in 2009. The majority of its population is Maya K'iche' (98.52%) and the rest Mestizo (7.48%).

than archaeology, which makes the development of this discipline difficult as well as the protection of important K'iche' and Kaqchikel sites.

Brief account of the facts

The first time I visited the Chontala canton or village, it was in the summer of 2014 when I conducted interviews about the *saqarib'al* or the foundation altars in the K'iche' territory. In the Kiejel Canton of Chichicastenango, I asked an elderly man if he knew about the existence of ancestral sites in Chichicastenango besides the Maya altars which are distributed throughout the municipality. He replied that when he worked in Chontala, he observed that there was an ancient place where one could see stone walls. That same day we decided to visit Chontala along with the man who was our guide. Currently, the municipality of Chichicastenango has 90 cantons or villages that despite being relatively close to the urban area, some of them are difficult to access. The man was nervous and did not dare to take us to where the archaeological site was and told us that it would be better to first talk with the local authorities to get permission to enter the canton to see the site. They usually meet on Tuesday at the canton's elementary school. By the end of the year of 2015, members of my family and I visited Chontala three times on Tuesdays to talk to the COCODE who finally authorized us to do the research as long as there were neighbors who authorized the research on their land. A COCODE member whose family has lands on the archaeological site, currently known as Patz'aq, told me that his family authorized me to work on their land with the condition that the laboratory must stay in the community. It was always stressed from the beginning that the archaeological research regulations demand that all the material collected during an archaeological investigation should be transferred to the headquarters of

DEMOPRE²² in Guatemala City. This article contradicts the interests of the communities that have a connection with ancestral places and therefore want its material culture to remain in the community. The option of taking the materials to the Rossbach museum in Chichicastenango was proposed, but it would depend on the deliberation of the DEMOPRE. After fulfilling all the requirements to start an archaeological project, an investigation agreement was signed on March 16, 2016 between me and the DEMOPRE. In the second week of April the excavation stage started and lasted 2 weeks, which culminated successfully on May 2, 2016. On April 30, 2016, we received a visit from a group of authorities from the neighboring cantons who had been told that there was a mining project in Chontala. They asked us several questions that we answered, also, we showed the permits we had. After supervising the excavation pits and receiving an explanation the authorities left. This visit was recorded on video. The project was planned on a small scale since it was the first project in its kind, and it was decided to work on the land of only one family, and to hire only people from the Chontala village.

On May 4, 2016, rumors about a mining project in Chontala had spread to 11 cantones²³ that were broadcast by local residents of Chontala. Therefore, authorities of these 11 cantones or villages, including members of COCODES and auxiliary mayors, decided to arrive in Chontala and summon the local COCODES and me to ask us about the project. There was never a dialog, because all the events that took place during that day were previously planned. In the first meeting with the authorities of the 11 neighboring villages, an act was signed ordering the prohibition of any investigation that had to do with the excavation of the ground, and that any COCODE or family

²² The DEMOPRE –Department of Pre-Hispanic and Colonial Monuments– is a dependency of the Ministry of Culture of Guatemala in charge of regulating and administrating archaeological projects and the protection of national cultural patrimony. In cases where archaeological materials or a site is in danger, the director of the project must notify the events to the DEMOPRE and provide proof.

²³ Chuchipaca, Quiejel, Camanibal, Panquiac, Pajuliboy, Tzamanicabaj, Lacama 1, Lacama 2 y Lacama 3, Xabiawach, y Chipaca.

that would authorize any work of this nature, would be fined Q50,000 (Approx. \$7,000). Because this was the first time an archaeological project was authorized, the COCODES of Chontala were pardoned this fine. A couple of hours later, the family who supported my project and I were surrounded by hundreds of people who were encouraged by a group of men over 50 who not only said negative things about the project but also compared me with Rigoberta Menchú, who for them was a person that deceived and took advantage of people. Some people demanded to the authorities that we should be punished with the ‘Castigo Maya’²⁴. Some people in the crowd were shouting that we should be lynched with fire and they also threatened to burn the houses of the family who had collaborated with my project. Women and children from this family hid in nearby ravines for fear that their homes would be burned and they would be injured. As if that were not enough, the visitors took all the archaeological materials from the project from the laboratory in Chontala, including my cellphone (so I could not ask for help, take any pictures, nor record the events), my research journal, the excavations forms, and drawings. Finally, they charged us Q.9,0000 (approximately \$1,150) as a fee for our ‘crime’ to be set free. This money was later distributed among the COCODES²⁵ of 11 neighboring villages who had led the meeting that day. The meeting ended around 1:00 AM.

²⁴ The Castigo Maya, or the Maya Punishment, is the way indigenous authorities publicly penalize someone who has disrespected the norms of coexistence or committed a crime in the community. The term in K’iche’ for it is Xk’ay or ‘tree branch’ because generally a branch is used to whip the accused by local traditional authorities or elderly relatives. Indigenous organizations and lawyers in Guatemala have worked to recover the ancestral procedures to apply justice which practice includes the pixab’ ‘counseling’, the xk’ay ‘tree branch’, and the Xukulem ‘stay kneeling’. Maya lawyers and indigenous organization highlight that the ancestral authorities— Ajq’ijab’, elders, K’amalbe’ and Chinam(ital)—always seek the conciliation, the repair and/or the compensation between the parts involved in the conflict (Castillo 1998:63).

²⁵ COCODES- Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo or Community Development Councils were created in compliance with the General Law of Decentralization (Decree 14-2002), the Law of Councils of Urban and Rural Development (Decree 11-2002), and the Municipal Code (Decree 12-2002). Each COCODE is comprised generally by 11 members, mostly men, who are the legitimate representative of their communities (Barrientos 2007:35)

As soon as I got home on May 5th, 2016, I began writing a report of what happened in Chontala for the DEMOPRE. While writing this report, many questions invaded my head, such as, why had the authorities from other communities (COCODES) stopped my research, which was authorized by local authorities? What were the specific damages I caused them (they never told me directly), what did the people who had spread false rumors about mining and contamination in Chontala days before the incident want from us? What would happen if I filed a complaint despite having been threatened not to do so? Even though the family who supported my project and I were not hurt physically, we experienced different types of violence that demonstrated old patterns of behavior practiced by the army during the civil war. In the next section, I attempt to explore the long-lasting legacy of the civil war in the highlands of Guatemala, contextualizing how the idea of an ‘internal enemy’ persists today and how it is connected with the events that took place on May 4th, 2016, in Chontala.

Historical background of the civil war in the Guatemalan Highlands

Land distribution is the central economic problem in Guatemala. Most of the nation’s landholdings, and certainly the best and most easily cultivated land, are concentrated in the hands of the small percentage of the population who run the agricultural export sector. By contrast, hundreds of thousands of rural Guatemalans are landless agricultural workers or they possess such small plots of land that they can barely feed their families. A drastic change to this pattern was planned through agrarian reform led by President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán (1951-1954). This reform sought to reduce the existence of *latifundio-minifundio* relationships that proliferated in Guatemala since the government of Justo Rufino Barrios (1873-1885), including the concessions given to German citizens and the United Fruit Company (an American company) by previous

liberal governments. Arbenz' government and that of his predecessor—Juan José Arévalo—represented the unique process of economic, political and cultural progress and modernization of Guatemala that started in 1944 and came to a drastic end in 1954. In this year, President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán announced his resignation from the presidency. This decision was in response to US intervention, supported by the elite landowners, the high hierarchy of the Catholic Church, several opposition parties, and a sector of the army. The next decade—1960s—was significant in history because several social phenomena coincided, including structural injustice, the closing of political spaces, poverty, racism, exclusion and exploitation (principally of indigenous peoples and peasants); these together caused the outbreak of the Guatemala civil war (1964-1996).

It was in this context of inequality and exclusion that the guerilla or insurgent groups—inspired by Marxist doctrine and the political influence of Cuba—saw the armed conflict as the only way to defend the rights of the people and change the structural power of the country. Also, the Guatemalan government, together with right-wing political parties, and the country's economic elite, supported the United States, fighting against communism in Guatemala, which was the catalyst for the civil war. In exchange for this help, Guatemala received resources to strengthen its national intelligence apparatus, and military training for its official soldiers engaged in the fight against insurgency. The support that the US provided the Guatemalan army was a key factor in the violation of human rights during the civil war (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:18, 20).

The civil war in Guatemala cannot be reduced to a struggle between two armed actors—the Guatemalan army and the guerrillas—since there was active involvement of right-wing political parties and economic forces of the country. On the other hand, the army fought not only against members of the guerrilla, but also against organized indigenous Maya and peasants,

members of cooperatives and the Catholic church, communal leaders, activists, academics, and others that had demanded economic and land reforms (Ibid, 2004:23). The sociologist Edelberto Torres proposed that Guatemala did not have a war, instead the country faced brutal military repression that escalated by the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. The guerrillas never had the numbers²⁶ nor the resources to be a dangerous rival for the army or a threat for the political order. According to Torres, the period between 1979-1980 is important for the recent history of Guatemala because of the army set in motion a new repressive structure called the ‘Kabilisation’. The government decided that the entire army would be trained as special patrols or Kaybil²⁷, to “instill hard manners”. “Hard manners” in Torres’ own words means that the “Kaybil is not only the one who can bite the meat of the animal that he is going to eat alive, but the one who is capable of torturing, the one who knows what anticommunism is and made his own the deep sense of war: to kill civilians unarmed or not”²⁸.

The Guatemalan Commission for the Historical Clarification (CEH) reported that during the armed conflict in Guatemala, 626 massacres were carried out that resulted in the complete disappearance of villages, 200,000 people died or disappeared (from which approximately 83% were indigenous Maya and 17%, mestizo), and between 500,000 to 1,000,000 people were displaced and sought refuge inside or outside the country (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:xviii, 43). The vast majority of victims of the state repression were not guerrilla fighters but civilians. The Guatemalan state identified the indigenous Maya as supporters of the

²⁶ The Guerrilla forces had 5,000 members at their peak according to Americas Watch (Americas Watch 1986:3)

²⁷ The army special patrols were named after Kayb’il B’alam, a Mam-Maya ruler who resisted the Spanish invasion in his territory Xinabajul (now Huehuetenango) in the sixteenth century. Many indigenous leaders have expressed their disagreement that the military special forces, that killed thousands of Maya people in Guatemala during the civil war, used the name of an ancient Maya leader who really cared for his people.

²⁸ <https://www.narrativayensayoguatemaltecos.com/entrevista/edelberto-torres-rivas-mas-vale-cinico-que-pesimista-luis-mendez-salinas/>

guerrillas and together with their racism, justified indiscriminate and massive aggression towards their communities. The army wanted to eliminate any possibility in the present or future that the Maya population could collaborate with insurgent projects. The result was the release of a politic of terror described in the military campaign plans Victoria 82 and Firmeza 83. These plans, launched during the government of General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982-1984), contained a list of counterinsurgency operations: scorched earth, operations of displacement, of punishment, of control and annihilation of the civil population, of covert military actions, psychological operations and intelligence²⁹ (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico II 1999:21). As part of the control operation, the army established a variety of methods to exercise physical and psychological control mainly over indigenous communities. These methods included permanent patrols and registration posts on roads and urban areas, population censuses, curfews, inspections of individual identification documents, and the search and capture of guerrilla sympathizers. To increase the level of control during the most critical years of the war (1980-1984), the army forcefully recruited males—between 13-60 years old—to create the Self-Defense Civil Patrols or Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC) by the end of 1981. Because there was no official document that legalized the formation of the PACs, the military justified their existence by declaring that men's participation as patrollers was voluntary. The PACs put in practice the army control methods on a community level (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico II 1999:30), especially in red zones. The military classified Guatemala's territories in color zones—green, yellow, pink and red—based on the level of presence of the guerrillas. Communities in red zones were considered under the control of the insurgency, which meant that there was no distinction between guerrilla members and civilians. In order to get rid of such a threat, communities in red zones were massacred and

²⁹ For more information about these operations, see CEH T. I.

wiped off the map by the army in collaboration with the PACs. The departments of Guatemala that were identified as red zones were El Quiché, Huehuetenango, Petén and San Marcos (Remijnse 2005:174–176), taking into account that other zones were also under less military repression. Of the total 626 massacres, 95% (595 cases) were perpetrated between 1978 -1984 and 90% of them were concentrated in five departments: El Quiché (52%), Huehuetenango (14%), Chimaltenango (10%), Alta Verapaz (9%), and Baja Verapaz (4%) (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico III 1999:257). In the most critical years of the war, the PACs multiplied significantly. In 1982, Efraín Ríos Montt's dictatorship started with 25,000 PACs and in eighteen months increased that number to 700,000. In December of 1984, when the first democratic government of Guatemala was elected, the PACs had reached almost 1 million members most of whom were indigenous. The civil patrol system or PACs in Guatemala was the “most extensive counterinsurgency model of its kind in the world” (Americas Watch 1986:2).

The PACs, as part of the paramilitary forces, were trained to obey the authorities without questioning reasons nor consequences. This process has been called the ‘militarization of the mind’, which involved the use of fear and terror to impose the habit of uncritical obedience to superiors’ orders. The training of the PAC was intended to change values and behavior by normalizing the violence as a method to face conflict situations. The training also encouraged the dehumanization of the others, of the guerrillas, the communists, their sympathizers or simply civilians that unfortunately lived in red zones allegedly taken by the insurgency. The criminalization of these people was built on the idea of an “internal enemy”, a key element of the army’s National Security Doctrine against communism. The subversives or communists were portrayed as delinquents, terrorists, capable of stealing the few material possessions that people have (Esparza 2005:383–4). For example, neighbors of Chichicastenango, with the support of the

popular organization Mutual Support Group³⁰ (GAM), denounced the protest organized by the army against the catholic priest Ventura Lux Herrera on July 27 in the early 1980s. The army discredited the priest saying that “He does not preach the voice of God, instead he preaches politics in favor of the guerrillas”. The priest was accused of gathering widows and men in different villages to convince them to support the guerrillas and to practice the Maya culture (Maya spirituality). He also was accused of entrapping widows to rape them. The people who participated in the protest were mostly members of evangelical and protestant churches and people who were forced to join the mob under threat. They were told “The one who won’t go to the manifestation is a guerrilla member, because he/she is in favor of the priest and against the army” (CIRMA Archive: G.28.3. DOC 4484). In this incident, patrols and members of the army, dressed as civilians, agitated the protesters in front of the Catholic church carrying posters with images of the priest. The priest was depicted wearing a cassock with a long tail, horns and long nails³¹ (CIRMA Archive: G.28.3. DOC 4484). The association of the devil with the guerrillas reinforced the simple idea that they were ‘mala gente or bad people’. The army made and dispersed propaganda leaflets by helicopters depicting guerrilla members as devils bringing destruction to their communities (Esparza 2005:384). From 1981 to 1996 the PACs witnessed and perpetrated numerous human rights abuses such as murder, rape, forced disappearances, and the looting of property, which provided internal ‘security’ against an exaggerated and distorted threat of robbery and Communist invasion (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:42). According to the CEH, the army alone was responsible for 63% of the massacres and the PACs alone or accompanied by the army

³⁰ Created in 1984 is a non-profit civil society organization that brings together the families of peoples illegally detained and forcibly disappeared in Guatemala during the Internal Armed Conflict that lasted from 1960-1996.

³¹ The document also included a list of demands, among them: the army must fulfill their real duty of protecting the Guatemalan citizens instead of destroying them, members of evangelical and protestant churches do not let the army to manipulate them to attack the Catholics, and to denounce the crimes against the human rights in Chichicastenango and identified the authors and instigator of those crimes.

were responsible for 30% of the massacres (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico II 1999:256). In El Quiché, the PAC committed 59% of the reported human rights violations between 1981 and 1994 (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico III 1999:230).

Repression in Chontala, Chichicastenango

The Washington Office of Latin America (WOLA) in its publication named *Who Pays the Price? The cost of war in the Guatemalan Highlands* (1988), provides general data about the impact of the internal armed conflict in the highlands of Guatemala. In 1986, it is estimated that the municipality of Chichicastenango was reduced by around 8,000-10,000 inhabitants, now believed to be dead. During that year, the municipality had approximately 60,000 inhabitants. The villages that experienced the most violence were Saquiya, the Mactzules, Agua Escondida, Chixot, Xepocol, Chipaca and Pocohil. It was also reported that the village of Saquiya was reduced from 120 to 30 families, Xepocol had 140 widows out of 160 families, and it is reported that Chontala had almost completely disappeared (Washington Office of Latin America 1988:37). Another source, consisting of a complaint made by a popular organization named CERJ, indicated that among the most affected communities in the south region of El Quiché were: Chunima, Sacpulup, Lacama Segundo, Chontala and Quiejel in Chichicastenango; Pujujil in Sololá; and El Membrillar and Laguna Seca and other villages of El Quiché department (CIRMA Archive: ICA M5). In both documents Chontala is mentioned as one of the most affected villages during the civil war.

Chontala is one of the 90 villages that comprise the municipality of Chichicastenango and is located 5 km³² to the east of the urban center. The WOLA reported that Chontala almost

³² To get to Chontala, it is necessary to take a minibus close to the Santo Tomas Hotel and follow the Interamericana road until the Km 137. At that point you turn left onto a dirt road that bifurcates into several roads that lead to several

disappeared, but no document consolidates all cases of human rights violations in this village. Only one document mentions brief information about one massacre that happened in Chontala in 1981. This document was written as a public complaint by a popular organization named The Peasant Unit Committee (CUC). The CUC denounced the atrocities committed by the army in El Quiché Department in 1981. This document mentions that on November 6th and 7th more than 100 soldiers of the army surrounded Chontala and killed many peasants, kidnapped a considerable number of men, burned houses and destroyed corn and beans crops (CIRMA Archive: CHSG/cart- 57/N.68). In this complaint, the authors did not mention the PACs as the authors or collaborators of this massacre. However, in later years, their involvement in cases of selective murders is clearer. The following table (See table 4) shows the cases reported to the Truth Commission regarding army abuses in Chontala.

| Data | Description |
|--|--|
| Department: El Quiché Author: Chief of PAC Type of violation: Arbitrary execution Year: 1983 Case: 102 | In 1983, the chief of PACs of Chontala captured and executed a member of the PAC named Juan Pascual Gómez when he went out to cut wood. The authors confessed the crime to Raquel Juan Can who was threatened if she said anything. |
| Department: El Quiché Author: PAC Type of violation: Year: 1983 Case: 2112 | In 1983, armed groups with covered faces captured Sebastian Morales Martín, Diego and José Morales Macario. Fifteen days after, armed groups captured Juan Macario Riquec, Manuel and Fermin Morales Macario. They never reappeared. |
| Department: El Quiché Author: PAC Type of violation: Arbitrary execution Year: 1982 Case:2367 | In June, 1982, alleged members of the PAC killed Manuel Pérez Gonzáles and three other men, none of whom yet been identified. |
| Department: El Quiché Author: ? Type of violation: Wounded, attack Year: 1982 Case: 2515 | On June 5th, 1982, army groups shot against people from the Chontala who then ran away to the mountains. Anastasia Pérez Ordóñez was wounded. |

villages, including Chontala. The neighbors' houses are distributed along a plateau, and in its north end is located the archaeological site Patz' aq.

| | |
|---|--|
| Department: El Quiché Author: PAC Type of violation: people disappeared Year: 1982 Case: 2516 | In April 1982, Tomás Pérez Ordóñez disappeared when he went to work on his lands. He was never heard from again. |
| Department: El Quiché Author: Armed groups Type of violation: Forced disappearance. Year: 1982 Case: 2519 | On August 6th, 1982 armed men with covered faces captured Sebastián Morales Dominguez and Sebastián Morales Zapeta in their houses. They were both never heard from again. |

Table 4. Cases of human right violation at Chontala during the civil war (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico III 1999)

This table can only provide a general idea about what people were experiencing during the civil war in Chontala, but it is difficult to determine the total number of human rights violations that took place in this village by the hand of the army only or accompanied by the PAC. A general view of the impact of the armed conflict in all Chichicastenango villages is provided by Americas Watch. They estimated that in Chichicastenango (a municipality of 60,000 inhabitants), each village has an average of eighty widows and 150 orphans; that means that roughly 15,000 inhabitants of this single municipality have lost either a husband or a father (Americas Watch 1986:6).

Protests against the PAC

After a sequence of military governments, the president Vinicio Cerezo (1986-1991) from the Guatemalan Christian Democracy party in 1984 was elected democratically. This change represented the beginning of a civil government and the negotiation of peace between the two main sides of the war: the army and the guerillas groups unified in the Guatemalan left-wing party National Revolutionary Unit (URNG). This new democratic era opened discussions and spaces for popular and humanitarian organizations such as CERJ, CONAVIGUA, and the CUC. These

organizations worked more in rural areas, but ultimately joined forces with larger entities to protest against the forced recruitment of men for the PACs. They also demanded the cessation of all expressions of the army repression. In Guatemala there were two waves of protests, one started in 1988 and the other in 1993 (Remijnse 2002:214 and 262).

The PAC's authorities felt threatened by these popular organizations because they pointed them out as responsible for multiple crimes in their own and neighboring communities, and because with the transformation of the political arena, they could lose their privileges. Although there was a reduction of massacres starting in 1985, the patrols still committed atrocities against their neighbors and even closer relatives in order to reach their personal goals. Generally, the chiefs of patrols deployed violence to improve their economic positions, either confiscating land and cattle that belonged to their neighbors, who had run away or disappeared or stealing the resources they liked. Several patrol chiefs succeeded in creating 'small kingdoms' in rural communities and were anxious to keep them (Remijnse 2005:229). In other words, it installed an uncontrolled army power that acted in an arbitrary way, prioritizing their personal interests (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:51).

One of the organizations that led the first wave of protests against the PACs was the Council of Ethnic Communities Rujunel Junam 'all together' (CERJ) that worked principally in El Quiché. CERJ members denounced, before the National Reconciliation Commission (CRN), that many rural areas of Chichicastenango were suffering repressions, threat, and accusation by the army and the chiefs of PACs. They also denounced that militants of popular and union organizations had been accused of being guerrilla members and communists for the simple fact of demanding respect for human rights and complained against 'volunteering' with the PACs. The

CERJ made this complaint because they had knowledge that patrol chiefs from the Chunima village wrote a list of people they planned to execute. In the list appeared the names of members of CERJ from Chunima and Sacpulub in Chichicastenango (CIRMA Archive: ICA M5).

Through the efforts made by the CERJ in coordination with other popular organizations during the first wave of protests, the growth and influence of the PACs at the community level was halted. In 1988, the PACs from Chontala stopped patrolling (Anderson and Simon 1989). Despite this achievement, military authorities—chiefs of PACs and military commissioners—continued to exercise their authority over the communities under their surveillance, including attacks toward organizations' leaders. For example, on February 14, 1989, soldiers called a meeting in Chontala to convince locals that the massacres that had occurred in the village at the beginning of the 1980s had been perpetrated by Méndez's people³³ and that those events could be repeated again. In this meeting, the soldiers singled out four CERJ members and accused them of being part of the Guerilla Army of the Poor or the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP). As a mockery, the soldiers gave them a red flag with the initials of the EGP to illustrate that CERJ militants were guerilla members. Shortly after, they ordered someone to burn the flag. Since nobody responded to the order, one soldier burned the flag while saying “this is what we are going to do with people who don't collaborate with us”. In this meeting, the commander reprimanded the locals for not having killed Méndez when he had visited the village weeks before. On April 7th, one week after Americas Watch and Méndez had visited Chontala, patrol commander Osvaldo Higueros reproached locals for failing to capture Americas Watch representatives and Méndez who were considered part of the guerrillas (American Watch 1989:128).

³³ Amilcar Méndez Urizar, a militant of CERJ

Another emblematic case regarding the continuous repression exerted by the PACs authorities in Chontala occurred during an exhumation project that took place in 1991. This case triggered many public complaints that today provide us with information about how the project developed in an early postwar context. From July 29th to August 10th, 1991, a judicial and technical delegation—composed by members of the Guatemalan Forensic Medical Service, the Argentinian Forensic Anthropologist’s team, CONAVIGUA, GAM, two policemen, ten hacienda guards, and the Peace Judge of Chichicastenango—arrived to Chontala to carry out exhumations of alleged mass graves. Neighbors from Chontala offered guidance to identify the zones where locals had been buried (CIRMA Archive: CHSG/caja 14-No. 19). A day after the arrival of the delegation to Chontala (July 30th), a group of patrols tried to stop the exhumation, but with the intervention of the Justice of Peace, the team was able to proceed with the project (CIRMA Archive: CHSG caja 15, No 23). The people who wanted to stop the project were actually patrol chiefs from six villages including Chontala. After a long dialog between the PACs and the Peace Judge along with the victims’ families, the PACs abandoned the place but not before insulting the delegation (CIRMA Archive: CHSG caja 15, No. 24). The same day, July 30th, patrols and the Development Committee (Comité pro-mejoramiento), gathered all of Chontala’s neighbors and warned them that if she (member of the National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala-CONAVIGUA) and her collaborators wanted to work at the cemeteries, they were allowed to do it, but with the condition that they will not involve or prejudice the patrols. A witness at the meeting said that the patrols also threatened them by saying that they must not say anything to anyone³⁴. The PACs and the committee also expressed that “the exhumations do not work because the bones cannot speak” (CIRMA archive: CHSG: caja 15-No. 22). Regarding the same case, on August 6,

³⁴ <https://www.csmonitor.com/1991/0919/19052.html>

1991, the Human Rights Attorney wrote a press release communicating that in Chontala, a group of neighbors identified a new mass grave where between thirteen to eighteen people had been illegally buried, possibly from the neighboring village of Panquiatic (The note has more information regarding the identity of the victims but is not legible in the printed copy). Local people indicated that the authors of the crime were the chiefs of PACs from Chontala (CIRMA archive: CHSG caja15-No. 21). Members of the delegation manifested their concern in several press releases. On August 4th, they alleged that the chiefs and members of the PACs from Chontala had threatened 22 families to avoid the search of their disappeared relatives (CIRMA Archive: Op. cit. No. 23). In the twelve days that the project lasted, the delegation managed to exhume the bone remains of 26 individuals.³⁵ The intimidation exerted over the population, especially on the widows, influenced the suspensions of the exhumations indefinitely.

In 1993, the second wave of protests began against the patrols until achieving their definitive dismantling shortly before the signature of the Peace Accords in 1996³⁶. Even though the PACs were dismantled, they continued to exert control in many rural communities. This occurred because the dismantling of PAC was carried out with no transparency, and only a reduced number of PACS faced justice. The majority of them clung to power but in new spaces and with different identities (Remijnse 2005:263). A recent topic of debate in the 1990s, was the transformation of the ex-PACs into development committees. President De Leon Carpio (1993-1996) expressed the need to evaluate the use of the PACS as operation bases for these committees. In the same line with this proposal, on June 24, 1996, the Defense Minister Julio Balconi

³⁵ On August 1st and 2nd, there were found the bones remains of 6 persons; in August 6th and 7th were collected the bones of other 7 individuals in a different pit, and finally between August 8th to 10th were recovered the bones of 13 persons. In total the delegation exhumated 26 persons, all masculine (CIRMA Archive: CHSG Caja 15-No. 24).

³⁶ In 1994 the acting human right attorney Garcia Languardia, recommended to revoke the decree No. 19-86, which sought to legalize the PACs as military reserves. It was until November 28, that the decree was definitely revoked by the congress. This action represented official end of the PACs (Remijnse 2005:277)

announced his plan to dismantle the PACs by the end of that year. His plan included three steps: 1) notification of the PACs about the plan and its development; 2) disarm the patrols; and 3) discuss the possibility that the PACs remain in some communities but for development purposes. Many national and international organizations expressed their opposition with the third step of the plan. As a consequence, only the two first steps were undertaken, but with little transparency³⁷ (Ibid., 2005: 277).

Despite the formal dissolution of the PACs in 1996, they were reincorporated over the past twenty years into new local power structures. It is known that some groups of patrols actually became development committees (COCODES) or coordinators of different committees (of water, of a sewer system, of education, among others). Unfortunately, there is no information about how many of them took new positions of authority and in which places (Remijnsi 266-267). According to the WOLA, in some of Chichicastenango's villages, development committees had been formed as an initiative of the governmental authorities. The members of these new models of the organization included assistant mayors, military commissioners, civil patrol chiefs, and representatives of development organizations working in the area. The projects driven by these committees consisted mainly of public infrastructure projects that included the building of schools, roads, and water systems (WOLA 1988: 38). In this way, the authorities were army members, who in order to repair their image, adopted new identities that fit the new democratic context.

³⁷ As Simona Remijnse expressed, this plan lacked transparency for many reasons, among them the international and national organization did have the opportunity to observe and verify this process, it was uncertain the number of weapons given to the PACS since their existence including the ones that these patrols bought by their own, and the army never proportionate the list of patrols chiefs to guarantee their disarm (277).

A lasting institution with different identities

During the election of September of 1999, members of the Guatemala Republican Front Party (FRG) visited Joyabaj, El Quiché, as part of their political campaign. The presidential candidate was Efraín Ríos Montt, an ex-military dictator who ruled in Guatemala (1982-1984) during the bloodiest years of the civil war. In his public speech he explained that if he won the elections, he would order the organization of Local Security Boards (Juntas Locales de Seguridad -JLS) that would work as neighborhood guards. These JLSs would be an alternative to overcome the increasing level of common crime that appeared soon after the end of the civil war. The formation of the JLSs was already underway in 1999. In this year, the National Civil Police issued an order to formally create the local security boards to address public security under the supervision of the General Crime-prevention Directorate (Sub-Dirección General de Prevención del Delito) (Remijnse 2005).

According to Otto Argueta (2010), the JLSs were not an innovation because they did not start in 1999. The Juntas Locales de Seguridad were the product of communities or neighborhoods' own history, particularly in those places hit by the civil war. The political structures that resulted in highlands communities during this period, were the base for the accelerated proliferation of JLSs because their creation reactivated previous authoritarian structures. Then, it can be said that the positive or negative performance of JLSs, depends largely on the historical organizational culture of the region. Argueta, who studies the private security in Guatemala, argued that the existence of JLS do not have a direct correlation with criminal rates, especially in the Guatemalan highlands. More specifically, his analysis of homicide rates and local security board (JLS), revealed: 1) low homicide rates in indigenous communities, and 2) the lack of a clear correlation between poverty rates and homicide rates. In fact, the greater the poverty

rates, the lower the rate of homicides. This is principally true in departments with a majority of indigenous population: Totonicapán, El Quiché, Sololá, Alta Verapaz, Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, and San Marcos. By contrast, there are also departments with high poverty rates, low indigenous population, and high homicide rates: Jalapa, Santa Rosa and Chiquimula. The extreme case is Guatemala city where poverty is lower but there are higher homicide rates (Argueta 2010:23–26) (See figure 78).

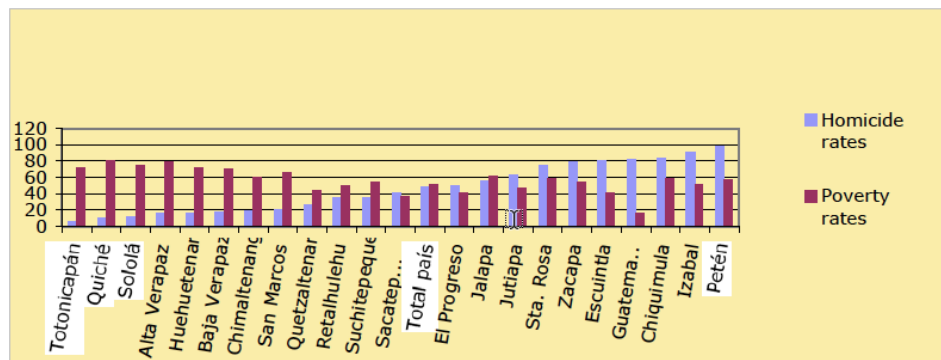


Figure 78. Homicide and Poverty Rates in Guatemala (Argueta 2010)

In Argueta’s study, the fact stands out that the departments with the majority of indigenous populations, like San Marcos, Alta Verapaz and El Quiché, have low homicide rates but a high number of JLSs. Other departments with the majority of the indigenous population and high poverty rates—Totonicapán, Sololá, Huehuetenango, Baja Verapaz, and Chimaltenango—have a typical number of JLSs (See figure 79). Argueta suggests that the proliferation of JLSs resulted from the continuity of social and political control mechanisms over indigenous populations and organizational history of certain communities (Argueta 2010:27).

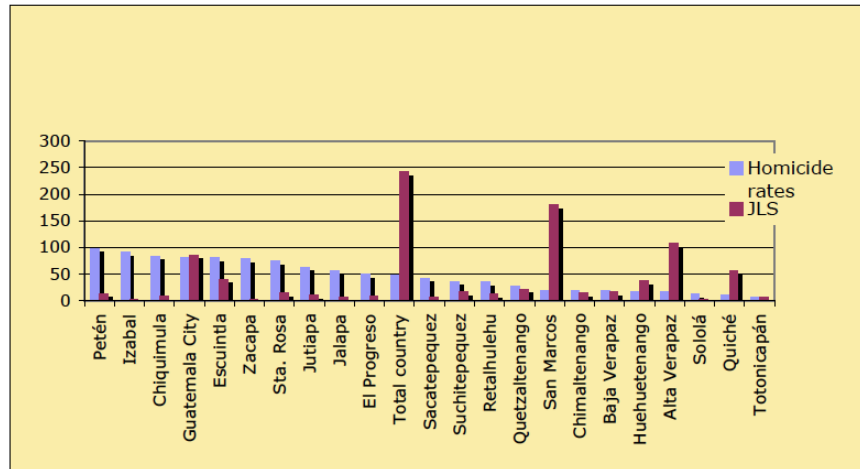


Figure 79. Homicide Rates and Numbers of JLSs in Guatemala (Argueta 2010).

As was showed in the previous section, the PACs had a strong presence in the highlands of Guatemala. The 54% of the population which was organized into PACs was concentrated in the seven departments with the majority of the indigenous population: El Quiché, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Zacapa, San Marcos, Huehuetenango. Argueta concluded that, with the exception of Zacapa (A Mestizo department), the remaining departments match those departments with a high rate of human rights violations and presence of PACs, and are nowadays departments with a high number of JLSs (Argueta 2010:28). The work of Argueta is key to showing that the marked presence of JLSs in predominantly indigenous departments, does not correspond to the high rates of homicides, but to the continuation of patterns of social control that originated during the civil war. People in Chichicastenango say that several JLS are comprised by ex-PACs, including Chontala.

The violence that was experienced during the civil war had different forms, including lynchings. These acts involve the use of fire to execute people accused of committing a crime.

Despite the fact that lynching is a phenomenon that still happens today in different parts of Latin America, lynchings related to the counterinsurgency forces in Guatemala generally involved the planning factor, instead of being spontaneous acts, which implies the participation of intellectual authors and the perpetrators. I believe lynchings continue to happen, although with other dynamics and without the use of fire, which is reflected in my case in Chontala.

Lynching, a scar of the civil war

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the practice of lynching³⁸ appeared progressively with a greater presence in departments with indigenous populations. The Verification Mission of the United Nation of Guatemala (MINUGUA), counted 255 persons that died under these circumstances (without counting the number of injured) between 1996 and 2003. The Mission pointed out that there was a correspondence between the areas where the lynchings had occurred with those areas more affected by the civil war, with the lowest human development indexes, which also present economic and social exclusion. Although in 2003 the National Table of Lynch Prevention was created with the participation of several institutions³⁹ to discuss, diffuse, and work with civil society to prevent lynching, these efforts were weakened by the prevailing impunity in Guatemala. Those responsible for these despicable acts were not investigated nor prosecuted, which influenced the continuation and promotion of this behavior (MINUGUA 2004:7). The ineffectiveness of the Guatemalan criminal justice due to lack of capacity, resources or political interest has produced a feeling of distrust against the authorities for being at best incompetent if

³⁸ Lynching is a collective resource of violence applied for a variety of reasons against people whose guilt has not been proven yet or against suspects and people that are seen or caught intrigant. Whichever the reason that motivated the lynching, there is an important role of the instigators, and a tacit complicity before the criminal spectacle (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:22 & 23).

³⁹ The Human Rights Ombudsman of Guatemala, the Judicial Body, the Public Ministry, the Indigenous Defense, the Institute of Comparative Studies in Criminal Sciences and the Alvarado Hugo Foundation.

not complicit in criminal activities. Guatemalans remain cynical about official law enforcement efforts (Snodgrass Godoy 2002:644).

The reported cases of lynching in Guatemala have occurred under different circumstances, however they have shown some patterns: they have occurred more frequently in indigenous communities⁴⁰—principally in Alta Verapaz and El Quiché—with some exceptions in towns with predominantly Mestizo population; there is a positive relationship between the frequency of lynching and the ancient zones where acts of repression and armed conflicts took place (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico 2004:22); the principal actors of these events have been a small group of men generally older than 35 years old. In some cases, members of these groups belonged to PACs, who could have personal reasons to commit the crime as resentment against the victims (Mendoza and Torres-Rivas 2003:103); and lynching occurred where the traditional communal, religious, and political structures were lost and where the ancient norms and values lose validity. Based on this perspective, the lynching occurs in areas with weak social cohesion, the disintegration of the collective identities, and antipathy to the social order and the legality.

The sociologist Angelina Snodgrass has examined the process by which state violence ruptured communities and the ways in which this process has led to lynching in the postwar period. She argues that the terror not only traumatized individuals, but in some cases may have transformed the social fabric of entire communities. In the case of Guatemala, the army aimed not only to commit atrocities against the civil population, but also to eliminate their entire social world by decimating the pre-existing institutions of civil society and by replacing these with a new form of social organization that has endured into the postwar period. For instance, the counterinsurgency targeted community leaders who were the pillars of collective life such as Maya priests, mayors,

⁴⁰ More than the 65% of lynchings (91 cases) have occurred in departments with a majority of indigenous populations.

village elders, traditional authorities, and others. They performed important tasks in local government, passing on religious and cultural traditions to future generations, and guiding their communities through times of trouble (Snodgrass Godoy 2002:647). After the 36 years of war in Guatemala, in many highlands' communities, members of the army continue to hold positions of authority in a context where victims and victimizers continue to share spaces. "In this context of fragile coexistence, it is difficult to reach collective decisions, and less in the cases of crime 'which ignited passionate reactions'" (Ibid., 2002: 649).

In 2002, Snodgrass conducted fieldwork research about the lynching phenomena in Chichicastenango where she interviewed members and ex-members of the army, the guerrillas, and authorities from the Chichicastenango municipality and the Guatemalan government. Significantly, she interviewed a K'iche' officer who worked in the municipality's town hall about the violent behavior of ex-patrols in positions of authority in their communities. He said:

There are local authorities. There are local authorities but they have those ideas of the past stuck in their heads. So those people, now they're the authorities, but many of them have ideas, well, they were brainwashed by the Army. They told them that the guerrillas were the ones who stole the chickens who raped the women, all those things, but the people know, the guerrillas didn't have problems with the people because it wasn't true, the ones who did those things were the soldiers and the people knew it, although you couldn't say so, but it's known, it's known nowadays who were those who killed people, who were those who burned people, it's known who they were but you can't say anything to them about it. So that's the root of the problem, because since they organized the civil patrols, there those people that were in the patrols got accustomed to those things, to burning and all of that. Nowadays, they don't burn with their houses and all, but they're still burning. Those people are trained, that's the problem. The people are trained but the rest don't know it, the rest allow themselves to be manipulated by the fear that exists in the communities. That's the problem. There are some who are naïve, who get involved with things without really knowing what they're doing. Since the 1980s we knew that this type of thing was going to happen, these lynchings, because those were the ideas that they taught the leaders of the patrols, because our people, people from our own community were patrollers, and they heard the what's it called, the orientations that they gave them in those days (Interview 24, October, 2000).

When my incident on May 4th occurred, I noted how well organized the authorities or COCODES from 10 neighboring villages were who had led the meeting that day. It seemed that they were following an already established agenda. First, a small group of men put in a lot of effort to convince the community that we (the family who collaborated with my project, members of the

COCODE from Chontala, and I were ‘bad people’ and that we were a threat to the wellbeing of the community; second, the visiting authorities signed two community acts to prohibit future research that involved excavations; third, they took all the information I collected during the fieldwork including the materials stored at the laboratory. And finally, the ultimate goal of the meeting, the payment of a fee by us. Some weeks after the incident, my family and I heard from some people that what happened on May 4th was carefully planned and that the meetings had taken place in the Central de Chipaca, a neighboring village. This place is where the COCODES of the region come together to discuss topics of mutual interest. Also, some elementary teachers who work in those communities and people from Chontala told us that the Chontala Junta Local de Seguridad (JLS) and members of some neighboring COCODES were spreading gossip about a mining company working in Chontala and the use of chemicals just days before the incident.

The MINUGUA publication about the practice of lynching in Guatemala (2002), identified the 1996 lynchings as spontaneous and with no possibility of controlling them. However, by 2002, they appear planned. There is also evidence that local authorities supported the mobs, at least doing nothing to stop or prevent them from their criminal activities (Minugua 2002). For example, an outstanding case occurred on March 12th, 2001. The news headline in the *New York Times* stated: “Mob stone a Guatemalan Judge until death.” The article reported that the judge Hugo Martinez decided on Monday afternoon that there was not enough evidence to retain two suspects accused of rape that were detained by the police after hundreds of neighbors of a town captured them. The Public Ministry (PM), in charge of the research, said that the instigators were looking for revenge because of a fee that was imposed on them previously by the judge. Also, the PM believes that they could be PAC or members of the guerilla because the night before they were communicating with each other using flashlights and whistles. Witnesses indicated that three days

before the crime, the local radio station spread messages in Q'eqchi' language calling the people to act together. The messages said: "The kidnappers have been released, and we do not know if tomorrow they will be kidnapping. Let's get together at the town on Tuesday to make a decision about what is recommended—kill them or forgive them, you will decide". Another message said: "What we going to do with these kidnappers: lets burn them, lynch them and kill them". Because of these messages, the Public Ministry argued that the lynching was not spontaneous but a planned action (Mendoza and Torres-Rivas 2003:104).

Lynching is not exclusive to Guatemala. This type of collective violence has been seen in many other countries, but the planned aspect is not a common factor. Carlos Avila who has investigated this topic in Mexico in the period between 1987 and 1998, indicates that the motivations behind lynching emerge in everyday activities where there is a clear absence of public institutions or the lack of their legitimacy from the point of view of some population's sectors. His research addressed 103 lynchings that occurred more frequently in Oaxaca (19 cases), Chiapas (16 cases) and Guerrero (11 cases), characterized by a high indigenous population. In all cases, lynching appears as a reaction to a grievance committed effectively or presumably by the lynched who is commonly a neighbor, a friend or a relative mostly in rural contexts. The most common crimes that warranted lynching were: assaults (24.6%), an offense to the community⁴¹ (18.4%), murder (14%) and rape (11.6%). The reaction is particularly immediate after the act that detonated the lynching is committed and it is led by witnesses or the individuals affected by the grievance. The act of lynching includes predominantly blows with fists or sticks, machetes and rocks. In only 13% of the cases, firearms were used. Avila indicates that the latent insecurity in Mexico increases the "accessibility" to this type of behavior, which is presented as a resource to fill a vacuum of

⁴¹ Theft to school or church of the village, refuse to do community work, appropriating community's resources, disrespect local authorities.

state presence or legitimacy. He adds that lynchings generally happen in scenarios of poverty, oppression and subalternity; it is an expression of violence of poor against poor, all sharing the lack of institutional justice (Mendoza and Torres-Rivas 2003:55–88).

Avilas's study about lynchings in México does not mention the presence of 'instigators', but instead he described a direct relationship between the lynched (the one who committed a crime or offense) and the aggrieved person who initiates the act of lynching or witnesses. It can be suggested, that in Guatemala (specifically in El Quiché and Alta Verapaz), the planification aspect of lynching or other kind of popular justice, seeks to convince people to join the instigators in order to diffuse responsibility. The power that some leaders have in Chichicastenango comes from the support of neighbors, because they are convinced that their leaders only want the wellbeing of the community. The sociologist Marcia Esparza determined that in Chichicastenango and in probably in many parts of the highlands, people view the army as the guardian of their lives, families, and communities. Because the army convinced people that their traditional ways of the organization were inadequate and that the only legitimate social structure were those such as PACs (Esparza 2005:388), they have now transformed into other types of organization.

Micro-region in Chichicastenango: Unity for development or unity for impunity

On May 18, 2016, I got a notification from the DEMOPRE asking me to mediate with the community in order to recover and analyze the archaeological materials, to write the final report, and deliver the materials to the DEMOPRE's office. With the support of mediator lawyers, representatives of the municipality of Chichicastenango and the Human Rights office, we had several meetings with the old and new authorities or COCODES of the 11 villages (including Chontala) that were present in the incident on May 4th. They were reticent to dialog and made clear

that it was my fault was not asking for permission to the 11 communities to conduct research in Chontala since the village is part of a microregion. The municipality of Chichicastenango is comprised of 8 microregions⁴².

Every micro-region is composed of a group of villages, as appears in the table below. According to the Municipal Development Plan of Chichicastenango (2011-2025), the COCODES that arrived to Chontala on May 4th were from: Chipaca, Quiejel, Camanibal (from micro-region No. 1); Xalbaquiej (from micro-region No. 3); Lacama I-II, Panquiac, Chuchipaca, Tzamanicabaj, and Xabilaguach (from micro-region No.5). As can be seen in the table, the 11 COCODES that stopped by project belong to different micro-regions, instead of only the one where Chontala is a member. Therefore, the reason that these authorities gave to us to justify their intervention in Chontala did not have a reasonable basis. The governmental institutions that have accompanied me in this process of dialogue with the authorities of the 11 communities, have noticed that there was a total abuse of authority from them and the judicialization is the process to follow.

Chichicastenango's micro-regions

| No of Micro-regions | Group of cantones for micro-regions |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Camanibal , Chijtinimit, Chilimá, Chipaca I , Chontala , Chucam, Chulumal I-IV, Chujupen, Pachoj, Quiejel , Rio Xajil, Sepela, Xepocol. |
| 2 | Mactzul I-VII |
| 3 | Paquixic, Patulup, Patulup II, Patzibal, Paxot I-III, Saquilla I-II, Xalbaquiej . |
| 4 | Camanchaj, Chicúa I-III, Chuabaj, Chucojom, Chutzorop II, Sacbichol, Semeja I -II, |
| 5 | Chuchipacá II, Chutzorop I, Lacama I , Lacama II , Lacama III , Panquiac , Tzamanicabaj , Xabilaguach , Xecalibal, Xecoja. |
| 6 | Agua Escondida, Agua Viva, Chuguexa I, Chuguexa IIA, Chuguexa IIB, Chuguexa II, Chunima, Chujulimul I-II, Chupol, Pajuliboy, Sacpulub and Xepol. |
| 7 | Mucubaltzip, Pocohil I-II, Pocohil II 2do. Centro, Semeja III, Xeabaj I, Xeabaj II, |
| 8 | Chucalibal I-II, Chumanzana, Las trampas, Panimaché I-V, Pacaman. |

⁴² In Chichicastenango, the COCODES of 90 cantones or villages are organized in 8 microregions or COCODES of second level. This micro-region started in 1997 in order to facilitate the mobilization of representatives to the meetings, workshops, and other organizational events at the town hall. Each microregion has its own Junta Directiva or Board of Directors, and two representatives of each microregion's board of director make up the Municipal Board of Directors. These groups participate monthly to the meetings of the Municipal Development Council or COMUDE to present suggestions, complains and projects.

The existence of the micro-regions has been questioned seriously after a mob burned part of the Town Hall, the mayor's house Sebastián Xon and other houses that belonged to members of the municipal council on January 16th, 2013. The mob started because people were told that the mayor misused around Q.4 million that should have been used for development projects in the municipality. The rumors were not based on true facts since the General Comptroller of Accounts (Contraloria General de Cuentas) gave him his settlement (finiquito) after he delivered a financial report of his administration. People say that micro-regions' representatives were distorting information they received at the monthly meeting in the town hall about the use of municipal resources. These representatives informed their COCODES about the stealing of the money, which produced the anger of the people. Since that incident, it was decided at the municipality level, that all 90 COCODES will participate at the monthly meeting to avoid the manipulation of information.

The existence of the microregions also links with old paramilitary structures of organization. In 2000, Snodgrass documented in Chichicastenango the existence of La Cadena or the chain. It is an organizational system originally formed to coordinate actions between communities and the army or PACs. In La Cadena participated ex PACs, some of them local authorities, who have been involved in a lynching (considered also a massacre) in Xalbaquiej village in 2000, where villagers were obligated to attend (Snodgrass Godoy 2002:650–651). I would risk saying that this chain was the one that stopped the exhumation carried out by the delegation invited by CONAVIGUA in 1991, and I presumed that the same organization was the one that interfered with my project in 2016. Despite the possibility of retaliation, I filed a complaint, however, the probability that any of them go to trial is very unlikely.

A weak justice system and the belief of an “internal enemy”

On May 5th, a day after the incident, I visited the Juzgado de Paz (Peace Court) of Chichicastenango to see the Peace Judge. I wanted to let him know how the incident developed in Chontala and to inquire as to why he was not able to assist me, as part of his duties, when my family requested his help. I also wanted an official letter documenting what had happened in Chontala the day before. The letter was to be delivered to the DEMOPRE. After briefly telling the judge the ordeal I had experienced the day before in Chontala, he expressed the following thoughts about my case: “It was all your fault, why did you enter that community? I do not understand why you want to open the wounds of the civil war?” I proceeded to explain to him that I was excavating sections of an archaeological site in Chontala and that I was not looking for clandestine burials from the civil war. I specified that I had gotten all the necessary permissions including the support of the local authorities, the authorization of an extended family who let me work on their lands, and the signed Archaeological Research Agreement from the DEMOPRE that grants legality to my research. I gave him a copy of the signed agreement. Then he continued with his accusation saying “It was your fault because it is as if you entered in a foreign house without permission and what happened to you was not illegal because their actions were backed by the Convention No. 169 of the ILO⁴³”. Finally, he told me that because I was not hurt physically, I was not entitled to file a complaint, so I should just let this case go. From these comments I knew that his mind was set in convincing me that what happened in Chontala on May 4th was all my fault. Therefore, I simply requested the letter as proof of the events and left his office.

⁴³ The convention No. 169 of Indigenous and Tribal people has two postulates: The right of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their cultures, forms of life and own institutions, and their right to participate effectively in the decisions that affect them. The Convention also guarantees the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to decide their own priorities as far as to the development process, to the extent in which this affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and to use the lands they occupy any way, and to control, as far as possible, their own economic, social and cultural development (Organización Internacional del Trabajo 2014:8).

What happened to me was not an isolated case. Still today, it is difficult to carry out exhumations in some villages of Chichicastenango, despite that these projects comply with legal requirements and count with the support of local families who wish to give a proper burial to their deceased relatives. For instance, a family from Pocohil, Chichicastenango, requested the exhumation of a relative with the support of forensic experts (FAFG) and members of the Human Rights Office in 2009. During this project the family and experts were threatened and injured by another group of neighbors who called them guerrilleros and accused them of false crimes in order to stop the project⁴⁴. Unfortunately, the majority of cases like this are not documented or covered by the media, which would be fundamental to know who is behind these events and find mechanisms to weaken these hidden groups of power.

The permission I got from the COCODE from Chontala to conduct my research in Patz'aj was an achievement for me because I had been trying to obtain permission in other villages in the El Quiché department where the immediate answer was no. In the village of Santa Rosa Chujuyub, where the first K'iche' capital was founded, I was told by a local leader when I requested permission to visit the site and take some pictures that: "We do not know who you are, and we do not know if you just want to take advantage of us. Since the civil war, we do not trust even our own brothers". After his words, a group of men started to insult me and followed me until I left the village. This sense of distrust creates an unstable environment for any internal or external initiative or any kind of cooperative work, which could have a counterproductive effect in the community. Even after 20 years of the signing of the Peace Accords, an observation that Jaen-Marie Simon made about the civil war in Guatemala continues to be valid.

⁴⁴ See case of Exhumations in Pocohil, Chichicastenango in 2009: <https://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/quiche/mujer-pide-perdon-por-haber-dirigido-una-turba-que-retuvo-a-vecinos-y-autoridades/>

In any case, partly through the PAC, the military has already accomplished its mission in some areas. The guerrilla movement has been beaten back; and neighbors now distrust one another too much to cooperate and to express demands for peaceful change. Indeed, even were he to abolish the civil patrol tomorrow, Cerezo would face the challenge of their effects. The patrol system has left tragic scars on the Guatemalan highland communities, where poverty, fear, petty feuding and the replacement of traditional legal systems by arbitrary military force have made the patrol system a dangerous conduit for vigilance justice and the abuse of power(Americas Watch 1986:11).

Some efforts that future generations must carry out to change this situation consist of demanding the strengthening of the justice system, so that hidden powers that still exist in many indigenous communities are dismantled and so that the population can freely exercise their rights without having to align with their interests. Another effort would be to promote more the link between education and archeology. In this way, more young people could be involved in archaeological projects or any initiative to conserve their cultural heritage without being negatively influenced by these power groups. However, the main problem will continue to be the colonialist way in which the State administers the archaeological heritage which usually violate the interests and rights of indigenous peoples over their cultural and historical heritage. Perhaps the most feasible step would be to achieve changes on the archaeological research regulations in Guatemala and create more inclusive and participatory research protocols, including the decentralization of museums.

CONCLUSIONS

Studies of the Postclassic Period in the Guatemalan highlands have focused on its military and secular character and the rivalry that existed between small states to expand their territories and resources. This focus has made it difficult to visualize other study approaches that take into account the origin of the political units and the role of political and military alliances for the achievement of the group's objectives. Fortunately, the study of Postclassic Period populations has many sources of information that allow for diachronic studies necessary to understand social processes, which is a key aspect in studies on ethnogenesis. Cases of ethnogenesis involve the structural transformation of social identity practices in relation to large-scale historical processes such as colonialism, migration, dispersion and shifts in power relations. To study ethnogenesis, it is necessary to show not only that social and cultural practices have changed over time but also that these changes are transformative beyond the normal fluctuations and adaptations typical of social identity maintenance. In many cases, the application of ethnogenesis theories have illuminated hidden histories, restored lost genealogies, and challenged ethnic essentialism by exposing the social construction of identity that encompasses both change and continuity. In the study of Kaqchikel ethnogenesis, I reconstructed the power relations between the Kaqchikel and the K'iche' groups in order to understand how the former managed to go from being part of the Thirteen Divisions of Warriors, at the service of the K'iche' elite, to finally having their own independent polity. I also focused on how the experience of the dawn in multiple places helped to understand the process of nucleation of the Kaqchikel settlements and the centralization of their organization, and how they forged a subsequent collective identity. I propose that the unity showed by the confederations that comprised the Kaqchikel polity was a resistance mechanism against the

K'iche' hegemony. However, once they became independent of the K'iche', they reproduced the K'iche' expansionist model to reach their own goals, thus changing the motives of their unity.

The K'iche', as a hegemonic power during the Late Postclassic Period (1250-1524 CE), established alliances with several political units, including the most prominent with the Tz'utujil, the Kaqchikel and Rabinal'eb'. These alliances mainly benefited the K'iche' since their subordinate allies had to provide services or pay taxes periodically. However, many subordinate allies rebelled against the K'iche', which triggered acts of repression that resulted in the destruction of opposing peoples or the increase in the payment of taxes as punishment for their rebellion. In the case of the Kaqchikel, they resisted the power of the K'iche' by strengthening their own internal organization with new alliances that were sometimes hidden from the K'iche' rulers and improving their warfare skills to obtain more rewards for their services. The unity and strength that the four confederations of the Kaqchikel political unit developed also allowed them to demand from the K'iche' the payment of their services and certain privileges such as having their own political unity. Similar cases happened with other groups of K'iche' warriors, who tired of their services not being rewarded and consequently, joined with other K'iche' nobles to carry out an internal revolt in Q'umarkaj around 1470. The revolt aimed to demand Ajpop titles to Kiq'ab and to deprive him of his resources. Once the hegemonic power of the K'iche' diminished after this internal revolt, most of their allies built their own independent political units as the Kaqchikel did.

The emergence of the Kaqchikel political unit resembles the case of the Mexicans who with their skill in war and their strategic alliances with neighboring peoples, they gradually increased their power until they gained hegemony from the villagers and people of the valleys, and

subsequently carried out war campaigns in distant places. As discussed in chapter 3, the Kaqchikel first established alliances to strengthen their own confederation, which was composed by the Xajil, B'ak'ajol, Sib'aquijay, Q'eqak'uch, Kaweq and Kejil. These last two *Chinamit* were K'iche' groups with less power. It is very likely that this alliance was what motivated the Kaqchikel confederation to occupy territories closer to the K'iche' capital of Q'umarkaj, and to experience its first sunrise there.

When the Kaqchikel experienced their primordial dawn in a group of hills, Pan Tzik, Pa Raxone', Simajijay, Sibaqul and Pa Kaweq-kejil, they still did not have power, but they did have a well-defined internal organization confirmed by four titles of authority: Ajpop Xajil, Ajpop K'amaja, Ajuchan Xajil and Q'alel Xajil. From the point of view of the Xajil, this dawn was shared with other allied confederations, including the Sotz'il, the Tuquche and the Aqajal, who had their own protective deities and still lived in their respective mountains. Together, they started a quadripartite system of organization that remained until the arrival of the Spanish. During this first dawn, the Kaqchikel not only strengthened their alliance with the Kaweq and the Kejil, but also took possession of new territories that now correspond to the territories of the municipality of Chichicastenango. Their first settlement called Nima' Jay was eventually abandoned by an internal dispute between the Xajil and the Bak'ajol. It is very probable that the Bak'ajol held the authority before moving to the territory of Chichicastenango, and they wished to continue with the same position, but the Xajil did not allow them. In this way, members of the Kaqchikel confederation move and experience their dawn for the second time in another group of hills that include Panche', Chi Q'ojom, Muqb'al Sib' and Chuwila'. The last was their main settlement. At this point in history, the Kaqchikel and their allies were incorporated into the system of the Oxlajuj Ch'ob

Ajilab'al or The Thirteen Divisions of Warriors at the service of the Nima' K'iche' confederation of Q'umarkaj. In the Popol Wuj, Chuwila' appears as one of the main defensive *calpuls* or division of warriors, but it is also mentioned as the territory of the Kaqchikel. In the list of defensive *calpuls*, Xoyab'aj, currently Joyab'aj, also are mentioned, which was occupied by the Aqajales who protected the northern border of the K'iche' capital. The presence of Kaqchikel speakers in the territory of Chichicastenango and in Joyab'aj is supported by the existence of K'iche' variants that show Kaqchikel influence at a phonetic level. Specifically, these two variants, replaced the system of long and short vowels with that of tense and lax vowels, which is only present in the Kaqchikel language. This phenomenon is directly related to the Kaqchikel pre-Colombian occupation of Chichicastenango, Joyabaj and possibly in Cubulco and Zacualpa.

The Kaqchikel, like other Mesoamerican groups, knew that the main means of improving their economic conditions and increasing their status was via the military field, which depended on the success with which this service was provided. During the government of Q'ukumatz (1400-1425 CE), which corresponded with the occupation of Panche' Chu Q'ojom, Muq'ba' sib' and Chuwila' by the Kaqchikel, they were forced to fight against K'iche's enemies. Because their experience in the military field was limited, they suffered several defeats and the victories they had over other peoples benefited mainly the K'iche', which generated a lot of discomfort among the Kaqchikel. This situation changed when K'iq'ab' reigned (1425-1475 CE). The alliance between K'iq'ab' and the Kaqchikel is presented in indigenous documents as a symbiotic relationship since both groups benefited from the alliance, which was further strengthened by the celebration of marriages between both groups. In this alliance, the Kaqchikel joined forces with the K'iche' to defeat various peoples and colonize the northwestern zone of the highlands and the

Pacific Coast. The political and economic power achieved by the K'iche' during the government of K'iq'ab' had a positive impact on the Kaqchikel who, as a reward, received titles of authority and the right to have their own political unit and its corresponding citadel or *tinamit*.

The first *tinamit* of the Kaqchikel was Chi Awär that was occupied approximately in 1430, which is currently located at the village of Chontala, Chichicastenango. In this place, a process of nucleation is clearly observed since the dawn that the Kaqchikel experienced for the third time no longer occurred in a group of mountains, but in a citadel or *tinamit*. This is because the representatives of the four confederations began to live together in a citadel. Each confederation had their own plaza and their own architectural group, as can be observed in the pattern of settlement in Chi Awär and also in Chi Iximche'. The question that arises from this situation is whether the Kaqchikel nucleation or centralization was due to imposition of the K'iche', or was the result of its own sociopolitical development. It is more likely that this unit was forged as a means of survival and resistance against the K'iche' and after their experience of fighting together to defeat the enemies of the K'iche' and their own enemies. According to Elizabeth Arkush, warfare is an arena that creates communities since the confrontation of threats can unite small groups into large confederations. In addition, war is central to the identity of groups at different levels (Scherer and Verano 2014:200). This is true in the Kaqchikel case as they also identified themselves as the Aj Chay 'those of the obsidian' and the Aj k'am 'those of the lasso' as both were elements commonly used in wars.

The material culture of Chi Awär indicates that the Kaqchikel, despite having their own *tinamit*, were still under the influence of the K'iche'. Archaeologically, this influence is visualized

with the use of the same ceramic types that are used in Q'umarkaj, mainly the red and orange monochrome ware. However, extensive use of micaceous ceramics in Chi Awär, which is a very popular ceramic type among the Aqajales of Jilotepeque Viejo, was also observed. It is also necessary to mention that in burial 1 of Chi Awär, vessels appeared with quite particular designs that have only been found in the residential areas of El Resguardo and Pakaman in Q'umarkaj. The settlement pattern at Pakaman and the presence of abundant obsidian in these residential areas led scholars to suggest that the sites may have been occupied by Kaqchikel groups, including Aqajal members. The possibility that Kaqchikel groups lived in Q'umarkaj is confirmed by the Sotz'il who mention Q'umarkaj as a place where they also dawned. The K'iche' influence in Chi Awär is also observed with the presence of double and twin temples in the main squares of this settlement, which has been interpreted as symbols of alliances between two groups, or the imposition of the cult of Tojil that was added to the cult of the local protector deity. This architectural feature is associated with the Quiche period, or the period of the K'iche' political predominance in the highlands.

The site of Chi Awär is completely defensive, which raises questions about who their enemies were or from whom they were hiding. It is more likely that they were foreseeing future confrontations with some sectors of the K'iche' political unit who were questioning the hegemonic power of the Kaweq from Q'umarkaj and the way in which the Kaqchikel were acquiring more power from this alliance. Unfortunately for the Kaqchikel, their stay in Chi Awär came to an end in 1470 when K'iq'ab' asked them to leave the site as a security measure because K'iq'ab's sons in alliance with K'iche' warriors decided to snatch his power and distribute his resources, including the Nimaq Achi'. On the day, 9 Iq', the Kaqchikel left Chi Awär, moved to Ratzmut, and

constructed their new *tinamit* named Chi Iximche' where they experienced the dawn for the last time. There is a possibility that the Kaqchikel and their allies were *Nimaq' Achi*, who eventually won the recognition of the K'iche' rulers. This may explain why in the Q'umarkaj revolt, K'iche' factions aimed to kill the leaders of the Nimaq' Achi, which included many Ajpop Xajil (Maxwell and Hill 2006:173). This situation could lead to the abandonment of Q'umarkaj and Chi Awär.

The Kaqchikel, with their vast military experience, reproduced the same expansionist model of the K'iche' and subjected several groups who provided them with tributes and resources, among them were several Poqomam groups. In this context, the Kaqchikel of Chi Iximche' maintained a unity no longer as a means of resistance against the K'iche' but as a means of dominion towards other highland groups. At the arrival of the Spaniards, the Kaqchikel had as their main enemies the Pipiles and the Tzutujiles because their resources in the vicinity of the lake and the Pacific Coast were coveted by the Kaqchikel.

During the Postclassic period, the political units of the Guatemalan highlands not only sought to be stronger in order to obtain more resources but also aimed to increase their prestige and noble affiliation to legitimize their governments. Without this, their governments would not be recognized by other political entities and would be more at risk of being attacked or destroyed. That is why the K'iche' and Kaqchikel defended their position that their ancestors or founding fathers came from Tula. An example of the importance of having a connection with Tula to legitimize power occurs with the internal revolt in the Q'umarkaj. In the Xajil Chronicle, it is mentioned that the warriors who initiated the internal revolt against K'iq'ab' to obtain titles of Ajpop as a reward for their military services were not legitimate since they only possessed strength

but not knowledge as they did not come from Tula. By the time of the Spanish conquest, nearly all Maya rulers prided themselves on their Nahua / Toltec heritage (Morley and Brainerd 1983:166).

The emergence of the Kaqchikel political unit, and perhaps other polities in the Guatemalan highlands, can be understood as means of resistance against the political and military power of the K'iche' who took advantage of people with less strength and demanded from them various services and the payment of taxes. Only other political units with similar or greater strength and power could defend their autonomy as the Tz'utujiles did, and later the Kaqchikel. The military experience that the Kaqchikel obtained fighting alongside the K'iche', gave them the advantage to protect their territories and expand to obtain more, especially on the shores of Lake Atitlan and the Pacific Coast. The territorial borders that the Kaqchikel defended against the K'iche' and other highland groups became their political, cultural and linguistic boundaries, which were also flexible.

In Mesoamerica during the Postclassic period, the soft version of ethnicity was practiced, which was based mainly on the territory and shared historical experiences, instead of claiming a common origin. This was due to the movement of people due to warfare, migrations, marriages between members of different groups, and expansionism. Therefore, the territorial boundaries of the political units were very flexible and permeable, as were the ethnic borders (Berdan et al. 2008:204–211). In the Guatemalan highlands, there was a certain overlap between ethnolinguistic groups and the main political units. This is because the names of the strongest confederations were used to identify the languages they spoke and their territories. For example, from the Nima' K'iche' confederation derives the name of its language and territory, currently called Santa Cruz

de El Quiche (K'iche'). The same happened with other expansionist polities such as the Kaqchikel and Tz'utujil, whose languages have the same names. It is necessary to mention that the rivalry and competition between groups for resources, sharpened their differences or allowed them to establish differentiated symbolic features, such as language, ritual practices, professions, shared histories and territories.

The territory played an important role in the development of identity for the K'iche'an groups (K'iche', Kaqchikel, Tz'itijil, Achi'). Territory could be from a *chinamit* or *calpuls* to a territory conquered by expansionist polities. For example, the identity of the warriors who occupied military calpuls were identified according to their demonym, or the dwelling place: Aj Uwila "those (Warriors) from Uwila", Aj Chulumal, "Those (warriors) of Chulumal ", Aj Kab'rajan " Those (Warriors) of Kab'rajan ". etc. In other words, their identity was based on their affiliation to specific *calpuls*. Generally, groups of calpuls were integrated into larger polities, whose authorities resided in a *tinamit*. Therefore, identity could have several scales but always connected to a territory or a polity where social relation develops. In the Title of Santa Clara, it is said that during the expansion of the K'iche' *winaq* or 'nation', they occupied several territories where they placed territorial borders that they defended from other nations.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Xa Kucha qetaam rojonel uchi qulew Oj Kaweq K'iche' Winaq Oj Rajawal Totoncapán Oj rajawal pa Sija Santa Catarina Ruk' Quetzaltenango, Ruk' puch San Martin Zapotitlán..</p> | <p>It is said that we know all the boundaries of our lands We, the Kaweq, the K'iche' nation we, the Totoncapan lords we, the lords in Sija Santa Catarina along with Quezaltenango along with San Martin Zapotitlan (list of K'iche' places)</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Xa jun qak'ojeik xa pu jun Qachuch qaqajaw quk' xa ki jun qatit qamam quk' oj Utlatecat K'iche' winaq qachajim k'ut uchi ulew K'iche' ulew ronojel chuwach Tz'utujil (winaq) chuwach Kaqchikel chuwach rab'inal chuwach puch aq'aab'</p> | <p>We are united in our existence only (a couple) were our parents and mothers along with our grandmothers and grandfathers along with us, the Utlatecs, the K'iche' nation we are guardians of the boundaries of the K'iche's territories we all against the Tz'utujile nation against the Kaqchikel against the Rab'inal against the Aq'aab' (Q'eqchi')</p> |
|---|---|

B'alimija ruk' q'ancheb'es
Mam saqulew
84)

(against) the B'alimaja (Ixil) and the Q'abcheb'es (Mam)
(against) the Mam from Saqulew (Cabezas Carcache 2009:83,

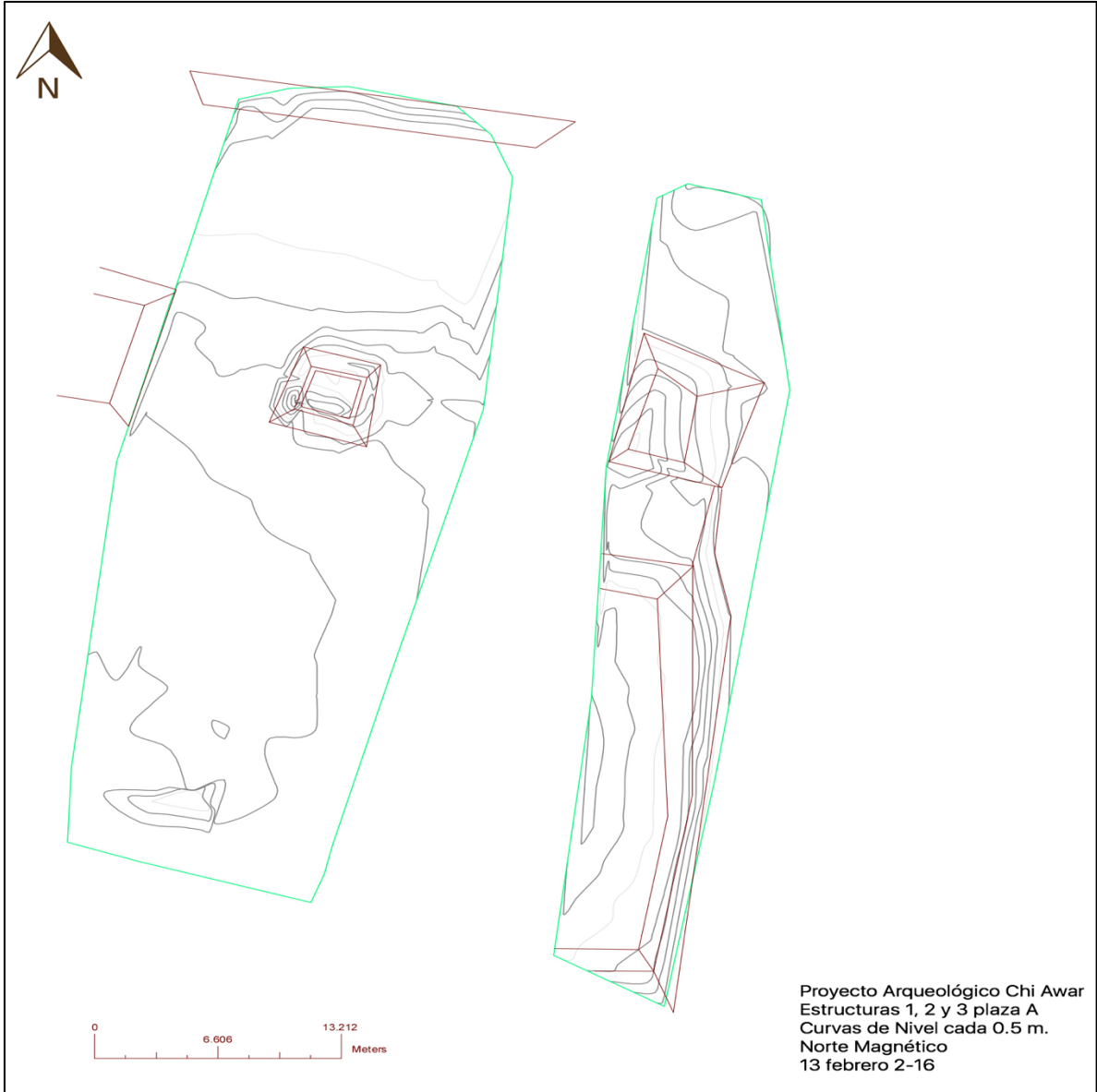
In this text, the authors identify themselves as part of the K'iche' nation but also as Utlatec, which is the demonym for the people who lived in Utlatlan (the nahua word for Q'umarkaj), thus showing an affiliation with their *tinamit*. In this same paragraph other peoples are mentioned, who are also identified as *winaq* or nations, such as the Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil Rab'inal, Aq'aab' and B'alimaja. Although the dominant groups of each *winaq* tried to maintain the unity of their political units, there were always internal divisions, migrations and warfare, which made ethnic identities very flexible, situational and reactive to new contingencies.

Appendix

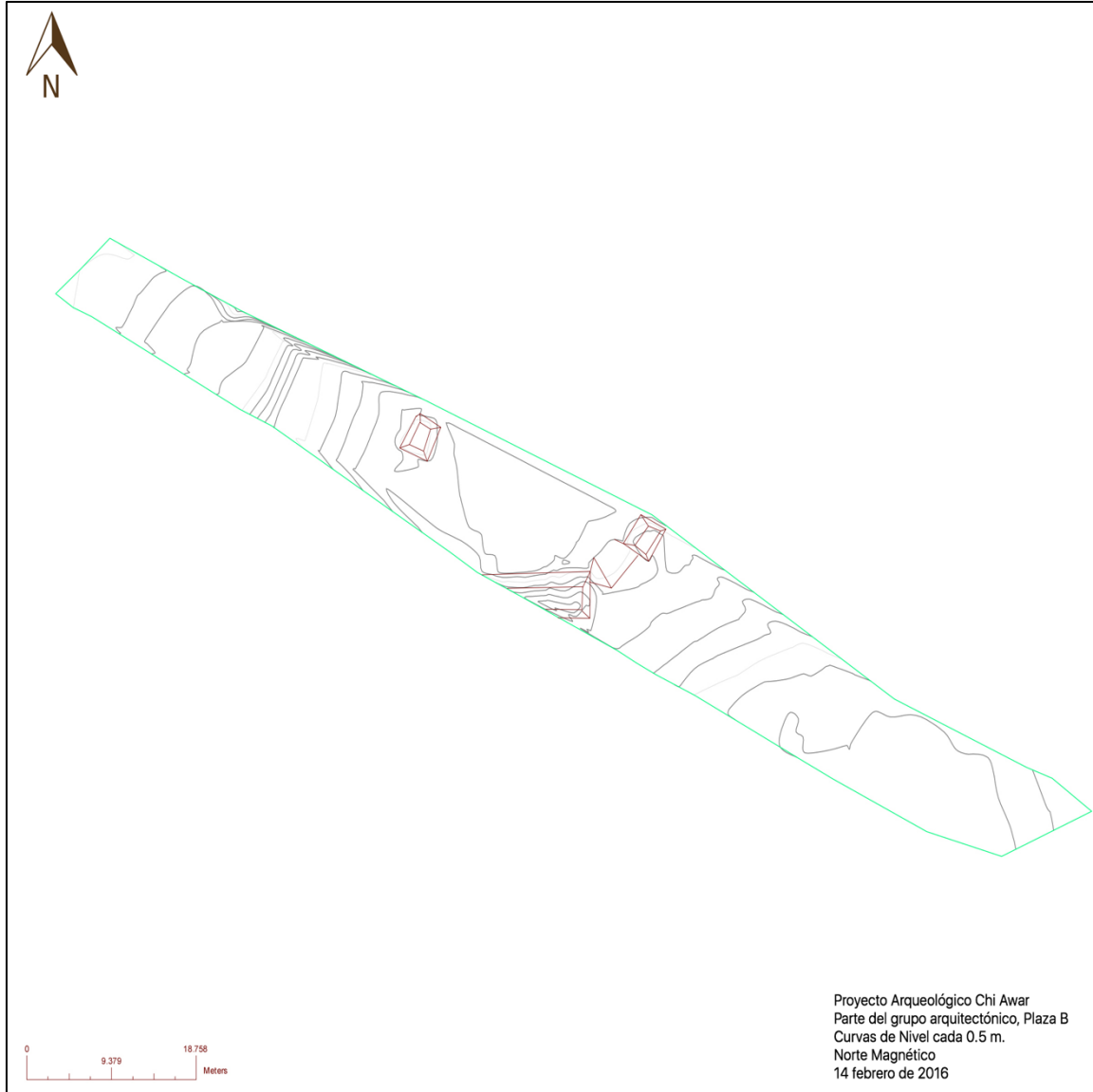
A. Mapped zones in Chi Awär



Map 1. Northwest end of the Chi Awär site (Eduardo Bustamante, 2016)



Map 2. Plaza A and structures 1, 2 and 3.



Plano 3: Estructuras ubicadas al sur de plaza B

B. Other excavations in Chi Awär

Unit 1A: This excavation unit was located on the west side of unit 1 and aimed to determine the existence of some archaeological feature since a group of stones was identified, but without a specific order, in the previous unit. This excavation pit has a total of 4 levels, with a maximum depth of 70 cm. At the end of the excavation of this pit, no more stones were identified, only an increase in the ceramic material was visualized.

Level 1 (CHWR-1A-1): This level goes from 0 to 20 centimeters. The soil corresponds to humus, of coarse and loose granulometry, mixed with organic material, of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10YR 4/4). The collected material consisted of 80 ceramic sherds, 20 samples of obsidian, and a sample of ashes.

Level 2 (CHWR-1A-2): This level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters, and corresponds to fine grained soil. In some parts it has compact consistency and in other loose. Its color is Dark Yellowish Brown (10 YR 3/4). From this level, 132 ceramic sherds, 17 obsidian samples, a carbon sample, a square-shaped support with zoomorphic decoration, and cooked clay fragments were recovered. The continuation of stones located on the second level of unit 1 was not visualized.

Level 3 (CHWR-1A-3): This level ranges from 40 to 60 cm, the soil is presented with a compact consistency towards the north side and looser on the south side and fine granulometry of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10 YR 4/6). The material collected consisted of 119 ceramic sherds, 28 obsidian samples, a fragment of worked pumice, and a small sample of carbon were counted. A strong change of natural layer occurs at this level.

Level 4 (CHWR-1A-4): In this level only 10 centimeters were excavated because the sterile soil was identified, reaching maximum depth of 70 cms. The soil was sandy, fine with loose granulometry of Yellow color (10 YR 7/6). At the beginning of this unit, 26 ceramic sherds and 1 obsidian fragment were recovered.

Unit 2A: This unit corresponds to an extension of unit 2, which was located on its west side. It was decided to make this extension with the purpose of knowing better the use that was given to this

mound through the recovery of more cultural material to analyze. This unit has a total of 4 strata whose maximum depth is 70 centimeters. From the west side of the unit, sterile sandy soil began to appear from the first level, which is characteristic of the units subsequently excavated (including units 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) in this mound. This confirms that the space where human activity was concentrated was specifically restricted to the highest part of the mound which had a garbage dump on its north side and its possible entry to the south which is the side where visitors come and enter to Chi Awär

Level 1 (CHWR 2A-1): With a depth of 0 to 20 centimeters, this level corresponds to the Humus which is loose and coarse-grained soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/4). The material collected consists of 66 ceramic sherds, 21 obsidian samples, 1 arrow-shaped flint artifact and 1 small possibly polished bone artifact with circular designs inside.

Level 2 (CHWR 2A-2): The second arbitrary level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters, and corresponds to compact, fine-grained soil, which when excavated tends to leave in large brown 'bodoques' of 7.5 YR 4/4. The material collected is 100 ceramic sherds and 15 copies of obsidian. 1 carbon sample was also stored in an aluminum envelope.

Level 3 (CHWR 2A-3): This level ranges from 40 to 61 centimeters deep and consists of a compact, fine-grained earth whose color is dark yellowish brown 10 YR 4/4. The material collected in this lot consists of 46 ceramic pots, 7 specimens of obsidian and 1 poma stone without form. Another sample of carbon wrapped in foil was also recovered.

Level 4 (CHWR 2A-4): The fourth arbitrary level has a depth ranging from 61 to 70 centimeters. This level corresponds to sandy soil that is not very compact and has a coarse grain size of 10 YR 6/6 brownish yellow. In this lot the amount of cultural material decreases considerably, recovering only 3 ceramic pots. Due to the lack of cultural material, it was decided not to continue digging the unit.

Unite 3: This unit was located on the west side of the plateau a short distance from the ravine, it is specifically located at geographical coordinates N 14.932904 W -91.070610. This unit consists of

4 levels, has a maximum depth of 75 centimeters. It does not show significant presence of cultural material. It was excavated from April 15 to 16.

Level 1 (CHWR 3-1): This level ranges from 0 to 20 centimeters, and corresponds to sandy soil mixed with roots and leaves, light yellowish brown 10Y / R 6/4. The material collected corresponds to 180 sherds, 1 specimen of obsidian and 1 unidentified bone.

Level 2 (CHWR 3-2): With a depth of 20 to 40 centimeters, this unit corresponds to a sandy strip of yellowish appearance, very pale brown 10 YR 7/3. The material collected consists of 18 ceramic sherds and one specimen of obsidian.

Level 3 (CHWR 3-3): This level ranges from 40 to 60 centimeters, and consists of very pale brown sandy soil 10 YR 7/3. Only 3 sherds and 7 copies of obsidian were recovered.

Level 4 (CHWR 3-4): This last level ranges from 60 centimeters to 75 centimeters. The earth is sandy yellow-brown 10 YR 5/6, very compact and sterile. In these 15 centimeters no cultural material was recovered.

Unit 4: This unit was located in the southwest corner of the plateau where the small mound is located and has the following coordinates: N 14.932983 W -91.070580. This unit consists only of two arbitrary levels with very little material, with a maximum depth of 40 centimeters, and was excavated on April 15.

Level 1 (CHWR 4-1): With a depth of 0 to 20 centimeters, this level consists of sandy soil, loose, fine grained, with many roots and leaves, light yellowish brown 10 YR 6/4. The recovered cultural material consists of 74 sherds, 1 specimen of obsidian and 1 unidentified bone fragment.

Level 2 (CHWR 4-2): The second level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters, and corresponds to very compact, sterile sandy soil and very pale brown 10 YR 7/3. Only 20 pots were recovered.

Unit 5: CHWR-5 was performed on the east side of the plateau and its coordinates are the following N 14.932895 W -91.070435. The objective of this unit, like that of the previous units, is to infer about the ancient human activity of the plateau and the mound. This unit has dimensions of 2 x 1 meters, has a total of 3 levels and a maximum depth of 60 centimeters. The excavation was carried out by arbitrary levels of 20 centimeters, with its date of completion on April 16.

Level 1 (Chw-5-1): The land of this level corresponds to humus, of coarse granulometry, loose and brown (10YR 5/3), mixed with organic material such as roots and tree leaves. 165 ceramic sherds and 12 obsidian specimens were found at this level.

Level 2 (Chwr-5-2): The earth at this level is semi-compact, fine grained, and yellowish brown (10YR 5/4). The recovered cultural material consists of 91 ceramic sherds, 14 obsidian specimens, as well as a small sample of coal.

Level 3 (Chwr-5-3): The land on this level is sandy, compact and brownish yellow 10 YR 6/6. This level is sterile since only 1 ceramic pot was recovered, and to verify this characteristic, only one meter from the north side of the unit was excavated up to 60 cm where cultural material was no longer recovered.

Unit 6: This unit is located south of the plateau, showing the following coordinates: N 14.932762 W -91.070557. This unit has a total of 3 levels with a maximum depth of 56 centimeters and was excavated on April 16.

Level 1 (CHWR 6-1): The first 15 centimeters of this lot corresponds to land with a coarse granulometry, loose and contains organic elements such as roots and leaves, and is dark yellowish brown 10 YR 4/4. From 15 centimeters on, a very pale brown sandy soil begins 10 YR 7/4. The recovered cultural material corresponds to 140 sherds, and three copies of obsidian.

Level 2 (CHWR 6-2): This level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters, and corresponds to the continuation of the former sandy earth of Very Pale Brown color (10 YR 7/4) and is completely sterile.

Level 3 (CHWR 6-3): This level ranges from 40 to 56 centimeters deep and corresponds to sandy earth of a Very Pale Brown color (10 YR 7/4). This unit was excavated in order to confirm the sterility of the soil, which was confirmed. No cultural material was recovered.

Unit 7: This unit was located in the approximations of the central part of the mound but oriented more towards the southwest with the coordinates N 14.932818 W-91.070595. The objective of this unit was to identify the limits of occupation or human activity in the mound. This unit only consists of two levels reaching a maximum depth of 38 centimeters.

Level 1 (CHWR 7-1): The first level goes from 0 to 21 centimeters and corresponds to the humus. The humus corresponded to coarse granulometry, with roots and leaves soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/4). From 10 centimeters, there was a change in stratigraphy, where Very Pale Brown sandy soil appeared (10 YR 7/4). The material collected at this level corresponds to 22 ceramic sherds.

Level 2 (CHWR 7-2): The second level goes from 21 to 38 centimeters deep and corresponds to very compact, hard, and Yellowish-Brown color soil (10 YR 5/6). This stratum is completely sterile and therefore the excavation was stopped.

Unit 8: Unit 8 was located near the center of the mound but oriented further east. The coordinates for this unit correspond to N 14.932890 W -91.070518. This unit consists of 2 levels and it has a maximum depth of 40 centimeters.

Level 1 (Chwr-8-1): The soil in this level is of smooth consistency, of coarse granulometry, and of Yellowish Brown color (10 YR 5/4). In this level, 37 ceramic sherds were recovered, and four obsidian samples. Upon reaching 18 centimeters, a change in stratigraphy was identified that will also occur at the next level.

Level 2 (Chwr-8-2): The soil at this level is compact, with coarse granulometry and of Reddish Yellow color (7.5 YR 6/6). Due to the low presence of cultural material at this level, it was decided to excavate only its north side. In total, only 19 ceramic sherds and 1 carbon sample were recovered. When deepening this level, no more material culture was collected, so the excavation of this unit was stopped.

Unit 9: This excavation unit has a dimension of 1 x 1 meters and was located on the west side of unit 2 and was intended to corroborate the limit of ancient human activity at the top of the natural mound. This unit has a total of three levels, reaching a maximum depth of 50 centimeters.

Level 1 (CHWR 9-1): With a depth ranging from 0 to 20 centimeters, this level corresponds to coarse grained and loose soil of Brown color (10 YR 5/3). The recovered material consists of 43 ceramic sherds and 1 sample of obsidian.

Level 2 (CHWR 9-2): This level ranges from 20 to 41 centimeters, and the soil is sandy and of Very Pale Brown color. No cultural material was collected.

Level 3 (CHWR 9-3): With a depth of 41 to 50 centimeters, there is a very pale brown sandy soil 10 YR 7/4, which is completely sterile.

Unit 13: This 2 x 1 unit is located in the southeast corner of Plaza A with coordinates N 14.935175 W -91.070404. Like unit 10, it was sought to better understand the occupation time of the square as well as its function. The maximum depth of this unit is 50 centimeters, and it is composed of three arbitrary levels. This unit was excavated from April 21 to 22.

Level 1 (CHWR 13-1): The first arbitrary level corresponds to loose, coarse-grained soil of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10 YR). The material collected at this level consisted of 20 ceramic sherds, 2 obsidian samples and 10 samples of a possible floor, which could also be remains of the buildings that are in very poor condition around the plaza.

Level 2 (CHWR 13-2): The second arbitrary level ranges from 20 to 40 centimeters, and consists of sandy soil of fine granulometry and of Light Yellowish Brown color (10 YR 6/4). No cultural material was recovered at this level.

Level 3 (CHWR 13-3): This last level has a depth of 10 centimeters and was excavated to confirm the sterility level that corresponds to sandy, loose, fine grain and 10YR 7/4 very pale brown color. The recovered material It was null.

Unit 14: This unit was located approximately in the center of Plaza A with coordinates N 14.935350 W -91.070419. Its excavation was carried out following the same objectives as units 10 and 13 located in the center of the plaza. This unit has a maximum depth of 60 centimeters and has a total of 3 levels. The material recovered in this unit is very scarce too.

Level 1 (CHWR 14-1): This first level has a depth ranging from 0 to 20 centimeters and is composed of loose, coarse granulometry soil of Dark Brown color (7.5 YR 3/3). The collected material consists of 21 ceramic sherds and 1 specimen of obsidian.

Level 2 (CHWR 14-2): The second arbitrary level is composed of a semi-compact, sandy of Yellowish Brown (7.5 YR 3/2) soil. The recovered material consists of 28 sherds and 1 obsidian sample.

Level 3 (CHWR 14-3): Third arbitrary level that goes from 40 to 60 centimeters, is composed of sandy soil a little compact, colored 10 YR 5/6 yellowish brown. No material was recovered from this lot.

Unit 16: This unit is located on a rectangular platform located behind the twin temples, specifically in the northwest corner of said platform with coordinates N 14.935656 W -91.070374.

The objective of this unit was to collect cultural material on the outskirts of the main square to better understand the activities that were carried out outside the enclosed spaces, as well as to find

evidence of the time of occupation of the area. This unit was excavated from April 24 to 26, where 5 arbitrary levels were excavated with a maximum depth of 100 centimeters.

Level 1 (CHWR 16-1): Level that goes from 0 to 20 centimeters, and corresponds to a compact soil of coarse granulometry, with abundant tiny fragments of limestone, of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10YR $\frac{3}{4}$). In this unit 49 ceramic sherds and 3 obsidian fragments were collected.

Level 2 (CHWR 16-2): With a depth of 20 to 40 centimeters, this level corresponds to very compact earth, of mixed granulometry (coarse and fine) that when excavated it leaves in different sized boulders, and is of Dark Yellowish Brown color (10YR $\frac{3}{4}$). From this unit 55 ceramic sherds and 9 obsidian samples were collected. Small fragments of limestone, possibly from an old floor and remnants of architecture that is very damaged, were also collected.

Level 3 (CHWR 16-3): Third arbitrary level whose depth ranges from 40 to 60 centimeters corresponds to a very compact mud, which when excavated comes out in earth boulders, and is colored 10 YR $\frac{3}{4}$ dark yellowish brown. The recovered material consists of 150 sherds and 19 copies of obsidian. Many small and medium stones were also presented in no specific order. This is the level where the largest amount of ceramic material was collected. In the following levels the material will decrease considerably.

Level 4 (CHWR 16-4): The fourth arbitrary level does not show any change in stratigraphy, since compact, taffy mud is present, and with a slight variation in color being 7.5 YR $\frac{3}{3}$ dark brown. The collected material corresponds only to 31 sherds.

Level 5 (CHWR 16-5): The last arbitrary level ranges from 80 to 100 centimeters where a continuation is shown with the previous layer of compact muddy mud colored 10 YR $\frac{3}{4}$ dark yellowish brown. No material was collected at this level, thus reaching the sterile soil, although the talpetate or sandy soil was not found.

The platform after the twin temples (structures 1 and 2) could have a floor that was destroyed by the practice of contemporary agriculture which is no longer observed in the profile of the unit. It

is interesting to note that human activity was more frequent on the outskirts of the square than in enclosed spaces, which is corroborated by the amount of pottery found at this level compared to units 10, 13 and 14 that were excavated in the central plaza.

Unit 17: This unit was located on the north of structure 3 of Plaza A and its coordinates are N 14.935531 W -91.070175. The excavation pit aimed to find the foundations of structure 3 and to verify human activity in that sector of the site. The unit had dimensions of 2 x 1 meters, with a total of 5 levels and a depth of 1 meter. The excavation was carried out by arbitrary levels of 20 centimeters, being its date of completion between April 26 and 28.

Level 1 (CHWR-17-1)

This level corresponds to the humus. It is characterized of coarse granulometry, semi-compact consistency soil of Dark Yellow Brown color (10 YR 3/4). The material collected consisted of 61 ceramic sherds and 1 obsidian sample. On the south side of the well appeared 3 large rocks, which did not have a defined pattern.

Level 2 (CHWR-17-2)

This level ranging from 20 to 40 centimeters, corresponds to coarse granulometry and compact consistency soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/4). A lot of material was found that included 59 ceramic sherds and 13 obsidian samples. On the south side you can see the stones that appeared in the previous level better, they were preserved in their place.

Level 3 (CHWR-17-3)

The soil at this level was semi-compact, with coarse granulometry and of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4). In this unit was collected 69 ceramic sherds, 3 obsidian samples and a carbon sample. At this level the stones that were on the south side were removed, since they did not show any kind of organization; while on the north side a stone with a rectangular shape appears and because of the way it was inserted into the earth it seemed to be a spike.

Level 4 (CHWR-17-4)

The soil at this level was very compact, with coarse granulometry and of Yellowish Brown color (10 YR 5/8). At this level, no cultural material was found. It was dug under the spike-shaped stone that appeared on the previous level to verify if it had any particular function but it was confirmed that it was not.

Level 5 (CHWR-17-5)

In this level, sterile soil was reached, therefore a bench of one square meter was made in the southern part of the well, and it was only excavated in the northern part. The type of soil was of compact consistency and thick texture, yellowish brown 10 YR 5/8. Not one type of cultural material was found, therefore at this level the excavation was stopped.

Unit 18: This unit was located in a cut in structure 3, possibly resulted from a clandestine looter. This unit has a maximum depth of 80 centimeters and is made up of 4 arbitrary units.

Level 1 (CHWR 18-1): The first arbitrary level goes from 0 to 25 cm, and corresponds to a compact soil of fine granulometry of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/6). The material collected in this unit is minimum corresponding to 8 ceramic sherds.

Level 2 (CHWR 18-2): This second level has a depth ranging from 25 to 45 centimeters and is composed of compact, dry-looking, fine-grained earth, with small stone fragments and light yellowish brown 10 YR 6/4. In this level, carved stones were found posing horizontally that appeared in the northwest corner of the unit. The pottery in this level was very low. Only 6 ceramic sherds were collected.

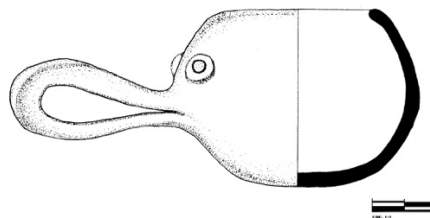
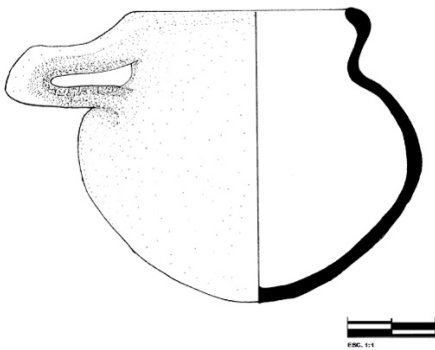
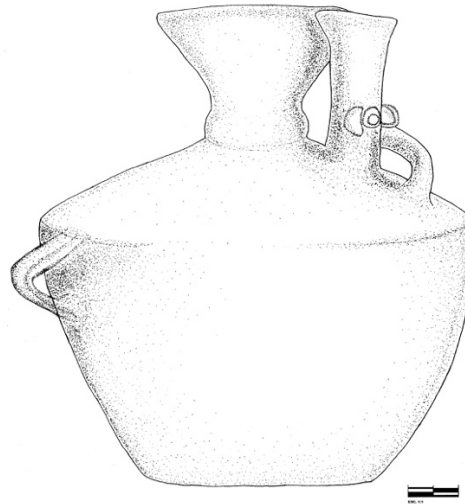
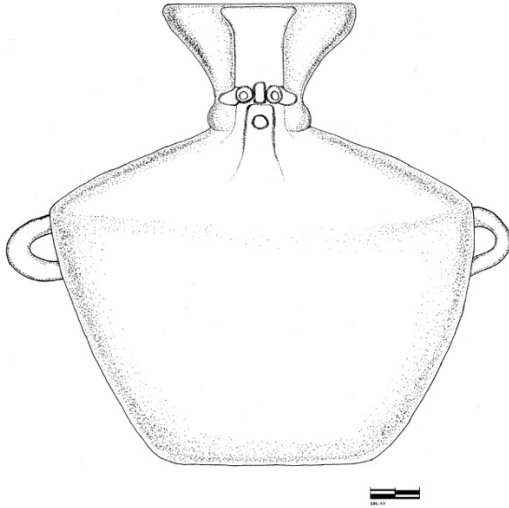
Level 3 (CHWR 18-3): The third arbitrary level ranges from 45 to 60 centimeters. At this level, compact earth of fine grain size is present, and without stone fragments like the previous batch. The color of the soil was Dark yellowish Brown (10 YR 4/6). The material collected was 4 obsidian samples.

Level 4 (CHWR 18-4): The last arbitrary level ranges from 60 to 85 centimeters and consists of compact, mixed granulometry, dry-looking soil of Dark Yellowish-Brown color (10 YR 4/4). The material recovered at this level is null.

Unit 19: This excavation unit was located between structures 1 and 2 (twin temples) of Plaza A whose coordinates are N 14.936755 W -91.069122. The purpose of this unit was to confirm if the platform on which structure 2 is based is shared with structure 1 as is the case with the twin temples of the Chwa Nima 'Ab'aj (Old Jilotepeque) site.

Only a few levels of this unit were excavated since at a depth of 15 centimeters, a cluster of collapsing stones appeared that prevented it from being systematically deepened. Many stones were carved, while others were not modified. We did not remove the stones because the project was coming to an end so it was decided to leave them in place. This excavation was cleaned, photographed and drawn (See figure 13).

C. Drawing of ceramics found in burial 1 of Chi Awär and some ceramic sherds from surface



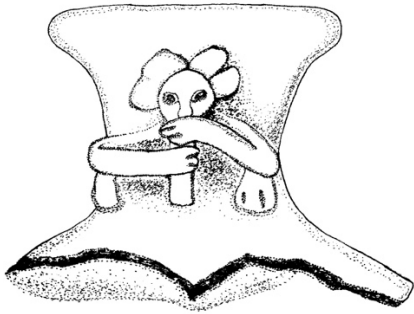


FIG. 114



FIG. 115

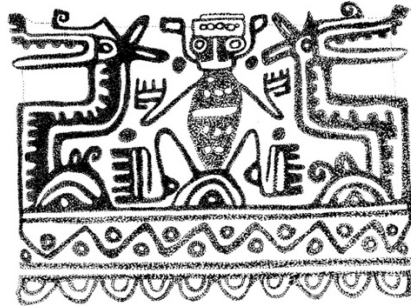


FIG. 116



FIG. 117

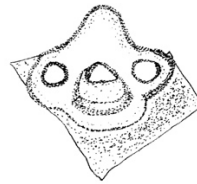
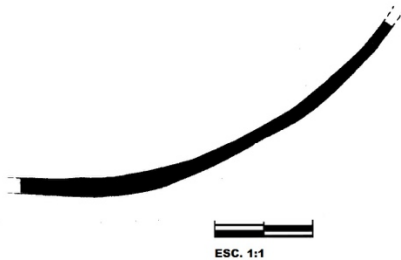
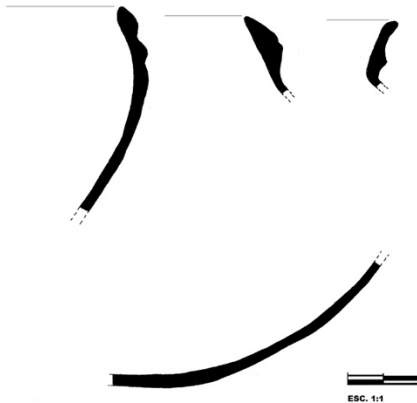
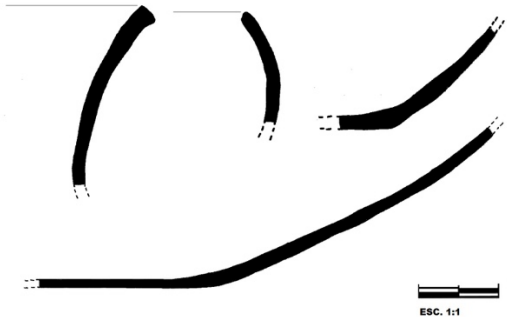
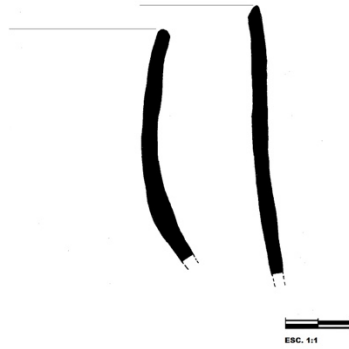
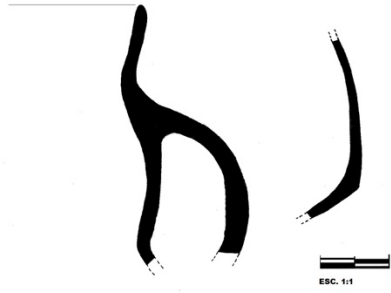


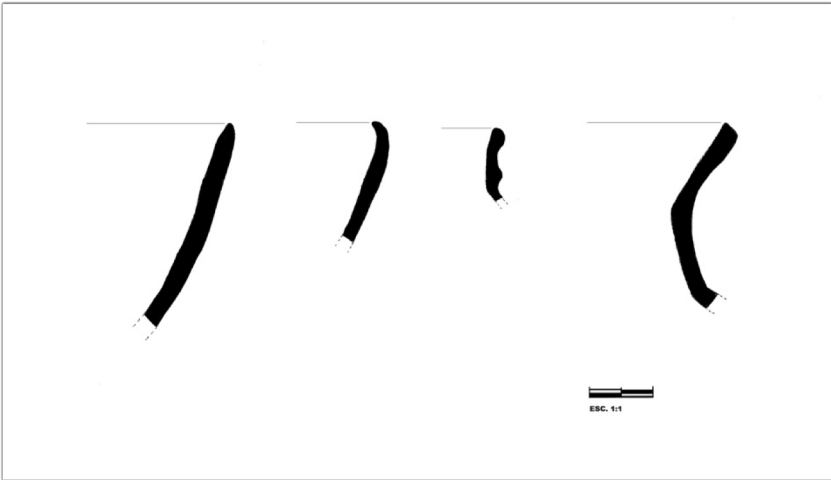
FIG. 118

Ceramic profiles





Ceramic from surface in Chi Awär



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