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The Materiality of Aztec Agricultural Deities: From Tenochtitlan to the Provinces

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Art History

by

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ABSTRACT

The Materiality of Aztec Agricultural Deities: From Tenochtitlan to the Provinces

by

Elizabeth Johnstone Aguilera

This study interrogates the ritual function of Aztec agricultural deities across various media to discover how material objects were perceived as animate and sacred. In addition, it addresses the following themes as they relate to the objects themselves: the instantiation of sacred essence in ritual performance, consumption as metaphor for sacrifice, and the reach of imperial power in provincial regions or the relationship of center and periphery. To do so, I examine a corpus of Aztec sculptures of female agricultural deities, made out of stone and paper, dough, and polychrome ceramic primarily, from provincial sites of central Mesoamerica (ca. 1325-1521). In both the capital of Tenochtitlan and the provinces, public rituals involving female agricultural deities solidified the interconnectedness between the material and spiritual realms; however, their prevalence in the provinces likely emphasizes their association with the agrarian economy. Whereas previous studies of Aztec ritual have privileged textual and pictorial accounts, I concentrate my analysis on extant concrete evidence

(from museum collections and archaeological sites) and its relationship to Aztec ritual practices outside of Tenochtitlan.

This study contributes to a broader understanding of Aztec ritual and sacrality, particularly as it relates to the nature of sacred imagery within the ceremonial life of provincial peoples. In this dissertation, I move beyond the simplistic categorization of Aztec female agricultural deities identifiable by diagnostic traits, to understand how they functioned in a ritual context. I focus on their materiality as it relates to an animate Mesoamerican universe in order to understand the interconnectedness of the physical environment and ritual activity. By examining the complex histories of objects related to ritual activity, I hope to further our understanding of the engagement of Aztec social communities with the material essence of sacred objects and, more broadly, explore the religious and political relationship between Aztec provinces and the state.

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SECTION I: Maize Deities in an Aztec World View

Chapter 1: The Inventory

Itlatol Temictli
Auh tocnihuane,
tla xoconcaquican yn itlatol temicatli, *ayahue*,
xoxopantla technemitia,
in teocuitlaxilotl, techonythuitia
tlauhquecholelotl, techoncozcatia.
In ticmati ye, *ohuaya ye*, ontlaneltoca
toyiollo, tocnihua! *Ohuaya, ohuaya.*

The Dream of a Word
And, O friends,
hear the dream of a word:
Each spring gives us life,
the golden ear of corn refreshes us,
the tender ear of corn becomes a necklace for us.
We know that the hearts of our friends are true!

Cantares mexicanos (Nahuatl Songs), sixteenth century[1]

Beyond serving as a basic subsistence crop in Mesoamerica, corn or maize sustained social intercourse, the very essence of life, as the poetic epigraph above suggests. So central was corn that it became a metaphor for all things precious, such as a greenstone necklace or the rarity of a true friendship. The sixteenth-century Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún indicates that the Nahuas, Nahuatl-speaking

[1] *Cantares mexicanos*, (National Library of Mexico, fol. 12 r). This translation comes from Miguel León-Portilla, *Fifteen Poets of the Aztec World*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 212-213, but is based on a sixteenth-century manuscript in Nahuatl known as *Cantares mexicanos (Collection of Mexican Songs)*.The original manuscript is housed in the Mexico National Library. Facsimile reproductions include *Colección de cantares mexicanos*, Ed. Antonio Peñafiel (Mexico, 1904), and *Alt-aztekische Gesange nach einer in der Biblioteca Nacional von Mexico aufbewahrten Handschrift*, Ed. Leonhard Schultz Jena, (Stuttgart, 1957).

heirs to the Aztec culture, conflated precious stone with corn by describing the "white maize ear" as "a green stone, a bracelet—precious sustenance, our bones."[2] As such, maize figured prominently in Aztec ritual and cosmology, which was also inextricably linked to the culture's origins. Analogies, or metaphors, such as these, help to order reality using intuitive comparisons to make foreign concepts seem more familiar. For Europeans, there was always a separation between the word and the thing itself, making a metaphor simply a figure of speech. In Nahua culture, on the other hand, metaphors were so pervasive that analogies between physical things, such as maize and green stone and concepts of preciousness, were tangible. While in both European and Aztec cultures metaphors existed as a conceptual system that helped people to interpret reality, Aztec metaphors reveal that every human action could be described in terms of a natural phenomenon and moreover that metaphorical speech was so central that they had a word to describe it: *machiotlahtolli*, meaning "sign-speech."[3] This is especially apparent when it comes to their deity effigies, or *teixiptlahuan* (deity surrogates). These figural representations—made of stone, *tzoalli* dough, or clay—were, in fact, the deities present and not just a representational substitute. This complete conflation of

[2] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain [1575-1578]*, Trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, (Santa Fe: The School of American Research and the University of Utah, 1950-1982), Book 11: 276. The *Florentine Codex* a collaborative project between Sahagún and his Nahuatl speaking scribes and artists. The text is in Nahuatl, the indigenous Aztec language, and the Spanish is Sahagún's translation; the Florentine Codex includes almost 2,000 accompanying illustrations by Nahua painters.

[3] Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 128, 267. *Machiotlahtolli* is a compound word that combines the words *machiyotl*, meaning "sign," and *tlahtolli*, meaning "word, speech or statement."

material and concept was what created the perceived animacy of these objects, allowing them to become imbued with a sacred essence during the ritual process, changing the object from a metaphor to a metonym.[4] The metonymical qualities of these material objects made of stone, *tzoalli* dough, or clay allowed them to go through a perceived transformation from mundane to sacred.

One example, from among many in my corpus, of a material object that visualizes the principal concerns and the aspirations of a culture—in this case, maize and the prosperity of the community—is a stone deity effigy excavated at the provincial site of Calixtlahuaca, one of the tribute states within the Aztec empire, and currently on display at the Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca (Figure 1). This stone sculpture depicts a female agricultural deity wearing a *quechquemitl*, which is a shawl that has a slit in the neck and hangs over the torso, and a long skirt that drapes completely to the ground covering her feet (Figure 2). These articles of clothing gender the figure female, as there is no indication of breasts or other sexual features apparent. The face is an elongated oval shape with small eyes, a prominent straight nose, and delicately pursed lips; it is an idealized rendering of facial features, but bearing a somber lack of expression. Since there is a lack of carved detail around the face or on the garments, the face seems to float. Two short arms that are unfortunately eroded jut forward and may once have held corn cobs as other sculptures like this often do. The most noteworthy part of the sculpture is the large

[4] This is analogous to the Catholic Eucharist, also known as the Holy Communion, where the consecrated bread or wine is believed to be ritually transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, respectively.

amacalli (paper house) headdress that surrounds the figure's entire face and most of her body, falling laterally all of the way past her waist. This impressive rectilinear headdress is embellished with an intricate decorative knot directly in the upper middle portion, as well as two rosettes, one on each upper corner, and little tassels that dangle over the forehead. Thus, the entire emphasis of the sculpture is on the *amacalli* headdress that frames the female body. In this example from Calixtlahuaca, the image of the female agricultural deity is not the only important factor that makes this image special; the material is also significant. In the Aztec worldview, certain materials, such as the stone of this sculpture or the paper headdress rendered in stone, and the objects created from them do not have intrinsic meanings; rather people create and imbue things with meaning. That is, specific properties of certain materials were perceived as having innate significance and power due to their color, rarity, origins, or associations with life-sustaining elements.

Aztec female agricultural deities, such as the one just described, are prolifically rendered in various media in both the capital city of Tenochtitlan and the peripheral provincial cities. These sculpted deities constitute a large portion of the material culture that allows us to better understand the Aztec culture and world view. These sculptures are ubiquitous and endure from the earliest period in Mesoamerican history (circa 1800 BCE) to the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs in 1521. [5] The vast material culture from these diverse but connected locations throughout the Aztec

[5] The type of agricultural deities, or fertility figures, that existed in the earliest period of Mesoamerican history (circa 1800BCE) were not stylistically nor necessarily ichnographically similar to the Postclassic manifestations that are the topic for this study.

Empire led me to question the relationship between female agricultural deities from Tenochtitlan and those from the provinces under imperial control and are the subject of this study.

One of the contributions of this study is to examine the objects, the stuff of which they are made, and the broader contextual information about ritual activity, political relationships, and socio-economic concerns to demonstrate how Aztec agricultural deity effigies became vivified.[6] Why are images of these agricultural deities produced in such a diversity of materials? As I contextualized these figures in their ritual contexts, I realized that they were understood by the Aztecs to be sentient, and that they became more animate and imbued with a sacred essence when activated by ceremonial activities.

The Aztecs and Their Worldview

The Aztec thrived between 1428 and 1521 CE in what is today Central Mexico, although their imperial reach ultimately spanned Mesoamerica from coast to coast.[7] According to native mytho-historical accounts, the people who called themselves Mexica migrated to the central basin of Mexico from a mythical place

[6] Following Catherine Bell (1992), I define ritual as a structure of patterns prescribed by the traditions of a community or social group designed to generate, experience, and affirm a set of collective beliefs. The practice of ritual is a way to communicate collective messages through physical and visual means.

[7] The people known more commonly today as Aztecs actually called themselves Mexica. I use the popular 19th century term Aztec to refer to those Nahuatl-speaking polities within the Triple Alliance or Aztec Empire. In other words, Aztecs were imperial peoples. Mexico refers to the modern country and its associated borders. Mesoamerica is a geographic and cultural region that includes Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The term is deployed to refer strictly to the cultural entity prior to the Spanish invasion in 1519, despite linguistic and ethnic diversity.

called Aztlán, meaning "Place of the White Heron," in about 1200 CE.[8] When the Mexica arrived in the Valley of Mexico in the late 1200s, there were already civilizations existing in that region, though none as large and powerful as the Toltec who had dominated Central Mexico from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries but had collapsed by the time the Mexica entered the area. These Central Mexican city-states interacted with one another through trade, intermarriage, and frequent territorial and ritual warfare. Disadvantaged because they were without allies, the Mexica were subjected to attacks by local militaries who forced them to retreat to an island off Lake Texcoco's swampy western shore. It was there that they founded the city of Tenochtitlan in 1325 CE.[9] The Nahuatl-speaking Mexica asserted themselves as aggressive mercenaries and became an increasingly powerful polity after they

[8] The Aztecs believed that Aztlan was a legendary homeland of seven desert tribes, called Chichimecs, who miraculously emerged from caves located at the heart of a sacred mountain far to the north of the Valley of Mexico. They enjoyed a relatively peaceful existence of hunting and fishing until one of the seven tribes—the Mexica—were divinely inspired to fulfill a destiny of conquest by their patron deities Mixcoatl (Cloud Serpent) and Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird on the Left). The *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*, a sixteenth-century Nahuatl language manuscript, portrays Chicomoztoc, or "The Place of Seven Caves" of Aztlán from which the first Chichimec tribes emerged before entering the Valley of Mexico to become the Aztecs (folio 29). The stylized mountain with desert imagery like rocks and cacti is bisected to show a cave with seven lobes that each contains a number of human heads representing ancestral leaders of separate lineages or tribes. A line of human footprints depicted in black leave the mouth of the cave to visually show the start of the journey. The *Codex Boturini* (1530-1541), a pictorial manuscript, illustrates the journey of the Chichimecs as they wandered for many years led by their deity Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird on the Left), sometimes hunting, and sometimes even settling down to farm as they approached Central Mexico, but never remaining in any one place for very long. See Dana Leibsohn, *Script and Glyph: Pre-Hispanic History, Colonial Bookmaking, and the Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2009) for an historiography of the interpretations of the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*, as well as a discussion of its creation.

[9] 1325 is the date traditionally assigned to the foundation of Tenochtitlan and corresponds with the Mesoamerican year 2 House, though archaeology suggests the site had been settled prior to that date. See Michael E. Smith, *Aztec City-State Capitals*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 84. According to mythohistory, Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird on the Left) prophesized that the Aztecs would witness a vision of an eagle standing on a cactus growing from solid rock (with a serpent in its mouth) as a sign of where they should end their long journey and build their city. Tenochtitlan means "Place of the cactus fruit in a stone."

established their capital at the center of the highly fertile basin around Lake Texcoco, enabling productive trade alliances and a consolidated military presence.[10] Eventually, they were even granted royal marriages.[11]

In 1428, the Mexica formed the Triple Alliance, combining the military-economic power of three city-states: Tenochtitlan, Texcoco (to the east of Tenochtitlan) and Tlacopan (to the west of Tenochtitlan). The three city-states that made up the Triple Alliance worked together to conquer other polities, creating tributary subjects and establishing a complex system of social classes and taxation. As the population and size of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan increased, the Aztecs outgrew the parameters of their island home necessitating an increase in agricultural production and an expansion of arable land. The people in the conquered provincial city-states had to produce enough for their own subsistence needs in addition to meeting the tributary demands of their government. Agriculture was fundamental to survival; thus, seed-bearing plants became important components in origin myths, rituals, and performances. Self-transforming, plants and seeds were understood to possess spiritual power, so they were venerated as a part of both the material and the spiritual worlds. While beans and squash were food staples, maize was the central

[10] Nahuatl is a Uto-Aztecan language, indigenous to Mesoamerica, and was the lingua franca of the Aztec Empire. Nahuatl was originally primarily an oral language, although they developed a pictographic script using mnemonics and logograms in this writing system. At the time of the conquest, the Spanish introduced the Latin alphabet to write Nahuatl. Today there are approximately 1.5 million Nahuatl speakers, with the majority of them living in central Mexico, particularly in Puebla, Veracruz, Hildago, San Luis Potosi, Guerrero, Mexico (state), El Distrito Federal, Tlaxcala, Morelos and Oaxaca, and also in El Salvador. There are smaller numbers of Nahuatl speakers throughout the rest of Mexico, and in parts of the USA.

[11] Susan Gillespie, "A Model of the Tenochtitlan Dynasty," in *The Aztec Kings: The Construction of Rulership in Mexica History*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989).

crop of Mesoamerica.[12] The four types of maize, which included red, yellow, white, and black varieties take from four to six months to mature, during which it is crucial for the plants to have the proper amount of sun and rain and to be carefully cultivated.

Mesoamerica, the area of Mexico and northern Central America, encompasses a diverse region that developed multiple complex societies. While these civilizations differed from one another, they shared similar polytheistic belief systems that focused on the veneration of the natural world. As in many agrarian societies, the deep connection that the Aztecs had to the earth was often reflected in the roles and functions of their deities, a problematic term when referring to Aztec supernatural or sacred beings, and that will be further elaborated below. Unlike Christianity, a monotheistic religion with a singular God, Mesoamerican peoples were polytheistic, worshipping an array of sacred beings that were closely associated with components of human life and the natural environment. The Aztecs recognized the vitality of the world around them and believed that the earth and all of the elements of the natural world had spiritual power, a concept sometimes referred to by scholars as animism. Animism, in this case, goes beyond the simple definition of a belief in the lives and "souls" of humans and other living creatures.[13] Rather,

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[12] See Mary Eubanks, *Corn in Clay: Maize Paleoethnobotony in Pre-Columbian Art*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999) for more biological information about the various types of maize and an inventory of its depiction on pre-Columbian pottery.

[13] Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-century Mexico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 49-50, 109, 125, 181. The disconnect between Nahua and European views of the soul is explained by Burkhart thusly: "The soul that maintained an individual identity after death was the *teyolia* or *teyolitia*, associated with the heart and life force. The

Nahua animism is a mode of thought that encompasses a broad spectrum of entities with souls in the natural environment. It includes, but is not limited to, living beings and also extends to animals, plants, rocks, and geographic features. In the Nahua universe, there were different levels of animacy, with deities as highly animate entities, followed by in diminishing degrees of spiritual animate power, planets and stars, the elements, humans, and animals.[14] In addition, Aztec deities were polymorphous, meaning that they were neither distinct individuals nor necessarily manifested in a specific form, human or otherwise. Aztec deities could personify natural forces and those natural forces, in turn, could be understood as deities themselves.[15]

Within the Aztec universe, there was a range of distinctions between animate and inanimate; in other words, everything was considered alive but certain materials were particularly revered and deemed exceptional. The precise substances of the female maize deity figures in this study, made up of the raw materials of clay, paper, maize-dough or *tzoalli*, were deemed special and understood to contain a life force even before they were sculpted into a figural shape. Certain stones, such as obsidian (due to its volcanic origins), jet (due to its black color), and turquoise (due to its blue-green color) were thought to contain unusual potency and be exceptionally

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friars used this concept as a parallel for *ánima*, though the frequent use of *ánima* alone suggests that they did not find the native concept entirely appropriate" (Burkhart, 49).

[14] For further information on contemporary and colonial Nahua levels of animacy, see Molly Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things: Aztec God and God-Bodies*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 11-14.

[15] The transformative ability of Aztec deities is not that different from that displayed by Greek gods, particularly as vividly detailed in Ovid's *Metamorphoses.*

prestigious.[16] Additionally, factors such as rarity, the degree of difficulty in fashioning objects, and the material's innate luminosity or brilliance affected the perceived power of certain things.[17] These materials, once transformed into figural sculptures and then used in a ritual context were further animated. The ceremonies in which these sculptures played a central role by being processed, petitioned, honored with offerings, and beheld by the masses, activated the objects and imbued them with sacred essence. These transformative ceremonies further animated their extraordinary nature. The Aztec schedule of calendric feasts in which agricultural deity effigies played a vital role was ample, allowing numerous opportunities for mere sculptures to transform into divine deity-substitutes or deity-representations known as *teixiptlahuan* (sing.: *teixiptla*).[18] The identifying insignia and costume elements that marked the *teixiptlahuan* during these ritual events were a crucial part of their conversion from earthly to sacred, and instrumental in granting them agency.

Representations of Aztec deities associated with myths of creation and death were prevalent in monumental sculpture in the heart of the capital city of Tenochtitlan, specifically associated with the Aztecs' major religious temple, or

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[16] Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things*, 101-104.

[17] On the significance of brilliance, see Dorothy Hosler, "Sound, Color and Meaning in the Metallurgy of Ancient West Mexcio." In *World Archaeology* 27, no. 1 (1995): 100-115; Nicholas J. Saunders, "Biographies of Brilliance: Pearls, Transformations of Matter and Being, c. AD 1492." In *World Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (1999): 243-257; and Nicholas J. Saunders, "'Catching Light': Technologies of Power and Enchantment in Pre-Columbian Goldworking," in *Gold and Power in Ancient Costa Rica, Panama, and Columbia*, ed. Jeffery Quilter and John W. Hoopes, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2003), 15-47.

[18] Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana y Mexicana y Castellana (1571)* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2004), 45. In Molina's dictionary, he uses the word *ixiptlayotia* and defines it as "to make something in one's image" or "to stand in for someone."

Templo Mayor, as well as within the greater sacred precinct that surrounded it. Visual culture was used as propaganda by the imperial Aztecs in order to reinforce and disseminate certain religious, economic and political ties with their provincial territories. Beyond the capital, where communities were obligated to supply dietary tribute, individuals focused more of their attention upon those agricultural deities directly responsible for ensuring a steady supply of foodstuffs. In both the capital and the provinces, however public rituals involving female agricultural deities solidified the interrelation between the material and spiritual realms.

This study interrogates the nature and ritual function of Aztec agricultural deities across various media to show how material objects were perceived as capable of becoming vivified and sanctified. It addresses the following themes as they relate to the objects themselves: the instantiation of sacred essence in ritual performance, consumption as metaphor for sacrifice, and the reach of Aztec imperial power in provincial regions, that is, the relationship of center and periphery. To do so, I assembled and analyzed a corpus of 122 Aztec sculptures of female agricultural deities primarily from provincial sites of central Mesoamerica during the Late Postclassic period (ca. 1325-1521) (see Catalog of Known Aztec Agricultural Deities in Museum Collections). While 20% of these figures display breasts, the sexual identity of many these deity images is ambiguous because of a lack of clear sexual features, unlike the monumental and official state sculptures like Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) and Coyolxauhqui (Bells, Her Cheeks) (Figures 3 and 4). Instead, the female agricultural deities wear distinctly female-gendered costume

elements. Many of these medium and small-scale sculptures can be identified as the agricultural deities through their headdresses and accoutrements, including those named and identified as Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent), Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt), and Xilonen (Young Maize) from the Aztec "pantheon." Their manufacture in diverse media from stone to those made of corn dough and clay, raise important questions about their meaning and ritual roles. Although their scope and ubiquity have long been recognized, no focused study has considered the important role of these agricultural deities within Aztec cosmology and ritual life, and, in particular, the connection between their materiality and sacrality.

This study contributes to a broader understanding of what constitutes divine essence as embodied in the natural and human spheres, particularly as it relates to the nature of sacred images within the ceremonial life of provincial peoples under Aztec hegemony. Aztec agricultural deities are a rich corpus to study because they conform to the message of the official monumental corpus of female earth deities in and around the sacred precinct of the capital, emphasizing the bounty of resources controlled by the Aztec empire and the vital links with tributary regions needed to sustain the ever growing urban population. On the other hand, there are many ways in which Aztec agricultural deities did not conform to the imperial sculptural program. For example, provincial communities like Calixtlahuaca duplicate, albeit in small-scale, sculptures of agricultural deities that reflect the centrality of the agrarian economy but also deviate from the imperial canon. This local regulation of regional religious cults points to the degree of autonomy of certain tribute states and the

loosely controlled nature of the Aztec empire in spite of imperial propaganda that claimed otherwise.[19]

Despite the significant quantity of this sculpted genre (122 in this study), relatively few critical analyses have been published about this material. Scholarship thus far has used a taxonomic approach, meaning that the focus has been on identification and categorization. While important, beyond constructing a typology of Aztec female agricultural deities identifiable by diagnostic traits, my interest is primarily in the function of these representations in a ritual context. As an art historian, I too rely on the iconographic elements associated with these female maize deities, though I also apply other criteria to more fully understand the ceremonial, cosmological, and societal roles of these deities. I focus on their materiality, meaning their physical make-up, as it relates to an animate Mesoamerican universe in order to understand the interconnectedness of the physical environment and ritual meaning. Whereas many previous studies of Aztec ritual have privileged textual and pictorial accounts, often shaped by colonial agendas, I build on these analyses but also focus on extant material evidence, that is the original archaeological venues of the sculptures themselves and their physical construction. In addition, important data can be derived from these sculptures and their relationship to Aztec ritual practices outside of Tenochtitlan, within provincial sites that are only now being scientifically excavated, such as Calixtlahuaca. While I rely on objects for primary evidence, my

[19] On a comparison of imperial and provincial visual culture, see Emily Umberger and Cecelia Klein's, "Aztec Art and Imperial Expansion." In *Latin American Horizons*, edited by Don S. Rice and Janet Berlo. (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 295-336.

conclusions are also necessarily supported by early colonial texts, however skewed through a European and Christian filter, as well as previous scholarship on Aztec culture and religion.

Visual Analysis of Aztec Maize Deities

In the Mexica hall of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, there is a modest collection of female maize deity effigies in stone and ceramic. These hail from a variety of now unknown locations and differ from a number of the other deity representations in the hall not only because they are much smaller in scale, but also because they are more recognizably human, meaning that they conform to bodily traits in physiognomy, including facial features and posture.[20] Most of these sculptures are generically labeled "diosas del maíz" (Maize goddesses) because they wear female garments such as long skirts and *quechquemitls* (triangular shawls) and they hold corn cobs in their hands, though some of these sculptures have been identified more specifically as either Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) or Xilonen (Young Maize), both of whom are explicit female maize deities named and described in colonial codices.[21] While the proffered corn cobs seem to be the diagnostic attributes in identifying these deities, the costume elements on the sculpted images are also an important part their identification, as addressed below.

[20] While the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City chooses to use the indigenous name, Mexica, in identifying their hall, as noted previously, I refer to the Mexica as Aztecs once they became an imperial peoples throughout this paper for the purposes of clarity.

[21] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1 on The Gods.

The representations of maize deities used as data for this dissertation include stone sculptures and polychrome terracotta vessels putatively excavated from the Valley of Mexico and the Toluca Valley region; additionally useful are the dough figures and paper costumes no longer extant but textually described in the colonial pictorial manuscripts. I located the sculptures in museums throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe by reviewing museum databases, catalogs, and physically visiting the institutional vaults to include objects not currently published or on display.

I started assembling the catalog in the same place that I had initially become interested in female maize deity effigies: the Mexica hall of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. Since Mexico City, previously Tenochtitlan, was the Aztec capital city and locus of imperial Aztec art, it made sense to begin my research there. I closely viewed, photographed, and measured all of the representations of maize deities on display in the National Museum. I was particularly interested in material, size, quality of craftsmanship, extant paint, decorative elements, sexual characteristics, and provenance. Since the provenance of the sculptures in the collection is primarily from the Valley of Mexico or unknown, I was interested in comparing them to those created and excavated in the provinces to see if there were any discernable differences or significant similarities. I hoped that such comparisons might lead me to noteworthy conclusions regarding the religious and aesthetic relationship between Tenochtitlan and the outlying areas.

As a comparison, I next went to the Toluca Valley where two of my mentors from Arizona State University, Michael E. Smith and Emily Umberger, conduct extensive research. I chose this location because I was familiar with the area and I had access to sculptures archaeologically excavated from the site of Calixtlahuaca, including those that had not previously been published as a part of a comparative academic study. The Toluca Valley was home to a number of provincial Aztec cities, and most of those sites now have modest site museums that house the objects that have been excavated locally. I went to the following museums in the region, paying careful attention to the same aesthetic and material factors as I did with the sculptures in the National Museum of Anthropology: the Museum of Anthropology and History in Toluca (Museo de Antropología e Historia, Toluca), Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum at Malinalco, and the Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca. I immediately noticed that certain costume elements, such as the headdress and female clothing, were common among all of the female maize deity sculptures from both the Mexico City collection and the small regional Toluca Valley collections, regardless of their size or quality.[22] Additionally, the rectangular headdresses were only depicted on female agricultural deities, not the males. Although at that point I had enough of a corpus to begin to make comparisons between the nature of female agricultural deities from the capital and the provinces, I wanted to further expand my catalog by including sculptures that are not currently located in those two regions.

[22] The female clothes included a *cueitl* (skirt), a *huipilli* (tunic), and a *quechquemitl* (triangular shawl), which are all described in more detail in Chapter 5.

In Mexico, I attempted to find female agricultural deity effigies in collections located in other provincial regions, though with little success. The Amparo Museum and the Tehuacan Valley Museum (Museo del Valle de Tehuacan), both in Puebla, did not have any examples of this class of deity-figure. I came to realize that although the Aztecs exerted control over the territory of Puebla during the fifteenth century, it was not an agricultural hub and therefore unlikely to be devoted to agricultural deities. Similarly, the Museo de Arte in Tlaxcala did not have any female agricultural deity effigies possibly because it has a comparable ecosystem to Puebla and was also never formally under Aztec rule.[23] Within the United States, I visited several museums that I knew had fairly extensive Pre-Columbian art collections, but unfortunately did not have any objects that would fit into my growing catalog.[24] Although each of these venerable institutions have hosted remarkable exhibitions that have included such objects in the past, they did not have relevant sculptures in their permanent collections. I poured over museum and exhibition catalogs to find images of sculptures that fit into my corpus and then contacted the curators of those museums. My research led me to visit the Denver Art Museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

[23] Agricultural deity sculptures were ubiquitous and endured from the earliest period in Mesoamerican history (circa 1800 BCE) to the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs in 1521. However, the type of agricultural deities, or fertility figures, that existed in the earliest period of Mesoamerican history (circa 1800BCE) were not stylistically nor necessarily ichnographically similar to the Postclassic manifestations that are the topic for this study. While there may have been agricultural deity sculptures utilized in the Puebla or Tlaxcala region prior to the Aztec rule in those areas, they are not stylistically similar enough to be useful in this study, no longer extant, or not collected by the regional museums. I am unaware of the history of collecting at the museums I visited.

[24] These museums included the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, CA, the de Young Museum in San Francisco, and the Field Museum in Chicago.

the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The Metropolitan Museum of Art had a particularly robust collection of Aztec female agricultural deities, where I was able to closely examine ten sculptures for my catalog.

Curators and institutions in Europe were equally as helpful as I continued my research, working in the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg (Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg), the Ethnological Museum of Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, which is one of the Berlin State Museums), the British Museum in London, and the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna (Museum für Völkerkunde Wien). In Vienna, I was able to physically search the vaults of the museum to locate twenty Aztec female agricultural deities, none of which had been on display at any time in the recent past.[25]

While the catalog is as comprehensive as possible at this time, it is, of course, a project that will continue to expand. Unfortunately, there is a range of material that is omitted from the catalog. There are likely stone and polychrome sculptures that can be added that I have overlooked, such as those in regional museums or collections that do not publish inclusive lists of their inventory, either in print or as a part of an online database. It is also imperative to note that my catalog only consists of stone and polychrome sculptures because the dough figures and paper costumes

[25] There were quite a few sculptures in this Viennese museum due to collecting habits of the Austrian-born Hapsburg monarch, Ferdinand Maximilian, who briefly served as the Emperor of Mexico (April 10, 1864 to June 19, 1867) during the French intervention in Mexico. It is also true that through the Hapsburg connection, Amerindian and colonial objects flowed into Austria from the sixteenth century forward.

were ephemeral creations. And finally, I am limited to those objects that have already been excavated and are owned by institutions who share their collections publicly; every new archaeological dig could potentially yield new findings.

My corpus currently consists of 122 sculptures, in stone and polychrome ceramic, displaying iconographic characteristics traditionally identified as female agricultural deities (see Catalog of Known Aztec Agricultural Deities in Museum Collections). Although few of these sculptures are documented as archaeologically excavated, enough examples exist with a regional provenance to reconstruct their importance in Aztec cosmology. Eighteen are attributed by archeologists to the Valley of Mexico, five to Malinalco, one each to Teotihuacan, to Teloloapan in Guerrero, and to San Augustin del Palmar in Puebla; two are generically attributed to the Toluca Valley—and seven have an unknown provenance. Additionally, 27 sculptures can be traced to the provincial site of Calixtlahuaca in the Toluca Valley, providing an advantageous data set from a single location (Figure 1). A variety of local stones was available at Calixtlahuaca, including volcanic rock; however, given the site's close proximity to the Basin of Mexico, it is unclear whether sculptures in volcanic stones were made locally or imported. Regardless of their provenance, sculptures of agricultural deities were important in the Aztec provinces as indicated by their sheer numbers and their significant association with the agrarian economy.

My objective for this study is, in part, to critically examine sculptures of female agricultural deities made of ceramic, stone, and *tzoalli* dough, in order to ascertain how the objects made from these materials became perceived as sacred by

the ritual participants. I use the broad term "agricultural deities" because I want include all sculptures of deities related to nourishment, sustenance, and the fertile earth. Historically, these sculptures have been problematically and inconsistently named. Only 17% of the objects in my catalog are identified as Chicomecoatl by scholars; the rest remain unnamed or bear the generic title of "diosas del maíz" (Maize goddesses), or even more simply "diosas" (goddesses), like those on display in National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. Coincidentally, 18% of the figures hold corn cobs in their hands, though not all of those sculpted with maize are identified as Chicomecoatl and not all of those identified as Chicomecoatl are sculpted displaying maize. The objects in my catalog range in size from three to 59 inches tall and their posture varies as well. 41% of the figures are standing, 36% of the figures are kneeling, and 23% of the figures either have no legs or their stance is unclear. However, while these objects vary in media, size, and posture, I have identified them all as female due to both female costume elements and, in some cases, female sexual characteristics. I make a distinction between sex and gender, where sex refers to biological attributes and gender refers to the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine or feminine. Over half of the figures are undoubtedly female, as evidenced by their female gendered costumes and female bodies: 52% of the figures wear a clearly female costume that consists of a long skirt, a *quechquemitl* (triangular shawl), or both, and 20% of the figures have distinctive female sexual characteristics, specifically breasts.[26] Many of the

[26] For information about the gendering of Aztec children, see Rosemary A. Joyce, *Gender and Power*

remaining figures in the study wear a defining headdress, but since they do not wear a female costume or have female sexual features they cannot be definitively gendered or sexed.

Particular head gear were part of specific performances, such as the procession of the deity Chicomecoatl during the Aztec ceremony called *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping). In an illustration of this ceremony in the native-style screenfold manuscript, Codex Borbonicus (1522-1540), special distinction is given to Chicomecoatl who stands on top of a low platform with a pair of attendants on either side (Figure 5). She has maize cobs in her hands and she wears the flayed skin of a sacrificial victim as indicated by the yellowing hands that flop beneath her own. However, this macabre detail is overshadowed by her dramatic headdress that is almost double her height and dwarfs those around her. The *amacalli* (paper house) headdress is not only massive in scale, but it is also extremely colorful, using blue, pink, red, yellow, green, black, and white hues to emphasize the visual spectacle. This headdress is an exaggerated version of those sculpted in clay and stone that have previously been discussed. It is architectonic in shape and frames her face, with two tasseled poms hanging down over her ears. The upper portion of the headdress is decorated with four vibrantly colored rosettes that are reminiscent of pinwheels. Two panels of multicolored, vertically striped panels of paper hang from the back of the headdress and fall behind the female deity to the ground. At the very top of the

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in Prehispanic Mesoamerica, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 145. Joyce argues that the Aztec did not ascribe gender at birth to be consistent with biological sex. Rather, gender is inscribed by social rituals and "it requires work to achieve adult gender status." Joyce uses an ethnographic analogy with the Kodi of Indonesia to explain the Aztec social transition to adulthood.

headdress, two maize cobs, one red and one yellow, and their flowing silks project out horizontally to visually stress the relationship between Chicomecoatl and agricultural abundance.

The female agricultural deities in my catalog, regardless of provenance, can be differentiated into two types, distinguished by the design of their headdresses, which is a significant ceremonial costume element. The first type of headdress is much more elaborate and is worn by the figures that are identified as Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) and as described in my first example (Figure 2) and in the paragraph above. These headdresses are commonly called "temple headdresses," a term coined by art historian Esther Pasztory; they are also known as *amacalli* (paper house) in Nahuatl because of their resemblance to architectural structures where the doorway frames the wearer's head and because they were also originally fashioned from paper.[27] They are generally rectilinear and high-tiered, adorned with rope-like divisions, rosettes, and decorative knots (Figure 6). Although the size and detail of these *amacalli* headdresses vary, 44% of the sculptures unmistakably wear temple headdresses.

The second headdress type is one worn by sculptures that are most commonly identified as Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt) or Xilonen (Young Maize). The headdress, which I call the "round-banded headdress," consists of multiple cords

[27] Esther Pasztory, *Aztec Art* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 219. *Amacalli* (paper house) is a compound Nahuatl word where *amatl* means paper and *calli* means house. "Temple headdresses" is a term coined by Pasztory because of their resemblance to architectural structures where the doorway frames the wearer's head. She speculates that inspiration for these "temple headdresses" may have come from the Huastec region.

wound around the head, edged along the uppermost and lowermost cords with a series of little circular decorations (Figure 7). There are two examples in my catalog where the circular decorations are enhanced, depicting blooming flowers. Every round banded headdress has an expertly pleated fan attached to the back that was originally fashioned in bark-paper (*amatl*). In the front, large balls cover the ears on both sides of the head, from which oversized tassels dangle.

These visual diagnostic elements of Aztec maize deities, specifically costume elements, are significant bearers of meaning. However, it is also crucial to contextualize the sculpted images as cultural objects to fully comprehend their meaning and associations. According to culturally inflected vision theories, meanings projected onto images by original viewers are not fixed and individual viewers have different interpretations. A significant part of understanding objects is considering the broader archaeological context in which they were discovered and the culture in which they were made and used. For this study, an examination of the provincial city of Calixtlahauca and its relationship to the Aztec imperial capital of Tenochtitlan is imperative for interpreting the agricultural deity sculptures. Further, a comparison of these two sites illuminates their differing socio-economic concerns and, thus, the ceremonies and deities associated with said priorities.

Calixtlahuaca and Aztec Imperial Structure

Calixtlahuaca (Place of the Plain of Houses) is located in the Toluca Valley of highland central Mexico, southwest of the Aztec capital. While it was an

important province of the Aztec empire due to its agricultural resources, Calixtlahuaca, like other tribute provinces, enjoyed a certain level of autonomy even while under imperial rule. Today, the site undergoes continuous archaeological excavations led by archaeologist Michael E. Smith, making it an exciting area for new discoveries pertaining to the functioning of the Aztec empire. I chose Calixtlahuaca as an example of a provincial Aztec site to compare with the imperial capital city of Tenochtitlan due to the scope of the current research and the access I was granted to the information and materials from the site. While I understand that a comparison of just one site to the capital of Tenochtitlan cannot necessarily lead to broad conclusions that can be applied to the entire imperial domain, there are similarities between the scale, material, and iconography of the sculptures found at Calixtlahuaca and other provincial sites that allow for useful discourse about the extent of imperial religion and propaganda as manifest in the figural material remains. An overview of the Aztec empire's economic and political structure is essential for understanding the role of religion as part of its ideological strategies.

The Aztec empire was based in the Valley of Mexico centering on Tenochtitlan, with outlying areas acting as defensively strategic territories and providing a regular supply of wealth and resources, including food.[28] At its apogee, the Aztec empire extended from the Pacific Ocean in the west to the Gulf of Mexico and from Central Mexico in the north to the southern Oaxaca Valley. It is possible

[28] Some sixteenth-century sources that outline Aztec history and the structure of the empire are Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc's *Obras históricas* (1975) and *Crónica mexicáyotl* (1975), the *Codex Chimalpopoca* (Bierhorst 1992), Diego Durán's *The History of the Indies of New Spain* (1994), *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]*, and Juan deTorquemada's *Monarquia indiana* (1975-83).

that when the three cities of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan formulated the new Aztec Empire of the Triple Alliance (1428), they ruled over as many as twenty-five million people throughout Mesoamerica. These distant communities were conquered using military force, which generated a network of tributary subjects that were beholden to the Aztec empire. According to Ross Hassig, "the goal of most campaigns was outright conquest, but because of a combination of relative strength, terrain, and distance, some competitors proved difficult to conquer in a single campaign or without a prolonged siege, which was usually logistically unfeasible."[29] However, the Aztecs consistently attempted to conquer people in order to dominate the land and its resources, to exact economic tribute, and to provide sacrificial victims for the deities during religious ceremonies. Nigel Davies posits that, "the empire, by the time of Ahuitzotl, was caught in a kind of vicious circle; new conquests provided the means for lavishness on an ever-increasing scale; such rituals in turn, designed to placate the gods of war and to bedazzle the still unconquered guests, exhausted the treasury and thus created the need for yet more conquests."[30] Thus, repeated cycles of conquest and warfare became ingrained as a part of Aztec culture for political, religious, and economic purposes.

Control over Mesoamerican highland valleys and plains, along with the labor provided by the people in these regions, was imperative in order to feed the

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[29] Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control*, (Norman: Univeristy of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 254. Hassig provides details about the military campaigns waged by each Aztec ruler, as well as their military strategies.

[30] Nigel Davies, *The Aztec Empire: The Toltec Resurgence*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 100.

expanding population of the empire and capital city. The Aztecs used two primary strategies when conquering and then ruling defeated regions. First, they made alliances through trade and marriage. Specifically, they created client states along their frontiers so that these polities could protect the empire from their enemies. Second, they implemented a tribute system in which conquered regions contributed a mandated quantity of goods to the capital. This system promoted trade and markets throughout the empire, strengthening an economic interdependence between conquered territories. The empire was organized into city-states (*altepetl*) with a central town that governed smaller subservient towns, of which Calixtlahuaca was one. City-states and towns within the Aztec empire were not defined by territory or physical space, but rather by obligation or allegiance to the highly centralized polity.[31] These city-states were not only urban centers that consisted of a royal palace, a temple, and a market, but they were also communities that engaged in collective social and cultural activities.

At the height of the Aztec empire, 38 tributary provinces provided a continuous supply of goods that consisted of both foodstuffs such as maize, beans, and squash, and luxury items that included feathers, cacao, and cloth.[32] Each of these 38 tributary provinces are listed in *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]*, a manuscript that clearly documents and illustrates in detail the items demanded by the imperial

[31] Mary G. Hodge, "When is a City-State? Archaeological Measures of Aztec City-States and Aztec City-State Systems," in *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross Cultural Approaches*, Ed. Deborah L. Nichols and Thomas H. Charlton, (Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1997), 209-227.

[32] Frances F. Berden, "The Tributary Provinces," in *Aztec Imperial Strategies*, edited by Frances F. Berdan, et al. (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 115.

Aztecs to be delivered at regular intervals. There also may have been more provincial regions in the Aztec empire than those listed as tributary provinces in the *The Codex Mendoza*; some of these frontier areas of the empire may have functioned as strategic provinces that had geographic value, as routes for trade and military movement, and therefore were exempt from further taxation. It is likely that the Aztecs did not effectively integrate tributary areas into the empire, especially those that were distant from Tenochtitlan. As long as the conquered city-states in the provincial regions continually supplied the necessary tribute, they were relatively free to retain their ways of life prior to Aztec subjugation. In other words, Aztec rule relied on local elites who would maintain their power unless the city-state became rebellious. The wildly different tributary obligations illustrated in *The Codex Mendoza* may have to do with both the resources available in that region, as well as the level of control the Aztecs deemed necessary. Hassig argues that, "since tributaries took their payments to Tenochtitlan, requiring payment at least four times a year rather than once kept the king better informed about their loyalty," and that "by keeping aware of the state of his tributaries this frequently, in the event of revolt, the king could mobilize the armies sooner and keep the rebellion from spreading."[33]

The ties between the city-states and the imperial capital ran both ways, with the Aztec elite exacting tribute from the polities that received protection in return. The provincial site of Calixtlahuaca was such a polity and a focal point for my discussion relating metropolitan to local practices through the construction of deity

[33] Hassig, *Aztec Warfare*, 262.

effigies. Calixtlahuaca, as a vibrant and thriving market- and agricultural-based city, flourished in the Postclassic period (A.D. 1100-1520). The site encompasses 317 hectares in area, making it the third largest Aztec-period city in Central Mexico. This powerful regional capital was inhabited by the Matlatzincas and was known as Matlatzinco (Place of the Matlatzinca), until it was conquered by the Aztecs in 1478.[34] Calixtlahuaca was valued by the Aztecs for its lush agricultural bounty and its advantageous location between Tenochtitlan and the Tarascan enemy lands to the west. After the conquest of Calixtlahuaca, the city was stripped of its ruling dynasty and position as a regional capital. Instead, the Aztecs designated the city of Tollocan (the modern day city of Toluca) as the provincial capital, with Calixtlahuaca forced to become a tribute-paying town under Tollocan.

Archaeologist José García Payón led excavations at the Calixtlahuaca archaeological site between 1930 and 1938. He excavated a number of large monumental structures and burials that contained offerings.[35] The circular temple dedicated to Ehecatl (the Aztec wind deity) and known as Structure 3 is the largest and best known building restored by García Payón (Figure 8). He also excavated several structures that are a part of Group B: Structure 4, which is a large rectangular temple (Figures 9 and 10), and a temple in the shape of a cross and decorated with tenoned stone skulls (Figure 11). García Payón identified Structure 17 as a *calmecac*

[34] Smith, *Aztec City-State Capitals*, 52.

[35] José García Payón, "La cerámica del Valle de Toluca." In *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 5 (1941): 209-238; José García Payón. "Manera de disponer de los muertos entre los matlatzincas del Valle de Toluca." In *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 5 (1941): 64-78.

(school), but it has since been identified as the city's palace because it clearly follows Aztec conventions for royal buildings with an extensive series of residential and administrative rooms that abut a large courtyard and raised ceremonial platforms (Figure 12).[36] This royal palace indicates that the social hierarchy at Calixtlahuaca was similar to the ranked society of the Aztec elite in Tenochtitlan, where an individual or a small group of individuals controlled the wealth and power of the city. In several smaller structures that make up Group C (Figure 13) García Payón discovered the burials containing offering objects such as ceramic vessels, bronze objects, greenstone jewelry, and obsidian.[37] Burials similar to those found at the buildings of Group C were also found in the plaza directly in front of Structure 3 (the Ehecatl temple). Unfortunately, even though García Payón published some of his findings, in keeping with the archaeological practices of the first decades of the 20th century, he did not include detailed data on the excavations and associated offerings, nor did he do a thorough analysis of those materials. That contextual information is now lost, but many of the original materials from Calixtlahuaca, including over 1,200 ceramic vessels and about 1,000 other objects that range from greenstone beads to stone sculptures, remain at the Museo de Antropología (Museum of Anthropology) in Toluca where the collection is cataloged and maintained by the Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura (Institute of Mexican Culture).

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[36] Susan T. Evans, "Architecture and Authority in an Aztec Village: Form and Function of the Tecpan." In *Land and Politics in the Valley of Mexico: A Two Thousand Year Perspective*, edited by Herbert R. Harvey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 63-92.

[37] Payón, "La cerámica del Valle de Toluca," 209-238; Payón, "Manera de disponer de los muertos entre los matlatzincas del Valle de Toluca," 64-78.

More recently, excavations at Calixtlahuaca have continued under Smith, who focuses on public architecture by studying the residential zones, terraces, and overall spatial organization of the ancient city.[38] In addition, Smith has built upon García Payón's fieldwork by conducting analysis on more than 1,000 ceramic vessels and hundreds of other objects, from figurines to whistles, found in the offerings.[39] Underscoring the city's role as a commercial nexus, imported Postclassic ceramic vessels are also found at Calixtlahuaca: Tlahuica polychrome from Morelos, Aztec-style polychrome from the Basin of Mexico, "Chontal" polychrome from Guerrero, negative polychrome from San Miguel Ixtapan, and "Laca" polychrome from Puebla or Tlaxcala. Almost 100 Classic-period ceramic vessels that are types common to Teotihuacan, and 15 that are types characteristic of the Valley of Oaxaca in southern Mexico were also found at Calixtlahuaca within a large-scale trading network.[40] This archaeological evidence reinforces the fact that commerce flourished at Calixtlahuaca. Like the polychrome, the figurines at Calixtlahuaca are generally Aztec-style, though they vary in detail and material: some are made of a course paste

[38] The Calixtlahuaca Archaeological Project is supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and is sponsored by Arizona State University. Collaborating institutions include El Colegio Mexiquense (Toluca, Mexico) and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

[39] There are six major categories of pottery, based on shape, found at Calixtlahuaca: earthenware and stone pots supported by three short legs (known as *cajetes* and *molcajetes,* respectively), pots, bowls, *comals* (a smooth, flat cooking surface similar to a griddle), and other vessels and miscellaneous artifacts. Smith has also identified and defined a series of ceramic decorative groups from the site of Calixtlahuaca. These groups, based on color and technique, consist of plain, polished redware, white-based polychrome exterior with polished red and/or white polychrome interior, white-based painted, buff-based painted, negative decoration, negative red-on-buff, negative red-on-white, orange-based painted, and red-and-orange-on-cream. For more information on ceramic types from Calixtlahuaca, see Michael E. Smith, Juliana Novic, Angela Huster, and Peter G. Kroefges. "Reconocimiento superficial y mapeo en Calixtlahuaca en 2006." *Expresión Antropología* 36 (2009): 48.

[40] Smith, et. al., "Reconocimiento superficial y mapeo en Calixtlahuaca en 2006," 48.

of unknown origin, while others are made from a fine gray paste from the western Basin of Mexico or a fine orange paste from the Basin of Mexico.

According to Smith, the public architecture and stone sculpture at Calixtlahuaca are stylistically related to that found in other communities within the Aztec sphere.[41] Calixtlahuaca is one of the few Aztec-period urban sites where both monumental architecture and extensive residential districts are preserved today without the destruction of superimposed modern-day urban sprawl, allowing us to have a more complete understanding of the layout and function of a provincial site. The practice of creating monumental architecture and sculpture in Mesoamerica functioned to show the dominance of the imperial Aztecs that commissioned the work; the urban plan of Calixtlahuaca, however, differs from that of the Aztec capital and other cities, indicating a certain level of independence.[42] For example, unlike other Aztec sites, most of the settlement occurs on the terraced slopes of Cerro Tenismo, a small dormant volcano. These terraced slopes were created to meet the high demand of agricultural production to react to increasing population pressures. Farmers piled stones one on top of the other without mortar in horizontal rows along the slopes so that the terraces would form as eroded soil washed down the hillside and collected against these retaining walls. Due in part to these intensive agricultural practices and the enhanced yield, the provincial commoners in and

[41] Members of the Calixtlahuaca Archaeological Project continuously post updates on the excavations at the site, and their research at http://calixtlahuaca.blogspot.com/

[42] Emily Umberger and Cecelia Klein, "Aztec Art and Imperial Expansion," in *Latin American Horizons*, ed. Don S. Rice, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 295-325.

around Calixtlahuaca were relatively prosperous. They not only remained in the good graces of the imperial elites because they were able to continually produce food for the Aztec empire, but they also had important food products and goods made in the region (such as ceramics and cotton textiles) for trade. According to the *Codex Mendoza*, the primary resource exacted from Calixtlahuaca was maize, though beans, chia, amaranth, warrior suits, warrior shields, fine and dyed maguey cloth, and white cotton cloth were also required as part of their tribute.[43] The imperial elites in Tenochtitlan had access to a wide range of imported goods, which is made clear by the archaeological data that shows both ceramics from a number of different regions, and figurines made of paste from different locations. While the construction and use of monumental architecture and large-scale art in an imperial style was employed in provincial areas, such as Calixtlahuaca, to legitimize Aztec rule, assert its political and economic power, and thus discourage any insubordination from that region, archaeological excavations show that the outliers, such as the Calixtlahuacans, also enjoyed a certain level of autonomy and economic success that was not necessarily related to official channels. At the very least, their subjugation may not have been an excessive encumbrance.

With that said, to what extent did the imperial Aztec religion and the associated rituals in the calendar exist in provincial sites like Calixtlahuaca? The Aztec style public architecture and stone sculpture indicate that the ceremonies that

[43] Frances F. Berden and Patricia R. Anawalt, eds, *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), f. 32v-33r. Calixtlahuaca is listed as a tribute-paying town under the provincial capital of Tollocan (Toluca). Their contributions made up part of the entire Tollocan tribute owed to the Aztec state.

took place at these sites were similar to those in the capital of Tenochtitlan, albeit on a smaller scale that would correlate with the size and population of the provincial city. The materials used to create the sacred objects at the center of these rituals would then have a similar function as well, but with differences in style, scope, and iconography.

Outside the Aztec capital, where communities were obligated to supply agricultural produce tribute such as maize, beans, and squash, it was logical that cults would be directed to agricultural deities. Even before Aztec rule, the farmers in the provinces were likely already asked to contribute a quota of agricultural goods for local leaders, since cities like Calixtlahuaca had a large royal palace indicating a stratified society. In both the capital and outlying regions, public festivals involving female agricultural deities solidified the association between the earthly and spiritual realms, but in the provinces these agricultural deities became related directly to both everyday subsistence and the importance of tributary crops intended for the imperial capital. The sculptures of agricultural deities attributed to Calixtlahuaca are usually associated with well-constructed stone residences scattered throughout the city away from the urban epicenter, possibly indicating their function in local domestic rituals that were not necessarily one of the cyclical rituals of the official Aztec calendric celebrations. Smith has excavated household middens at various Aztec provincial sites in the modern state of Morelos and found the same kinds of long-handled censers that priests use in ceremonies in temples as well as small ceramic figurines used for divination and curing at small home altars, showing evidence of commoners

practicing public state religion and private domestic rites.[44] Sculptures of agricultural deities, in stone and polychrome ceramic, are found throughout the empire as indicated by their prevalence and association with the agrarian economy. The sculptures attributed to Calixtlahuaca, and within the larger Toluca Valley sphere, provide an opportunity to make comparative observations about provincial materials and practice.

[44] Michael E. Smith, "Domestic Ritual at Aztec Provincial Sites in Morelos," in *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica,* ed. Patricia Plunket, (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA, 2002), 93-114.

Chapter 2: The Sources

The varying interpretive emphases on Aztec deities—from colonial to modern-day scholarship—reveal significant aspects of scholarship about Aztec society and visual culture, but cannot capture all possible readings. A critical assessment of the literature on Aztec culture, reveals how cultural studies have changed over time and how previous interpretations have informed my methodology and analysis of Aztec agricultural deities in both Tenochtitlan and the provinces. My interpretation has advanced this historiography because I use an interdisciplinary methodology that relies on a range of evidence, among which material considerations are prominent.

A Historiographic Survey of Aztec Cultural Studies

Throughout this dissertation, I rely on a number of ethnographic sources in addition to the works themselves. This ethnographic data ranges from native pictorial codices and colonial alphabetic texts, to traditional indigenous poems and Spanish-Nahuatl dictionaries. Each of these documents carries the inherent biases of their authors and must be understood in the context of when and where they were created. However, they provide extensive and valuable information about religion, ritual, political hierarchy, language and social relationships that is not possible to glean from examining the archaeological data alone. The ethnographic data is an essential complementary component for interpreting Aztec deities, despite some of its flaws and prejudicial assessments.

Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (1558-1560) and *The Florentine Codex* (1575-1577), and Dominican Diego Durán's *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar* and *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain* are the sixteenth-century sources that I rely on most heavily due to their comprehensiveness with regards to Aztec deities and rituals. Both Sahagún and Durán and their indigenous informants were conversant in the native language, Nahuatl, and were therefore able to record more thorough historic and encyclopedic descriptions. Additionally, I draw on the writing of sixteenth-century Franciscan bishop Diego de Landa, sixteenth-century mestizo chronicler Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, and seventeenth-century priest Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón. These Spanish ethnohistorical documents are valuable primary sources despite the fact that they are filtered through Euro-Christian perspectives, especially when it comes to interpretation and representation.

Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* is a particularly significant ethnohistoric document because it was a collaborative project between Sahagún and his Nahuatl speaking scribes and artists. The last edition of Sahagún's forty year project is encyclopedic in scope, comprised of twelve books that record Aztec history, beliefs, and customs. The text in these books is organized into two columns: Nahuatl, the indigenous Aztec language, in the right column, and Sahagún's Spanish translation in the left column. Sahagún spent years interviewing Nahua informants, methodically recording notes and comparing statements that he eventually compiled into a complete work. Moreover, the *Florentine Codex* includes almost 2,000

accompanying illustrations, some in black and white and some in color.[1] These framed scenes complement the Nahuatl and Spanish commentary and also provide further detail and insight into the textual narrative. Although these illustrations deviate from a purely native artistic practice because they show some European stylistic conventions, they are still created by indigenous people and are considerably closer than illustrations created for other documents to the traditional Aztec modes of representation.

Alonso de Molina's collaborated with Sahagún to create a Nahuatl dictionary, which remains an extremely useful primary source. Molina was born in Spain but went to Mexico in 1522, where he later became a Franciscan friar and fluent speaker of Nahuatl. *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana y Mexicana y Castellana* was written between 1555 and 1571, and was the first dictionary printed in the New World. Molina's lexicon is an important source for the etymology of Nahuatl words, giving insight into the nuances of language specifically as it relates to indigenous concepts of the sacred.

[1] On the creation of and illustrations in the *Florentine Codex*, see Eloise Quiñones Keber, "Reading Images: The Making and Meaning of the Sahaguntine Illustrations," in *The Work of Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, ed. by José Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber, (New York: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies at SUNY-Albany, 1988); Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "The Florentine Codex Imagery and the Colonial Tlacuilo," in *The Work of Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, ed. by José Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber, (New York: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies at SUNY-Albany, 19889; Diana Magaloni Kerpel, "Painters of a New World: The Process of Making the Florentine Codex," in *Colors Between Two Worlds: The Florentine Codex of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. by Gerhard Wolf and Joseph Connors, (Florence: Villa I Tatti, 2011); Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colors of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex*, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014); Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Translating the Sacred: The Peripatetic Print in the Florentine Codex, Mexico (1575-1577)," in *The Nomadic Object: The Challenge of World for Early Modern Religious Art*, ed. by Christine Göttler and Mia M. Mochizuki, (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

After these initial sixteenth-century Spanish chroniclers, the chroniclers of Aztec culture were archaeologists, historians, and popular authors. Beginning in 1790, spectacular archaeological finds of monumental Aztec sculpture prompted serious academic interest in pre-Columbian cultures. In that year the "Great" Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) was unexpectedly uncovered by construction workers who were repairing the surface on the southeast side of the central Plaza Mayor in Mexico City, the location of the preconquest ceremonial precinct. In this initial period of discovery, archaeologists seemed primarily concerned with reconstructing history and creating inventories of the many objects that were being unearthed, rather than asking questions about the culture and society that made and used them.[2] For example, in the early 1900s, German anthropologist Eduard Seler studied Pre-Columbian culture from a linguistic, ethnographic, and archeological perspective, focusing primarily on an iconographic interpretation of uncovered monuments and pictorial codicies.[3] He used an analytic approach to describe, identify, name, and classify deities and their diagnostic attributes, then related these symbolic attributes to images and mythology. Seler primarily used colonial texts and illustrations for his close iconographic readings of the images in the *Codex Borgia* pictorial manuscript

[2] Michael J. Schreffler, "The Making of an Aztec Goddess: a Historiographic Study of the Coatlicue" (MA thesis, Arizona State University, 1994). Art historian Michael Schreffler describes Coatlicue's (Serpents, Her Skirt) early history in his thesis, describing in detail the use and display of the monolith after its removal from the Plaza Mayor. Historically, Alexander von Humboldt (1814), Antonio León y Gama (1832), Ignacio Bernal (1977), and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (1988) have all contributed to the history of the "Great" Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) and other Aztec monoliths unearthed around the same time.

[3] Eduard Seler, *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History*, trans. by Charles P. Bowditch, (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Press, 1904).

group and Aztec sculptures in order to create taxonomic classifications. Seler was a colleague of Franz Boas, a pioneering anthropologist known for engaging the idea of cultural relativism and his commitment to field research patterned on that used in the natural sciences; both men stress the empirical in their work. While Seler's contributions to the field of pre-Columbian art are immense, he employs a rigorous, yet rigid, taxonomic methodology in which he related the symbolic diagnostic attributes of pre-Columbian deities to images and mythology. However, Boas' work, and subsequently Seler's meticulous studies, underscored the necessity of understanding the beliefs and activities of a people based on their own cultural worldview, insofar as that is possible.

Anthropologist H. B. Nicholson followed Seler's iconographic approach, summarizing cosmology and cosmogony in Aztec religion. In his pioneering 1971 article, "Religion in Pre-Hispanic Mexico," Nicholson focuses on mythic history rather than political and social history. Within his classificatory system, typical of the social sciences, Nicholson creates a useful taxonomy that addresses the themes and subthemes of the deities within the Aztec pantheon. Nicholson describes deities as having diagnostic insignia that he uses as factors for identification without fully developing how those elements relate to and function as a part of ceremonial practice or their broader cultural and political meanings.

More recently, art historians Elizabeth Boone (1987, 1993, 1999) and Richard Townsend (1979, 1987) approach pre-Columbian iconography by putting a greater emphasis on recorded history, exploring texts along with the sculpture and

manuscript imagery as primary sources. Similarly, art historian Pasztory (1983, 1998) emphasizes the political and historical role of monumental Aztec sculpture; for example, she argues that the massive and menacing Great Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) sculpture in Tenochtitlan was created and displayed as propaganda for the Aztec elite. Here, Pasztory links the imagery of the sculpture with a specific Aztec myth, considering iconographic and ethnographic evidence in her analysis.

Cecelia Klein (1988, 1993, 1994) is among the notable scholars who have written more thematic and critical syntheses about Aztec visual culture. While focusing on describing and understanding details of objects, she also tends to link the artifact to its historical and ideational setting, exploring symbolic aspects in more detail in relation to these contexts. For example, in her 1993 article entitled "The Shield Woman: Resolution of an Aztec Gender Paradox," Klein states that Aztec depictions of women can be read both literally and metaphorically. She further suggests that war shields, which we think of as quintessentially male implements, were not only symbols of femininity, but also visual metaphors for the female body itself. Klein's method of interpretation of pre-Columbian iconography goes beyond simple identification and considers the broader historical perspectives and the nuanced visual metaphors of the work. Klein's scholarship relies in part on Marxist theory, as she focuses on the class-based motivations for the creation of the large-scale Aztec sculptures, elucidating how they are tied to economic and sociopolitical agendas of the elite or ruling class.

Scholars necessarily make a distinction between the visual traits that identify a figure and those that refer to other information outside of the image. For example, a certain body ornament might mark the gender of a person, though it could also communicate social standing, social identity, or even a person's history.[4] Previous studies of costume, pertinent to Aztec deities, have not considered sufficiently the visual traits that refer to broader contextual information about ritual activity.[5] Costumes are objects that are more than mere garments, and can visually impart complex concepts. The material world is intrinsically linked to a system of ideas within a specific culture. Objects do not have inherent meanings; rather people create and imbue things with meaning. The importance of this study is in examining the ritual function of Aztec agricultural deities across various media in order to discover how material objects were thought to be transformational, becoming imbued with vital forces that rendered them animate and sacred.

Methodology

This dissertation is fundamentally shaped by material engagement theory, that is, the use and status of material objects that are employed to mediate between

[4] Rosemary Joyce, "Archaeology of the Body," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35, (2005): 142.

[5] Patricia R. Anawalt, *Indian Clothing Before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981). Anawalt's work is an incredible inventory of costume elements and their distribution, but she does not go in depth about their usage in ritual activity.

individuals, and between humans and their environment.[6] Material engagement theory, also known as entanglement theory, is not only concerned with the characteristics of an object, or the substance from which it was created, but also the broader concept that humans are shaped by their experiences while engaging with the material world.[7] Materiality is, thus, a study of how physical objects help to construct and maintain social realities. Renfrew uses the example of the building of a megalithic chambered tomb as an example of how communal construction and the continuing use of said structure can not only create a community where there was none before, but also strengthen the group that previously existed. He states,

> "That is how institutional facts are created: by the formation of institutions through common consent and belief. Such belief and consent are often mediated through material engagement (in this case the construction of a monument) and perpetuated by other kinds of engagement, such as the continuing rituals at the site. These rituals may involve the consumption of food and drink, the burial of the bodily remains of deceased members of the community and the symbolic preparation and offering of various categories of artifact."[8]

Renfrew's observations about material engagement activated by ritual are particularly relevant to this project as the materials of stone, paper, dough, and polychrome ceramics are used in Aztec ritual activities that conceptually, and often quite literally, purport to construct and maintain communal beliefs about the cosmos.

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[6] Colin Renfrew, "Towards a Theory of Material Engagement," in *Rethinking Materiality: The Engagement of Mind with the Material World*, Eds. Elizabeth DeMarrais, Chris Gosden, and Colin Renfrew, (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2004).

[7] Ian Hodder, *Entangled. An Archaeology of the Relationships Between Humans and Things,* (Oxford: Wiley and Blackwell, 2012).

[8] Colin Renfrew, "Towards a Theory of Material Engagement," 29.

I also build on the work of anthropologist Alfred Gell, who argues that humans exert primary agency, or actively influence an event, and objects are capable of exerting secondary agency in a chain of events ultimately instigated by humans.[9] Agency, here, refers to the ability to act in a dynamic and purposeful way. Gell clarifies that agency is necessarily dependent on context, meaning that it is "exclusively relational" to the specific event, place and time in which objects may become animate. In other words, mundane objects or materials may remain so unless activated by human agents through a combination of perception and performance. This, of course, is true of many objects perceived as sacred regardless of era or geography; for example, Christian icons or images of saints often have to be displayed, processed, and inaugurated publicly to become consecrated.[10]

In this dissertation, I examine how the Aztecs utilized and animated objects to create and maintain their religious and political ideology, particularly during ritual activities. These ritual activities took place as a part of the Mesoamerican calendric cycle. The 365-day Mesoamerican year, known as *xihuitl*, is made up of eighteen "monthly" periods of twenty days each (also known as *veintenas*), and five additional days at the end of the year called the *nemontemi*. Each twenty-day period,

[9] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 19-22. Gell describes an agent "as one who has the capacity to initiate causal events in his/her vicinity, which cannot be ascribed to the current state of the physical cosmos, but only to a special category of mental states; that is, intentions."

[10] For information about the consecration of Eastern Orthodox Christian images, see Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life*, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1963), 15. On the consecration of general Christian images and icons, see David Freedburg, *The Power of Images*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 94.

or "month," had its own elaborate public festival dedicated to the rites of different deities. It was during these calendric rituals that sculpted figures played prominent roles and were transformed into sacred objects. Particularly useful in understanding the agency of Aztec objects are those calendric rituals involving agricultural deities such as *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping) and *Huey Tozoztli* (The Great Vigil), the ceremonies that mark the Aztec month that occurs in the spring around April 15th to May 4th in our current calendar year.

Divine objects are often regarded as having mysterious origins despite their manufactured qualities; in the case of the Aztecs, the very materials used in the ritual manufacture of certain objects, such as the ingredients in *tzoalli* dough (maize and amaranth) figures or the *amatl* (paper) costumes, often effected their animation and were considered intrinsically potent. The purpose for their animation was generally religious in nature and a way in which to make sense of the world. Objects act as agents to realize abstract ideologies, such as the understanding of our relationship to the cosmos.[11] By examining the use of objects in ritual, I also follow social anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's argument that things have a social reality that at times gives them a capacity akin to that of living beings, such as the appearance of agency.[12] While agricultural deity sculptures may be mnemonic devices for political and religious themes (meaning that the objects visually stimulate memory to recall

[11] Lynn Meskell, "Divine Things," in *Rethinking Materiality: The Engagement of Mind with the Material World*, Eds. Elizabeth DaMarrais, Chris Gosden, and Colin Renfrew, (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2004), 249-260.

[12] Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

certain practices or beliefs), they also become animate or appear to be "living" or "participating" in certain ritual contexts. My analysis of these sculptures explores how they become imbued with sacred essence and the role played by the material composition of the effigies in this process. I argue that Aztec devotional representations came alive during religious ceremonies, responding to specific catalysts that transform objects from mundane to sacred.

Thus, I combine material culture and religious practice by exploring the contexts in which the material objects were used, with the presumption that ritual objects are often more than just a mere gesture toward the sacred. In other words, I ask how the objects functioned at a specific moment in time, such as during a ceremony? How were these objects perceived as sacred at that moment by the people who participated in and witnessed the event? According to Caroline Walker Bynum in reference to late medieval art, "some images came alive, were feared to be alive, or were thought to be misunderstood as alive because many material objects were not only analogies to, but also discourses of, the divine."[13] That is to say, objects from medieval crucifixes to Aztec deity sculptures can be more than simply holy matter or devotional representations: they can communicate and have agency.

In addition to a methodology that seriously incorporates the materiality of my evidence and its implications, each chapter in my study has a strong historiographic component, allowing me to be critically conscious of how the data has been analyzed

[13] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 44.While Bynum's area of expertise is medieval European Christianity, her work on objects as holy matter is relevant to this dissertation.

and defined over time. A historiographic approach allows for a comparison of previous arguments, assumptions, and methods; it reveals gaps in all of the points of comparison, as well as problems with argumentation and differences of emphasis. While considering approaches focused on materials from both art history and archaeology, I evaluate how the handcrafted objects themselves have been studied and the methodological problems with the way they have been identified and interpreted.

This dissertation builds upon and departs from previous theories on the nature of Aztec divinity, particularly regarding the concepts *teotl* (sacred essence) and *teixiptla* (a physical manifestation of *teotl*) that will be more fully explicated in Chapter Four. The theoretical interconnectedness of representation and presence is an integral part of both the Mesoamerican and pre-Hispanic Andean worlds. Carolyn Dean argues that, "For the Inka, sacredness was embedded in the material of the thing rather than its form. Thus the Inka identified sacred essence in a variety of hosts, and any particular essence was not necessarily reflected in its external form."[14] As in the Inka example, the significance of the Aztec concepts of *teotl* were not always tied to a specific form and the materials themselves were not necessarily sacred but rather acted as vessels for the divine.[15]

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[14] Carolyn Dean, *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.

[15] I utilize the work of archaeologist Alfredo López Austin (1988), cultural historian Inga Clendinnen (1991), anthropologist Louise Burkhart (1989), and religious historians Davíd Carrasco (1999) and Molly Bassett (2009) in my thinking on sacrality and divinity.

While the ontology of Aztec deities and the nature of their relationships continue to provoke scholarly debate, it is becoming increasingly evident that unlike Greek and Roman deities, Mesoamerican sacred beings cannot be understood as a part of a rigid hierarchical pantheon. My method differs from a purely iconographic approach as first proposed by the anthropologists Eduard Seler (1904, 1990) and H. B. Nicholson (1971, 1983), and further codified in typologies by archaeologist Leonardo López Luján (2005) and art historian Elizabeth Hill Boone (1989). These classificatory systems are based on the accoutrements worn by Aztec deities in visual representations such as sculpture and painted codices, and tend to generally focus on how these accoutrements are assigned. However many of these deity traits are variable, especially when considered in specific contexts. While I rely on the iconography of Aztec deities to a certain degree, I question the traditional structure of a pantheon in the classical sense and instead focus on the historical and ritual events for which these objects were made. More specifically, I compare a corpus of sculptures of female agricultural deities across media to reconstruct the commemoration of agricultural bounty, an integral part of Aztec cosmology that is of particular importance in the provinces.[16]

My corpus of female deities includes stone sculptures and polychrome vessels from the Valley of Mexico (specifically Tenochtitlan) and the Toluca Valley (specifically Calixtlahuaca and Malinalco), and dough figures and paper costumes

[16] My work benefits from insightful studies by previous scholars who politicize and historicize the origins and roles of Aztec deities, including Cecelia Klein (1988, 1993, 2009), Emily Umberger (1996, 2007, 2014), Umberger and Klein (1993), and Catherine DiCesare (2009).

reconstructed from the images and texts in colonial codices patterned after pre-Columbian pictorial manuscripts. Along with the extant objects, especially those with an archaeological context, I integrate colonial texts and ethnolinguistic material. My research questions are motivated by a perceived lack of conceptual clarity in current understandings of the relationship between materials and sacrality in Mesoamerican studies. By focusing on the Aztec agricultural deities in various media, I address the following questions that are applicable to future Aztec and religious studies: What is the material essence or "thing-ness" that makes sacred objects so potent? What are the roles of these female agricultural deities in ritual? When do objects become animate, and when are objects just objects? What can we infer about provincial Aztec sites, in contrast with the imperial capital, when they emphasize certain types of deities in their ceremonial life? And what do the materials out of which ritual objects and representations of deities are created tell us about their sacrality?

Organization of the Dissertation

The subjects of my investigations are organized by the various raw materials used to produce representations of agricultural deities—clay and ceramic, stone, paper, and *tzoalli* dough. These special materials became more animate when they were sculpted into *teixiptlahuan* and activated during ritual activities. Processions, veneration, beholding, and, most importantly, being dressed in specific and elaborate

costumes, created an environment where sculptures were infused with sacred essence and were transformed into animate objects with agency.

Most scholarship pertaining to Aztec deities classify them according to iconography. This system provides a wealth of knowledge, but it is also possible to reexamine these deities using a different lens in order to glean a new perspective. Agricultural deities are made out of a range of materials and there are differences between each of these materials. By dividing the core arguments of this dissertation according to their raw materials, I illuminate the Aztec understanding of, and relationship to, their agricultural deities.

I begin, in Chapter Three, by examining clay and ceramic objects, enduring materials found both in Tenochtitlan and the provinces. The prevalence of figurines throughout Mesoamerica demonstrate their ubiquitous and enduring nature, particularly as they relate to domestic ritual. Here, I anchor the objects to their social lives by providing relevant examples of domestic rituals using clay figurines from other earlier Mesoamerican contexts, such as the Classic Maya and Teotihuacan. Material objects such as figurines are inherently linked to cosmological concepts within both domestic and public venues in that they act as mediators between the physical and spiritual worlds. Aztec objects made out of clay or ceramic were understood to be a sacred because they emanated from the earth, a fact that rendered these objects extraordinary, particularly when used in a ritual context. Ceramic figures were more common in the provinces than the capital and were usually found

in domestic contexts; I show that ceramic figures, specifically, were a meaningful part of provincial domestic ritual due to both their substance and production.

The crux of Chapter Four focuses on stone depictions of female sacred beings, juxtaposing sculptures from the capital and the provinces. I reiterate the nature of Aztec imperial structure, including the relationship between Tenochtitlan and its tributary provinces. Aztec stone sculpture from Tenochtitlan provided models for disseminating styles and iconographic motifs common to imperial art from the capital. By comparing the stone sculptures from the capital with those from provincial sites, I argue that the imperial artistic style, meaning the aesthetic values, iconography, techniques and media, was particularly apparent in the scale and subject matter of official Aztec sculptures. While sculpture from both the imperial capital and the provinces communicated messages about the connection between the cosmos and human society, Aztec official art was more militantly propagandistic in nature, created to aggrandize the state. Additionally, the provincial production of stone sculptures confirmed the economic, political, and religious link to the imperial rulers, though local variation also indicated that these outlying regions exerted a degree of autonomy.[17]

I conclude this chapter by showing how Aztec art is both political and religious in nature, since politics and religion could not be divorced from one another. The specific and key religious concepts discussed are *teotl* and *ixiptla*,

[17] Emily Umberger and Cecelia Klein, "Aztec Art and Imperial Expansion," in *Latin American Horizons*, ed. Don S. Rice, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 295-325.

particularly as they relate to sculptures. Aztecs used the term *teotl* to discuss the supernatural, or an invisible sacred essence. In other words, *teotl* is a concept or descriptor rather than a material object, and differs from Western understandings of divinity in describing something marvelous, reverential, or exclusive that can manifest in a physical form, but does not necessarily have to be a conventional representation of a deity. *Teotl* is a polyvalent word that can modify things in order to make them extraordinary, whether it is jet, turquoise, or amaranth dough shaped to create a sacred being.[18] However, it is primarily evoked to describe a spiritual essence associated with the materialization of a sacred being.

Stone and paper are linked because the actual paper ornaments used in real life ceremonies were permanently sculpted in stone. Certain costume elements were part of a specific performance, such as headdresses in the Aztec ceremony called *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping). Chapter Five demonstrates how the costume elements, ephemeral materials manufactured out of paper and worn by humans and sculpted images, were used to animate and infuse objects with sacred essence. I elucidate how material objects were imbued with sacred essence, and further grapple with the meaning of the terms *teotl* and *teixiptla* as they relate to animacy. Paper headdresses are encoded with meaning, pointing to the importance of the visual and performative aspects of the rituals in which female agricultural deities were

[18] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 11, 228. For example, jet (*teotetl*) is a stone that is modified by the word *teotl* because of its extraordinary feature: extreme blackness and volcanic origins. According to Sahagún, "The name jet comes from teotl and tetl (stone) because nowhere does a single stone appear as black as this stone. That is to say it is rare, precious, like the teotl's exclusive thing. Black, very black, perfectly black; black like pitch. Indeed, perfectly black, it is really totally black." On the etymology of the term *teotl*, also see Bassett's *The Fate of Earthly Things*, 76-78.

involved. Bodily adornments, such as headdresses were understood to transform someone from human to *ixiptla.* Aztecs used *teixiptla* (generally translated as an image, likeness, representation, or representative) for manifestations of a *teotl*, which is embodied by a human or an object in the form of a human impersonator. I argue that the images of Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent), and all fertility effigies, are *teixiptlahuan* (plural of *teixiptla*), manifestations of a *teotl*. Even humans could be transformed through performance and costume elements. Headdresses, in particular, are indicative of ceremonial costume because they are often made of paper, which is thought to be an inherently sacred material. I discuss how the concepts of beholding and transfiguration inform my understanding of how these objects functioned. Additionally, using ethnographic and historic evidence, I establish that paper was, and continues to be in Nahua communities today, a sacred material that acts as a medium of communication between human and spiritual worlds.

Tzoalli dough—malleable, molded or modeled and often ingested—is the topic of Chapter Six. *Tzoalli* dough, made of maize and/or amaranth, became a sacred material when utilized in ritual activity; I examine both the creation of the dough figures and the sacrificial connotation of eating in this chapter. By focusing on the relationship between food and sacrifice, as made apparent in Aztec mythic history, these legends highlight the importance of food, particularly maize, as a part of Aztec cosmovision. I present an overview of the varied scholarly views of the nature of human sacrifice and how these interpretive strategies have changed over time, in order to situate my own argument that sacrifice, like animacy, was

situationally nuanced. More specifically, I argue that smaller scale sacrifices took place during ceremonies involving dough deity figures that were ritually consumed. Ceremonial consumption of *tzoalli* dough figures, metonyms for the deities themselves, transfers a sacred essence from the dough into the human bodies during ingestion and thus can be viewed as a form of ritual sacrifice. Given the paucity of scholarship dedicated to *tzoalli* dough, this synthesis of the primary documentation is new.

Finally, Chapter Seven will conclude with a reexamination of figures of maize deities as they relate to all of these materials—ceramic and clay, stone, paper, and *tzoalli* (dough). Using Calixtlahuaca as a case study, I demonstrate how the sculptural remains from this provincial site may have functioned as media of communication between human and spiritual worlds, *teixiptla*, metaphoric or metonymic sacrifices, and indicators of local and/or official state practices. By narrating the complex histories of objects within a ritual context, I hope to further our understanding of the engagement of Aztec social communities with the palpable essence of sacred objects, and, more broadly, explore the religious and political relationship between the Aztec state and its provinces. This approach offers a valuable perspective on ceremonial activities that are based in materiality, that is, how physical objects help to construct, maintain, and alter social, religious, and political relations.

SECTION II: Enduring Materials in a Ritual Context—Ceramic and Stone

Chapter 3: Ceramics: Imperial and Local

Ceramic figurines were essentially made from the earth itself, which is abundant, cheap, and efficient to work. While all earth may not necessarily be sacred at all times, the terrestrial realm was venerated as both the womb and tomb of Mesoamerican cultures. And, like other natural materials such as paper or corn dough, it could transform into something sacred during the process in which the raw material was shaped and hand-modeled then fired into a figural object. This process was also used for larger terracotta sculptures. At the site of Calixtlahuaca, ceramic figurines of female agricultural deities were found in both households and in offerings at monumental public buildings showing that they were a meaningful part of provincial ritual, especially to a people whose lives, politically and economically, depended so vitally on the earth and what it could provide.

One example of a ceramic figurine excavated at Calixtlahuaca and now on display at the site museum is only approximately four inches tall but wears a detailed costume, indicating that it represents a deity or deity impersonator dressed for a ceremonial activity (Figure 14). The long, yet unadorned and unpatterned skirt denotes that the figure is female; no sexual characteristics, such as breasts, are visible. A necklace made up for four strands of substantial round beads hangs downs

over her chest. Her feet protrude from beneath the folds of her skirt and her diminutive and roughly sculpted hands reach forward. A rectilinear headdress is prominently featured and frames the delicate features of her face. The headdress is not as proportionally large as other sculptures of agricultural deities that wear similar attire, but it is sizable enough to show its significance. This headdress is decorated above the forehead with three bands of circular embellishments and two rectangular protrusions on the very top, which can be read either as twin temple-like structures above the *amacalli* (paper house) style headdress that was named as such because it often made out of paper materials, or as the double top-knot hair style common to mature or married Aztec women. Either way, this figurine exemplifies the care taken to create images of deities or deity impersonators in ceremonial garb originally used as a part of domestic ritual. The back of this figurine is not as detailed as the front, and the two small holes located on the shoulders of the figure indicate that is may have functioned as a whistle, which further ties this object to its ceremonial use.

Ceramic and stone figures were used in a similar way during ritual events, but I discuss them separately here in order to highlight their physical properties. There is more stone than ceramic in my catalog because it is far more durable than ceramic and, therefore, is more ubiquitous in the extant archaeological record. These ceramic figures are also more complicated to discuss as a group of objects because unlike sculptures made of stone, paper, or *tzoalli* dough, the variation between objects made of ceramic or clay is great, especially when comparing Tenochtitlan to the Aztec provinces. The material composition of these sacred materials and the

provincial rituals in which they are used might deviate from the imperial capital of Tenochtitlan. Archaeological data reveals that small-scale ceramic figurines were used in abundance by commoners in the provinces. However, there is a vast disconnect between the quantity of these artifacts discovered archaeologically and the paucity of times they are mentioned in the many pages devoted to descriptions of Aztec religion by early Spanish chroniclers. While it has been posited that the omission of figurines from the early colonial textual accounts may be due to their use by women in the home for curing, fertility, and divination, it is also possible that they were overlooked because they were more commonly used domestically in a personal, regional, or communal manner, especially in the provinces.[1] It is important to note that while the figurines vary in style, shape, size, and quality, they tend to depict female agricultural deities with their characteristic headdresses and skirts. Outside the Aztec capital, where communities were obligated to supply agricultural produce tribute such as maize, beans, squash and cotton, individuals focused more of their attention on agricultural deities because they were related directly to their everyday subsistence and their economic ties to the imperial capital. In both the capital and the provinces, public rituals involving female agricultural deities consisted of prescribed sets of ceremonial actions that took place on fixed calendric

[1] For further reading on ritual objects used by women in the home for curing, fertility, and divination, see Ann Cyphers Guillén's "Women, Rituals, and Social Dynamics at Ancient Chalcatzingo" (1993), Doris Heyden's "La posible interpretación de figurillas arqueológicas en barro y piedra según las fuentes históricas" (1996), and Louise Burkhart's "Mexica Women on the Home Front: Housework and Religion in Aztec Mexico" (1997).

dates. These rituals solidified the interconnectedness not only between the material and spiritual realms, but also between center and periphery.

Aztec Imperial Polychrome Ceramics

Polychrome ceramics excavated within the capital of Tenochtitlan are essential to understanding the cultural context and ideology of the Aztec empire because of both their material properties and detailed iconography. The imperial artistic style, meaning aesthetic values, design, technical finesse, and media, was particularly apparent in the monumental size and subject of Aztec ceramic sculptures. While sculpture from both the imperial capital and the provinces communicated messages about the relationship between the cosmos and human society, Aztec imperial art was political in nature. Scale, iconography, and the quality of craftsmanship are all factors that differentiate imperial sculpture from provincial sculpture, though material played a role in defining the importance of these sculptures regardless of size or provenance.

Sculpture and painting were not mutually exclusive in ancient Mesoamerica; stone and ceramic, or terracotta, sculptures in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan were usually painted in vibrant hues, making them visually arresting. Architecture was also painted, marking these colorful buildings as strikingly conspicuous locations of importance.[2] Some of the best known monumental sculpture from the sacred precinct

[2] There were two primary techniques for applying paint to an architectural or sculpted surface: putting paint directly on the surface of the stone or ceramic, or apply a thin layer of stucco to the painting surface prior to painting. Although stucco might diminish some of the details by filling in the

was polychromed in order to emphasize the readability of their sign systems; the most prominent of these include the Sun Stone (Figure 15), the Temple Stone (Figure 16), the Tizoc Stone (Figure 17), the Coyolxauhqui Stone (Figure 4), and the Tlaltecuhtli Monolith (Figure 18). In addition, terracotta sculptures from Tenochtitlan, such as the Eagle Warrior, *Tzitzimitl* (celestial monster) terracotta, and several censors in the shape of maize deities, were also painted.[3]

Polychrome is present on many monumental sculptures, regardless of their material. While polychrome is not exclusive to imperial art and architecture, its addition to a sculpted object certainly elevates its quality because it adds extra visual intrigue and can highlight iconographic details. Elizabeth Hill Boone argues that,

> "Buildings and sculptures in Mesoamerica seem not to have been painted as an afterthought; rather, paint was an integral part of the creative process and was probably carefully considered before and during construction and the carving of monuments. In this regard, color functioned less as a decoration than as a vehicle for iconographic readings and symbolic meanings. Specific colors could aid in the identification of separate deities, living things or objects, and they could refer broadly to more abstract phenomena and principles such as the cardinal directions, night, lineage, preciousness, and sacredness. Color, in many cases, completed the work of art."[4]

The importance of color is prevalent throughout Mesoamerica, both in Central Mexico and the Maya region; interior and exterior walls, sculptures, stelae, thrones,

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crevices, the color was more vibrant on this white surface because it allowed light to bounce off more easily.

[3] I use terracotta to refer to sculptures made of reddish-brown clay and then fired to become a sculptural ceramic.

[4] Elizabeth Hill Boone, ed., *Painted Architecture and Polychrome Monumental Sculpture in Mesoamerica*, (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 173.

benches, and lintels were all painted.[5] The colors used were always created from natural elements. White (*tizatlalli*) was lime stucco; bark extract used as a polishing solution could turn a plaster surface a bright red; black (*texotli*) comes from carbon made from burnt bone or charcoal; different shades of red (*tlachichilli*) came from the iron oxide known as hematite, and yellow (*tecozahuitl*) from a hydrated form of iron oxide.[6] Finally, the precious and rare blue color was fabricated from a combination of the indigo plant (*Indigofera tinctoria*) and attapulgite clay.[7] When large-scale ceramic sculptures were painted using colors such as the ones just described, the symbolic meaning of the earth in the form of clay was likely enhanced by yet other venerated substances from the sacred landscape.

The *tzitzimitl* (celestial monster) terracotta sculpture is one of the best known large-scale Aztec ceramics, and is an example of the combination of both clay and paint to communicate and emphasize the connection between imperial authority and

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[5] For a discussion of the role of color in Aztec or Nahua culture in Central Mexico, see Molly Harbour Bassett and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Coloring the Sacred in Sixteenth-Century Mexico," In *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800*, eds. Andrea Feeser, Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fawkes Tobin, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 45-64.

[6]Although Maya pigment sources do not always align with Mexica colorants, see Linda Schele, "Color on Classic Architecture and Monumental Sculpture of the Southern Maya Lowlands," in *Painted Architecture and Polychrome Monumental Sculpture in Mesoamerica*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 33- 34. For a detailed scientific trace of the reds used in the Florentine Codex to cochineal, Palo de Campeche (the flowering tree Haematoxylum campechianum), and hematite (a reddish-black mineral consisting of ferric oxide), see Piero Baglioni, et. al. "On the Nature of the Pigments of the *General History of the Things of New Spain: The Florentine Codex*," In *Colors Between Two Worlds: The Florentine Codex of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. Gerhard Wolf and Joseph Connors, (Florence: Villa I Tatti, 2011).

[7] According to Diego de Landa's sixteenth-century account, "There is a wood or plant from which indigo is made, which the natives of these provinces formerly employed for a blue dye or paint, hence the Spaniards availed themselves of it and started large plantations, so that they have come to make large quantities in the provinces." Tozzer, ed., *Landa's Relación de las Cosas de Yucatan,* 117-118.

sacred activity (Figure 19). This 5.5 foot tall sculpture was excavated in the House of the Eagles at the Templo Mayor, and was likely meant to be viewed as a pair with its terracotta partner known as the Eagle Warrior. The *tzitzimitl* terracotta sculpture has traditionally been identified as a deity representation of Mictlantecuhtli (Lord of Death) but John M Pohl and Claire L. Lyons argue that the iconography and archaeological context for this sculpture is more closely associated with its identification as a *tzitzimitl* (tzitzimime, pl.). They state that, "tzitzimime personified an indigenous belief in the association between disease, drought, war, sacrifice, death, and divine castigation," and go on to say that, "most feared during climactic events such as eclipses, *tzitzimime* were believed to emerge as stars to attack the sun and bring an end to the present age of mankind."[8] Cecelia Klein adds that *tzitzimime* were also viewed as benevolent deities with generative abilities that included being able to prevent and cure disease.[9] These creatures embodied a duality, as they were associated with both fertility and the chaos that ensued when people were drunk and disorderly. This representation of a *titzimitl* represents the kind of discord that attempts to be quelled by Aztec warriors through the act of human sacrifice. The ceramic sculpture has a direct physical link to human sacrifice because traces of blood have been found on the surface of the object itself. Its posture is also intimidating as the knees are slightly bent and the figure leans forward at the waist in

[8] John M. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, eds., *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2010), 54.

[9] Cecelia Klein, "The Devil and the Skirt: An Iconographic Inquiry into Prehispanic Nature of the Tzitzimime," in *Ancient Mesoamerica* 11, no. 1 (2000): 1-26.

a menacing fashion. The costume on this figure is a simple loincloth and sandals, with the emphasis on the exposed ribcage, clawed hands and lipless mouth instead of the costume. The most striking part of the sculpture is the organ (which is possibly a liver) that hangs below the ribcage.

The Eagle Warrior terracotta sculpture is the exact same height (5.5 feet) as the *tzitzimitl* sculpture and was found in the same location (Figure 20). Visually, this terracotta sculpture echoes the body language of the *tzitzimitl* sculpture: a life-size statue that also leans forward and over the viewer. The eagle helmet has an open beak that is wide enough to clearly view the person's head inside the costume. The body suit covers the figure to directly below the knees and ends with eagle claws that protrude out over the shins. The feet are clad in sandals, which is a costume element specific either Aztec warriors or nobility. Finally, the sleeves are oversized in order to evoke the wings of the eagle; they are decorated with a series of stylized curves meant to be feathers. The entire terracotta statue would have been plastered, or stuccoed, and then painted. Only some of the plaster remains today, but it is easy to see that it was used to create the texture of feathers all over the body suit and not just act as a primer for the paint. According to Sahagún, the principle Aztec military orders consisted of eagle warriors and jaguar warriors because eagles and jaguars were associated with a creation myth in which the two creatures leapt into a sacrificial hearth to incite the sun and moon to move through the cosmos.[10] The Eagle Warrior sculpture was excavated in the House of the Eagles, a council house

[10] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 7: 6.

adjacent to the Templo Mayor that was likely dedicated to the distinctive military order; the warriors in this order wore a suit decorated in feathers and an eagle head helmet. Since the Templo Mayor was the primary locus of Aztec religion, and therefore sacrifice, it makes sense that there would be a space closely associated with the pyramid that celebrates elite warriors who were embodiments of mythological heroes who sacrificed themselves for the greater good; in practice, they were also responsible for expanding Aztec territory and providing the empire with the necessary sacrificial victims.

The *tzitzimitl* terracotta sculpture and the Eagle Warrior, as a pair, are a visual metaphor for the causal relationship between the potential disorder caused by deities and the ensuing order brought forth by the Aztecs. The location and iconography of these two terracotta sculptures clearly signal their propagandistic function, aggrandizing the Aztec imperial rulers and their agenda. In both, the subject of the sculptures seems to overwhelm the physical qualities of the materials from which they are made, thus downplaying connections between the figural and the sacred landscape. However, there is a closer link between subject and substance in other imperial examples of large-scale ceramic sculptures.

The Incense Burner (incensario) with Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent), which is made of terracotta and polychromed, is an example of a large-scale imperial ceramic that shares imagery with a number of provincial sculptures also made from clay (Figure 21). It was found in Tlahuac, the southeastern part of Tenochtitlan (and is today one of sixteen boroughs of Mexico City) and depicts an agricultural deity,

thus visually manifesting the relationship between the earth and a deity responsible for earthly abundance. This 42 inch tall (3.5 feet) sculpture functioned as a censor for burning copal incense, which is an aromatic pine resin used as a sacralizing agent because of its intense fragrance and ability to make dark black smoke as it burns.[11] It depicts the earth deity Chicomecoatl, identifiable due to the costume elements and the prominence of the proffered corn cobs. The face of the supernatural being, with a black stripe on both cheeks and large earspools in the lobes, is the central image, but is dwarfed by the costume itself. The figure wears a boxy, oversized skirt that falls to the ankles and is decorated with horizontal red and white stripes. Her sandaled feet are sculpted with anatomical detail including toenails, and peek out from beneath the skirt; her hands, also with incised nail details, hold a pair of mature corn cobs out toward the viewer in a gesture of offering. The most conspicuous and diagnostic costume element is the "temple headdresses," or *amacalli* that fits over the figure's head and shoulders. The *amacalli* headdresses are generally architectonic and high-tiered with rope-like divisions. They are adorned with rosettes (round stylized flower designs) and pointed elements, and sometimes even decorative knots. Pasztory coined the term "temple headdress" and argues that "the goddess's body is constrained and hidden by the rectangular frame symbolizing the demands of the house, field, and harvest sacrifice, and her reward takes the form of the two ears of

[11] For descriptions of the role of copal as a sacralizing agent and a component of divination still in use in contemporary Nahua ritual, see Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom, *Traditional Papermaking and Paper Cult Figures of Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 48, 74, 155; Alan R. Sandstrom, *Corn is Our Blood: Culture and Ethnic Identity in a Contemporary Aztec Indian Village*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 235, 279-280.

maize."[12] This particular rectilinear headdress on Chicomecoatl is adorned with four rosettes made to look like paper folded like an accordion into circular shapes, which would have been applied as mold-made elements. The production of decorative elements is likely technologically similar to those made at Teotihuacan, where small mass-produced clay ornaments were fired in molds and then glued onto the body of the incense burner.[13] Tassels painted with horizontal red and white stripes like the skirt fall below the rosettes on either side of the figure's face and arms. Knots adorn the top of the *amacalli* (paper house), and a curved slab of clay acts as a decorative back flap reminiscent of streamers. This *amacalli* is a similar shape and design to those worn by a number of ceramic figurines of all sizes, marking a visual correspondence between large-scale imperial ceramics and the more diminutive ceramic figurines from Calixtlahuaca with which we began this chapter (compare Figures 11 and 19). It is of note that the Calixtlahuaca figurine is abbreviated not only in scale but also in iconographic details with its vastly simplified, but still identifiable headdress elements. The function of the large-scale imperial ceramic Chicomecoatl figures as incense burners emphasize the importance of the deity in religion and ritual, even in Tenochtitlan.

Another incense burner with a depiction of a maize deity similar in shape and size to the Incense Burner with Chicomecoatl was found in the Tenochtitlan archaeological zone (Figure 22). This censor, however, is slightly more naturalistic

[12] Pasztory, *Aztec Art*, 219.

[13] Esther Pasztory, *Teotihuacan: An Experiment in Living*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 58-59.

and organic in its rendering of the human body. There is still a lot of care and focus on the costume elements, as the long skirt is painted red and white in a diagonal criss-cross pattern. The figure wears sandals, large earspools, and a necklace made of two bulky strands of sculpted beads painted a turquoise color. The headdress worn by this figure is an elaborate variant of the *amacalli*; it is a rounded headdress made up of six stacked cord-like bands of dividing layers and decorated on the top and bottom with rosettes, and tassels over the ears. A row of short feathers, followed by a row of tall and thin feathers dominates the top. Two paper fans expand out from either side of the headdress, and, like the other censor, this one has a colorful and decorative back flap painted with the palette of colors for the entire figure: red, white, cream, ochre, and blue. The figure holds corn cobs in its left hand. Like the Incense Burner with Chicomecoatl, this sculpture is also iconographically related to small ceramic figurines, despite its vast difference in scale.

These examples of large-scale ceramic sculpture demonstrate that the Aztec ideological messages notably cross media but also function to convey power over all realms, from the imperial warriors from Tenochtitlan and depictions of celestial monsters to agricultural deities. Since the ties between religion and politics are in essence indissoluble, sculptures that emulated the official iconography in the capital city, and the rituals that surrounded them, had an important integrative social function. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the Aztecs imposed their own deities on provincial regions for several reasons. First, there was a pan-Mesoamerican culture that spanned geographic distance as well as throughout a vast

time period; this included, among other criteria, the playing of the ball game, the use of the ritual calendar of 260 days, the veneration of mountains as sacred places, and the high regard for the green-blue color (as in jade or quetzal feathers) because of its association with water. The Mesoamerican worldview was similar enough that people in provincial regions may have worshipped certain deities or deity types prior to imperial conquest by the Aztecs. Thus, when comparing the proliferation of Aztec deities outside of the imperial capital of Tenochtitlan, the inclusion or exclusion of Aztec-specific deities like their patron deity Huitzilopochtli is most telling. Second and conversely, there is evidence that the Aztecs purloined statues of local patron deities, taking them to Tenochtitlan as symbolic hostages. Durán relates that Motecuhzoma II went so far as to build a temple to house all of the deity figures from the provincial regions.[14] While Durán does not explicitly say that these figures were looted or forcibly removed from their previous locations, he does discuss the fact that Motecuhzoma II dedicated the temple by sacrificing people from the rebellious regions. Thus, it is possible that some of the deities represented in Aztec art are appropriated from the provinces and not the other way around. The Aztec interest in incorporating provincial deities into their pantheon also emphasizes the elements of a shared Mesoamerican worldview, and therefore commonalities among

[14] Diego Durán, *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain*, trans. by Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas, (New York: Orion Press, 1964), 431. "Motecuhzoma had come to feel that there should be a shrine where all the gods revered in all the country could be adored. Moved by religious zeal, he ordered that one be built. This was constructed as a part of the Great Temple of Huitzilopochtli, in the place where the house of Acebedo now stands. It was called Caoteocalli, which means "Temple of the Diverse Gods," and it was called thus because in it were housed many gods from the different towns and provinces. They were all placed within one chamber and there were great numbers of them, all different types, faces, and forms."

certain deities such as agricultural deities, that predated the Aztec Empire. Umberger and Klein remark that, "the Aztecs actually seem to have been more involved in absorbing luxury goods, artworks, and even "styles" than in distributing them," suggesting that this was an effort by the Aztecs to attempt to legitimize their own status.[15] More explicitly, Umberger argues that few stone sculptures and large-scale ceramic figures were produced in the outer provinces and even less were produced in the Aztec colonies, and concludes that the absence of Aztec art in these areas reflects their indirect rule.[16]

Mesoamerican Figurines

The abundance and variety of small-scale ceramic figurines, however, made with local clay in provincial towns exemplify the fact that these outlying regions exerted a degree of autonomy, especially with regards to local cults and the divine objects associated with them.[17] The pervasiveness of figurines in Mesoamerica reveals their ability to endure through time. Long before the Aztecs used ceramic figurines in domestic ritual, earlier cultures such as the Classic Maya and Teotihuacan used similar objects in similar contexts. By examining the history of these material objects more broadly, I demonstrate how figurines have acted as

[15] Emily Umberger and Cecelia F. Klein, "Aztec Art and Imperial Expansion," in *Latin American Horizons*, ed. Don S. Rice and Janet Berlo, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), 325.

[16] Emily Umberger, "Aztec Presence and Material Remains in the Outer Provinces," in *Aztec Imperial Strategies*, ed. Frances F. Berdan, et al., (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 151-179.

[17] Umberger and Klein, "Aztec Art and Imperial Expansion," 295-325.

mediators between the physical and spiritual worlds, particularly in domestic rituals, throughout Mesoamerica.

The earliest examples of figurines in the Americas come from South America rather than Mesoamerica, but are relevant to this study because they were made out of the same material—clay—and found in similar domestic settings to those in Central Mexico. The Valdivia culture occupied earliest agricultural villages on the Ecuadorian coast (3000-1500BCE), and they were the earliest peoples to perform rituals with clay and stone figurines in a domestic setting.[18] These figurines, all female, indicate the centrality of the immediate family and reflect the burdens that would most affect small nuclear households, such as procuring food and shelter, making marriage alliances, and having children. It is crucial to our understanding of the function of these figurines not to immediately relate the female form to fertility without considering more nuanced interpretations. Since the Valdivia figurines vary greatly, from naturalist to abstract, from mature to immature, and are depicted in a variety of postures, it is fair to assume that they show social variability or were created for different types of ritual uses. These contexts could include, but are not limited to, initiation into adulthood or motherhood, passage into the otherworld after death, representations of ancestors or deities, guardians, offerings, focal or power objects during ceremonies, healing, or even teaching devices.[19] Figurines are

[18] Valdivian figurines were found in remains of the circular (some three to five meters in diameter) wood and cane houses below refuse layers. They were also found in the large ceremonial structure. Karen Olsen Bruhns, and Karen E. Stothert, *Women in Ancient America*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 108-116.

[19] Bruhns and Stothert, *Women in Ancient America*, 189-196.

dynamic because they are easily manufactured to carry symbolic messages and to be activated via ritual for specific personal, household, or communal purposes.

Figurines were a well-developed tradition in Mesoamerica by the Early Formative time period which dates to about 1000 BCE, and have continued to the present day.[20] Ethnohistoric evidence of figurines is clear, but the Spanish chroniclers such as Bernardino de Sahagún and Diego Durán describe figurines and statues as "idols" and do not elaborate on materials or on their use in domestic ritual. Sahagún condemns what he views as idolatrous worship when he witnesses the Aztec perception that natural features and forces are sacred and alive, and that these natural elements were associated with deities.[21] He goes on, in this example, to describe how these idols were fashioned from a variety of natural materials: "Unhappy are they, the accursed dead who worshipped as gods carvings of stone, carvings of wood, representations, images, things made of gold or of copper, or who indeed worshipped as gods four-footed animals, creatures which fly, those which live in the waters, or their representations which carpenters or lapidaries carved, or metal-workers molded."[22] Sahagún even describes the process by which a woodcarver fabricates a sculpted figure from a tree; however, he overlooks the

[20] For further information about figurines throughout Mesoamerica, see Christina Halperin, Katherine A. Faust, Rhonda Taube, and Aurore Giguet, eds. *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009).

[21] "But these did not so; they took not example of God's creations. Thus they should have recognized their gods, their lords as the creatures of God. Only they were in confusion as to God's creatures; they worshipped gods as the fire, the water, the wind, the sun, the moon, the stars. These things they worshipped as gods. They said that by means of them we live; they guide us, they protect us. They support, they carry." Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1: 56.

[22] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 57.

crucial importance of the material itself and does not recognize that natural substances were viewed as sacred and animate before they are ever shaped into something sculptural.[23] He also fails to underscore that the sculptural production was completed in the home.

While Mesoamerican domestic ritual may have varied by individual, social group, or region, the underlying purpose of those rituals remains fixed, but broadly so, in that they acted as a process by which society could ensure continuity and express identity.[24] In the Maya region, numerous ceramic figurines have been excavated from funerary settings representing all levels of Maya society including priests, chiefs on their thrones, warriors, ball-players, dancers, musicians, and craftsmen.[25] The island site of Jaina in the present-day Mexican state of Campeche

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[23] "Behold the works of the idolaters which can greatly confuse men, which can terrify men. For if some wood-carver wisheth to make his god, he goeth there into the forest. He felleth a tree. It is good, it is tall and straight. And then he striketh off its branches, he cutteth off its branches. And the bark, the leaves of the tree go there unto his house; there they will be required in order to cook his food. And the tree he cutteth up. He maketh a log, a cylinder of wood. And while it is still a log, well doth he carve it; carefully doth he continue to carve it. He giveth it a head, eyes, a face, a body, hands, feet. And when he hath finish, then against the wall he buildeth a house for it. There he standeth it. And that in may not fall, he holdesth it firmly to the wall's surface with either pegs or iron nails. When he hath properly set up his god, then before him he layeth an offering; before him he cutteth his ears, he bleedeth himself, he offereth his prayers. He maketh vows to him. He weepeth before him; he doth penances; he asketh that which is required by him." There is a set of images (book 1, folio 26) that corresponds to this passage that shows a tree being felled and carved into a statue, and people giving food offerings to the completed figure. Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 57.

[24] "Ritualization [is] a creative act of production, a strategic reproduction of the past in such a way as to maximize its domination of the present…Tradition exists because it is constantly produced and reproduced, pruned for a clear profile, and softened to absorb revitalizing elements." Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 123.

[25] The Maya thrived during the Classic period (250-900CE) in the tropical and subtropical rainforests of southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Northwest Honduras. Their city-states had steep stepped pyramids, and like other Mesoamerican cultures they played the ball game and used a complex calendar system. They documented achievements on stele, in books, on vessels, and murals and are known for their hieroglyphic writing system.

has had significant archaeological attention because hundreds of fine hand modelled and mold-made clay figurines have been excavated in burial contexts.[26] Despite their location in the Jaina necropolis as opposed to household settings, Jaina figurines emphasize the ability of objects to perform and reinforce social identities even after death. Elsewhere in the Maya region, standardized production and homogeneity of representation was more of the norm; this, too, reinforced social identities in that these figurines celebrated the roles of common people and allowed for a certain level of religious agency in the household realm.[27] According to sixteenth-century Franciscan bishop Diego de Landa, "They [women] were very devout and pious, and also practiced many acts of devotion before their idols [ancestors], burning incense before them and offering them presents of cotton stuffs, of food and drink which they offered in the festivals of the Indians."[28] This description of ceremony in Maya homes shows that, like the Aztecs, the Maya commoners were not separated from their ritual spaces in daily life because commemorative shrines were located in their private and personal.[29] Even if the objects used during these domestic rituals, such as

[26] For a comprehensive exploration of Jaina figurines, see Christopher Corson, *Maya Anthropomorphic Figurines From Jaina Island, Campeche*, (Ramona, CA: Ballena Press, 1976).

[27] Christina Halperin, "Figurines as Bearers of and Burdens in Late Classic Maya State Politics," in *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, eds. Christina Halperin, Katherine A. Faust, Rhonda Taube, and Aurore Giguet, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 378-403.

[28] Alfred M. Tozzer, ed., *Landa's Relación de las Cosas de Yucatan: A Translation*, (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1941), 128.

[29] For elaboration on the variety of Maya rituals, see Patricia McAnany, *Living With the Ancestors: Kinship and Kingship in Ancient Maya Society*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

figurines, were originally created with official propagandistic purposes in mind, their function and meaning were likely more personal when used in local settings.

Teotihuacan, the largest city-state in Mesoamerican history, flourished during the Classic period (150-900CE) and was located in Central Mexico. Domestic rituals were also an important part of Teotihuacano daily life and took place in the private courtyards within apartment complexes. These apartment compounds housed 60 to 100 people; they were walled, spacious and well-made areas subdivided into suites of rooms and organized around a large patio with a central altar. Artifacts closely associated with ritual, including vases, sculptures, censers, *candeleros* (ceramic artifacts that resemble candle holders), and small-scale ceramic figurines, have been archaeologically excavated in these household courtyards; there is also wear on the lime plaster floors adjacent to the stone altars, which indicates significant movement around this space.[30] It is clear from the archaeological context and extreme abundance of figurines at Teotihuacan that they were a consistent part of domestic ritual, possibly used to help in intercessions with the state or deities, or as tools for modelling behavior in households or social groups.[31] It is striking that while the Maya chose naturalistic representation, Teotihuacanos were interested in abstraction, and used stylized activities, proportions, generic and idealized faces in all of their

[30] Luis Barba, Agustín Ortiz, and Linda Manzanilla, "Commoner Ritual at Teotihuacan, Central Mexico," in *Commoner Ritual and Ideology in Ancient Mesoamerica*, eds. Nancy Gonlin and Jon C. Lohse, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2007), 64-69; Sigvald Linné, *Archaeological Researches at Teotihuacan, Mexico*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 115-119.

[31] Barba, Ortiz, and Manzanilla, "Commoner Ritual at Teotihuacan," 64; Linda Manzanilla, "Daily Life in the Teotihuacan Apartment Compounds," in *Teotihuacan: Art from the City of the Gods*, eds. Kathleen Berrin and Esther Pasztory, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 98.

artistic representations, including figurines (Figure 23).[32] However, Teotihuacano figurines assumed varied poses: seated, standing, active dance-like postures, and even articulated, so that separate limbs could move like puppets and be manipulated during ceremonial use. Additionally, mold-made figurines were most abundant at Teotihuacan, further emphasizing standardization of forms.[33] Both the iconography, even when standardized, and the material of the figurines likely played a role in their activation during ritual performances.

Aztec Provincial Ceramics

Throughout Mesoamerica figurines were an essential part of domestic and community ritual, acting as agents that solidified the relationship between the physical and divine worlds. Like the Maya and Teotihuacan regions, the majority of Aztec figurines have been found archaeologically in household contexts. Since households are the most basic level of community organization, it makes sense that the rituals practiced in that space would correspond to fundamental needs like agricultural abundance and fecundity, health, safety, or protection from natural disasters. Michael E. Smith defines Aztec domestic ritual within and around

[32] Pasztory argues that the lack of lack of ruler representation, dates, and inscriptions along with the emphasis on iconographic standardization indicates that the Teotihuacan political structure was socially harmonious and egalitarian. Recent discoveries and analyses of elite burials at Teotihuacan undermine this theory. Esther Pasztory, *Thinking With Things: Toward a New Vision of Art*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 128-151.

[33] Kiri Hagerman, "Transformation in Representations of Gender During the Emergence of the Teotihuacan State: A Regional Case Study of Ceramic Figurines from the Basin of Mexico," in *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 28, no. 4 (2018): 689-71. Hagerman explores how ceramic figurines at Teotihuacan communicated gender through clothing and sexual attributes.

households as directed toward "curing, fertility, orderliness, divination, supplication, and other themes that concerned the individual and the family," indicating that figurines and the activities in which they were used were a part of daily practice for people at all levels of society.[34] The purpose of figurines and exact nature of domestic ritual is not fully understood, but these rituals encompassed many participants, spaces, and a range of daily necessities.

In the Aztec region, beyond Tenochtitlan, ceramic objects sometimes function in a utilitarian or mundane fashion, however there are notable exceptions.[35] Ceramic production throughout Mesoamerica included functional items for daily use such as cups and bowls, and long-handled incense burners, flutes, pipes, rattles, bells, and whistles for small-scale ceremonial use at a familial or community level. Most importantly for this study, figurines were a sizable and ubiquitous part of ceramic production. For example, 480 figurine fragments were excavated at the site of Cihuatecpan, a small but densely populated, agricultural Aztec village in the Teotihuacan Valley that thrived between 1430-1520 CE.[36] Ethnographic sources provide valuable information about the use and function of figurines such as these. Fray Diego Durán, a Spaniard and Dominican priest who grew up in Tezcoco,

[34] Michael E. Smith, "Domestic Ritual at Aztec Provincial Sites in Morelos," in *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica,* ed. Patricia Plunket, (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA, 2002), 96.

[35] According to archaeologist Barbara Stark, "among preserved materials, chipped obsidian and ceramics have afforded the primary domains of investigation in Mesoamerica because of the abundance of products and by-products." Barbara Stark, "Pottery Production and Distribution in the Gulf Lowlands of Mesoamerica," In *Pottery Economics in Mesoamerica*, eds. Christopher A. Pool and George J. Bey III, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 149.

[36] Susan T. Evans, ed., *Excavations at Cihuatecpan: An Aztec Village in the Teotihuacan Valley*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1988), 44.

Mexico in the sixteenth century, wrote extensively about Aztec history and culture. Using his familiarity with Nahuatl, Durán recorded the history, everyday life habits, and beliefs of the peoples among whom he lived and worked. Durán is one of the few chroniclers who handed down some descriptions of at least one of the uses of clay figurines in Aztec ritual. Durán indicates that small clay figurines were strung onto necklaces and worn around the neck, perhaps as a talisman or fetish, stating that to the thread tied as a necklace, "these men tied a small snake bone, a string of stone beads, or perhaps a little figurine. The same was attached to little girls' wrists, not just for adornment but because of heathen ideas."[37] Durán's account points to the fact that figurines were more than just representations of human bodies, but were understood to be charged with supernatural power and a significant part of local religious practices. While the figurine as a talisman might be considered akin to a domestic ritual, Durán also describes ceramic figurines (editorialized as "idols") as a part of Aztec public ritual and their association with sacred spaces, natural and architectural: "…caves, shrines, places of sacrifice, and temples were filled with little stone and clay idols."[38]

[37] "Certain heathen old men, the soothsayers of each town, went from home to home this day, inquiring about the children who had fasted and done penance by pricking their ears and other parts. If they had fasted and had accomplished what was required of them according to the pagan law, red, green, blue, black, or yellow threads (any color which the soothsayers liked, in fact) were tied to their necks. To the thread these men tied a small snake bone, a string of stone beads, or perhaps a little figurine. The same was attached to little girls' wrists, not just for adornment but because of heathen ideas." Diego Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*, trans. Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 420.

[38] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 416.

Archaeological data indicates that figurine production was prevalent in every city-state during the Late Aztec Period, as evident by excavations of the figurines themselves, as well as items associated with figurine production. These items include molds and manufacturing errors such as fired lumps of raw clay. Figurines could be hand molded, though most were made using open-back molds in which clay was pressed into the back of the mold and the excess clay was trimmed straight across the back so that one side would have impressed details and the other would simply be flat.[39] After being fired, the figurines were sometimes painted with a white paint base and then further decorated with red, blue, yellow, and black detail, though this was quite rare. Thus, ceramic sculptures in the provinces were usually produced on a much smaller scale than those in Tenochtitlan and ranged from being extremely similar due to the mass-produced mold technology or widely variable, likely because they were hand molded by someone other than a skilled artisan.[40] Aztec figurines represented men, women, animals, and supernaturals, though female figurines that also include a woman holding a small child are the most prevalent.[41] This is consistent with the figurines in this study, where the majority of the small-scale objects represent women or an unspecified gender. The generational iconography of

[39] Thomas H. Charlton, Cynthia L. Otis Charlton, Deborah L. Nichols, and Hector Neff, "Aztec Otumba, AD 1200-1600: Patterns of the Production, Distribution, and Consumption of Ceramic Products," in *Pottery Economics in Mesoamerica*, eds. Christopher A. Pool and George J. Bey III, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 251. While this study was completed at the Post-Classic site of Otumba, this is the most common technique for creating figurines throughout Mesoamerica.

[40] Michael E. Smith, *Aztec City-State Capitals*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 183.

[41] Cecelia Klein and Naoli Victoria Lona, "Sex in the City: A Comparison of Aztec Ceramic Figurines from the Templo Mayor," in *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, ed. by Christina T. Halperin, Katherine A. Faust, Rhonda Taube, and Aurore Giguet, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 330-350.

mother and baby indicates an association with fertility, but their function was probably as variable as their form, possibly ranging from being perceived as implements for curing to visual aids for teaching. Further, Pasztory astutely points out that although clay figurines were abundant in burial and household contexts in the provincial Aztec regions, they are rarely found in the offerings at the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, which emphasizes the fact that they were not understood to be rare, precious or elite.[42] However, just because these figurines were not part of the Templo Mayor assemblage does not indicate that they were not special, rather it suggests a clear tradition of local practices that continued during the Aztec Empire. These objects could still be understood as possessing extraordinary powers when activated in certain ritual contexts because of their combination of both earthen substance and iconography.

The abundance of ceramics throughout Mesoamerica speaks to the easily available raw clay and the fact that there was much less specialization involved in making rudimentary objects from the earth.[43] Thus, the reason for the great quantity of ceramic figures found in the provinces is multi-factorial, but could be due to the ready access to the material for manufacture that was both practical and inexpensive

[42] Esther Pasztory, *Aztec Art*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 282.

[43] Stark states that, "ceramic systems of production and distribution are inherently more regional than interregional because of the widespread availability of suitable raw materials; local production was a feasible strategy in many cases." Stark, "Pottery Production," 149.

and that they could be more readily manipulated.[44] Their portable small-scale size also might have been dictated by their function; these figurines were used as a part of domestic rituals, or in ceremonies that took place in more modest regional plazas, local pyramids, and shrines. Additionally, there was symbolic meaning in the use of the earth itself, particularly in the making of agricultural deities: the earth nurtures the native flora, most importantly maize and other sustenance crops.

While the earth may not have been considered a sacred substance on its own, it was certainly seen as an integral part of the animate universe. Even contemporary Nahua villagers understand the earth to be alive, saying "that the soil is the earth's flesh, the stones its bones, and the water its blood."[45] Thus, the clay used to manufacture ceramics was respected and revered for its life-sustaining qualities even before it was shaped into something more figural or functional. One indication of the innate significance of earth is evident in a rite Durán describes as Nitizapaloa, otherwise known as "Tasting of Chalk" or "eating of the earth," that was a frequent part of Aztec ceremonies because it was "a special sign of reverence and humility before the gods."[46] The Dominican writes that the duties of an Aztec priest included, among other things, "kissing the earth, [and] eating it with one's fingers."[47] Durán

[44] This dissertation does not include a study of clays and clay sources. It could be the case that specific clay sources were favored for production of figurines due to local belief systems and practices.

[45] Alan R. Sandstrom, *Corn is Our Blood: Culture and Ethnic Identity in a Contemporary Aztec Indian Village*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 23.

[46] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 235.

[47] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 64.

further describes this gesture during the feast for Huitzilopochtli where the "all the people made a profound obeisance, touching earth on the ground and carrying it to their mouths," and during the feast for Tezcatlipoca where people "placed a finger on the ground, smearing it with earth, whereupon they placed it within their mouths and ate the earth which had stuck to their fingers."[48] Durán writes that the highest honor paid to the deity known as Tlaltecuhtli "was to place one's finger on the earth, carry it to one's mouth, and lick the earth."[49]

According to Aztec myth, Tlaltecuhtli (Earth Lord) was a flesh-eating monster before being torn apart by deities Quetzalcoatl (Feathered Serpent) and Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror); the upper part of her body was transformed into the earth, which provides humans with all their needs, including plants, animals, springs, rivers, mountains, caves, and valleys.[50] This ingestion of earth, just as consuming a *tzoalli* dough figure fashioned to resemble a mountain as I describe in Chapter 5, is a physical act that symbolizes the interconnectedness between humans and the earth or the deities that influence how the earth behaves. Eating the earth, then, is a gesture of reverence for a valuable material. One must assume that the symbolic meaning of this venerated substance was not lost when the earth, in the form of clay, was manipulated into a sculpture and activated in a religious ceremony. Jeanette Peterson argues that "from this fundamental belief in the sacred landscape arose the need to

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[48] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 87, 101.

[49] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 261.

[50] Angel Ma. Garibay K., "Historia de los Mexicanos [1543]," in *Teogonia e Historia de los Mexicanos*, (Mexico City: Porrua, 1973), 105-108.

respect and venerate the earth's gifts, including the materials from which works of art were fashioned."[51] This statement is especially relevant with regards to ceramic figurines, and can also be applied to large-scale ceramic sculptures that were commissioned by elites and displayed in official imperial spaces.

In the Aztec empire, artistic style, techniques, quality and scale were important indicators of the official patronage and usage of any object. Additionally, the material makeup of objects can also contribute to our comprehension of their function and meaning. Since clay objects were abundant throughout Mesoamerica regardless of wealth or class, the purpose of Aztec imperial polychrome ceramics was linked more closely to their iconography than their material alone. The ideological message of the Aztec imperial polychrome ceramics in the forms of elite warriors and specific deities was propagandistic and aggrandizing, elevating an object used in a ritual, such as a ceramic incense burner, to a monumental work that was visually impressive, significant in its intricate content, and complex in its message. Conversely, in the provinces, there was likely a stronger emphasis on the material itself that was used to construct figurines because clay was understood to possess a sacred essence. Provincial figurines like those in my catalog had simplified iconography because reductive or abstract forms can be more readily interpreted by a diverse audience, and they could be turned out in larger quantities more efficiently and requiring less attention to painstaking craft. Surely though, these figurines were

[51] Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *Sacred Gifts: Precolumbian Art and Creativity*, (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1994), 7. Peterson, along with several of her graduate students, produced an exhibition publication that highlighted the diverse media used in the Americas: ceramics, stone, precious metals, wood, textiles and featherwork, and shell.

read as miniaturized versions of the large-scale imperial sculptures even when they were rendered in a more stylized fashion.

Chapter 4: Stone: Political and Religious Propaganda

In the vast corpus of sculptures created and replicated in stone, Aztec artisans disseminated the style and iconographic motifs characteristic of imperial art. While sculpture from both the imperial capital and the provinces conveyed the relationship between the cosmos and human society, official Aztec art was more militaristic and propagandistic for the imperial elites. Monumental sculptures in stone originally located in Tenochtitlan/Mexico City show a distinct imperial style that differs from their provincial counterparts in their imagery, technique, size, and quality of workmanship. There are 110 stone female agricultural deity figures in my catalog also show a range in size, posture, and imagery: the smallest figure is four inches and the largest is 53 inches, 45 are in a kneeling pose and 47 are standing, and 51 wear an *amacalli* headdress (with an additional 9 wearing a geometric headdress that is similar in shape to the *amacalli* headdress) and 58 wear a round banded headdress. Like their ceramic counterparts, stone sculpture was widely used in rituals and featured likenesses of Aztec agricultural deities; however, there are many more examples of stone sculptures due to their enduring permanency.

Although stone depictions of female sacred beings similar to the Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) sculpture from Calixtlahuaca detailed at the beginning of Chapter 1 (Figure 2) exist in both the capital and outlying areas, a comparison of an agricultural deity sculpture from the Tenochtitlan and another from the Toluca Valley emphasizes the difference between imperial and local styles. A sculpture excavated from the metropolitan area and labeled Chicomecoatl housed in

the Ethnological Museum in Berlin stands 26.8 inches high and is carved from a dark brown-grey stone (Figure 24). It depicts a standing female deity dressed in a *quechquemitl* decorated with a series of knotted tassels, a belt tied around the waist, and an ankle-length skirt. She holds a jagged rattle stick (*chicahuaztli*), a musical instrument used exclusively during religious ceremonies, in one hand and two cobs of maize in the other. On her head sits a sizable rectilinear *amacalli* (paper house) headdress adorned with a large knot directly above her forehead and four rosettes on the upper corners. While the headdress is the most prominent part of this sculpture, great care is taken to carve the detailed face and feet. Each of the features are sharply incised, and the result is naturalistic human features. In contrast, a stone sculpture from the Toluca Valley also labeled Chicomecoatl at the Museum of Anthropology and History in Toluca stands half the size at only 15 inches (Figure 6), yet is one of the largest female agricultural deity sculptures found in this region. Like the imperial sculpture, this figure depicts a being with doubled maize cobs and an impressive rectilinear headdress decorated with knotted cords and rosettes. In the provincial example, gender is difficult to read because the clothing is obscured, but the kneeling pose may indicate that the figure is female because this is the posture of an idealized Aztec woman, a posture used for food preparation and cloth production.[1] Here, the figure holds a pair of proffered maize cobs in both hands rather than a rattle stick.

[1] Elizabeth Brumfiel, "Aztec Hearts and Minds: Religion and the State in the Aztec Empire," in *Empires: Perspectives From Archaeology and History*, ed. by Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, Carla M. Sinopoli, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 305. Brumfiel points out that state-sponsored Aztec art, including both sculpture and manuscript painting, depicts women in a controlled kneeling pose, while provincial figurines almost exclusively show women standing. However, these reversals in posture could also be due to the difference in media and sculpture size, because some postures are easier to render in certain materials.

Moreover, the sculpture is more roughly carved and not as finely finished as the larger version. What is significant is that despite size, quality, and provenance, both sculptures emphasize the headdress that acts as a visual marker of ceremonial performance and sacrality. This comparison of sculptural subjects from the capital and the provinces is fairly unique because not all imperial themes found in Aztec visual culture are prevalent in both realms. The replication of only certain forms in stone sculptures, such as agricultural deities, as well as their local variation, points first to the control exerted by the official school in the urban capital, and second to the loosely regulated nature over regions outside of the metropole in the Aztec empire. Additionally and as importantly, the omnipresence of these female deities also indicates the widespread veneration of the natural world as a consistent and essential part of Aztec religion.

Translating Aztec Concepts of the Sacred

An understanding of Aztec religion provides a context for the culture's stone sculptures. It is necessary to bring together a variety of source materials in order to adequately reconstruct the indigenous conceptual framework. The use of diverse sources allows scholars to be more aware of Western biases when evaluating precontact concepts of the sacred. Modern scholars can regenerate the mythic and historical past by studying a combination of ethnohistorical documents, indigenous languages, and archaeological data that provide a framework in order to better understand pre-Conquest politics and sacrality.

Much of what we know about Aztec religion comes to us from information recorded by Spaniards at the time of the conquest in the early sixteenth century. The Spanish monarchy made evangelization of the native people a justification for the conquest of the Americas, following a papal mandate that linked church and state when conquering and civilizing territories abroad. This was apparent by the number of missionaries, educated Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and other religious orders who closely followed the Spanish conquistadors to spread Christianity in the New World. Catholic ideology legitimized invasion because, while subjugating people and resources, the Spaniards saw themselves as doing God's work. Churches and monasteries were constructed in rapid succession often located on top of the platforms of demolished pyramids. Native images, often referred to as "idols," and texts were destroyed, and local deities were replaced by patron saints with similar characteristics. Points of convergence between Christianity and indigenous religious traditions (specifically in the Nahua traditions of central Mexico) were used to make Catholicism more understandable to the native converts. [2] These similarities included a formal priesthood, sacred rites to mark various stages of life, and the importance of the body and blood of an individual sacrificed in the name of ideology. The Aztecs sacrificed human bodies and blood as tribute to their deities, and Catholics reenacted Christ's sacrifice of his corporeal body during the

[2] Jaime Lara, *Christian Texts for Aztecs: Art and Liturgy in Colonial Mexico* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008). Lara explores how New Spain (colonial Mexico) missionaries used visual and linguistic metaphors as a part of the evangelization process; they translated the Christian message into something that could be understood in terms of the already existing Mesoamerican worldview. See also Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*.

Eucharist where Christ is spiritually present in the consecrated bread and wine. Spanish Catholicism was quite different from any Mesoamerican religion: it was exclusive, fixed and intolerant of other religions. Conversion to Catholicism officially required a change in values and customs, as well as participation in Catholic rites and rituals. In *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (1966), Robert Ricard presents a monolithic approach to the evangelization of Mexico, arguing that indigenous people completely converted to Christianity within the first twenty years after the conquest due to the systematic teaching methods of Spanish missionaries. According to Ricard, "the missionaries insisted on presenting Christianity, not as perfecting or a fulfilling of native religions, but as something entirely new, which meant an absolute and complete rupture with the whole past."[3] This triumphalist interpretation of conversion is now outdated and has since been replaced by more nuanced theories of cultural change and transformation.

J. Klor de Alva argues against Ricard's long-accepted view of conversion, showing that there were varying degrees of conversion that included complete conversion, partial misunderstanding of Christianity, compartmentalizing or borrowing certain practices, syncretism, and total resistance. Klor de Alva concludes that, "among the Aztecs, few were wholeheartedly embracing the vision of the world implied by Christianity, many resisted it passively, most failed to meet the minimum test required of a convert (belief in one God who died to redeem humanity), and

[3] Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572*, Trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 35.

almost all mixed the colonial versions of the ancient beliefs with the Christian doctrine."[4] While there were similarities between Christian and indigenous religious traditions (specifically Aztec), there were explicit differences between concepts of the sacred. The indigenous conceptual differences with sixteenth-century Catholicism include an absence of a structured pantheon, polymorphous sacred beings, a lack of rigid dualism between concepts such as good and evil, and the belief in the transmutable vitality of matter in the sacred landscape.

Unlike Christianity, a monotheistic religion with a singular deity or God, Mesoamerican peoples were polytheistic, worshipping an array of sacred beings that were associated with various elements of human life and the natural environment. Select sixteenth-century friars, such as the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún and the Dominican Diego Durán, systematically studied Aztec religious beliefs to discover the best ways in which to convert indigenous peoples from their traditional multi-deity beliefs to Christianity. Polytheistic religions, such as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were known to educated Europeans like Sahagún, who had a broad humanistic education at the University of Salamanca in Spain before venturing to the New World. These ancient European religions were transposed onto indigenous pre-Hispanic traditions as a way to comprehend the unfamiliar. For example, the gloss beside the watercolor image of the Aztec sacred being Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) in Sahagún's "Book I: The Gods" in his *Florentine*

[4] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Spiritual Conflict and Accomodation in New Spain: Toward a Typology of Aztec Responses to Christianity," *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400-1800: Anthropology and History*, Ed. George A. Collier, Renato I. Rosaldo, and John D. Wirth (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 363.

Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain [1575-1578] reads "Chicomecoatl es otro diosa Ceres" because Sahagún made a connection between the agricultural associations of both deities; Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) was associated with sustenance and maize, while the Roman goddess Ceres was associated with agriculture (particularly grain crops) and fertility.[5] While the difference of the very nature of the god-presence between Aztec "deities" and their ontology still provokes much contemporary scholarly debate, it is becoming increasingly evident that unlike Greek and Roman deities, Mesoamerican sacred beings cannot be understood as a part of a rigidly hierarchal pantheon-like structure. This is an inherent difference between Aztec and Classical religions.

Another European predisposition transposed onto native religion was the deities' personification or appearance in human form. However, pre-Hispanic sacred beings were polymorphous, meaning that they were neither distinct individuals nor necessarily manifested in a specific form, human or otherwise. After the arrival of Europeans, *teotl* ("sacred" or "exceptional" in Nahuatl) was a term closely associated with the Christian God. Alonso de Molina defines *teotl* as "dios" or "god" in *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana y Mexicana y Castellana (1571)*.[6] However, he demonstrates that when *teotl* is used in compound words, the

[5] The Greco-Roman lens through which the Spaniards viewed the New World was the subject of the 2010 exhibition, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa in Malibu. By comparing material objects from these ancient cultures, this exhibition was able to historicize the European way of viewing ancient Mexico and emphasize the imposition of Classical models on pre-contact deity effigies.

[6] Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana y Mexicana y Castellana (1571)* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2004), 101.

meaning shifts to something closer to "sacred" or "exceptional." For example, *calli* means "house" in Nahuatl, but when *teotl* is added to it to make the compound word *teocalli*, the meaning of the word changes to "sacred house" or "temple." Thus, *teotl* can be defined as an Aztec sacred essence. This differs from Christianity because the Aztecs believed that the natural world could be imbued with this divine presence, whereas in Christianity only the signs of divinity might be found in nature or as a part of natural phenomena, without containing divinity themselves. Therefore, defining *teotl* as "god" is problematic because it is too closely tied to Christian notions of the sacred and does not account for the Aztec worldview. Thus, *teotl* is a term for an invisible sacred essence, a descriptor rather than a material object. The Aztec concept of *teotl* is about something marvelous, reverential, or exclusive that can manifest in a physical form, but does not necessarily have to be a conventional representation of a deity. It is a multivalent term that can modify things in order to make them extraordinary, whether it is jet, turquoise, or amaranth dough shaped to create a sacred being.[7] However, it is primarily evoked to describe a spiritual essence associated with the manifestation of a sacred being.

In his pioneering and still useful essay on *teotl* and *ixiptla*, Arild Hvidtfeldt compared *teotl* to the Polynesian concept of *mana*, a supernatural power or influence that cannot be defined outside of its cultural context.[8] Further, archaeologist Michael

[7] Bassett, *The Fate of Earthly Things,* 91.

[8] Arild Hvidtfeldt, *Teotl and *Ixiptlatli: Some Central Conceptions in Ancient Mexican Religion*, (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1958), 20-23.

E. Smith argues that *teotl* does not mean "god," as it is traditionally translated by colonial chroniclers and early Mesoamerican scholars, because Aztec sacred beings did not always have a human form; rather, they are better viewed as invisible spirits whose roles, natures, and forms merged.[9] This is what I refer to as sacred essence, which is an animating property imbued in objects when transformed into something divine.

On the other hand, while Aztec sacred beings could be depicted in anthropomorphic form, they were primarily recognized by their insignia and their roles, rather than their physical forms. *Teixiptla* is the Nahuatl term used to describe manifestations or images of *teotl* that could be embodied by human beings as impersonators or in sculptures and painted images.[10] The Nahuatl term *teixiptla* is generally translated as an image, likeness, representation, representative, or an impersonator.[11] The word is a compound of two nouns, a prefix (*te*-, meaning an unspecific human object, or his, hers, its *ixiptla*), and a causative suffix (*-tla*). The nouns that make up the core of the word are *ix(tli)*, meaning an eye, face or surface, and *xip*, meaning flaying or something that is flayed. It literally means "a flayed-

[9] Smith, *The Aztecs*, 199.

[10] Carolyn Dean, "The Trouble With (the Term) Art," *Art Journal* 65, no 2 (2006): 24-32. Dean argues that scholars should use indigenous terms, categories and epistemologies whenever possible, rather than using the term "art." Indigenous terms and concepts often lose their original meanings when translated. Following Dean, I will use the Nahuatl terms *teotl* and *teixiptla* in this paper, rather than their translations.

[11] Karttunen, *Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, 115. Karttunen draws heavily on the colonial dictionary of Fray Alonso Molina and the previous work of Rémi Siméon in the compilation of this dictionary. I am grateful for the help provided by John Sullivan and Molly Bassett in my understanding of the meaning and morphology of these Nahuatl terms.

surface thing."[12] This can be interpreted as a person who has been stripped of their marked social skin in order to transform into something else entirely. Alfredo López Austin argues that Aztec deities reside in their images and relics, thus emphasizing the connection between materiality and sacrality. More specifically, López Austin states that "men destined for sacrifice were temporarily converted into receptacles of divine fire," where the phrase "receptacle of divine fire" is another metaphor for *teotl*.[13] Like López Austin, Inga Clendinnen views *teotl* as a form of sacred power that can be contained in an *ixiptla*. Emphasizing the dynamic and elastic qualities of *teotl*, Clendinnen contends that "*ixiptlas* were everywhere, the sacred powers represented in what we would call multiple media in any particular festival—in a stone image, richly dressed and accoutered for the occasion; in elaborately constructed seed-dough figures; in the living body of the high priest in his divine regalia, and in the living god-image he would kill; human, vegetable and mineral *ixiptlas*."[14] Davíd Carrasco argues that *teotl ixiptla* can be individuals or objects whose essence has been turned into gods.[15] He emphasizes the magical qualities of *teotl*, where *teotl* is the invisible essence and *ixiptla* is the vessel. This concept lies at

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[12] Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, 121, 228, 325. According to Karttunen, the word *teixiptla* is made up of three compounds: *teotl*, *ixtli*, and *xip*. She defines *teotl* as "god," *ixtli* as "face, surface, eye," and *xip* as "an element in numerous compounds and derivations [that] refers to peeling, flaying, shaving, etc."

[13] Alfredo López Austin, *The Human Body and Ideology: Concepts Among the Ancient Nahuas*, Trans. Thelma Ortiz de Montellano and Bernard Ortiz de Montellano (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 337.

[14] Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 252.

[15] Davíd Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 131.

the crux of my argument that the *teixiptla* is a human or object that has been transfigured through performance and costume to contain *teotl.* In other words, *teotl* is the invisible essence and *ixiptla* is the outward container—*teotl* is called forth by the creation of a visible *ixiptla. Teotl* is materialized and visualized in the creation and performance of an *ixiptla*.

Aztec elite and the religious leaders were responsible for the ritual activities that surrounded and animated the physical representations of *teotl*. For Aztecs, certain bold optical cues (such as costume, headdress, procession, maize food products, specific colors, or offerings) allowed *teotl* to be visualized. These accoutrements and contextual elements acted as visual metaphors for sacrality. In addition, the participants in the relevant ceremonies had to behold—directly and visually confront—the *teixiptla* for the *teixiptla* to become a part of their sacred reality.

In addition to differing concepts regarding the ontology of images and nature of sacred presence, a lack of rigid dualism was another varience between how Aztecs perceived their gods and understood their respective universes. At the time of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, Christian dualism espoused clear oppositions and moral absolutes: human and divine, good and evil, God and Satan. Conversely, Aztec cosmovision focused more intently on a balance between order and chaos, in other words, in a complementarity of opposites. According to Louise Burkhart, "Disharmony was as necessary as harmony. Creative, ordering forces and destructive, chaotic forces were two sides of the same coin, each dependent upon the

other for its functioning."[16] Even Aztec deities often had both hostile and benevolent qualities. Europeans, however, did not understand the Aztec interpretation of duality, meaning the fluid incorporation of disparate qualities in one deity; they distorted this concept of the Amerindian sacred by focusing on the malevolent aspects and transforming the deities from amoral beings into devils. Aztec deities were also depicted as demonic in visual material; for example, missionaries like Sahagún believed that the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli was an incarnation of the Christian devil and was illustrated as such in some colonial documents.[17] Evangelists used the diabolical analogy as an excuse to identify and eradicate any native worship of indigenous sacred beings.

The indigenous concept of a fluid duality extended beyond the deities themselves and into the sacred landscape. Aztecs understood their universe as having two important and interlocking components: the material world in which humans live and the spiritual world. Unlike Euro-Christian ways of thought, however, the two worlds were not separated; rather, they worked together symbiotically and were completely interchangeable. The dual opposition of contrary, yet complementary, elements are preeminent in the Mesoamerican worldview. More specifically, Aztec ideology included ideas of dualism, fluid reality, *nepantla*, and animism. As discussed, duality involved the oppositional but complementary forces (life and death, and male and female) that were also cyclical as the alternation of wet and dry

[16] Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 37.

[17] Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 2 (1989): 1–107.

seasons. However, these categories were permeable because the Aztecs believed in the transitory nature of reality. They also believed that their world had dynamism, equilibrium, and ephemerality, meaning nothing in their universe was permanent and it was their responsibility to find a balance. *Nepantla* ("in the middle," a phenomenon first recorded by Diego Durán) was a negotiation of the in-between positions in which oppositions and complements were recognized and moderated.[18] In other words, compromise and managing to find a balance between extremes was a part of the general Aztec worldview and, thus, governed daily life.

Since there is no coeval alphabetic record that reveals pre-Hispanic religious beliefs, scholars use pictorial codices, alphabetic ethnohistories, and extant material culture to interpret ancient Andean and Mesoamerican thought.[19] Scholars depend on ethnohistorical documents, indigenous languages and their use of metaphor, and archaeological data to better grasp indigenous concepts of the sacred. Despite the European modes of interpretation and representation, sixteenth-century Spanish

[18] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 410-411. "Once I questioned an Indian regarding certain things. In particular I asked him why he had gone about begging, spending bad nights and worse days, and why, after having gathered so much money with such trouble, he offered a fiesta, invited the entire town, and spent everything. Thus I reprehended him for the foolish thing he had done, and he answered, 'Father, do not be astonished; we are still *nepantla*.' Although I understood what that metaphorical word means, that is to say, 'in the middle,' I insisted that he tell me which 'in the middle' he referred to. The native told me that, since the people were not yet well rooted in the Faith, I should not marvel at the fact that they were neither fish nor fowl; they were governed by neither one religion nor the other. Or, better said, they believed in God and also followed their ancient heathen rites and customs. And this is what the Indian meant in his despicable excuse when he stated that the people still were 'in the middle' and were 'neither fish nor fowl.'"

[19] In Mesoamerica, one could argue that there are pictorial manuscripts that are close to Aztec in style and iconography, such as Mixtec manuscripts, particularly if one supports the idea of a pan-Mesoamerican cultural tradition. In addition, although the *Codex Borbonicus* was likely created ca. 1522-1540 just a few years post conquest (perhaps a colonial copy), it is in a pre-conquest Aztec style, format, and is made from pre-conquest materials.

ethnohistorical documents, such as Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (1558-1560) and *The Florentine Codex* (1575-1577), are valuable to our understanding of pre-Hispanic concepts of the sacred. Like modern ethnographers, Sahagún interviewed Nahua informants in their native language (Nahuatl), compared related testimony, and emphasized linguistics. Not only did Sahagún use native informants, but he also employed indigenous scribes and artists. While the images in Sahagúntine material generally display a certain amount of European stylistic influence, and are not completely a part of an ongoing native tradition, they are still created by native hands.[20] The *Primeros Memoriales* is of particular importance because it is the earliest transcription of what the elder informants communicated at Tepeapulco, a city northeast of Tenochtitlan; therefore, the images in this book are closer to the traditional visual systems of Mesoamerica than others. In addition to traditional images, native language also provides an avenue for understanding native ideas. The Franciscan Alonso de Molina, whose lexicon is a result of his work with Sahagún, demonstrates that the nuance of language can provide a more complex understanding of certain foreign concepts.[21] For example, both the Nahuas and the European friars used metaphoric language and visual metaphor as conceptual systems, particularly in

[20] For further discussion of European stylistic influence in Sahagúntine material see Jeanette Favrot Peterson's "The Florentine Codex Imagery and the Colonial Tlacuilo" and Eloise Quiñones Keber's "Reading Images: The Making and Meaning of the Sahaguntine Illustrations," In *The Work of Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, eds. José Jorge Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber (New York: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies at SUNY-Albany, 1988).

[21] Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana y Mexicana y Castellana (1571)*, (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2004).

religious contexts.[22] Kay Read also relies on indigenous languages, particularly metaphors, in her discussion of Sahagún's description of the rites of passage for a dead ruler. According to Read, the subtle metaphors refer to both the mythic landscape where the ritual takes place and the process of transformation from death and decay to the life-sustaining fertilizer of the bountiful earth.[23] The transitory nature of the ruler's animistic essence as it moves from the earth's surface to Mictlan (Land of the Dead) is similar to the fluid nature of *teotl* or sacred essence.

Additionally, archaeological data provides material evidence of the rituals depicted and described in ethnohistoic documents. Leonardo López Luján's archaeological excavations of the offerings buried at the base of the Aztec Templo Mayor have provided material data for understanding the religious significance of gifts presented by humans to their deities during ritual celebrations. According to López Luján, the blue water pitchers evenly distributed in the six offerings of Complex N on the northern side of the Templo Mayor associated with Tlaloc, have two purposes: they represent the pouring of precious water during a ceremony and they act as a watery surface for the Tlaloc temple.[24]

Another example of the material evidence of imperial Aztec religion is the iconography on the monumental stone sculptures located at the Templo Mayor in

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[22] Lara, *Christian Texts for Aztecs*.

[23] Kay Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 36.

[24] Leonardo López Luján, *The Offerings of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan*, Trans. Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano and Thelma Ortiz de Montellano (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 167. Tlaloc is the Aztec sacred being associated with water, rain, and agricultural fertility.

Tenochtitlan. Almost all of these immense, finely-carved sculptures found in situ allude to or explicitly show human sacrifice, which was an essential part of the religious practice and political objectives at the state level.

Aztec Imperial Stone Sculpture

What has become the most iconic Aztec imperial stone sculptures have been discovered and excavated within the sacred precinct of Tenochtitlan, primarily in and around the base of the Templo Mayor. The following sculptural examples, regardless of their iconography and shape, are massive, finely-carved monoliths that have both religious and political themes. They were created to inspire awe and fear on their audiences, which was made up of all classes of people from city dwellers to provincial visitors. I show that certain themes were common in the capital in order to highlight how the provincial sculptural programs diverged from the imperial norm.

The so-called "Calendar Stone," or Sun Stone, was discovered in 1790 during repairs on the Mexico City Cathedral (Catedral Metropolitana de la Asunción de María). The Sun Stone, carved during the reign of Motecuhzoma II (1502-1520), is 13.5 feet in diameter, carved from a single piece of basalt, and was found lying flat on the ground which is how it would have originally been displayed (Figure 15). Trace amounts of paint on the sculpture reveal that it was originally polychromed in red, white, ochre, and blue-green. In its carved motifs, it references some of the central components of Aztec cosmography. For the Aztecs, time was cyclical and the four previous iterations of the world were catastrophically destroyed, and the present

age is the fifth world or "sun."[25] The fifth world was predicted to come to an end on a *Nahui* (Four) *Ollin* (Movement, or Earthquake) day unless humans offered sacrifice to the cosmos. The central image on the Sun Stone is a representation of the fifth "sun" signified by the calendrical sign 4 *Ollin* (Figure 15). The sculpture also makes reference to the sacred calendar (Tonalpohualli) because the inner circle glyphically symbolizes the 20 day names of said calendar. Each rectangular section that make up the inner circle around the *Ollin* sign contains a day glyph.[26] The prominence of the calendrical sign *Ollin*, and the inclusion of the day names of the sacred calendar, indicates that this sculpture can be read as a warning of what is to befall the Aztecs if they do not continually provide sacrifice to their deities. Additionally, the central image inside of the *Ollin* sign further illustrates the sacrificial theme of this sculpture. Traditional interpretation is that image in center is the deity Tonatiuh (Sun), but this does not match up with other day sun images.[27] Rather, the face is likely of the earth deity Tlaltecuhtli (Earth Deity) because of a number of iconographic elements: the head faces forward, has a flint knife for a tongue, and clawed hands are also depicted. This sculpture represents a menacing

[25] Thelma D. Sullivan, trans., *A Scattering of Jades: Stories, Poems, and Prayers of the Aztecs*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994): 64-67. The Aztecs believed that the cosmos came to an end four previous times. The first time, a great flood carried the sun away. The second time, the sun and the giants who inhabited the earth were consumed by felines. The third time, the world ended in fiery rain. And the fourth time, the sun was carried off by the wind.

[26] The day glyphs are as follows: *Cipactli* (Crocodile), *Ehecatl* (Wind), *Calli* (House), *Cuetzpallin* (Lizard), *Coatl* (Serpent), *Miquiztli* (Death), *Mazatl* (Deer), *Tochtli* (Rabbit), *Atl* (Water), *Itzcuitli* (Dog), *Ozomatli* (Monkey), *Malinalli* (Plant, Grass), *Acatl* (Reed), *Ocelotl* (Jaguar), *Cuauhtli* (Eagle), *Cozcacuauhtli* (Vulture), *Ollin* (Movement), *Tecpatl* (Flint or Obsidian), *Quiahuitl* (Rain), and *Xochitl* (Flower).

[27] Cecelia Klein, "The Identity of the Central Deity on the Aztec Calendar Stone." *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 1 (1976): 1-12.

reminder that ritual sacrifice on behalf of the entire empire was necessary for the cosmos to continue and the empire to prosper. Politically, the date *Ce* (One) *Tecpatl* (Flint) that is represented as a glyph to the right of the ray above the *Ollin* (Movement, or Earthquake) sign corresponds with an important historical date: the Aztecs defeated the Tepanecs in 1428, cementing their dominance in the Valley of Mexico.[28] With that in mind, the visual record of cataclysmic cycles on the Sun Stone represents both the political power of the Aztec empire as well as its essential role in obtaining blood sacrifice. Calendrical records and human sacrifice were, of course, essential parts of all Mesoamerican cultures, but the theme shows up visually most often in imperial sculpture as political propaganda.

A second monument to imperial strategies is recorded in 1978 when the Coyolxauhqui Stone was found in situ at the base of the Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird on the Left) side of the Templo Mayor (Figure 4). It measures approximately 10 feet in diameter on average, weighs eight tons, and is made of volcanic stone.[29] The Coyolxauhqui Stone is a carved relief of a sprawling dismembered nude woman, identified as the Aztec deity Coyolxauhqui (Bells, Her Cheeks) by the carved bells on her cheeks and by the sculpture's location at the

[28] Emily Umberger, "Aztec Sculptures, Hieroglyphs and History," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1981), 193-208.

[29] The base of the sculpture is about 9.8 inches high and the relief adds an additional 3.9 inches, which makes it a significantly deeper relief than other monumental sculpted disks found at the Templo Mayor, including the Sun Stone and the Tizoc Stone. In addition, there is little evidence of wear on the relief surface, indicating that it was not meant to be walked upon or used as a sacrificial stone, which also contrasts with the Sun Stone and the Tizoc Stone.

bottom of the pyramid where sacrificial victims were thrown.[30] Like the Sun Stone, there is evidence it was once painted: dark red on the background, blue on the masks that cover the knees and elbows, bright yellow on the excess skin, and ochre on the face, torso, arms, and legs.[31] The paint is no longer visible because it was removed when the sculpture was washed directly after it was unearthed after its initial excavation.[32] The body itself is naturally proportioned and the head is bent backward and is shown in profile. The upper torso is depicted frontally, while the hips are twisted to the right. The head and the arms and legs have been disarticulated from the body. The breasts are exposed and seem to be flaccid and distended. Although the torso is bare, the costume elements that remain are quite elaborate, and major parts like the headdress, *maxtlatl* (loincloth), and sandals are all clearly male warrior

[30] A brief version of the myth of Coyolxauhqui and her mother, Coatlicue, is as follows. It begins when Coatlicue became pregnant with her son Huitzilopochtli by coming into contact with eagle feathers while she was sweeping on top of a hill. Her daughter, Coyolxauhqui, led her four hundred brothers in an attack against their mother because they believed her pregnancy to be dishonorable. Coyolxauhqui's mission was thwarted when Huitzilopochtli sprang from Coatlicue as an armed and full-grown being. Huitzilopochtli drove his brothers away and killed his sister Coyolxauhqui, then threw her body down Coatepec. Her dismembered body landed in pieces at the bottom of the mountain.

[31] Molly Bassett and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Coloring the Sacred in Sixteenth-Century central Mexico," in *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800*, ed. Andrea Feeser, Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 45-64.

[32] Carmen Aguilera, *Coyolxauhqui: The Mexica Milky Way*, (Lancaster: Labyrinthos, 2001), 1-3. Aguilera witnessed these colors when she arrived at the excavation site at dawn on February 23, 1978, the day after the Coyolxauhqui Stone was discovered. At that point, it was still in the earth. The haste to wash the mud, and thus the paint, off of the Coyolxauhqui Stone before it could be properly documented was due to an imminent site visit by the Mexican President.

costume elements.[33] Her other ornamentation includes striped anklets that are tied onto her leg with knots that rest on the top of her feet, and wristlets decorated with rows of small circles and a series of dangling bells. According to Umberger, it is likely that this image is not merely an illustration of a mythic character, but also that the deity metaphorically represented the defeated Tlateloco ruler, Moquihuix (1460-1473), who was thrown from the Templo Mayor at the conclusion of the civil war between Tlateloco and Tenochtitlan.[34] This specific historic reading can also be interpreted more generally, with the female Coyolxauhqui representing all defeated and humiliated peoples. This monumental sculpture originally situated at the base of the Templo Mayor represented a mythic character, which was a visual metaphor for the penalties of disobedience to prescribed norms and actively rebelling against the powerful Aztec state. It is also important to note that sacrificial victims were often prisoners of war. The analysis of the Coyolxauhqui Stone's iconography as both a defeated woman and a sacrificial victim and her in situ context is yet another example of stone sculptures that commemorated the intertwined nature of Aztec politics and religion.

Coyolxuaqui's mythical mother, Coatlicue, is also depicted in a monumental stone sculpture at the Templo Mayor. The Great Coatlicue portrays a fearsome being with female characteristics, notable breasts, and the serpent skirt that evokes her

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[33] See Patricia R. Anawalt's *Indian Clothing Before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices* (1981) for a more detailed description of all of the various warrior costume elements and where they appear in the ethnohistoric documents.

[34] Emily Umberger, "The Metaphorical Underpinnings of Aztec History: The case of the 1473 civil war," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18 (2007): 1-19.

name Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt). It is an intricately carved block of black stone that is freestanding and, like other monumental sculptures, was originally painted in a number of bright colors (Figure 3).[35] It stands at approximately 2.5 meters in height (close to eight feet) and 1.6 meters (5.25 feet) at the shoulders of the figure, its widest point. The base is 1.1 meters (approximately 3.61 feet) wide and 1.15 (approximately 4.92) meters deep. The sculpture likely stood in the sacred precinct of the Templo Mayor after its creation, and may have been one of a cluster of similar sculptures.[36] The hieroglyphic date on the sculpture's back above the prominent skull, 12 Acatl or 12 Reed, dates the sculpture to circa 1491 during the reign of Ahuitzotl (1486-1502).[37] Stylistically, the sculpture is fully rounded and deeply carved. The complex details combine realism and a geometric composition. It is bilaterally symmetrical, forms a cross-like shape from the front, and leans slightly forward, looming over the viewer below.

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[35] There is some discrepancy about the identification of the material used for this sculpture. León y Gama (1832, p. 34) identifies the material specifically as sandstone, Humboldt (1814, p. 40) identifies it as basaltic porphyry, Pasztory identifies it as basalt (1998, p. 91), and Boone as andesite (1999, p. 189).

[36] Elizabeth Boone, "Coatlicues at the Templo Mayor," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 10, no. 2 (1999): 189-206. Boone reconceptualizes the Great Coatlicue as a part of this larger set of monumental statues and argues that they represented the *tzitzimime* who are celestial demons that devoured all humans if the sun failed to rise and set. Boone concludes that the presence of the *tzitzimime* at the Templo Mayor indicates Huitzilopochtli's victory over darkness and ultimate supremacy in Aztec society. However, I suggest that if the monumental sculptures are indeed *tzitzimime*, then they should be interpreted in relation to Coyolxauhqui rather than Huitzilopochtli because of the iconographic similarity of decapitation and dismemberment. Metaphorically, the *tzitzimime* also embody an element of warning against improper conduct. These sculptures do not necessarily depict *tzitzimime* that have been vanquished by Huitzilopochtli, but of the possibility of terror due to a lack of control by those in power.

[37] Emily Umberger, "Aztec Sculptures, Hieroglyphs and History," (1981), 77-78.

The Great Coatlicue depicts an anthropomorphic figure with an open wound where the head would have been located, and the spurting blood is represented by two serpent heads. The two fanged serpents that represent the head face one another so that the profile of each serpent's head are conjoined to form one half of the frontal face. The hands are also missing, replaced by fanged serpent heads raised to shoulder height in a menacing fashion. Two more serpents fall head first to the ground between the figure's legs, one in the front and one in the back, interpreted either as a male loincloth or menstrual blood.[38] The breasts are exposed, though partially covered by a necklace of alternating human hearts and hands, with a human cranium pendant that hangs in the front. The necklace is tied at the back of the neck. The other decorative costume elements include fringed wrist bands and leg bands with stylized feathers and bells. The figure also wears a belt made of a double-headed serpent, with the heads hanging in the front, directly underneath the skull pendant. The serpent belt has a large skull attached to the back, as well as a two-tiered back apron that is decorated with large feathers. The figure stands on legs decorated with ornamental costume elements and ending in the huge clawed feet of a bird. The underside is carved with an elaborate depiction of a fanged crouching creature, a common motif for sculptural bases because the figure is associated with the earth and is often identified as an "earth monster."[39] Most important, however, for

[38] Boone, "Coatlicues at the Templo Mayor," 189-206.

[39] For a brief history of the identification of this figure, see Boone, "Coatlicues at the Templo Mayor," 191-192.

purposes of identification and metaphorical interpretation, is its interwoven serpent skirt and female characteristics.

The Great Coatlicue, like most monumental Aztec sculpture, is a multivalent image that can be read on a number of levels. It is clear that the close relationship between Mexica religion and politics characteristic of all imperial sculptures in also exemplified here. Both the image of Coatlicue, and the myth from which it is derived, reinforce the Aztec message that strict adherence to traditional norms of conduct benefits society because it brings order; conversely, any subversion of these rules is dangerous because it causes disorder and devastation. Ultimately, the message conveyed by this sculpture signifies the liminality between control and chaos and acts as a visual warning of the potential apocalyptic destruction of the Aztecs.

Finally, several monumental stone sculptures of Tlaltecuhtli (Earth Lord) have been discovered in the sacred precinct of Tenochtitlan, but none are as massive and have such well-preserved colors as the one unearthed in October 2006 by an excavation team lead by archaeologist Leonardo López Luján (Figure 18). The Tlaltecuhtli Monolith was uncovered just ten feet away from the Templo Mayor on the north side, facing upwards and broken into four large pieces. It weighs 12 tons and measures 13.75 feet by 11.9 feet and is 1.25 feet deep, making it larger than the Sun Stone. It was carved from a pinkish andesite stone and has distinct traces of red, ochre, white, blue, and black paint on it. The Tlaltecuhtli Monolith is similar to other depictions of this deity because of the wide lipless mouth, clawed hands and feet,

and flexed arms pointing upwards. The long spurt of blood streams from Tlaltecuhtli's tongue acts as a powerful visual representation of this deity's desire for human sacrifice as necessary sustenance. In spite of its gender-neutral name, the figure is clearly female because it is positioned in a birthing or "hocker" posture, legs akimbo. In addition, she wears a skirt decorated with a crossed bones motif and is adorned with a necklace made of alternating skulls and bones that is similar to that depicted on the Great Coatlicue, just described. Iconographically, the Tlaltecuhtli Monolith emphasizes the duality of the earth goddess complex by depicting both generative and destructive elements.

Since 2006, López Luján and his team have discovered a pit beside the Tlaltecuhtli monolith with a number of rich offerings. The first offering included 21 white flint sacrificial knives painted red, a bundle wrapped in agave leaves containing sacrificial perforators made of jaguar bone, bars of copal, feathers, and jade beads. Below this bundle was a stone box that held the skeletons of two golden eagles, 27 sacrificial knives, 24 of which were decorated with fur and jewelry.[40] An elaborately decorated canine (dog or wolf) was found at the bottom of the stone box; it was covered in seashells, coral, clams, crabs, snails (from the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans), and wore a collar made of jade beads, turquoise earspools, and bracelets with gold bells. According to Aztec cosmology, canines served as guides to their master's souls across a dangerous underworld body of water, evocatively respresented by the marine artifacts. As of 2010, a total of six

[40] Robert Draper, "Unburying the Aztec," *National Geographic* 218, no. 5 (2010): 110-135.

offerings have been discovered and archaeologically excavated in the pit, each with additional precious objects such as earspools, figurines, and a ceramic jar filled with 310 greenstone beads. The Tlaltecuhtli Monolith's likely role comes from the location where it was found: Spanish chroniclers, such as Durán and Alvarado Tezozómoc, have all pointed to the fact that several Aztec rulers, including Axayácatl, Tizoc and Ahuítzotl, were cremated and buried between the Templo Mayor and the *tzompantli* (skull rack).[41] Since the Tlaltecuhtli Monolith is dated with 10 Rabbit beneath the lower left claw, which is the year Ahuitzotl (Water Rat) died, it is likely that it is a funerary slab with a tomb further below. In June and July of 2007, ground-breaking radar scans of the spot where the monolith was found have revealed up to four hollow chambers, further indicating that this was the site of a royal tomb with the Tlaltecuhtli Monolith functioning as a lid to that tomb. Thus, this sculpture was buried and hidden, but acted as a reminder of the propagative and voracious powers of the Tlaltecuhtli (Earth Deity), which was a symbol for the earth itself, and in this funerary context, also demonstrated the ruler's role in delicately balancing those cosmic forces.

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[41] Durán, *The Aztecs,* 382-386. "The nobles cast the corpse [of Ahuitzotl], splendidly dressed as described, into the fire. At this point the priests picked up their sacrificial knives and, one by one, they sacrificed the slaves that the visiting sovereigns and chieftains had offered. They cast them on their backs upon the wooden drum with which the death music had been played and then they opened the slaves' chests, taking out their hearts. These hearts were thrown upon the burning body and all night the cadaver and the hearts smoldered until they were consumed. The ashes and riches worn by the king and by the slaves were gathered and placed in a new urn and buried next to the Sun Stone, the *cuauhxicalli* or "eagle vessel." This is the stone that today stands near the door of the Cathedral in the city of Mexico. Together with this urn was buried all the treasure that had not been burned. This treasure consisted of all that the noblemen had offered to the deceased king and the fine things that Ahuitzotl had in his chamber. These customs were a regular practice among these people." See also Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica Mexicana*, (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1944), 391-392.

Each of the four monumental stone sculptures described above is related to sacrifice and also bear images that communicate a political message and support the ruling elite in the stratified Aztec urban society. Artistic expressions at the state level, such as official stone sculpture, were crucial components of the ideology of the Aztec empire, combining militaristic, cosmological, and mythohistorical components.

Provincial Stone Sculpture

Although many of the provincial stone sculptures excavated depict female beings, they tend to deviate from the imperial standard just examined. They are not closely tied to themes of sacrifice and imperial control as described previously, but rather these sculptures primarily show agricultural deities that promote agrarian fecundity.

The stone sculpture of Chicomecoatl from the Toluca Valley featured at the beginning of this chapter is one of many female agricultural deities discovered in an outlying region (Figure 6). There is a discrepancy between the female deities in the center and periphery: the outliers seem to echo the metropolitan models, but are also distinct in that they emphasize the connection to the earth through agriculture. In this example from the Toluca Valley, the figure's most prominent feature is a rectilinear *amacalli* headdress decorated with knots and rosettes, which is comparable to those on official examples. She clutches maize cobs in both hands. Similarly, the stone deity effigy excavated at the site of Calixtlahuaca highlighted in the introduction of

this dissertation depicts a female agricultural deity defined by a large *amacalli* headdress that is also decorated with a knot and rosettes (Figure 2). These two stone sculptures are not, of course, the only lithic representations of female agricultural deities from the outlying regions of the Aztec empire. There are more than 50 agricultural deities that have been excavated from provincial areas in my inventory, most from the Toulca Valley. Of the 30 stone sculptures in my catalog that are specifically from the Toluca Valley, eight are kneeling and 12 are standing and they range in size from four inches to 23 inches. While there does not seem to be a distinct Toluca Valley style, a prominent headdress indicative of an agricultural deity is their principal characteristic: nine wear an *amacalli*, seven wear a round banded headdress, and six wear a geometric headdress that is the same basic shape as an *amacalli*. These headdresses mark the sculptures as sacred, regardless of whether they are used in official religious practices or in local or familiar rituals.

Another example of a provincial stone agricultural deity is the 14-inch sculpture labelled Chicomecoatl from the Toluca Valley, and now located at the Museum of Anthropology and History in Toluca (Figure 25). This effigy, clearly female due to the rendering of small breasts, holds a pair of maize cobs in each hand and wears a long skirt that goes to the ground and hides her feet. The impassive face shows almond-shaped eyes, an angular nose, a barely furrowed brow, and relaxed lips that are slightly apart. Her distinctive *amacalli* headdress protrudes well above her head and is decorated with a row of points on the very top and two rosettes in either corner. Interestingly, this sculpture has a cavity deliberately drilled into the

chest, indicating that it likely once had an inlay of a precious stone, such as turquoise or obsidian, to represent its heart. The word for heart in Nahuatl, "yollo," means both heart and vitality, as the two are inextricably linked.[42] *Teyolia* (divine fire) resided in the heart of humans or any object that held power—cities, mountains, plants, and sculptures—and was an animating feature. A Chicomecoatl sculpture with an additional heart inlay can clearly be read as a special object imbued with sacred essence.

Unlike the sculptures described above, the five stone sculptures of female maize deities in my catalog from the provincial city of Malinalco, which is located in the modern state of Mexico southwest of Mexico City, are not as finely carved (Figures 26-30). They range in size from 10 inches high to 23 inches high, and they lack details to define clothing or facial features. Although these sculptures do not show the skillfully honed artisanship as others in this study, they all have large and clearly identifiable *amacalli* headdresses with varying degrees of ornamentation, in some cases the horizontal twisted cords or rosettes. The boxy headdresses that flank and frame the facial area unmistakably mark these figures as deified *teixipltahuan* because the headdress is a sign of divinity worn by the deity-representative.

Provincial stone sculptures are generally quite rudimentary in their craftsmanship, especially when compared to their imperial counterparts. These more abstracted effigies lack artistic refinement, but their materiality or stoniness rather than their appearance made them potent and effective as *teixipltahuan.* Smaller

[42] López Austin, *The Human Body and Ideology*, 212.

figural carvings were more easily manipulated than metropolitan sculptures, and could be carried, fed, dressed, honored with offerings, and processed to sacred locations. According to Durán, in reference to portable stone sculptures of the female deity Cihuacoatl (Snake Woman),

> "The idols were taken out whenever it was necessary to perform a special feast for them or when their day arrived or when their help was needed. They were carried out in a procession to the woods, to the mountains, or to the caves from which they had taken their names. There, in that cave or in that forest, they were presented with the usual offerings and sacrifices, and the mountain was invoked for some special need—lack of water, a plague or famine, or a future war."[43]

This example from the sixteenth-century chronicle of Durán highlights the fact that *teixiptlahuan* were called upon in desperate times for the community, and emphasizes the importance of ritual for their effective activation.

The imperial Aztecs of Central Mexico used visual culture in a propagandistic fashion in order to disseminate and reinforce certain religious, economic and political ties with their provincial territories. Aztec agricultural deities conform to the message of the official monumental corpus of female earth goddesses in and around the sacred precinct of the capital because these deities were venerated as a part of a strictly prescribed calendric ritual schedule. However, agricultural deity sculptures also deviate from state-level rhetoric because they accentuate the centrality of the agrarian economy and the welfare of local people and communities. The prevalence of small-scale agricultural deities in the provinces shows the ubiquitous importance of supernaturals related to subsistence in ceremonial contexts,

[43] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 211.

regardless of location. The function and animation of these agricultural deities during ritual events, as well as their paper accoutrements as depicted in stone, are the topic of the following chapter.

SECTION III: Ephemeral Materials in a Ritual Context—Paper and *Tzoalli* Dough

Chapter 5: Paper: Performing Divinity

The materiality and facture of stone and paper could not be more distinct in their contrasting weight, density, and durability. Yet here these raw materials are linked because the actual ornaments deployed on Aztec deity figures or *teixiptla* in real life ceremonies were fashioned of bark-paper before being permanently represented in clay or stone. This chapter demonstrates how the paper costume elements donned by humans, placed on sculptures of various media, and depicted on sculpted images were used to animate and imbue objects with sacred essence. Paper headdresses are encoded with meaning, pointing to the importance of the visual and performative aspects of the rituals in which female agricultural deities were involved. Bodily adornments, such as headdresses, were understood to elevate someone from mere human to divine *ixiptla.* I argue that the images of Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent), and all fertility effigies, are *teixiptlahuan*, manifestations of a *teotl*. Headdresses fashioned of paper, in particular, were thought to be fashioned of an inherently sacred material.

Headdresses, regardless of their materials, are not always diagnostic attributes of individual deities or characteristics of an individual, but are rather visual reminders of the prominence of the rituals devoted to these deities. Thus, in the case

of impersonators like Chicomecoatl illustrated in the Codex Borbonicus (Figure 5), the headdress creates the identity shift from an Aztec person to a *teixiptla* (*teotl* surrogate) and is the marker of the performed *teotl.* In other words, the headdress should be understood not only as an object to be used to specifically identify a deity, but also as an indicator of an ontological shift in sacrality.

Performed *Teotl*

As we have seen, Aztecs used the term *teotl* to denote the supernatural, whereas they used the term *teixiptla* to describe manifestations of *teotl*; these visualizations of *teotl* could be embodied by human beings in the form of human impersonators or in images across all media. As with the terracotta and stone figurines, humans could also be transformed through performance and certain costume elements. All of the images of maize deities such as Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) and Xilonen (Young Maize) that I analyze could become *teixiptlahuan*, manifestations of a *teotl*, if they were initiated via a ritual performance. Smith speculates that figurines from Aztec provincial sites in Morelos are "anthropomorphic images that were transformed into powerful objects through a ritual or through the application of clothing."[1] Headdresses, whether worn on living or virtual bodies, in particular, are indicative of ceremonial costume and I propose that these headdresses are encoded with meaning, pointing to the importance of the

[1] Smith, "Domestic Ritual at Aztec Provincial Sites in Morelos," 106. Smith's conjecture about the possible use of the figurines is based on ethnographic analogy with certain Hindu traditions.

visual and performative aspects of the rituals in which these deities were involved.[2] Thus, in the case of impersonators, the headdress is the specific part of the ensemble that enables transformation from an ordinary Aztec person to an extraordinary *teixiptla* with *teotl*.

Costumes are a part of the material world but are also an extension of the body itself; in the case of Aztec deities and deity impersonators, costume includes all bodily adornment, including body paint, jewelry, and headdresses. Thus, costume can serve as more than just mere clothing that covers the body—it becomes a "social skin," which includes an entire system of symbols conveying a variety of meanings for both the wearer and the observers.[3] For the Aztecs, the relationship between cloth and skin was more than just a metaphor; bodily adornments were understood to enact a metamorphosis from human to *teixiptla*.

Certain elements of the female maize deity costumes are similar to the basic units of clothing for model Aztec women. Although the *Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]* is a colonial manuscript like the Codex Borbonicus, it is a valuable reference for the study of Aztec clothing because it includes so many pictorial representations

[2] David Kelley, "Costume and Name in Mesoamerica," *Visual Language* 16, no. 1 (1982): 39-48. Kelley hypothesizes that headdresses are primary diagnostic attributes of individual deities, though it is important to note that Kelley's primary area of study is the Maya, and most of his examples in this article come from the Maya region and not from central Mexico.

[3] Terence Turner, "The Social Skin," *Not Work Alone: A Cross-Cultural View of Activities Superfluous to Survival*, Eds. Jeremy Cherfas and Roger Lewin (London: Temple Smith, 1980), 140. Turner argues that "the conventionalized modifications of skin and hair that comprise the 'social skin' define, not individuals, but categories or classes of individuals" and that "the system of bodily adornment as a whole (all of the transformations of the 'social skin' considered as a set) defines each class in terms of its relations with all the others."

of everyday life.[4] This manuscript contains three distinct sections: a history of the Aztec rulers and their conquests from the founding of Tenochtitlan in 1325 until the Spanish conquest, a list of the towns and provinces conquered by the Aztecs and the tribute they paid, and a more Europeanized description of daily Aztec life. Each of these three parts has both drawings and Spanish glosses. Of particular interest is a series of idealized illustrations of the life cycle that depicts children as they grow, learn the tasks assigned to each of the sexes, and are granted gendered costume attributes accordingly. The illustrations start with a baby naming ceremony. Folio 57r (Figure 31) depicts an elderly woman holding an unclothed baby over a reed mat that has gendered attributes on either side. Arrows, a shield, and various crafts-persons' tools indicate a male child, and a broom, a spindle whorl, and a basket indicate a girl. Folio 57v shows children at ages three, four, five and six engaged in family chores. The boys are directed to carry loads of wood and grain, while the girls are shown how to use the spindle whorl by their mothers. Folio 59v (Figure 32) shows that as the children grow older, the boys learn to harvest, row a boat, and fish, while the girls learn the more domesticated tasks of grinding maize, food preparation, and weaving on a loom. This depiction of transition into adulthood also illustrates typical male and female gendered clothing.[5]

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[4] *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]* is named after Antonio de Mendoza, the viceroy of New Spain, who may have commissioned it. It has been housed in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University since 1659.

[5] Rosemary Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 156. Joyce argues that the transition to adulthood was marked not only by gendered garments of clothing, but also by the use of earspools and adult hairstyles. Since the hair and ears of the female maize deities are generally covered, these costume elements are not examined as a part of

The women and girls each wear a *cueitl*, which is a skirt that is wrapped around the waist and hangs to the ankle or midcalf.[6] An example of this type of skirt is sometimes visible in the illustrations of women throughout the *Codex Mendoza*. Since this garment seems to be common among all classes of Aztec women, it was likely made out of inexpensive and widely available materials, such as cotton, yucca, or palm-fiber cloth. Likenesses of the *cueitl* (skirt) are depicted on stone sculptures of female deities, such as Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) and Xilonen (Young Maize), indicating their female gender via their distinctive garments.

All of the full-length female maize deities that are sculpted with legs and a lower torso are depicted wearing a *cueitl* (skirt). Cecelia Klein argues that skirts can be the generating forces for supernatural power because they are "magical garments."[7] Specifically, she argues that Coatlicue (Serpents, her Skirt) was a personified skirt, which emphasizes the fact that certain costume elements, including those that are inherently feminine, can be more than simple clothing for the body: they can be supernatural and transformative. The *cueitl* (skirt) worn by the women in the *Codex Mendoza* is generally ordinary and without elaboration, with the exception of a single red stripe along the lower hem. However, these garments sometimes had woven or embroidered patterns on the hems or on the entire length of the cloth, as

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this comparative study.

[6] Patricia R. Anawalt, *Indian Clothing Before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981). Anawalt provides more specific accounts of how the garments are constructed.

[7] Cecelia Klein, "The Devil and the Skirt: An Iconographic Inquiry into Prehispanic Nature of the Tzitzimime," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 11, no. 1 (2000): 1-26.

illustrated in Bernardino de Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (Figure 33).[8] Like the women in the *Codex Mendoza*, the *cueitl* worn by the stone female maize deities in my sample are plain, without any apparent patterns or details on the hem (as exemplified by 97 sculptures in my inventory with identifiable skirts).[9] It is possible that this omission was due to working in stone, which may not have allowed for such elaborate detail, in contrast to the ceramic female maize deities that have elaborate decorations on their skirts. It is also possible that the ceramic or stone figures were originally painted with floral details or stripes, but the paint has eroded. Evidence for this includes two ceramic figurines in the inventory: one with a *cueitl* that has a red rhomboidal design (Figure 22), and another with a *cueitl* that is checkered with two red stripes running through each row (Figure 21). However, there is another explanation for the lack of decoration on the stone figures' clothing. Diego Durán was impressed by the rich and skillful embroidery on the Aztec women's skirts, but he mentions that "another type of female dress… was entirely white and this was used by the old and young women who served in the temples," indicating that the

[8] Bernardino de Sahagún*, Primeros Memoriales* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), fol. 56r. In this image, the woman wears a *cueitl* (skirt) with a checkered pattern. The cloth is red, purple, ochre, and turquoise. Her *huipilli* (tunic) is also elaborate: it has red and white vertical stripes and a repeated red, ochre, and turquoise flower pattern along the bottom border.

[9] Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and Felipe R. Solís Olguín, eds., *Aztecs*, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2002), 127; Pasztory, *Aztec Art*, 211. The standing stone figure that has been identified as both Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt) by Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín, and a standing goddess by Pasztory, is an exception to the plain *cueitl* (skirt) (Figure 35). This *cueitl* (skirt) is a stone relief carved to look woven with geometric patterns.

degree of elaboration may have fluctuated according to age, class, professional activity, or ritual context.[10]

The mature women and adolescent girls in the *Codex Mendoza* wear a *huipilli*, which is a sleeveless square tunic that is decorated at the neck with a small rectangular elaboration woven into the yoke region (Figure 31). In contrast, the female maize deities in this study each wear a distinctive triangular shawl or *quechquemitl*. A *quechquemitl* is a cloth garment with a neck hole cut into the center so that it can be pulled over the head, and they usually fall to a point in the front and the back.[11] Like a *cueitl* and a *huipilli* (tunic), a *quechquemitl* (triangular shawl) can be created and worn with varying degrees of elaboration. The *quechquemitl* on the female maize deities is generally decorated with a series of dangling tassels, making them even more decorative and drawing attention to this unique garment. Anawalt, who has done extensive work on pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican costume, notes that some form of the *quechquemitl* was worn by women throughout the various regions of Mesoamerica, but that it was not known to be worn as a part of everyday Aztec attire because it was not depicted or mentioned in any early sixteenth-century Spanish documents.[12] Anawalt argues that the *quechquemitl* carries specific connotations of fertility because it is only worn by women, though I believe this

[10] Durán, *The Aztecs*, 204.

[11] *Quechquemitl* is a compound Nahuatl word where *quechtli* means throat or neck and *quemitl* means garment.

[12] Anawalt, *Indian Clothing Before Cortés*, 211-214. Anawalt suggests that the *quechquemitl* originated in the Gulf Coast region and was later adopted by other Mesoamerican cultures. While it may not have been commonly worn by the Aztecs, the *quechquemitl* is often depicted worn by Mixtec deities in the Borgia Group codices.

interpretation requires further analysis of the wearer's context. The *quechquemitl* is a significant article of clothing because it is highly gendered and specific to ritual events and deities; it may even emulate the garments depicted on visual representations of Toltec and Teotihuacan deities since the Aztecs often appropriated styles from these earlier cultures. An example of a possible Teotihuacano *quechquemitl* can be seen in the image of the Great Goddess at the site of Teotihuacan (Figure 34), acquiring prestige as a marker of antiquity. In other words, a *quechquemitl* is only worn during certain ceremonies, not as an everyday garment, which indicates its special status. Yet if the costume elements that cover the bodies of the female maize deities in this study, such as the *cueitl* and *huipilli*, directly correspond to those of typical Aztec women as represented in the Spanish colonial codices and depicted on stone and ceramic sculptures, then why are these sculpted figures identified as deities at all? The addition of the *quechquemitl* alone is not enough to identify them as divine, but certainly elevates the personage above the ordinary or mundane. For this, we need to turn to headdresses, which are only worn by females on ceremonial occasions.

The female *teixiptlahuan* wear two different types of elaborate headdresses that indicate their extraordinary status because they are only recorded during ceremonial occasions. The first headdress type, that I call the "round banded headdress," is featured on sculptures that are most commonly identified by contemporary scholars as Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt) or Xilonen (Young Maize) (Figure 35). It consists of multiple cords wound around the head, edged

along the uppermost and lowermost cords with a series of little spherical decorations. A simulated pleated paper fan is attached to the back of the headdress. In the front, bulky balls cover the ears on both sides of the head, from which dangle large tassels. The *amacalli* is the second type of headdress worn by agricultural deities. It is much more elaborate and is worn by the sculptures that are usually classified as Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) (Figure 6).[13] Pasztory argues that all deities that wear the "temple headdress" are maize deities, but not all maize deities wear the "temple headdress."[14]

However, in addition to this inconsistency, solely using headdresses to identify specific deities becomes especially problematic when examining the textual and pictorial references in the chronicles. Durán conflates Chicomecoatl, Chalchiuhtlicue, and Xilonen as incarnations of a single agricultural deity, without any regard for their costume elements.[15] He describes this amalgamated deity thusly:

> "The first thing to be said about this goddess is that she was the deity of the harvest and of all the grains and plants of this nation. She was known as the goddess Chicomecoatl or Chalchiuhcihuatl. The first name, Chicomecoatl, which means Serpent of Seven Heads, was applied because of the harm she did in barren years, when the seeds froze, when there was want and famine."[16]

In the *Primeros Memoriales* (1559-1561) on the other hand, Sahagún's illustrations of thirty-seven deities carefully note the Nahuatl terms for their costume elements

[13] This "temple headdress" is described in detail in Chapter One.

[14] Pasztory, *Aztec Art*, 219.

[15] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 221-228, 437.

[16] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 222.

(Figures 36-38), including their headdresses. The array of Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) is described as:

> Her face is painted ochre red.
> Her paper crown [*amacalli*] is on her head.
> Her green stone necklace.
> She is wearing her shift with the evening primrose design.
> On her legs are small bells, pear-shaped bells.
> Her lordly sandals.
> Her shield is the shield with the sun symbol design.
> Her double maize ears are in her other hand.[17]

The array of Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt) is described as:

> Her [yellow ochre] face paint.
> Her green stone necklace.
> Her paper crown [*amacalli*] has a quetzal feather crest.
> Her shift has the water design [of horizontal, blue, wavy lines].
> Her skirt has the water design.
> Her little bells.
> Her sandals.
> Her shield is the water lily shield.
> In her other [hand] is her rattle staff.[18]

And the array of Xilonen (Young Maize) is described as:

> Her facial paint is half red, half yellow.
> Her paper crown [*amacalli*] has a quetzal feather crest.
> Her green stone necklace.
> Her shift with the evening primrose design.
> Her skirt with the evening primrose design.
> Her small bells.
> Her sandals.
> Her shield.
> In her other [hand] is her red rattle stick.[19]

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[17] Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales,* 98.

[18] Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales,* 104.

[19] Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales,* 104.

In this source, all three deities—Chicomecoatl, Chalchiuhtlicue, and Xilonen—are described as wearing an *amacalli*, which has been poorly translated from the Nahuatl to English as "paper crown." There is also a disconnect between the Nahuatl text and images because, while all three deities in Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* are depicted wearing headdresses decorated with rosettes, none of them are an *amacalli* (paper house) because they are all relatively short and do not have ear flaps, though it is possible that they are an abbreviated form of the *amacalli* due to the skill or individual style of the artist (Figures 36-38). In addition, most of the other thirty-seven deities in Sahagún's Aztec deity complex are also described in Nahuatl as having either an *amacalli* (paper house) or an *amatzon* (paper crown), but they are all illustrated wearing similar paper headdresses, none of which have the impressively elongated temple shape.[20] We can conclude that *amacalli* (paper house) is not used exclusively as the headdresses worn by maize or even agricultural deities, indicating that this type of headdress, however significant as part of the ceremonial regalia, cannot be utilized as a consistent diagnostic attribute in a taxonomic system. Additionally, it is dangerous to rely on any one costume element alone as an indicator for identification because of their semantic instability; in other words, individual costume elements lack reliability as markers of a specifically named deity. However, costume elements can be used more generally to denote supernatural identity.

[20] *Amatzon* is a compound Nahuatl word where *amatl* means paper and *tzontli* means head or hair.

Beyond applying a taxonomic system to the process of identifying costume elements, let us turn instead to the festival role of the Aztec agricultural deities. It is more productive to attempt to understand how female maize deities functioned as a sign of a *teixiptla* within the Aztec agrarian calendar. The role of the female maize deities in ceremonial contexts highlights their complex involvement with the greater Aztec worldview and way of life.

As the Aztecs used maize in a number of different annual ceremonies, there were several festivals and ritual activities that specifically corresponded to the sowing and harvesting of maize. One of these ceremonies known as *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping) took place during the harvest season in September.[21] According to Sahagún, part of this ceremony consisted of gathering small stalks of maize, decorating them with flowers, and then leaving them along with offerings of food at the base of the pyramid dedicated to Chicomecoatl. Sahagún describes the importance of maize in this specific ceremony:

> "And all the girls bore upon their backs ears of maize [grown] the year before. They went in procession, to present them to the goddess Chicomecoatl, and they returned them once more to their house[s] as blessed thing[s]; and from there they took the seed to plant next year. And also they put it [away] as the heart of the grain bins, because it was blessed."[22]

This ceremony is illustrated on folio 250v in Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* where figures in female costume process to the temple to leave maize for a figure on the lower right (most likely a *teixiptla* as manufactured in a human form) wearing a skirt

[21] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 422-425 and Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 118-124, 125-126.

[22] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 7.

and *quechquemitl* and a paper headdress elaborated with rosettes (Figure 39). The whole costume is extravagant, but the headdress is the focus of the costume.

Although not reliable in and of themselves as diagnostic of specific deities, certain costume elements, such as headdresses, can be understood not only as signs of *teixiptla*, but as objects whose material composition was imbued with spiritual power. The woven cloth or paper from which the items of clothing were fashioned (such as headdress or skirts) were also perceived as containing a vital force. For example, certain types of cloth could be imbued with unusual charge: cloth had a role as coverings to contain of power or "relics" such as ancestral bones, and that power could be transferred to both humans and symbolic objects associated with the deities. During rites of enthronement, kings donned dark green cloth jackets in order to emphasize their transition into a position of power, and symbolic objects were wrapped in layers of cloth to create sacred bundles (*tlaquimilolli*).[23]

Similarly, when *teixiptlahuan* put on their headdresses to be part of a ritual performance, the headdresses transferred their essence to the person who wore them. Davíd Carrasco describes this act of dressing humans as deities as a part of a "cosmo-magical" tradition.[24] Alone, the headdresses were simply objects that were markers of *teixiptlahuan* and ritual performance, or a prop in the construction of identities, but when they were worn, they became a part of the skin or identity of the

[23] Guilhem Olivier, "The Sacred Bundles and the Coronation of the Aztec King in Mexico-Tenochtitlan," in *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica*, ed. Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III (Barnardsville: Boundary End Archaeology Research Center, 2006), 199-225.

[24] Davíd Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 194.

wearer. More importantly, the headdresses were catalysts in the transformation process. According to López Austin, "beneficial forms of possession could be achieved through penitence, ritual, and contact with objects charged with supernatural force."[25]

This idea of possession, or a human becoming a *teixiptla*, was central to the agricultural rites and various ceremonies that took place throughout the year in order to ensure regeneration, bounty, and health. Agricultural deities created, sustained, and nourished their communities, so it was the duty of the Aztec people to repay the debt to the gods by offering them blood through either autosacrifice or human and animal sacrifice, thereby ensuring positive and productive relationships with the deities. These sacrifices were only potent if the victim offered was imbued with spiritual power. Certain bodily characteristics and adornment were crucial components of the transformative process from human to a *teixiptla*.[26] Thus, part of the symbiotic relationship between earthly and spiritual realms, as understood by the Aztecs, involved the ability of certain humans to engage in transfiguration.[27] Transfiguration here is a change in appearance from something ordinary to something extraordinary.

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[25] López Austin, *The Human Body*, 357.

[26] López Austin *The Human Body*, 357. López Austin states that "possession was achieved through a similarity between the man destined for sacrifice and the divinity."

[27] I use the term transfiguration not with its Christian connotation, which specifically refers to a story in the New Testament where Jesus suddenly radiates glory from atop a mountain, but to more generally explain a metamorphosis.

One of the ceremonies that required the addition of costume elements for the transformative process of human to *teixiptla* took place on the first day of the eighth Aztec month of *Huey Tecuilhuitl* (Great Feast of the Lords). In sixteenth-century Tenochtitlan, on July 23, a feast in honor of Xilonen (Young Maize) included a human sacrifice of a woman wearing the costume of this deity. In other words, the woman would only become Xilonen when she donned the appropriate costume elements. According to Sahagún,

> "One day before they slew the woman who was to die in honor of the goddess Xilonen, the woman who served on the pyramid (who were called *ciuatlamacazque*)[28] performed a dance in the courtyard of this same pyramid, and sang the [hymns of] praise and the canticles of this goddess. They all went surrounding her who was to die [and] who went *bedight in the ornaments of this goddess*. In this way, singing and dancing, they kept watch all night before the day when she was to die"[29] (emphasis mine).

Xilonen's most obvious ornament in the corresponding images is her impressive headdress (Figure 37), marking the deity as such during this ritual performance. It is important to note here that Sahagún uses the term "the woman" (*la mujer*) initially, and then switches to "this goddess" (*desta diosa*) after she is bedecked with the ornaments. At the conclusion of this ceremony, the Xilonen *teixiptla* climbed the steps of the pyramid and then the priests beheaded her and pulled her heart out of her chest as an offering to the sun. This description of the *Huey Tecuilhuitl* ceremony exemplifies the importance of the performative aspect of dress and regalia. Not only

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[28] Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl*, 35, 278. *Ciuatlamacazque* is a compound word made up of *cihuatl*, meaning "woman," and *tlamacazqui*, meaning someone who serves in a religious establishment. Together, these two words are combined to mean a female priestess.

[29] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 15.

did the woman become Xilonen by wearing the costume of this deity, but she also had to perform certain ritual activities, which included singing and dancing. Here, the costume is a part of the ceremony that emphasizes the deity's prestige and supernatural power.

The *amacalli* (paper house) headdress is described as a prominent feature of Xilonen in the *Huey Tecuilhuitl* ceremony. The indigenous informants and scribes that worked alongside Sahagún state that,

> "…when the woman [who was the likeness of] Xilonen died, her face was painted in two colors; she was yellow about her lips, she was chili-red on her forehead. Her paper cap [*amacalli*] had ears at the four corners; it had quetzal feathers in the form of maize tassels; [she wore] a plaited neck band. Her neck piece consisted of many strings of green stone; a golden disc went over it. [She had] her shift with the water lily [flower and leaf design], and she had her skirt with the water lily [flower and leaf design. She had] her obsidian sandals, her carmine-colored sandals. Her shield and her rattle stick were chili-red."[30]

Xilonen's *amacalli* (paper house) headdress is highlighted and its decorative elements are described; these included ears of corn and rare quetzal feathers, both of which were considered precious.

The impressive headdress is also specifically mentioned as an important part of Chicomecoatl's costume in Sahagún's description of *Huey Tozoztli* (The Great Vigil). He recounts that when Chicomecoatl's image was formed that,

> "…her adornment [was thus]: she was anointed all in red—completely red on her arms, her legs, her face. All her paper crown [*amacalli*] was covered completely with red ochre; her embroidered skirt was also red; her skirt was the color of ripe fruit. She had a

[30] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 103.

> chief's shield, painted with designs and embellished in red. She carried in each hand her double ear of maize."[31]

Again, the *amacalli* headdress is described in detail and emphasized as a key component to the costume. The color red is stressed to accentuate Chicomecoatl's sacred nature and her metaphorical association with regeneration in this ritual context.[32]

One of the illustrations of Chicomecoatl in Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* reinforces the theatrical aspect because the figure is depicted in motion, with one foot in front of the other and arms at different angles (Figure 36).[33] In addition, there are three speech scrolls that come out of the figure's mouth signifying chanting or song. The presentation and subsequent reception of the body by the Aztec people is part of the performance that reinscribes certain social roles, and the Chicomecoatl performance is an act attributed to a deified body. Judith Butler argues that "performativity…is always a reiteration of a norm or a set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition;" that is, the performance is not seen as a single or deliberate act, but rather the appropriate set of actions for each social body.[34] By drawing analogies with Butler's work, I suggest that the performance by

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[31] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 63.

[32] Bassett and Favrot Peterson, "Coloring the Sacred," 45-64.

[33] Sahagún, *Primeros Memoriales,* folio 262r.

[34] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 12. Butler is trained as a philosopher, not a Mesoamericanist, and focuses on the social roles attributed to racialized and gendered bodies.

Chicomecoatl's impersonator in her appropriate costume can be understood as causative in the transformation of a human person into a *teixiptla* during sacred ceremonies, implying for the viewers that the "social body" of that mortal individual is indeed supernatural.

These descriptions directly relate to my analysis of the three-dimensional sculpted images of the female maize deities in their foregrounding of the *amacalli* headdresses or "crown." Unfortunately, since the sculpted stone images I examined for the study were not originally painted, as have been shown to be the case for the Aztec imperial sculpture (like the Sun Stone, the Coyolxauhqui Stone, and more recently, the Tlaltecuhtli Monolith), or are not now painted, it is not possible to ascertain a color coded iconography.[35] Although I noted trace amounts of paint, primarily red and white, visible on some sculptures, there are not enough for a comparative analysis. However, the color red was significant on the large-scale sculpted clay images from Tenochtitlan; although they have been categorized as different deities, they both have red faces, red clothing, and red on their headdresses (Figures 21 and 22). Many of the sculpted female maize deities in my inventory also wear necklaces and have maize tassels that hang over their ears, which also directly correspond to the descriptions by Sahagún's indigenous informants and scribes.

The power of donning a specific headdress to become a deity during a particular performance in the Aztec ritual cycle is complicated as evidenced by the sacrifice of Chicomecoatl. Once a year, during the festival of *Ochpaniztli* (Day of

[35] Bassett and Peterson, "Coloring the Sacred," 45-64.

Sweeping), a woman transformed into Chicomecoatl before being slain and flayed at the Temple of Cinteotl.[36] After the sacrifice, the priest who flayed Chicomecoatl proceeded to wear the flayed skin of the female deity while dancing around an eagle vessel. In doing so, this priest was possessed by the essence of Chicomecoatl. The skin itself maintained a sacred power even after it had been removed from the structure of the body. This skin was understood to be more than just the bodily remnants of a human impersonator—it was the essence of this fertility deity. It is significant that when the male priest is illustrated during the events of *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping) in the *Codex Borbonicus*, he not only wears the flayed skin, as evidenced by the loose skin of the hands that dangle beneath his own hands and the drooping breasts, but he also wears the skirt and headdress (Figure 40).[37] This clearly shows that when a person transforms into a deity by wearing certain costume elements, those items actually become a part of the "social skin" or an intrinsic part of the body. The body itself may be, as in this case, a garment that consists of both skin and specific items of dress.

The example of the rite of Chicomecoatl during *Ochpaniztli* shows that there is a difference between the straightforward impersonation of a deity and a complete

[36] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 173. Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) was sacrificed at the Temple of Cinteotl at night, whereas Cinteotl was sacrificed at the Temple of Cinteotl during the day. However, these sacrifices took place during different ceremonies.

[37] *Codex Borbonicus, Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale, Paris (Y 120): vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe des Codex im Originalformat* (Graz: Akadem. Druck- u. Verlagsanst., 1974), 29. See Couch (1985) for further description and analysis of the festival cycle of *Ochpaniztli* (Day of Sweeping) in the *Codex Borbonicus.* He argues that the emphasis on agriculture in the *Codex Borbonicus* indicates that it depicts local or peripheral practices, rather than official state practices. In addition, he argues that color is more significant than costume in identifying deities. This approach may work when codices are used as the primary evidence; however, a color coded iconography cannot always be ascertained with sculpture.

metamorphosis. The Nahuatl term *teixiptla* is generally translated as an image, likeness, representation, or an impersonator, but literally means "a flayed-surface thing."[38] "A flayed-surface thing" can be interpreted as a person who no longer has their ordinary social skin and can thus transform into something else entirely. The translation of *teixiptla* to "impersonator" does not fully grasp the transformative quality of the social skin, which includes costume elements, such as headdresses; rather, the *teixiptla* is a human who has been transfigured through performance and costume.

Paper as a Sacred Material

Stone sculptures of female maize deities were not the only objects that were utilized during Aztec ceremonies, and stone was not the only material out of which these effigies were created. The anthropomorphic images of stone, wood, clay and dough were not inherently precious materials like jade or feather. Clay and stone are practical materials found unadulterated in nature and had mundane uses such as for building, but they had the potential for being converted into potent substances. For clay and stone, ritual use of the objects made from these materials imbued them with divine essence and made them sacred. Paper and dough differ from clay and stone because they are made via a human process. These materials can be imbued with divine essence during the creation process. Headdresses, in particular, were

[38] The formation of this compound word is discussed in Chapter Four.

indicative of ceremonial costume because they were made of paper, which was an innately sacred material.

To make paper in ancient Mesoamerica, loose fibers from the bark of an *amatl* (meaning "paper" in Nahuatl) tree, which includes the smooth inner whitish-colored bark from the corpulent trunks of fig trees, or ficus trees, and mulberry trees, were stripped with a stone knife.[39] The sap was scraped off the bark, and then it was left to soak in a slow-moving stream. The water-logged bark was then boiled for hours with wood ash taken from the hearths used to make tortillas. The most stubborn and tough bark fibers had to be further soaked in boiling ground maize water because it contained the lime used for cooking maize that was required for softening the fibers to a more pliable consistency. Once the fibers were boiled and then rinsed with cool water, they were arranged on a flat, smooth wooden surface and then pounded with a striated stone until the strips of fiber were melded together.

Paper was considered (and continues to be) intrinsically sacred as a product made of trees. Trees had great significance in Mesoamerica because they were seen as the axis of the cosmos, could connect ancestry and deities, and were even used as metaphors for rulership. For example, the Nahuatl phrase *in ahuehuetl, in pochotla*, meaning "bald cypress tree, silk cotton tree," was used to compare a native ruler to massive shade trees that could shelter and protect all of his people; this phrase was

[39] Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom, *Traditional Papermaking and Paper Cult Figures of Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 27-31. Sandstrom and Sandstrom use colonial sources combined with ethnographic analogy with contemporary Mexicans to understand how ancient Mesoamericans made paper.

used repeatedly in sixteenth-century documents in reference to the governor designate of Cuernavaca.[40] Paper was also deemed special in part because it must be handcrafted by skilled workers who pulverized the bark fibers and then pounded them together to create flat sheets of paper. Due to the basic economic principle of supply and demand, paper was considered a luxury item since it took so much time to process and then shape into the final product. Second, paper was used as a medium for recording the most important information in Aztec society, such as tribute records, histories, genealogies, calendars, poetry, and songs. Finally, paper was used in rituals themselves.

Paper is a material that quickly erodes without careful preservation and storage, so there are very few surviving paper objects from the preconquest period. There are vestiges found in Maya funerary contexts and in Aztec offerings at the Templo Mayor. Offering 102 at the Templo Mayor, archaeologically excavated in 2000, contained an incredible amount of intact natural materials—paper, textiles, wood, and resin—that highlights the abundance of materials likely used in ritual contexts.[41] Some of the paper objects include a baton, paper decorated with a face and flowers, another square of paper that probably shows the likeness of a deity, and striped paper decorations. The most spectacular paper object was a pointed headdress made of paper, rubber, wood, and agave fibers attached atop a polychrome

[40] Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Indian Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 88.

[41]José Álvaro Barrera Rivera, Ma. De Lourdes Gallardo Parrodi, and Aurora Montúfar Lopez, "La Ofrenda 102 del Templo Mayor," *Arqueología Mexicana* 8, no. 48 (2001): 70-77. Offering 102 was a part of the sixth stage of construction of the Templo Mayor, and was dedicated to the deity Tlaloc.

painted wooden mask.[42] The discovery of this headdress draws attention to the value of paper since it was used in such a richly populated offering at a sacred location.

The ornate paper headdress at Offering 102 shows the value of paper, but its unearthing was an extraordinary anomaly. Due to the general scarcity of preconquest paper materials in the archaeological record due to environmental conditions, we must turn to historical and ethnographic sources to understand how paper functioned in Aztec culture. Diego Durán makes numerous references to paper as an integral part of ceremonies. According to Durán, the two primary uses of paper were as the stuff of clothing, including headdresses, or as ritual offerings along with other precious materials like rubber (derived from tree resin) or feathers.[43] Sometimes the paper offered as a gift was even visually enhanced with spattered liquid rubber.[44] Like the paper offerings, paper costume elements were also occasionally embellished with paint or rubber. For example, Durán describes the paper headdress on the wood statue of Iztaccihuatl (White Woman) as "a tiara of white paper painted black,"[45] and the wood statue of Quetzalcoatl as "crowned with a pointed paper miter painted in

[42]María de Lourdes Gallardo Parrodi, "Conservación del material orgánico de la ofrenda 102 del Templo Mayor," *Arqueología Mexicana* 18, no. 108 (2011): 61-65.

[43] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 136. For example, Durán includes the following items as offerings at the temple in Cholula as a part of a celebration for Quetzalcoatl: "…incense, rubber, feathers, pine torches, quail, *paper*, unleavened bread, small tortillas in the shape of feet and hands" (emphasis mine). He further indicates that these items were unique and that, "Each one of these things had its special aim and purpose."

[44] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 188, 211.

[45] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 249.

black, white, and yellow."[46] Durán even notes that during the seventeenth month of the year known as *Tititl*, during the feast of Camaxtli (the Otomí deity associated with hunting), part of the ritual performance involved boys making weapons from paper and then fighting as if in battle until the paper disintegrated.[47]

Sahagún corroborates Durán's descriptions of the importance of paper in rituals, both as offerings and costume elements. When the Franciscan describes the regalia of various deities in *Book 1—The Gods*, he consistently takes care to indicate which items are made of paper and whether or not they have any painted embellishments. For example, Sahagún writes, "…Tzapotlan tenan…had a paper crown; large drops of liquid rubber and small drops were spattered over her paper crown."[48] It is important to note that neither Durán nor Sahagún mention paper oranmentation in any context other than on deities and during calendrical ritual performances.

Cultural anthropologists Alan R. Sandstrom and Pamela Effrein Sandstrom have comprehensively demonstrated that bark paper is still used in native Mesoamerican rituals, acting as a medium of communication between the human and spiritual worlds.[49] They cataloged more than two hundred cut-outs of paper figures that depict spirits in an unnamed contemporary Nahua village in an isolated region of east-central Mexico. In addition, the authors detail a variety of rituals that

[46] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 130.

[47] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 463-464.

[48] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 17.

[49] Sandstrom and Sandstrom, *Traditional Papermaking*, 31-34.

employ paper among contemporary Nahuas, Otomís, and Tepehuas. Although the specific rituals vary among cultural groups, there are remarkable similarities in how the paper is made and the extent to which the paper figures are respected and venerated. While the purpose of the Sandstrom and Sandstrom study was to uncover details about the Nahua world view rather than about the paper itself, their evidence certainly underscores the value of paper as a material. In contemporary Nahua rituals, indigenous peoples continue to worship paper itself. Every step of the process—from creating, cutting, and venerating the paper forms—is ritualized, including chants, scripted movements, and the building and maintenance of altars.

There is cultural continuity for papermaking in Mexico from the inner bark of trees, "that still survives in the secrecy and isolation in the Otomi villages of the states of Hidalgo, and among the Chinontepec-Aztec Indians in the warmer regions of the tierra templada of Vera Cruz."[50] The processes used by these contemporary peoples for papermaking also includes a flat, smooth wooden surface similar to a breadboard, and a striated beating stone called a *muinto* (or barkbeater) for felting the ficus fibers into paper.[51] Finally, in both ancient and contemporary papermaking, the finished paper was sun dried and cut to the desired size and shape. Aztec papermakers polished their paper surface with a stone and then added a coating of white lime to stiffen the paper if it was to be used as a painting surface for codices or

[50] Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, *The Aztec and Maya Papermakers,* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1977), 56.

[51] The word *muinto* comes from Otomi word "muini," meaning "to hit." These *muintos* are similar in shape and size (roughly the size and shape of the palm of an adult human's hand) to those that have been archaeologically excavated throughout Mexico, particularly in urban domestic contexts.

other manuscripts. When writing about folded books in the Maya region, Bishop Diego de Landa of the Archdiocese of Yucatán states that "the paper was made from the roots of the trees, and was given a white luster on which they could write perfectly well."[52]

Creative work was often ritualized in Mesoamerica, where the manipulation of a material was as important as the completed product. This is evident in the production of artifacts and objects made of paper, corn dough, and even woodcarving and painting images in the codices. In the sixteenth century, de Landa describes the ritualized production of wooden sacred effigies that involved autosacrifice and offering incense to the four cardinal directions.[53] During the making of wooden figures, Maya woodcarvers incorporated such multisensory activities as drawing blood and burning incense indicating that the process of shaping a figure out of raw material may be as significant as the final product. Sahagún notes that Aztec wood-carvers were one of the groups of craftspeople (artisans) that should be condemned for making ritual figures; certain objects created from trees were considered dangerous by the Christian missionaries. He also explicitly points to wood as being one of the materials from which Aztec "idols" were made:

> "But the wood used for idolatry is worthy of being accursed. And he who [so] maketh it, carveth it, is indeed unhappy, indeed to be accursed, *even as the wood itself*. And the wood-carver must needs be exceedingly accursed because he made that which was not required,

[52] Diego de Landa, *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán,* (Paris: A. Durand, 1864), 44.

[53] Landa, *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, 44.

> shall also be accursed, because it is only wood and is worshipped as an idol"[54] (emphasis mine).

Since the Aztecs used wood for a variety of purposes other than sacred figures, this passage shows that at some point there was a transition from the wood as raw material to something potent and sacred. The process of ritualized production in fact may be the catalyst that imbues the material with a sacred essence, elevating the material and representational sculpture to *teixiptla* or something divine.

Information about the creation and use of other materials, including dough and paper, can be inferred from comparison to other documented Aztec ceremonies. As previously discussed, paper (*amatl*) was an inherently sacred material in the Aztec world because it was derived from living trees. Consequently, paper was used for prestigious products, such as surfaces for their pictographic records and codices, including sacred folding divinatory almanacs known as *tonalamatl* (pages of days). Additionally, paper regalia was deployed in ritual events as elaborate headdresses worn by deities such as Iztaccihuatl (White Woman), Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent), Chalchiuhtlicue (Precious Skirt), and Tepeyollotl (Heart of the Mountain), as colorful banners used during the *veintena* ceremonies of Aztec months *Atlcahualo* (Ceasing of Water) and *Cuahuitlehua* (Rising Trees), as offerings to the deities in the form of streamers or sheets for sopping up sacrificial blood. Its importance is made even clearer by the tribute demands from the Aztec rulers in the form of paper costumes, paper banners, paper streamers, and sheets of paper. The *Codex Mendoza* describes and illustrates the tributes required of the provinces by the imperial Aztecs

[54] Sahagún. *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 58.

in Tenochtitlan; the province of Quauhnahuac was obligated to give "eight thousand reams of paper…every six months."[55] Since each *resma*, or ream of paper, consisted of 20 sheets, the amount of paper required by the leaders of Tenochtitlan was an impressive 160,000 sheets. The staggering quantity of tribute in paper demanded by the Aztec ruling class underscores its value to fulfill both practical and ceremonial needs.

To advance an understanding of the central and significant role of paper, I explore the ritual associations between paper and food, principally maize, the nutritious staple in the Mesoamerican diet. Both paper-making and the manipulation of maize, for either consumption or for making figurines, were laborious activities that included a serious commitment of time and effort. Paper and maize were each prepared with water, ash, and fire; in addition, paper was made with materials that had previously been used to compose maize dough, inherently linking the two. According to Philip P. Arnold, "The rendering of plant life (i.e., the amatl tree) in the manufacture of paper was regarded as similar to the rendering of plant life in the creation of food."[56] While most paper was made from the bark of one of the more than 50 species of fig, or ficus, trees native to Mesoamerica, some paper was also

[55] Berden and Anawalt, eds, *The Codex Mendoza*, 53. "…mas ocho myll Resmas de papel de la tierra/ todo lo qual dauan en cada vn tribute/ que era de seys a seys meses."

[56] Arnold, Philip P. "Paper Rituals and the Mexican Landscape." *Representing Aztec Ritual: Performance, Text, and Image in the Work of Sahagun*, Ed. Eloise Quiñones Keber (Boulder: University Press of Chicago, 2002), 232.

made from maguey or *metl* (agave).[57] It is important to note that wild fig trees were particularly abundant and widespread in the Morelos area, where Calixtlahuaca is located, and many towns in the area specialized in papermaking. Thus, there is a strong association in this region between papermaking and the prevalence of maize deity figures. Additionally, according to Michael E. Smith, stone tools, often known as bark-beaters, that are used during an essential part of the paper-making process are commonly found at Aztec sites in Morelos.[58]

The connection between edible corn dough and paper was also apparent in their incorporation into ceremonies. For example, Tepeilhuitl (Feast of the Mountain) involved devotional offerings of food (amaranth and maize dough) in the shape of mountains. These representations were adorned in paper costumes, feathers, and rubber (which is comprised of resin and latex, another tree related product). The Aztec people would ritually feed these images over the course of several days, and then finally ingest them in a ceremonial meal at the culmination of the feast. As the dough representations were eaten, the paper adornments were burned. In my next chapter, I show that, like paper, dough became a sacred material when utilized in ritual activity, focusing on both the creation of the dough figures and the sacrificial connotation of eating and ingesting.

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[57] Francisco Hernández, *Historia natural de Nueva Espana*. Vol. 2 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959), 349. Dr. Francisco Hernández was a sixteenth-century Spanish naturalist who visited the Americas from 1570 to 1577 as a part of an expedition sent by Philip II of Spain. He traveled for five years and recorded his observations and findings, including this information about the many uses of maguey: "This plant has almost innumerable uses. The plant itself serves as firewood and fencing for fields…its leaves serve to cover roofs, as roof tiles, as plates or dishes, to make paper, and to make thread for footwear, cloth, and all kinds of garments…"

[58] Michael E. Smith, *The Aztecs*, second edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 240.

Chapter 6: *Tzoalli* Dough: Consuming Sacred Essence

The Aztecs celebrated the agricultural deities Cinteotl (Maize Deity) and Chicomecoatl (Seven Serpent) at a festival during their fourth month, known as Huei Toçoztli. A significant part of the ceremony included fashioning a *tzoalli* dough figure of the female deity Chicomecoatl; *tzoalli* combined maize and amaranth seeds as elaborated below. Young girls then processed with bundles of maize from the previous year's harvest and presenting the highly valued food stuffs to the effigy. In an illustration of this festival in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, three men stand holding stalks of maize and three women kneel in the foreground offering bowls of food and maize cobs before the temple dedicated to Chicomecoatl (Figure 41). The corresponding text states that,

> "They made of dough (which they call *tzoalli*) the image of a goddess in the courtyard of her pyramid; and before her they offered all kinds of maize, and all kinds of beans, and all kinds of chía. For they said that she was the maker and giver of all those things which are the necessaries of life, that the people may live."[1]

Together, the image and passage emphasize the deep connection between the dough image, the food offerings, and the ritual benefits. Sahagún says, "They formed her image as a woman. They said: "Yea, verily, this one is our sustenance"; that is to say, indeed truly she is our flesh, our livelihood; through her we live; she is our strength. If she were not, we should indeed die of hunger."[2]

[1] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 7.

[2] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 64.

This association is made even more explicit in another *Florentine Codex* image of Huei Toçoztli that shows the sculpted *tzoalli* dough deity identified as Chicomecoatl by the seven serpents that emerge from her skirt. She dominates the frame at almost three times the size of the young Aztec devotees who kneel before her with baskets of maize, chilies, beans, amaranth, and chía (Figure 42).[3] The imposing *teixiptla*, or deity representation, is further made to stand out by being completely red; her body, as well as her long checkered skirt, embroidered quechquemitl, and paper headdress are stained with red ochre.[4] This image of Chicomecoatl has iconographical elements that parallel the illustration of Chicomecoatl in Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (Figure 36): they both hold a pair of maize cobs in one hand and a decorated shield in the other, wear a paper headdress, and have red clothes and a red face. The sacred materials—*tzoalli* dough and red ochre (a variety of ochre that contains a significant amount of hematite, or dehydrated iron oxide)—were gathered from the earth making it possible for the

[3] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 64-65. Sahagún is meticulously descriptive about the food products associated with Chicomecoatl: "And, so it was said, it was indeed this Chicomecoatl who made all our food—white maize, yellow maize, green maize shoots, black maize, black and brown mixed, variously hued; large and wide; round and ball-like; slender maize, thin; long maize; speckled red and white maize as if striped with blood, painted with blood—then the coarse, brown maize (its appearance is as if tawny); popcorn; the after-fruit; double ears; rough ears; and maturing green maize; the small ears of maize beside the main ear; the ripened green maize. The beans—white beans, yellow beans, red beans, quail-colored beans, black beans, flesh-colored beans, fat red beans, wild beans; amaranth, the variety of amaranth called *cocotl*, fine red amaranth seed, [common] red amaranth, black amaranth, bright red or chili-red amaranth, fish amaranth [*michiuauhtli* or *chicalotl*], brilliant black amaranth seed; the bird-seed called *petzicatl*. And also the chía—white chía, black chía, wrinkled chía. All these things, so they say, all of them they offered to [the goddess]. When it was her feast day they gave her human form; they laid it all before her."

[4] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 65. "And her adornment [was thus]: she was anointed all in red—completely red on her arms, her legs, her face. All her paper crown was covered completely with red ochre; her embroidered shift also was red; her skirt was a bed covering. The ruler's shield was painted with designs, embellished in red. She was carrying her double ear of maize in either hand."

teixiptla of Chicomecoatl become animate and vivified. Since red is associated with blood, fire, light, and generative powers, it was a potent color choice that visually emphasized sacrality.[5] According to Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Color, when it appears on architecture and sculpture, may sometimes have been a purely decorative element added according to the fashion of the time, but, by and large, color carried with it certain specific and generic meanings that were intrinsically a part of the iconographic program."[6] The creation of a deity representation out of the sacred material—tzoalli dough—and then painted with a color with evocative symbolic connotations—red—was the first step in animating the *teixiptla*. The ritual activities that included processing, honoring the figure with food, and singing all culminated in the transformation of the *tzoalli* dough effigy into a powerful enlivened figure imbued with a sacred essence.

While these passages and illustrations from Sahagún make it clear that the Aztecs utilized *tzoalli* dough figures of agricultural deities during their ceremonies, the description of these figures in the colonial codices is scant and little academic scholarship has focused on any of the dough objects.[7] However, information about the creation and function of *tzoalli* dough agricultural deities can be inferred by

[5] Molly Harbour Bassett and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Coloring the Sacred in Sixteenth-Century Central Mexico," In *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800*, Eds. Andrea Feeser, Maureen Daly Goggin, and Beth Fawkes Tobin, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 50-51.

[6] Elizabeth Hill Boone, "The Color of Mesoamerican Architecture and Sculpture," In *Painted Architecture and Polychrome Monumental Sculpture in Mesoamerica*, (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 182.

[7] Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "Sacred Tzoalli: Its Use and Significance," 1977 (manuscript in Peterson's possession). This chapter draws on ideas first presented in this unpublished paper that the author has generously shared with me.

comparing them to the other sculpted objects from Aztec ceremonies that are both historically documented and found in the archaeological remains. *Tzoalli* dough is made of ground maize and/or ground amaranth seeds and, like other materials already discussed such as clay and stone, it became a sacred material when molded into something figural and then utilized in ritual activity. However, unlike the other materials, *tzoalli* dough figures were ephemeral, created to eventually be consumed. In this chapter, I argue that eating the *tzoalli* dough figure after it had been activated by ritualized production, procession, and veneration, essentially becoming a surrogate for the deity itself, can be understood as a form of ritual sacrifice.

The materials used to create *tzoalli* dough include both maize and amaranth. Amaranth (*huautli* in Nahuatl), also known by its Latin name, Amaranthus cruentus, and commonly known as Prince's Feather, is a Mesoamerican plant that was an essential part of the Aztec diet because its leaves were consumed as vegetables and its seeds were cultivated as protein rich grain. The importance of this grain and its ubiquitous nature in Mesoamerica is also clear by its prevalence in the Nahuatl language, where objects associated with amaranth contained the word as a part of its descriptor: the birds that consume the seeds at harvest time are called *uauhtotl* (a combination of the words *huautli* and *tototl*, meaning bird), a drink prepared with water and *huautli* (amaranth) was known as *uauhatolli*, and tamales made specifically with amaranth dough was called *huauquillamalmaliztli.* According to G. Alejandre Itúrbide and M. Gispert, "Its cultivation practices also had a special nomenclature: *uauhteca* was the sowing of its seeds, *uauhpuztequemi* was the name

of its harvest and the unshelled seed was called *uauhtlipolocayo.*"[8] In pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, amaranth was grown outside of the valley of Mexico in temperate areas such as the modern states of Tlaxcala, Puebla, Oaxaca, Morelos and Guerrero, or in the valley of Mexico on *chinampas* (floating gardens). Cultivation and sowing practices for amaranth and maize are extremely similar in that the two plants grow in the same climate and at a comparable pace; therefore, the harvesting season in the cultivation areas for both plants is simultaneous. During the months of September and October, both maize ears and amaranth seeds are harvested. However, while maize can be consumed immediately after harvest, the amaranth seeds must be threshed from the plant. This requires cutting the stems of the plants, allowing the stems to dry, and then transferring those stems to a cloth to be trampled in order to work the seeds loose. Finally, the seeds are ground into flour (often combined with maize flour as well) and mixed with agave syrup or honey to make dough. Amaranth has the added benefit of being higher in calcium and iron than most vegetables, a good source of fiber, and, most importantly, high protein content. Today, the practice of mixing amaranth grains with syrup still exists in Mexico: *alegria* is a popular treat, especially during the Day of the Dead celebrations when modern coarse dough is fashioned into the shape of skulls. However, *alegria* differs slightly from *tzoalli* dough in that the amaranth grains in *alegria* are popped by roasting, rather than ground.

[8] G. Alejandre Itúrbide and M. Gispert, "Neglected Crops: 1492 from a Different Perspective," in *Plant Production and Protection Series* 26, ed. M. Gispert. J.E. Hernández Bermejo and J. León (Rome: FAO, 1994), 93-101.

The cultivation and consumption of amaranth dough as a part of ritual is made evident by the Spanish chroniclers who included descriptions of this material and its ritual use as a way to identify specific instances of Aztec idolatry. In the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún includes multiple instances of maize and amaranth food products, such as tamales and tortillas, which were used as offerings on feast days.[9] In addition, he states that a paste of amaranth seed dough was used to spatter the mask placed over the face of the human deity representation of Napa Tecutli (Lord of Four Directions).[10] Most significantly, dough was molded into figures that Sahagún identified as idols because they were made in the shapes of natural phenomena, like mountains or anthropomorphic deities. For example, he describes the Tepictoton (Little Molded Ones) as molded amaranth seed dough representations of deities in human forms, elaborated with teeth made of gourd seeds and eyes made of black beans.[11] These dough figures were honored with offerings of food and songs before they were ritually destroyed by beheading.

Figures fashioned of *tzoalli* dough were one of the three types of sculptural representations highlighted in one early colonial source. According to *Teogonía e historia de los mexicanos*, a collection of early sixteenth-century sources, there were three specific types of portable "idols" made by the Aztecs for personal and

[9] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 19, 32. The feast days described includes those of Ciuapipiltin (also known as Cihuateteo), Macuilxochitl (Five Flower), and Xochipilli (Flower Prince).

[10] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 46. "And thus he was arrayed: he was anointed with black; his face was covered with soot; it was blackened; his face was [spotted] with [a paste of] amaranth seed dough."

[11] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 47-49.

communal ritual use. These idols consisted of small stone figures that were placed inside of barns or granaries, those made from copal, a tree resin, and those made from dough. All three types of figures were objects of veneration placed on altars at the summit of hills.[12] According to Sahagún, *tzoalli* dough could function as an offering:

> "And [they offered] two *cakes of amaranth seed dough*, which served in place of rubber, one black, one red, resting in wooden bowls. And some [offered] toasted maize, or toasted maize mixed in honey, or S-shaped tortillas, butterfly-shaped tortillas, tortillas of maize not softened in lime, tortillas of amaranth seed dough, *amaranth seed dough cakes* in the form of shields, arrows, swords, *dolls*" (Emphasis mine).[13]

In addition to its use as an offering, *tzoalli* dough could be venerated as figural representations of deities, which is what the term "dolls" in the quote above most likely refers to. Sahagún mentions a number of examples of deity representations in dough, including the earth goddess, Tzapotlan tenan, whom the Aztecs "…made her representation of amaranth seed dough."[14]

Furthermore, *tzoalli* dough figures were eaten after they were used ceremonially, as was the case during the yearly festival for the Aztec patron deity

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[12] Angel Ma. K. Garibay, ed. and trans, "Historia de los Mexicanos [1543]," in *Teogonía e Historia de los Mexicanos*, (Mexico City: Porrua, 1973), 122. "Tienen y hacen tres géneros de ídolos: unos chiquitos, de piedra, para adentro de sus trojes; ortros hacen de copal y masa de *tzoal*, y éstos envían a las cumbres de los cerros donde están los altares que llaman *momoztyli*; de esta masa de *tzoal* se hacía el cuerpo de *Huitzilopochtli* que se guardaba por tiempo de un año, y pasado, se repartía en bocadicos *uxcucoeyotia*." *Teogonía e historia de los mexicanos* is a collection of early sixteenth-century sources: *Historia de los Mexicanos pro sus pinturas* (1533), *Historia de Mexico* (1543), and *Codex Chimalpopoca* (c. 1569).

[13] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 32.

[14] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, 71.

Huitzilopochtli. A pair of striking images in Book 12 of Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* shows the extreme care taken to manufacture a *tzoalli* dough figure of Huitzilopochtli during Toxcatl, the fifth Aztec month or *veintena* (a *veintena* is a 20-day period, often referred to as a "month," in the 365-day Aztec calendar known as the *xiuhpohualli* in Nahuatl).[15] The first image shows two men kneeling on either side of a seated anthropomorphic figure that looks remarkably human due to his proportions, naturalistic pose, and Aztec-style loincloth (Figure 43).[16] As the figure is a deity, it is depicted as larger than the two male devotees who are actively touching and molding its shape and adorning it with earplugs, a crescent-shaped nose ornament, and an ornate cape. The scene takes place at the base of a large pyramid surmounted by two smaller temples, an illustration of the twin temples on the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. The successive scene in the *Florentine Codex* is in the exact same location, but in this image the figure is complete and three men bring offerings of tamales in baskets and place them at the foot of the deity representation (Figure 44). These two images illustrate the fact that when *tzoalli* was molded into likenesses of deities or given anthropomorphic features, these figures, regardless of their material, were, like the paper headdresses discussed in the previous chapter,

[15] James Lockhart, ed. and trans, *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 128-129. This book is an English translation of a Nahuatl text in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, Book 12. With regards to the Huitzilopochtli image, Lockhart translates as follows, "And when the feast day of Toxcatl had arrived, toward sunset they began to give human form to [Huitzilopochtli's] body. They formed it like a person, they made it look like a person, they gave it a person's appearance. And what they made his body of was just dough of amaranth seed, fish amaranth seed. They placed it on a platform of sticks, "hummingbird sticks" and "ear sticks." And when it had become like a person, then they put feather-down on his head and painted his face striped, and they [put] serpent earplugs on him, with turquoise glued on them."

[16] The naturalistic depiction of the deity Huitzilopochtli is due to the fact that the native artists were working in 1575-77 and were already influenced by European stylistic techniques of representation.

understood to be imbued with spiritual power. This concept of a particular material possessing a sacred essence and having transformative power is at the core of comprehending the ritual use of *tzoalli teixiptlahuan*, or deity surrogates of corn dough.

Like stone sculptures, *tzoalli* dough figures were created and called upon as a source of power during specified monthly and yearly ceremonies, and during times of particular need, often due to environmental stresses. According to Durán, *teixiptlahuan* were called upon when communities were most fraught and vulnerable.[17] Durán also states that sculptures of the female deity Cihuacoatl (Snake Woman) were "carried out in a procession to the woods, to the mountains, or to the caves from which they had taken their names."[18] This passage shows the importance of these *teixiptlahuan* as an integral part of the symbiotic relationship between earthly and spiritual realms accessed during ritual ceremonies. In fact, although these figures could be used as simple offerings, documented Aztec ceremonies imply that *tzoalli* dough figures were often charged with supernatural force, converting them from a sustenance material in the shape of a deity or sacred element in the natural world to a *teixiptla*. As discussed in Chapter Three, the *teixiptla* is a human or artifact that has been transfigured through performance and costume to contain *teotl*; the ceremonial use of *tzoalli* dough is yet another example of a metaphor for sacrality that allows *teotl* to be manifest in the natural world in which humans reside.

[17] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 211.

[18] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 211.

Tzoalli dough was so closely linked to Aztec ceremonial functions that its creation and consumption, and even the cultivation of amaranth, was forbidden by the Spaniards after the conquest for fear of idolatry; however, these edicts were often ignored especially in the more rural areas that were not as easily monitored.[19] In fact, in the seventeenth century, the Catholic priest Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, who was born in New Spain (colonial Mexico) and documented native religious practices in order to criticize and condemn their persistence, mentions that the manufacture of deities using *tzoalli* dough still endured in parts of Mexico at the time of harvest. Although his observations take place, well after the Spanish conquest, and the information is linked to his denunciation of demonic practices such as idolatry, drunkenness, and worshipping a non-Christian deity, this text provides insight into a general persistence of the native use of *tzoalli* dough for ritual purposes.

> "The time when there is most manifestly formal idolatry is at the end of the rainy season with the first fruits of a seed smaller than mustard, which they call *huauhtli* [another word for amaranth], because the Devil also wants them to offer him first fruits. This seed is, then, earlier than any other in the hardening and becoming ripe, and thus they gather it when the maize begins to produce ears—which happens in two months in the hot lands. From this seed they make a drink like porridge to drink cold, and they also make some cakes which in their language they call *tzoalli*, and these they eat cooked in the manner of their tortillas…From the first [*huauhtli*] that they gather, well ground and kneaded, they make some idols in the shape of a human figure and the size of a fourth of a *vara*, a little more or less. They have a lot of their wine prepared for the day that they form them, and after the idols are made and cooked, they put them in their oratories, as if they are placing some [holy] image, and setting before them candles and incense, they offer them, along with their bouquets, some of the wine prepared for the dedication, either in the superstitious little *tecomates*

[19] Jonathan Sauer, "Grain Amaranths: A Survey of their History and Classification," *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 37 (1950).

> [clay pot] mentioned above or, if they do not have them, in other chosen ones, and for this all of those of the clique that is the brotherhood of Beelzebub get together, and, seated in a circle with much applause, having placed the *tecomates* and the bouquets before the said idols, they begin in their honor and praise, and in that of the Devil, the music of the *teponaztli*, which is a drum all of wood, and the soft singing of the old people is accompanied with it. And when they have already played and sung what they have [received] from tradition, the owners of the offering and the most illustrious ones arrive, and, as a sign of sacrifice, they pour out before the little idols of *huauhtli* either a part or all of that wine which they had placed in little *tecomates*, and they call this *tlatotoyahua*. And then they begin to drink what is left in the *tecomates* first, and then they relentlessly pursue the pots until finishing them, and their wits with them—and what is usual for idolatries and drunken sprees follows. But the owners of the little idols guard them with care for the following day, on which, after the participants of the festival have met together in the oratory, distributing pieces of the little idols as if for relics, they all eat them together."[20]

Here, Ruiz de Alarcón describes both the production of *tzoalli* dough, as well as how it was used in ritual practices and ultimately eaten "as…relics." Ruiz de Alarcón intentionally uses the term relic, drawing parallels with those esteemed or venerated objects associated with a Christian saint or martyr. In this Mesoamerican context, however, he refers to the *tzoalli* dough figure as a relic to indicate its value and holy nature even though it is also clear from his use of "idolatries" and "drunken sprees" that he is censoring the non-Christian practices. Thus, there is an undercurrent of the dangers posed by these tzoalli dough "relics"—danger in the recognition of their potency and sacred charge. Ruiz de Alarcón's text highlights the importance of both the creation and use of *tzoalli* by painstakingly describing the process of gathering

[20] Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, *Treatise on the Heathen Superstitions: That Today Live Among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629*. Trans. J. Richard Andrews and Ross Hassig. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 53. Note that one *vara* equals 0.838 meters, or 32.99 inches.

the seed and kneading the dough as well as the display of *tzoalli* dough figures; typical ritual interactions with the figures included multisensory experiences such as lighting candles and incense and playing drums in their honor.

Tzoalli dough had the potential to be charged with a supernatural force that made it an appropriate material to be used in ritual activity, as evident by the attention given to the process of its creation and the care with which the resultant figures were displayed and honored by devotees. Since ethnographic literature only mentions *tzoalli* dough in ceremonial contexts, it is clear that it was imbued with spiritual power that elevated it above other mundane food stuffs. The dough figures were then venerated during certain calendric ceremonies and "pieces of the little idols" were distributed to be ritually consumed collectively, as noted in the passage from Ruiz de Alarcón.

Food and Sacrifice in the Aztec Creation Myth

The ritual consumption of food, such as the practices involving *tzoalli* dough recorded in the colonial period, has a precontact precedent. The relationship between the consumption of food and sacrifice is made particularly apparent in Aztec mytho-history. These legends highlight the centrality of food, particularly maize, as a part of Aztec cosmovision.

The Aztec creation myth cites Ometecuhtli or Ometeotl (Two Lord) and Omecihuatl (Two Lady) as an ancestral couple from which all other deities

originated.[21] These progenitors resided in Omeyocan "the place of two" and represented the Mesoamerican principle of duality. According to Alfonso Caso, Ometecuhtli (Two Lord) and Omecihuatl (Two Lady) are mentioned as divinities that encourage growth and are associated with food in the Codex Borgia, a manuscript created in a native Mesoamerican style.[22] Visually, they are illustrated in the Codex Borgia as one of six supernatural couples (Figure 45).[23] The page is divided into six panels and Ometecuhtli (Two Lord) and Omecihuatl (Two Lady), also known as Tonacatecuhtli (Lord of Our Sustenance) and Tonacacihuatl (Lady of Our Sustenance), are depicted in the lower right panel. They stand on either side of a turquoise bowl sitting atop a gold box. Both the bowl and the box overflow with riches, such as gold and turquoise beads and bells. A human figure also emerges from the bowl, indicating the connection between this deity pair and the creation of the human world.

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[21] Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Manuscript* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995). Ometeotl and Omecihuatl are also sometimes known as Tonacatecuhtli and Tonacacihuatl, respectively. These deities are sometimes conflated together as one deity with two names, making it seem as though this is one supreme deity with a double nature. Leonardo López Luján (2005) uses the term Ometeotl-Tonacatecuhtli, a combination of the two names, for this creator deity.

[22] Alfonso Caso, *The Aztecs: People of the Sun*, trans. Lowell Dunham, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 10.

[23] Gisele Díaz and Alan Rodgers, *The Codex Borgia: A Full-Color Restoration of the Ancient Mexcian Manuscript*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1993). The provenance of this manuscript is not secure, but likely from either the state of Puebla or Oaxaca. While the date of its creation is unknown, it was definitely made prior to the Conquest and is in a native Mesoamerican style: it was a pleated screenfold of 37 pages made of animal hide that was covered in a thin layer of plaster and then painted. This screenfold manuscript illustrates different ways to divide the 260 day sacred calendar known as the *tonalpohualli* or "the book of the days," and would have been used by diviners as a tool for prognostication. See also H. B. Nicholson (1994) on the origins of the *Borgia Codex* Group.

Like other Mesoamerican cultures, Aztecs believed that time is cyclical, and that the present world is one in a series of rebirths. For the Aztecs, the four previous worlds were catastrophically destroyed, and the present age is the fifth world. The generative pair, Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl, created the deities Quetzalcoatl (Feathered Serpent) and Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror), who in turn created humans in the fifth world by mixing the bones of human ancestors with blood of gods.[24] According to the legend recounted in the Codex Chimalpopoca, after Quetzalcoatl created humans, the other deities questioned what they would eat. After seeing a red ant emerge from Tonacatepetl (Mountain of Our Sustenance) with a kernel of corn, Quetzalcoatl turned himself into a black ant and followed the red ant into the mountain to bring food to the human race. After maize was discovered by Quetzalcoatl, the deities stole other staple foods from Tonacatepetl, including beans, amaranth, and chia. Notably, the legend states that the deities chewed the maize kernels before feeding them to the mortal beings, making them strong.[25] This origin myth models the ceremonial consumption of *tzoalli*. The paste nature of *tzoalli* dough, reminiscent of chewed maize kernels, makes a purposeful link to this origin

[24] John Bierhorst, trans., *History and Mythology of the Aztecs: The Codex Chimalpopoca*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992). The Codex Chimalpopoca has been lost since 1949, but a photographic facsimile remains. The original manuscript is made up of 42 folios written front and back (84 pages in total), and consists of two parts known as the Annals of Cuauhtitlan and Legend of the Suns. These two parts record the pre-Columbian history of the Valley of Mexico, including many origin stories and myths.

[25] Bierhorst, *History and Mythology of the Aztecs*, 147. "The red ant, it seems, showed Quetzalcoatl the way. Outside he lays down the kernels, then he carries them to Tamoanchan. Then the gods chew them and put them on our lips. That's how we grew strong."

myth during the ceremonies in which the *tzoalli* dough effigies were chewed and eaten.

It is because of the effort and generosity of the deities during creation that Mesoamerican people felt that they had to continuously repay their debt to the sacred beings. Repayment was made by offering them blood in the form of autosacrifice, as well as human or animal sacrifice, thereby ensuring that the sun would continue to rise and the cosmos endure. Human sacrifice took place on prescribed days in public locations. The primary site for the imperial ritual of human sacrifice was Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor; this sacred structure was the locus of Aztec religion and functioned as a ceremonial platform. Many people died every year atop the Templo Mayor, as well as at other pyramids throughout the Aztec empire. These rituals included hearts removed from chest cavities, and blood drained into ceremonial containers. Since sacred beings sacrificed themselves to create the world, there was an ideological imperative propagated by the imperial Aztecs that all people had the obligation to repay this enormous debt with regular autosacrifice (such as piercing one's earlobes, thighs, genitals, or tongue with a thorn) and human sacrifice in order to "feed" their deities.[26]

This worldview is explicitly illustrated in the *Codex Borgia*: the right side of page 53 is a depiction of the center of the Mesoamerican world (Figure 46).[27] A large maize plant that produces mature ears of corn dominates the image; the plant is

[26] Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice*, 184-186.

[27] Díaz and Rodgers, *The Codex Borgia*, 25.

positioned in the center of the panel and grows out of the earth, which is personified as a terrestrial deity that is recognizable by its clawed hands and feet, skeletal face, and position with its back to the earth and facing upward. A golden eagle perches on top of the plant. Two massive ears of corn emerge from the earth alongside the plant, emphasizing the centrality of maize in Mesoamerica within this priomordial rite of divine sacrifice. The deities Quetzalcoatl and Macuilxochitl (5 Flower) flank the maize plant, performing autosacrifice by piercing either their thighs or penises with sharpened bones. Their blood flows profusely onto the maize plant, dramatically visualizing the sacrificial blood so necessary for maize to grow. In other words, autosacrifice and human sacrifice were necessary for the earth to consistently sustain the human race. Clearly, there is a causal association between food, maize in particular, and the act of sacrifice. Thus, a discussion of the evolution of various interpretations of sacrificial rites will further our understanding of the role of *tzoalli* images in Aztec festival contexts.

Aztec Sacrifice

Human sacrifice continues to be a hotly debated topic in Mesoamerican studies today, as to its meaning, function, and even its very existence. The discussion of this topic is a touchstone in the study of pre-Hispanic American cultures because it is an essential part of indigenous cosmovision, although it has often been sensationalized. While there is general consensus among scholars that human sacrifices were an integral aspect of Aztec religion and deemed necessary for the

continuation of their cosmos, there have been interpretive shifts in understanding why human sacrifice within the Aztec empire was so frequent and pervasive. It goes without saying that accounts of the nature and meaning of sacrifice have changed substantially between sixteenth-century chronicles and twenty-first century scholarship. These changes include the types of questions that scholars have asked, often prompted by new archaeological discoveries. Since this topic has been widely debated, it is not possible to be comprehensive in this chapter. Rather, I discuss select shifts in methodology exemplified by a sample of the scholarship on this topic in order to provide context for the argument that food consumption in an Aztec ritual context was a metaphor for sacrifice, as manifested for example in the ingestion of *tzoalli* dough figures during certain ceremonies. Increasingly, interdisciplinary approaches have helped scholars answer complex questions by providing additional lines of evidence to support the archaeological data; this type of approach has allowed me to conclude that sacrifice, like animacy, was situationally nuanced.

The discourse on Aztec human sacrifice, specifically, began with the conquest of the Americas, when sacrifice became a signifier for savagery. Due in part to depictions in the colonial sources, the Aztecs had long been viewed as savage and bloodthirsty, while the Maya were viewed as a more refined, pacifistic society with a written language, naturalistic sculpture, and a dominant and benevolent priestly class.[28] The illustrations of Aztecs in colonial sources are particularly

[28] Archaeologist and epigrapher J. Eric S. Thompson (1931) further perpetuated this outdated idea of Maya society as exempt from the violence of war and sacrifice. In fact, the 1986 exhibition (and accompanying catalog) entitled *The Blood of Kings*, authored by Mary Millar and Linda Schele,

sensationalized and violent, though as Klein argues, this is likely due to contemporary Old World fears of otherness than simply a mere exaggeration of historical truth.[29] Despite their biases, early Spanish ethnohistorical documents are crucial to our understanding of Aztec sacrifice. It is important to note, however, that although native informants and artists were employed as a part of the creation of some these chronicles (in collaboration with Franciscan missionary, Bernardino de Sahagún in particular), they often used European modes of interpretation and representation. In addition, the ultimate goal of the chronicles that systematically studied Aztec peoples, ways of life, and religious beliefs was to discover the best ways in which to attempt conversion. However, this interest in ritual and religious activities provided illuminating passages about human sacrifice. Sahagún describes sacrifices in the context of ritual activities that take place on temples and involve sacrificial stones and priests. These activities include the removal of hearts, flaying of skins, decapitations, and cannibalism. Sahagún details the nature of a human sacrifice during the second month of the Aztec calendar, known as Tlacaxipeualiztli (Flaying of Men):

> "Having brought them to the sacrificial stone, which was a stone of three hands in height, or a little more, and two in width, or almost, they threw them upon it, on their backs, and five [priests] seized them—two by the legs, two by the arms, and one by the head; and

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emphasized blood sacrifice in Classic Maya society in an attempt to change the traditionally peaceful image of the Classic Maya. Cecelia Klein (1988) argued that *The Blood of Kings* provided an overemphasis on blood sacrifice among the Classic Maya and its authors did not adequately acknowledge previous scholars who had also addressed blood sacrifice in their work.

[29] Cecelia Klein, "Death in the Hands of Strangers: Aztec Human Sacrifice in the Western Imagination," *Altera Roma: Art and Empire from Mérida to Mexico*, Ed. John M. D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, (Los Angeles; The Costen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, 2016), 258.

> then came the priest who was to kill him. And he *struck him with a flint* [knife], held in both hands and made in the manner of a large lance head, between the breasts. *And into the gash which he made, he thrust his hand and tore from [the victim] his heart*; and then he offered it to the sun and cast it into a gourd vessel. After having torn their hearts from them and poured the blood into a gourd vessel, which the master of the slain man himself received, they started the body rolling down the pyramid steps. It came to rest upon a small square below. There some old men, whom they called Quaquacuiltin, laid hold of it and carried it to their calpulco [neighborhood temple], *where they dismembered it and divided it up in order to eat it*"[30] (Emphases mine).

Sahagún indicates that the victims he described were primarily captives obtained during war with neighboring polities. The Dominican Diego Durán, in a more sensationalized and censorious manner, emphasizes the more gruesome aspects of Aztec sacrifice. Durán's 1581 chronicle locates his discussion of sacrificial practices in the following contexts: during the process of capturing prisoners of war for sacrifice, and within religious ritual activities at the Templo Mayor.[31] While the *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]* does not explicitly describe or depict human sacrifice, it does, however, illustrate warfare, including captors holding captives by the hair in a gesture of both possession and humiliation.[32] Colonial representations of human sacrifice also tend to emphasize the horrific aspects and visually depict a tremendous amount of blood. For example, the mid-sixteenth-century *Codex*

[30] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 3.

[31] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 91-92, 227, 286.

[32] *The Codex Mendoza [1541 – 1542]*, Folio 2 recto, 11.

Magliabechiano depicts both autosacrifice and human sacrifice.[33] In one image, two priests pierce their ear lobe and tongue, respectively, and bleed profusely from all parts of their bodies (Figure 47). Another image, depicting the heart sacrifice on the summit of a temple, shows a priest in the process of opening a man's chest with a flint knife as two other victims roll down the blood-drenched steps of a pyramid (Figure 48).

After the discovery of monumental sculptures related to sacrifice such as the Great Coatlicue (Figure 3) and the Tizoc Stone (Figure 17), from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, archaeologists seemed primarily concerned with reconstructing history and creating taxonomic systems, rather than asking questions about the culture and society. For example, in the early 1900s, German anthropologist Eduard Seler studied Pre-Columbian culture from a linguistic, ethnographic, and archeological perspective, focusing primarily on iconographic inquiry. As did his colleague Franz Boas, Seler stressed empirical evidence without attempting to synthesize the material they studied in a broader social, political, or cultural context. Seler employed a scientific approach to describe, identify, name, and classify deities and their diagnostic attributes, then related these symbolic

[33] Elizabeth Hill Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), folios 87v and 70r. *The Codex Magliabechiano* is a Aztec-style codex created in the mid-sixteenth century, but possibly based on an earlier unknown codex that no longer exists. It was created on European paper, with drawings and Spanish language text on both sides of each page. It contains sections on the 260 day sacred calendar known as the *tonalpohualli* or "the book of the days," including depictions and descriptions of the monthly feasts and other festivals associated with the calendar.

attributes to images and mythology.[34] He primarily uses colonial texts and illustrations for his taxonomic classifications of the images in pictorial manuscripts and Aztec sculptures. Seler notices that most sacrificial vessels depict the offering of blood on them, but do not depict sacrificial captives; rather they depict blood drawn from a willing and "pious" individual. He argues that this emphasizes the religious aspect of blood sacrifice, acting as a part of prayer rituals offered to certain divinities. While Seler's method is iconographic, his interpretive theories are primarily cosmological.

Justino Fernández and George Kubler, the first academic art historians to seriously interrogate Aztec art and its relationship to human sacrifice in the mid-1940s, follows Seler's cosmological conclusions.[35] For example, in his analysis of the "Great" Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) Fernández downplays the importance of history, politics, and cultural context, and instead focuses on the ritual and religious aspects that are embodied in the imperial sculpture. He accurately observes that the figure was a male impersonator wearing a flayed skin of a female, rather than a female being. Fernández further argues that Coatlicue (Serpents, Her Skirt) has a warlike meaning, forcing viewers to contemplate the cosmic force that gave Aztecs life, but was maintained by death in the form of human sacrifice.[36] Kubler primarily

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[34] Eduard Seler, *Mexican and Central American Antiquities, Calendar Systems, and History*, Trans. by Charles P. Bowditch, (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Press, 1904), 651-664.

[35] In the 1940s, both Fernández and Kubler made significant contributions to both Pre-Columbian and colonial visual culture.

[36] Justino Fernández, *Coatlicue: Estetica del Arte Indígena Antiguo*, (México, D. F.: Centro de Estudios Filosoficos, 1954), 238.

discusses human sacrifice in the context of the iconography of the relief sculptures of the ballgame at the Classic site of El Tajin, on the Gulf Coast of Mexico: the victors cut out the heart of the loser. In his general discussion of the motivation for heart sacrifice, Kubler posits that among the Aztecs, death by sacrifice was both expected and desirable.[37] According to Kubler, the Aztecs derived human sacrifice from the Post Classic Toltecs of Central Mexico and created myths as explanatory metaphors for the workings of the cosmos as a mandate for sacrificial death. These cosmological explanations do not fully elucidate sacrifice because they neglect historical and political motivations.

In the late 1950s, anthropologists, such as Lewis Binford, began to question archaeological techniques that simply described material remains, pioneering the New Archaeology movement (also known as processual archaeology). New Archaeology championed a more theoretical and analytical approach where the study of material culture sought to explain human behavior. Mexican archaeologist Alfonso Caso was influenced by the social science method of New Archaeology, as well as a deep sense of nationalism, and sought to redeem, or at least explain and defend, the Aztec sacrificial practice by rationalizing their motives for human sacrifice. Caso, endeavoring to contextualize human sacrifice and alter traditionally negative views of the Aztecs, contends that their deities could not have existed

[37] George Kubler, "The Cycle of Life and Death in Metropolitan Aztec Sculpture," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 23, no. 915 (1943): 257-268.

without the nourishment of blood sacrifice.[38] Caso downplays the inherent violence of sacrifice, focusing rather on valor and religious honor. Overall, Caso is justifying a practice that, when sensationalized, cast his ancestral culture in a negative light. While Caso's interpretation of human sacrifice is still inherently cosmological, he also emphasizes the complexity of the Aztec social structure, mentioning sacrifice as integral to that structure.

By the mid-twentieth century scholars seemed interested in going beyond the role of sacrifice within the social structure and cosmology of ancient Mesoamerica. Instead, scholars developed ecological or Marxist (or historical materialist) approaches to the issue. Marxist interpretations of history strive to uncover how people collectively produce the necessities to survive. In the 1970's Michael Harner argued that Aztec sacrifice grew out of a need for sustenance, particularly fat and essential proteins.[39] This increase in consumption of human flesh was due to famine and seasonal food scarcities; however, according to Harner, it became an elite practice to motivate lower classes to participate in war by allowing them the right to consume human flesh as a reward. The priesthood also reinforced cannibalism by demanding victims to appease deities. Harner employs a materialist research strategy supplemented by primary accounts to understand this cultural behavior. This

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[38] Alfonso Caso, *The Aztecs: People of the Sun*, translated by Lowell Dunham, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 72-73. Caso went on to argue that this understanding of death as an integral part of their spiritual lives also permeated their attitudes toward it in the earthly realm. Aztecs were more concerned with how they died since the cause of death determined the fate of the soul.

[39] Michael Harner, "The Ecological Basis for Aztec Sacrifice," In *American Ethnologist* 4, no. 1 (1977): 117-135.

controversial theory is widely regarded as preposterous because it has been proven that the relatively small amount of meat in the Aztec diet did not hinder their protein intake; the combination of maize and beans provides a complete protein.[40] While Harner's theory is generally rejected by the contemporary scholarly community, numerous scholars have followed his reliance on interdisciplinary evidence to illuminate the past.[41]

Over time, scholars have increasingly focused on questions about the social and cultural environments surrounding sacrificial practices, although interest in materialist explanations of sacrifice has persisted. Cecelia Klein argues that autosacrifice was understood to be a symbolic death and could substitute for the real thing, and thus act as payment to the deities. According to Klein, bloodletting rituals primarily occurred during politically critical transitional periods, perpetuated by the elite who took advantage of the disenfranchised and powerless lower class. She states that, "the act of autosacrifice served to reinforce the superiority of, and divinely ordained control by, the ruling family while at the same time helping to persuade the commoners that it was the rulers alone who could protect them from the

[40] A complete protein, also known as a whole protein, is a source of food that contains all nine of the essential amino acids. Animal proteins and a few non-animal proteins, such as soybeans and quinoa, are complete proteins. Other foods, such as beans, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and corn, are incomplete proteins and have to be eaten in certain combinations to create a complete protein. Corn, or maize, and beans is one of these combinations.

[41] Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, "Aztec Cannibalism: An Ecological Necessity?" *Science*, New Series 200, no. 4342 (1978): 611-617. Montellano argues against Harner, stating that since cannibalism primarily took place during harvests, the practice was motivated by religion and the desire for social status rather than as a dietary necessity.

caprice of nature."[42] Therefore, bloodletting rituals are an elite attempt to manipulate religious mythology for the purpose of securing and promoting political power.[43]

In the 1980s, Patricia Anawalt makes an academic plea for her fellow scholars to downplay the gruesome aspects of human sacrifice by discussing it in the context of religious ceremonies and other ancient cultures that shared similar practices.[44] Following Anawalt, Barbara Braun argues that sacrificial images should be analyzed with an understanding of material conditions and social relations of the Aztecs, focusing on how religious ideology is linked to the political order of an expansionist state.[45] Aztec sacrifice took place throughout the city, not just at the ceremonial center; this civic-wide performative space allowed the general public to play an active role in sacrificial rituals. In addition, common people helped care for and prepare victims, particularly because seasonal ceremonies were generally

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[42] Cecelia F. Klein. "The Ideology of Autosacrifice at the Templo Mayor," *The Aztec Templo Mayor*, Ed. Elizabeth H. Boone. (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), 358.

[43] See also Donald V. Kurtz, "The Legitimation of the Aztec State," In *The Early State,* Ed. Henri J. M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik, (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978). Kurtz argues that the state religion was the stimulus for Aztec warfare because prisoners were used as sacrificial victims. Religion generated the ideology underlying state organization and behavior; thus, while it was conducted by the priesthood, it was still an institution that provided legitimacy for the state. Kurtz additionally claims that human sacrifice can be described as state terror because slaves and criminals were sometimes sacrificed with prisoners of war. Regardless of who was sacrificed, the state demonstrated their ultimate power over the fate of its citizens.

[44] Patricia Anawalt, "Memory Clothing: Costumes Associated with Aztec Human Sacrifice," In *Ritual Human Sacrifice in Mesoamerica: A Conference at Dumbarton Oaks, October 13th and 14th, 1979*, Ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone, (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984).

[45] Barbara Braun, "The Aztecs: Art and Sacrifice," *Art in America.* April, (1984): 127-139.

marked by human sacrifices.[46] Thus, human sacrifice was a social act, perhaps even used by the Aztec elite to promote social cohesion.

More recently, scholars continue to trace their methodological connection to social historians based on the foundational idea of cultural relativism. Using archaeological and visual materials and returning to some of the earlier explanatory models, religious scholar Davíd Carrasco views sacrifice as a religious strategy to conserve the Aztec cosmic structure, with the city center of Tenochtitlan as a sacred stage. More specifically, sacrifice was a method of educating people about their social futures, directing imperial expansion, and communicating with deities. Carrasco contends that, "Sacrifice was a way of life for the Aztecs, enmeshed in their temple and marketplace practices, part of their ideology of the redistribution of riches and their belief about how the cosmos was ordered, and an instrument of social integration that elevated the body of the ruler and the potency of the gods."[47] Finally, and more explicitly than scholars before him, archaeologist Michael Smith argues that human sacrifice was blatant propaganda of terror meant to demonstrate the immense power of both the ruling elite and the deities.[48]

It is evident that the varied scholarly views on the nature of human sacrifice have challenged interpretative strategies over time, from colonial chroniclers to contemporary social historians. Our understanding of sacrificial rituals also reflects a

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[46] Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 73-75.

[47] David Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 3.

[48] Michael E. Smith, *The Aztecs*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 220.

change in historical epistemologies about the pre-Hispanic world in general and Aztec society in particular, that has moved from a place of ethnic, cultural, and religious alterity described as savage or overly mystical, to a culturally, socially, and politically complex society.

Dough as Sacrifice

Within this highly evolved world, the Aztec constructed images of *tzoalli* dough that reified sacrificial practices. The review of historical academic discourses on human sacrifice in ancient Mersoamerica shows the layered nature of the practice; the metaphorical sacrifice engendered by eating a *tzoalli* dough representation of a deity is yet another nuanced way to understand this multifaceted ritual.

Since life and renewal are closely related to food, *tzoalli* dough images in the shape of agricultural deities were sometimes ceremonially consumed. While Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor was the primary site for the imperial ritual of human sacrifice, smaller scale metaphoric or metonymic sacrifices took place during local ceremonies involving dough deity figures.

Many of the Aztec comparative figures of speech were closely tied to food or consumption. Metaphors and metonyms allow us to use what we know about our physical and social experience to provide understanding of countless other subjects. Since the human body and natural environment were fundamental components of the everyday Aztec conceptual system, they were often evoked as either metaphors or

metonyms, which I distinguish.[49] A metaphor is something that figuratively denotes one object or idea that is used in place of another to suggest a likeness. Such is the case when as Aztec father addresses his daughter by saying "here you are, my little girl, my necklace of precious stones, my plumage" in order to show the extent to which he loves and values her.[50] Here, the father likens his beloved child metaphorically to stone beads and feathers because they are considered some of the most treasured materials by the Aztecs. On the other hand, metonymy is the name or image of one thing that substitutes for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated. For example, the term "tongue" is used to describe the language that someone speaks or the translator, even though that is not the only body part involved in the creation of speech. Louise Burkhart defines metonymy as a "substitution of part for part within a semantic domain," and emphasizes that this rhetorical device was commonly used in Aztec speech and thought.[51] Burkhart illustrates the difference between metaphor and metonym in her discussion of colonial period Nahua-Christian discourse about sin. To Christians, dirt was a metaphor for sin. However, the Nahuas, who generally thought in terms of metonymy, understood dirt to be an extension of sin; in that sense, Nahua earthly

[49] It is interesting to note that this metonymic worldview also existed to the pre-Hispanic Andean region, as discussed by Carolyn Dean (2010). She describes stones, in particular, as material metonymic surrogates for the land that is part of a broader and more complex examination of Inka sacred geography.

[50] *Cantares mexicanos* (facsimile reproduction), edited by Antonio Peñafiel, (Mexico, 1904), fol. 5v.

[51] Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 13.

bodies were inherently polluted and sinful.[52] Musicologist Gary Tomlinson goes so far as to declare Aztecs as "a culture not of metaphors but one of metonymies," and argues "that the indigenous construction of the world connected things to other things in a network of extraordinary, more-than-western complexity and intimacy; that the expression of one thing in another was, therefore, a real connection—a metonymic one, again, involving the interplay of adjoining parts of a whole; and that the surmounting of distance and difference basic to metaphorical understandings of the world was simply not an issue."[53] The extent to which metonyms permeated the Aztec world is clear; for example, flowers and song were metonyms for poetry, which serves to highlight the transformative and malleable nature of their physical universe.[54]

In the case of *tzoalli* dough figures, that which is edible is metonymic because once they are deified they stand in for divine beings to be consumed during specific ceremonies. To reiterate, a *teixiptlahuan* (in this case the *tzoalli* dough figures) can be both a material representation of something extraordinary and an object that contains a divine essence. In other words, *tzoalli* dough figures become deities when they are modelled as such, processed and honored during ceremonies, and beheld by the masses; this process elevates the *tzoalli* dough from a special food

[52] Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 98-99.

[53] Gary Tomlinson, "Unlearning the Aztec *cantares*: Preliminaries to a Postcolonial History," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, edited by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, Peter Stallybrass, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 276-277.

[54] Gary Tomlinson, *Singing in the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 40.

product to a vivified object. It is important to stress that this eating metaphor in which *tzoalli* dough figures become deities replicates the sacrificial acts of the deities in the origin myths who created humanity out of corn kernels and blood; the ritual blood offered by humankind in a reciprocal fashion provides nourishment for the earth.

Tzoalli dough is primarily created and consumed during the 13 *veintena* (20 day periods, or "months") ceremonies of the Aztec 365 day calendar (known as the *xiuhpohualli*), as described by Sahagún and Durán. These ceremonies differed, each appealing to and honoring certain deities, and invoking their abilities to affect agrarian outcomes. *Veintena* celebrations were multisensory experiences that included theatrical displays in public venues, chanting and singing, donning bright costumes, the burning of incense and ritual feasting. In some cases, *tzoalli* dough played a primary role, not only representationally as a sculpted figure that was usually placed on an altar, but also as a sacred object to be ritually consumed by the participants.

The festival of Panquetzaliztli (The Raising of Banners), the fifteenth *veintena* in the month of December, was dedicated to Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird on the Left) when his image was made out of *tzoalli* dough. This larger-than-human, seated anthropomorphic *tzoalli* dough figure is described at the beginning of this chapter (Figures 43 and 44). Sahagún makes specific mention of the importance of amaranth during this ceremony, prior to the creation of the *tzoalli* dough figure: "…then were eaten tamales of amaranth seed, all at the same time, everywhere

among the common folk. None failed to eat tamales of amaranth seed."[55] The *tzoalli* dough figure of Huitzilopochtli was clothed, and as Durán describes, was adorned with small green beads for eyes and grains of corn for teeth.[56] According to Durán, the figure was "about as large as a man could carry in his arms while fleeing so swiftly that others could not catch up with him."[57] A procession of feathered standards, flowered arches, drummers, trumpeters, and running warriors accompanied the *tzoalli* dough figure to the Temple of Huitzilopochtli in the sacred precinct of Tenochtitlan. At the end of the festival, after the figure had been displayed at the temple, the dough image was eaten. Sahagún explains: "They took it with them to their homes, for it was in truth their captive. They ate it. They offered it to each of their kin and to those of the neighborhood; they ate it all. And when this was done, then those who were to die were taken in procession to the pyramid…"[58] This sequence of actions shows that the ingestion of the amaranth dough image of Huitzilopochtli during Panquetzaliztli was understood as a metaphor for harnessing the power of the deity. In fact, the sacrificial victims who partook in the consumption of the *tzoalli* dough figure may have been transferred the sacred essence of Huitzilopochtli by ingesting the dough into their own bodies. Durán even

[55] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 144.

[56] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 80.

[57] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 458.

[58] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 147.

goes so far as to describe tzoalli dough as "the flesh of God."[59] Thus, the *tzoalli* dough figure of Huitzilopochtli was venerated by the Aztecs, not as an image of a deity, but as a vessel for a sacred essence. Here, the *tzoalli* dough figure of Huitzilopochtli was thought of as metonymic, containing the divine presence of the Aztec deity.

Panquetzaliztli was not the only Aztec ceremony in which a *tzoalli* dough figure was the focal point. Anthropomorphic *tzoalli* dough hills, embellished with eyes and mouths were created during the Feast of the Volcano Popocatzin (the reverential for Popocatepetl) in the thirteenth veintena. These *tzoalli* dough mountain-shaped *teixiptlahaun* are illustrated in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* as anthropomorphic faces in profile emerging from a trapezoidal base reminiscent of the bottom of a pyramid (Figure 49). The heads wear paper headdresses adorned with feathers and tassels, and some figures also have hands reaching out and holding staffs. The Aztec veneration of mountains was common because they were viewed as sacred spaces due to their sources of life-giving water, rivers, and springs. The *tzoalli* dough hills were crowned with paper decorated with black rubber paint and then eaten as a part of a ceremony that Durán calls Nicteocua (I Eat God). He writes:

> "It should be known that when the solemn day of the feast of this hill arrived a great multitude of people from the locality dedicated themselves to the *grinding of amaranth seed and maize kernels, and with that dough they formed a hill representing the volcano*. They gave him eyes, his mouth, and they placed him in an honored spot in the home. And around him were set many smaller hills of the same amaranth-seed dough, each with its eyes and mouth, each one

[59] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 266. It is likely that Durán describes *tzoalli* as the flesh of God in order to understand the act of eating a deity through his own Christian perspective on the Eucharist.

> possessing its own name: one, Tlaloc; another, Chicomecoatl, or Iztactepetl; Matlalcueye; together with Cihuacoatl and Chalchiuhtlicue, the latter the goddess of rivers and spring which flowed from this volcano. On this day all these hills were placed around the [dough] volcano, each made of dough with its face. [They were] thus placed in order and left for two days, [and] *offerings and ceremonies were made to them*. On the second day they were *crowned with paper miters and sleeveless tunics of painted paper*. After the dough had been dressed with the same solemnity customary in slaying and sacrificing the men who represented the gods, *the dough representing the hills was sacrificed in the same way*. The ceremony concluded, *this dough was eaten as a sacred thing*"[60] (emphasis mine).

In this passage, Durán highlights all of the actions that elevated the *tzoalli* dough to a level of religious prominence, and he also includes the fact that the agricultural deity Chicomecoatl is one of the deities fashioned as a mountain effigy out of dough to be venerated and consumed. Most importantly, Durán makes a conscious effort to distinguish that the *tzoalli* dough figure was not simply a food item consumed for sustenance, but rather "*this dough was eaten as a sacred thing*." Additionally, the figures were placed in venerated spaces and had their own names. He clearly likens the *tzoalli* dough figure to *teixiptla*, a personalized and anthropomorphized material vessel for a sacred essence.

Durán makes an even more explicit link between *tzoalli* and *teixiptla* when he states that, "…on the feast of the said Mecoatl, after having fasted a terrible fast, all the people, old and young, went to wash at dawn and then to eat the flesh of God, which was the *tzoalli*."[61] As discussed in the previous chapter, the costume elements,

[60] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 255-256.

[61] Durán, *Book of the Gods,* 266.

particularly the headdress or crown made of paper, also functioned as a marker of a *teixiptla*. This costume element and the paper material from which it is made indicate divinity because paper headdresses are only used during religious ceremonies. Additionally, when headdresses were worn and subsequently used in ritual performance, they transferred their essence to the person who wore them. In the case of the *tzoalli* dough figures, the paper costumes, along with the ritual activity around creating and venerating them were catalysts in the transformation process from a mundane food item to a *teixiptla*. Subsequently, when a human participant ingested *tzoalli* dough, they were intimately and tangibly linked to this sacred object.

These examples, such as the use of *tzoalli* dough during the Panquetzaliztli ceremony, demonstrate that dough figures were metonyms for the ephemerality of maize and of human life, particularly when the dough represented human bodies or skeletons. Since life and renewal, death and sacrifice, were inherently tied to sustenance, the Aztec dough images in the shapes of deities that were ritually consumed emphasized the metaphoric relationship between food and sacrifice. The *tzoalli* dough fashioned into female agricultural deities and then ceremonially ingested accentuated the ever-present relationship between staple crops like maize and the sacrifice deemed necessary for its continued renewal.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

> **O, Tlaloc!**
> …And your sister, Chicomecoatl, shall sustain him,
> the sister of the gods, the Providers, shall enter his belly,
> and thus he shall be provided for his journey;
> she shall lift him to that far-off place.
> For she alone is our flesh and bones,
> she alone is our staff and support,
> she alone is our strength and fortitude;
> she is man's entire recompense…
>
> Nahuatl invocation, sixteenth century[1]

Aztec agricultural deities, such as Chicomecoatl who is mentioned in the Nahuatl invocation cited above to the weather and storm deity, Tlaloc, were central to Aztec life, especially in the provinces where society revolved around the planting and harvesting cycle of staple crops. The maize deity Chicomecoatl was more than just associated with this food product, but was a metonym for sustenance. Two lines reinforce that essential nature of maize: "the sister of the gods, the Providers, shall enter his belly, and thus he shall be provided for his journey," and "for she alone is our flesh and bones." Additionally, during the springtime month of Huey Tozoztli, girls carried bundles of maize cobs on their backs to present to Chicomecaotl in her temple where "they became their granary hearts."[2] In other words, certain specially selected cobs formed the core of the grain store to be saved and then planted the

[1] Thelma D. Sullivan, trans., and Timothy J. Knab, ed., *A Scattering of Jades: Stories, Poems, and Prayers of the Aztecs*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 156. This Nahuatl invocation was originally recorded in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, Book 6.

[2] Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, 64.

following year. Both of these metonyms, "flesh" and "granary hearts," not only emphasize the reliance of humans on maize, but also demonstrate that agricultural deities personified nourishment. These sentiments were pervasive throughout the Aztec empire, from Tenochtitlan to the provinces, but were especially potent among the more rural people whose days were structured around agricultural pursuits and whose livelihoods were directly involved with productive harvests. The abundance of stone and ceramic agricultural deity sculptures discovered in the provincial regions of the Aztec empire indicates as much, and the vivification of these objects during ceremonies further underscores their social and religious importance.

In this study, I show that certain materials become sacred and more animate through ritual practices. Ceramic sculptures and clay figurines were made from the earth itself. At Calixtlahuaca, clay figurines and stone sculpture would have likely functioned in the same way as they did in Tenochtitlan: these figures were representational of female agricultural deities, but had the ability to be animated through public ritual. In other words, the clay figurines and stone sculptures were *teixiptlahuan,* manifestations of or images that embodied *teotl*. Similarly, paper, especially in the form of headdresses or costume elements, was a marker of the performed *teotl*. *Tzoalli* dough, too, likely functioned in a comparable fashion both in Tenochtitlan and the provinces: it was made into a sacred material through the ritualized process of its creation and acted as a metaphor for the ephemerality of both maize and of human life, and then ritually consumed to emphasize this relationship. Each of these materials—clay, stone, and *tzoalli* dough—were carefully transformed

into anthropomorphic sculptures and then used ceremonially to become even more animate. These transformative ceremonies further vivified the extraordinary nature of the materials from which the sculptures were formed.

I return to a stone female agricultural deity effigy excavated at the provincial site of Calixtlahuaca and currently on display at the Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca that was first described in my introduction and a stone carving of Chicomecoatl from Tenochtitlan that was discussed in Chapter Four (compare Figures 2 and 24). In this comparison, the imperial sculpture is almost twice as large as the provincial sculpture, though it was still dwarfed in size when compared to other carved monoliths, such as the Great Coatlicue (Figure 3) and Coyolxauhqui Stone (Figure 4), originally displayed in and around the sacred precinct in Tenochtitlan. The finely carved stone excavated in the Valley of Mexico expertly depicts Chicomecoatl in a long skirt and quechquemitl, holding a rattlestick in one hand and a pair of maize cobs in the other, and donning a massive *amacalli* headdress. Despite the sophisticated quality of this effigy and its expert representation of a specifically named deity, it was not likely a a major protagonist in rituals in the capital; rather, male deities, such as Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli, or sculptures that were associated with political themes and sacrifice, such as Coatlicue, were generally prioritized and more visible in Tenochtitlan's sculptural program and state ceremonies.

In contrast, the Calixtlahuaca stone sculpture that depicts a female agricultural deity wearing a sizable *amacalli* (paper house) headdress was a focal

part of rites at the Aztec town of Calixtlahuaca in the Toluca Valley where it would be transformed into a *teixiptla*.[3] After its creation by a skilled stone sculptor, and on a designated calendric date, the portable sculpture would have been processed up the terraced slopes of Cerro Tenismo and throughout the sacred center to be displayed on the appropriate temple structure. The people of Calixtlahuaca would have petitioned the *teixiptla* for abundant harvest and the continuation of successful agricultural cycles in the future. The carved sculpture would have been venerated with offerings such as food items, copal, and flowers. Most importantly is that during these ritual activities, the object was beheld by the community, activating it and imbuing it with sacred essence. This act of viewing with a sacred gaze is described by Durán in a number of instances when he recounts various festivals. During a festival in September to honor Chicomecoatl, Durán states that "people came to the temple and filled the courtyard with lights and bonfires," and when a human *teixiptla* of the deity appeared she was "surrounded by a great crowd," then processed to a temple strewn with ears of maize.[4] Additionally, Durán describes the Aztecs beholding a *teixiptla* of the deity Toci during the harvest festival of Ochpaniztli (also in the month of September): "She was presented to the public so that all could see her and worship her as a divinity."[5]

[3] Refer to discussion in Chapter Four.

[4] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 223-224.

[5] Durán, *Book of the Gods*, 232.

For sculptures of agricultural deities, such as the Calixtlahuaca example, the headdress is the marker of the performed *teotl.* However, another essential component of animating the object through ritual necessitated a very visible, very public ceremony of beholding as a way of seeing that prompts the viewer to imbue an image and consecrate it with spiritual significance, rendering vision as a cultural and historical act.[6] Beholding is part of the response of devotees that enlivens these *teixiptlahuan* and, as Christoph Menke explains, "in the process of mimetic reenactment, we reach behind the already formed figurines of meaning, back to the dynamics, force and energy of their formation."[7] Agricultural deity effigies were imbued with a sacred essence during certain prescribed ceremonies, and understood by the collective audience to be vivified, even though their physical characteristics did not change visually.[8] Rituals that included dancing, processing, chanting, and eating could activate a sculpted figure so that the perceptions of the object and the sensations provoked by it changed. This transformation into a living presence can be further clarified by Gell's statement that, "all that may be necessary for sticks and stones to become 'social agents'…is that there should be actual human

[6] David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Morgan argues that biological vision can enhance inner visions, such as imagination or belief.

[7] Christoph Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Experience to Adorno and Derrida,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 97-98.

[8] Meskell. "Divine Things," 252. Meskell describes a similar phenomenon that took place in ancient Egypt, where statues embodied the gods through ritual practice and invocation. "During the festivals the deity could leave the dark recesses of the sanctuary when a portable image was taken out into the world. It was not sufficient that the pharaoh might travel as a substitute for the gods at festival time, the conditions of possibility deemed that the person of the god was required. When the god stepped outside and was manifest he was the present god amidst the celebrations; he was not constrained by the works of men, and his were *the utterances of god himself*."

persons/agents 'in the neighborhood' of these inert objects, not that they should be biologically human persons themselves."[9] The anthropomorphic images of stone, wood, clay and dough were of relatively ordinary and not inherently precious materials; thus, the ritual was the force that imbued these materials with divine essence. Tzoalli dough and papers were already precious materials, but could also be made more divine through ritual practices. In addition, Aztec ritual participants had to behold—actively perceive through the use of the mental faculty and shared experience—the *teixiptla* for them to become a part of their sacred reality. The phenomological experience of the audience was not just as onlookers, but as active participants in the divine transformations.

It is essential to note that these Aztec rituals were not just petitions to the deities: there were economic incentives and political implications to all of these public displays despite their scope or location within the empire. While sculpture from both the capital city and the provinces communicated messages about the close relationship between the cosmos and human society, the political nature of the imperial sculptures in and around the sacred precinct in the very heart of Tenochtitlan is apparent. The imperial artistic style, meaning the aesthetic values, iconography, techniques and media, was not absent entirely from the provinces, but it was much more prevalent and apparent in the scale and subject of Aztec sculptures from Tenochtitlan. By venerating imperial Aztec deities in the provinces, albeit as reduced copies, the rural population visually and viscerally showed their allegiance

[9] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 123. To be clear, Gell does not refer specifically to Mesoamerican objects.

to the empire. Conversely, ritual celebrations that focused on female agricultural deities emphasized local economies, particularly in more provincial settings. In other words, these rituals helped to create and maintain a sense of community in the local environs, those in the network of loosely federated tribute states within a broader imperial strategy.

The symbolic meaning of the materials used to create agricultural deity figures—particularly clay and *tzoalli* dough— are inherently linked to the earth and its bounty and would be particularly meaningful in the provincial regions where agriculture was a fundamental part of culture and society. Provincial communities like Calixtlahuaca duplicate in small-scale the centrality of the agrarian economy, but they also exert local control on their own religious rituals to ensure the welfare of their people. At Calixtlahuaca, an agricultural deity stone effigy described above (Figure 2), among many others in varying media and sizes, is an example of a material object that is a manifestation of the primary interest of the provincial people: agricultural abundance leading to economic prosperity. In other words, agriculture was more urgently important to many provincial communities than to Tenochtitlan. Since the Aztec Empire was based on a tributary system, it was essential that each province continuously provide resources to the imperial capital, and foodstuffs were the primary tribute from Calixtlahuaca's region. The replication of agricultural deities such as Chicomecoatl in these sculptures—particularly those associated directly with maize crops—as well as their local variation, addresses the

loosely controlled nature of the Aztec empire and the relative autonomy of provincial regions.

I have shown that the ritual function of Aztec agricultural deities is fundamentally linked to their material—stone and paper, *tzoalli* dough, and ceramic. These were material objects that, under certain circumstances, were understood to become animate, with the perceived agency enacted on the objects by humans. Gell states that "the idol may not be biologically a 'living thing' but, if it has 'intentional psychology' attributed to it, then it has something like a spirit, a soul, an ego, lodged within it."[10] Aztec agricultural deities across various media were recognized as potentially transformational, becoming imbued with vital forces. Subsequently, these physical objects, as used in ritual, help to construct and maintain social realities by affirming an agrarian community's need for a productive earth.[11]

This study contributes to a broader understanding of Aztec ritual and sacrality, particularly as it relates to the nature of devotional objects and their paraphernalia incorporated into the ceremonial life of provincial and urban constituencies living within the parameters of the Aztec empire. The specific properties of certain material things and their correlation with an animate Mesoamerican universe, are essential to understanding the interconnectedness of the

[10] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 18-19, 129.

[11] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 222. According to Bell, "Ritualization cannot turn a group of individuals into a community if they have no other relationships or interests in common, nor can it turn the exercise of pure physical compulsion into participatory communality. Ritualization can, however, take the arbitrary or necessary common interests and ground them in an understanding of the hegemonic order; it can empower agents in limited and highly negotiated ways. Ultimately, the notion of ritual is constructed in the image of the concerns of a particular cultural era."

physical environment with ritual activity. By examining the complex histories of one group of objects related to the Aztecs' ceremonial life, I hope to have furthered our awareness of the Aztec's engagement with the material essence of sacred objects and, more broadly, to have provoked thought about the religious and political relationship between the Aztec states and its provinces.

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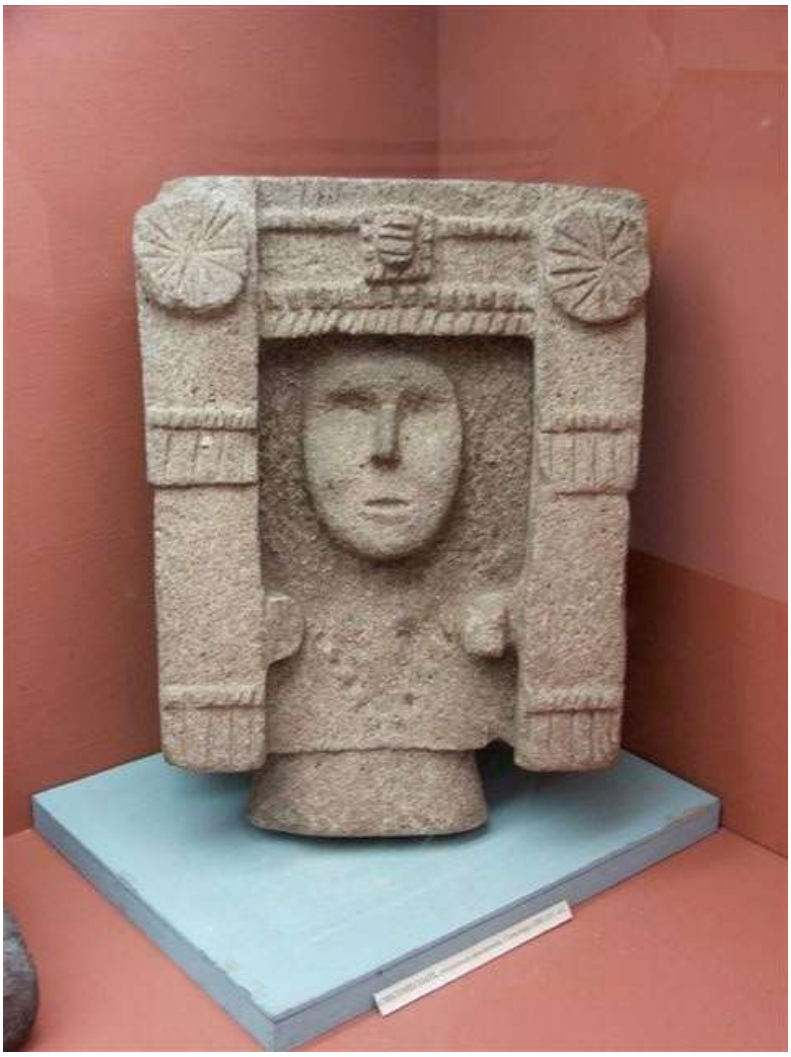

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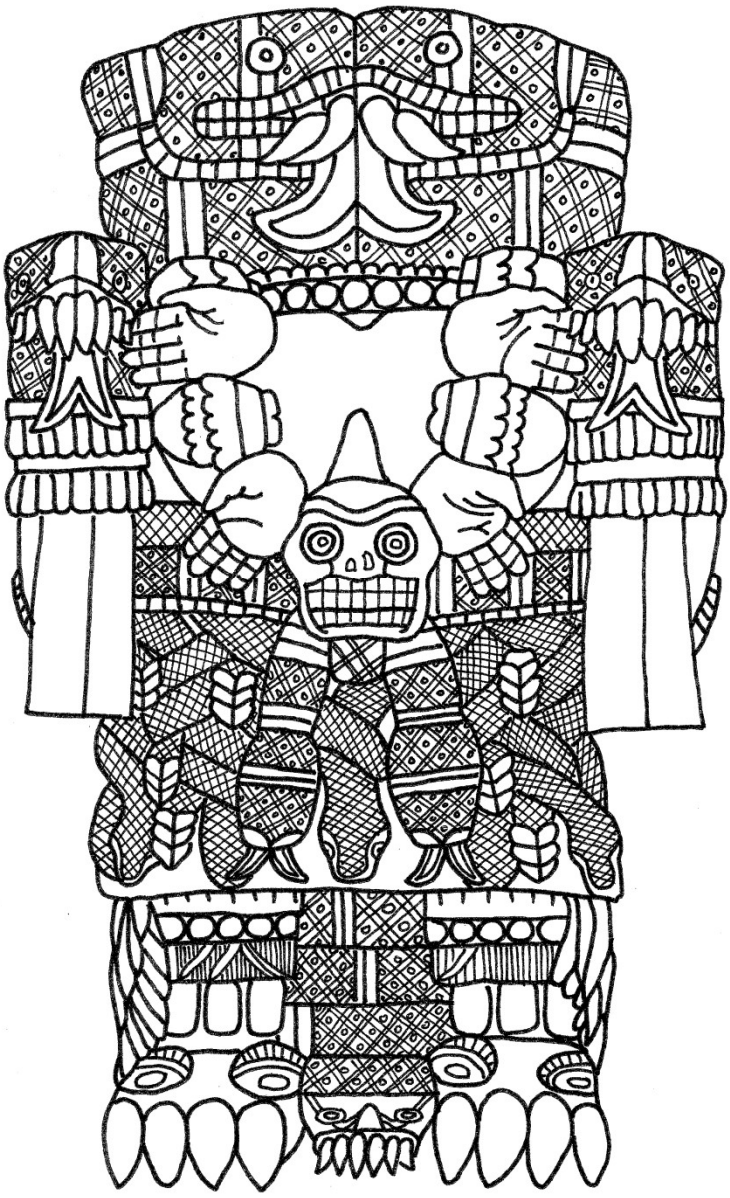

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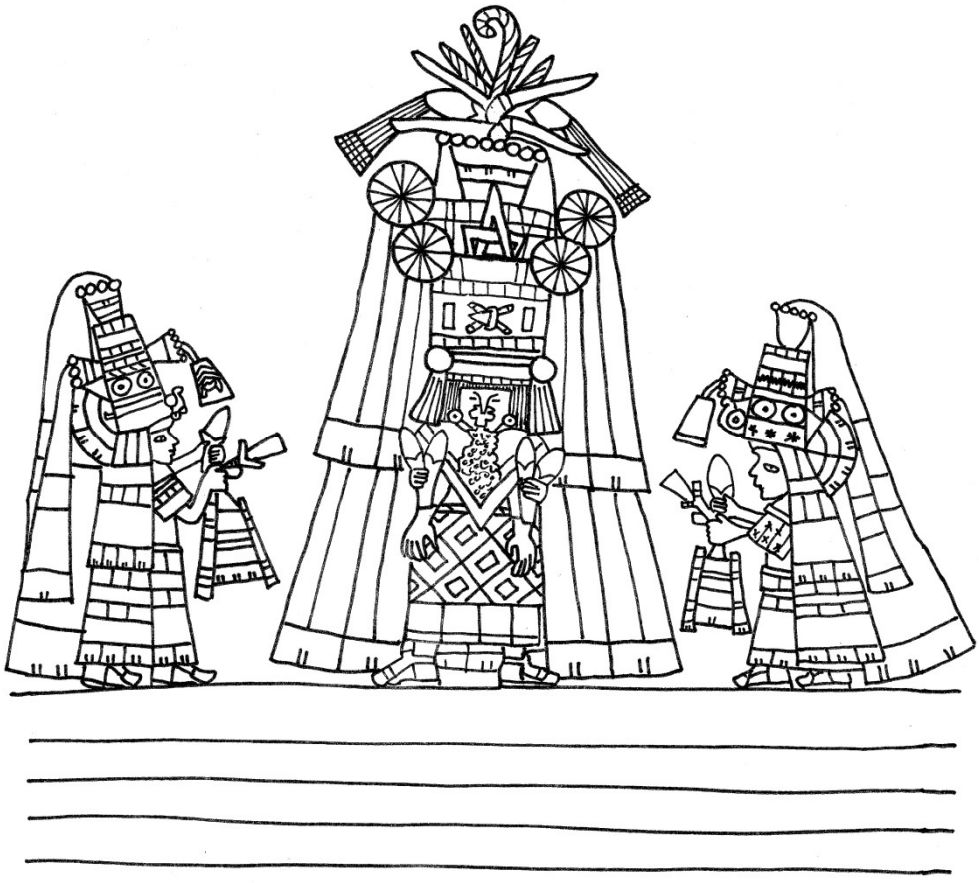

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Figure 15. Sun Stone; From Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 11.75” in diameter (drawing by Emily Umberger)

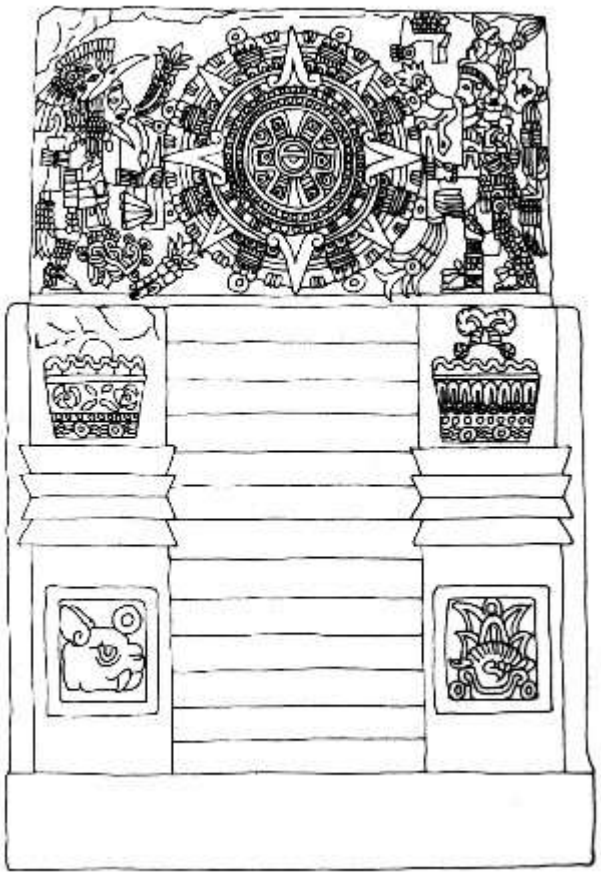

Figure 16. Temple Stone (Teocalli de la Guerra); From Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 4’ tall, 3.3’ wide (drawing by Emily Umberger)

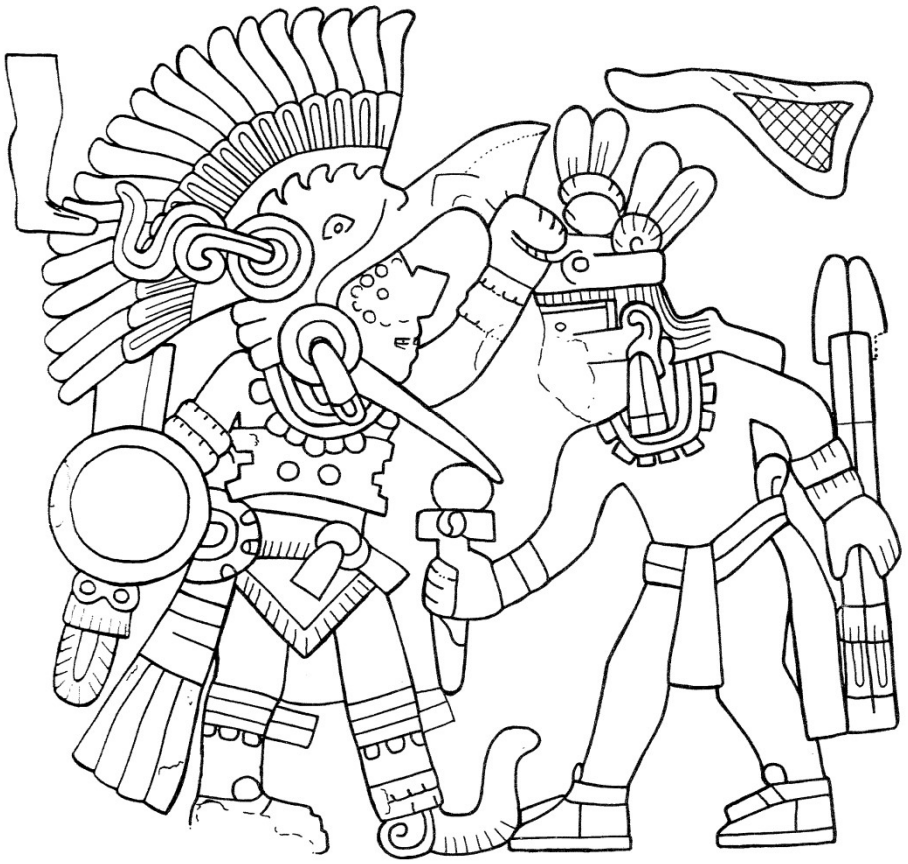

Figure 17. Tizoc Stone (detail showing Tizoc dressed as Tenochca Huitzilopochtli and conquering Matlatzinca god); Templo Mayor, Tenochtitlan, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 3’ tall, 8.8’ in diameter (drawing by Emily Umberger)

Figure 18. Tlaltecuhtli Monolith (Earth Deity); From Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone (andesite), 13.75’ by 11.9’ and 1.25’ deep (drawing by the author)

Figure 19. Tzitzimitl; From Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, terracotta, 5.5’ tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 20. Eagle Warrior From Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, terracotta, 5.5’ tall (photograph by the author)

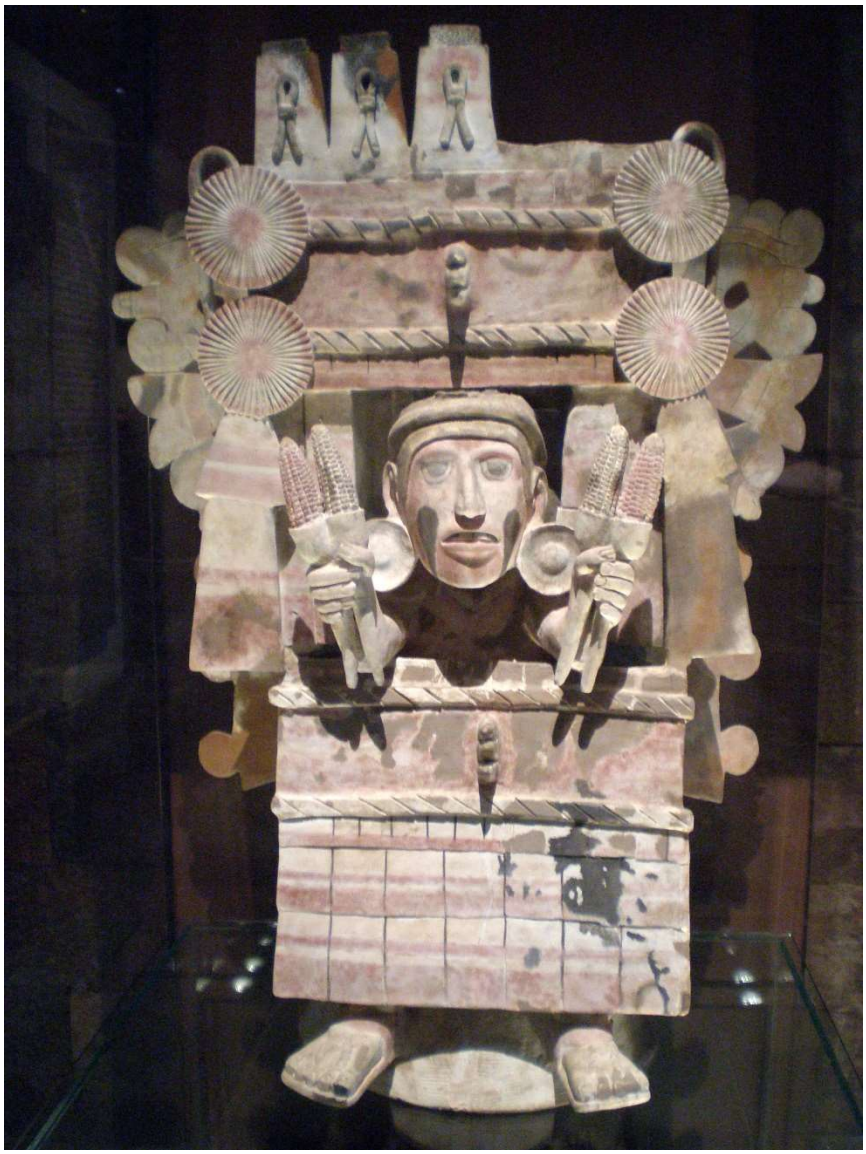

Figure 21. Incense Burner with Maize Deity; From Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, poly-chrome ceramic (terracotta), 39” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 22. Incense Burner with Maize Deity; From Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, poly-chrome ceramic (terracotta), 39” tall (photograph by the author)

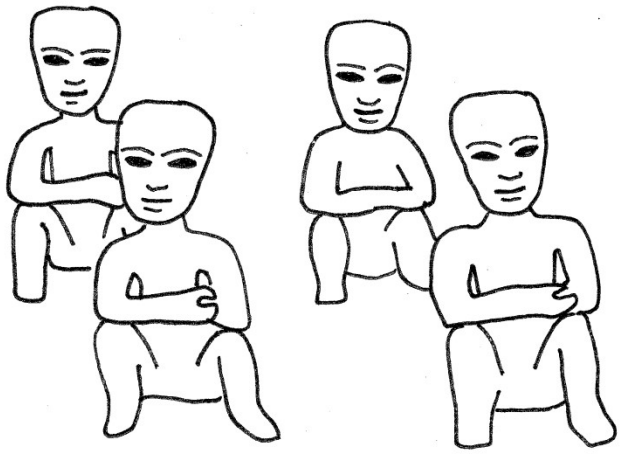

Figure 23. Figurines, From Teotihuacan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Teotihuacano, Classic, ceramic, approx. 4” tall

Figure 24. Chicomecoatl; From the Valley of Mexico, Located at Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 26.8” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 25. Chicomecoatl, From the Toluca Valley, Located at the Toluca Museo de Antropología e Historia, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 14” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 26. Amacalli Sculpture, From Malinalco, Located in Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 15” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 27. Amacalli Sculpture, From Malinalco, Located in Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 10” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 28. Amacalli Sculpture, From Malinalco, Located in Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 10” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 29. Amacalli Sculpture, From Malinalco, Located in Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 20” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 30. Amacalli Sculpture, From Malinalco, Located in Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone, 23” tall (photograph by the author)

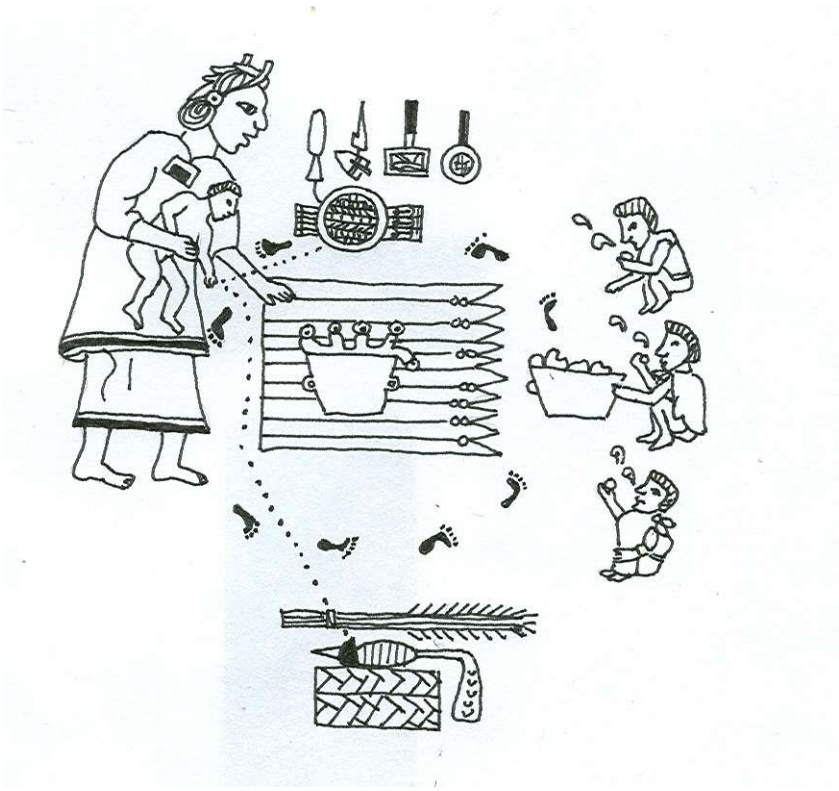

Figure 31. Tools to indicate a male or female baby (detail); drawn by an unknown Colonial Native Mexican artist, From *Codex Mendoza*, folio 57r, ca. 1540-1541, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University (drawing by the author)

Figure 32. Boys and girls learning gendered skills; drawn by an unknown Colonial Native Mexican artist, From *Codex Mendoza*, folio 59v, ca. 1540-1541, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University (drawing by the author)

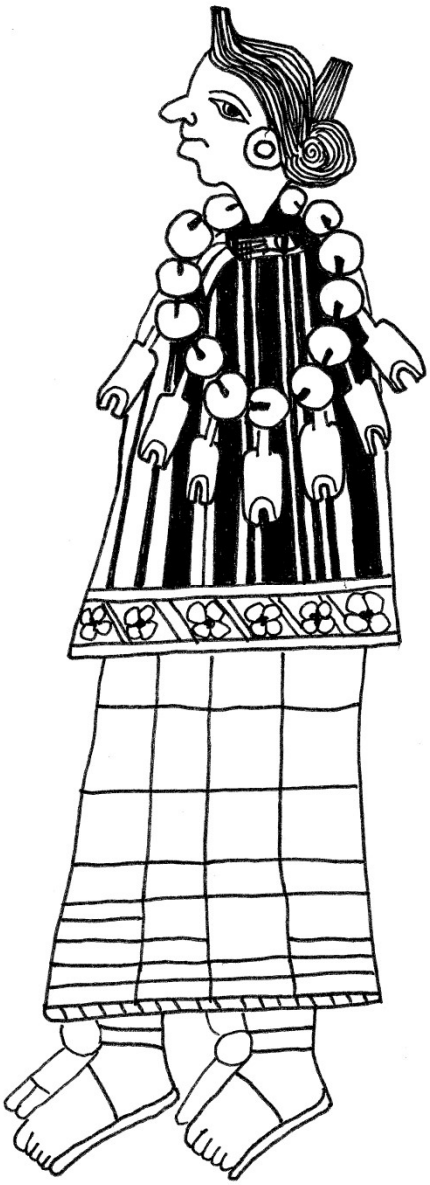

Figure 33. Aztec woman; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Primeros Memoriales*, folio 56r, ca. 1559-1561 (drawing by the author)

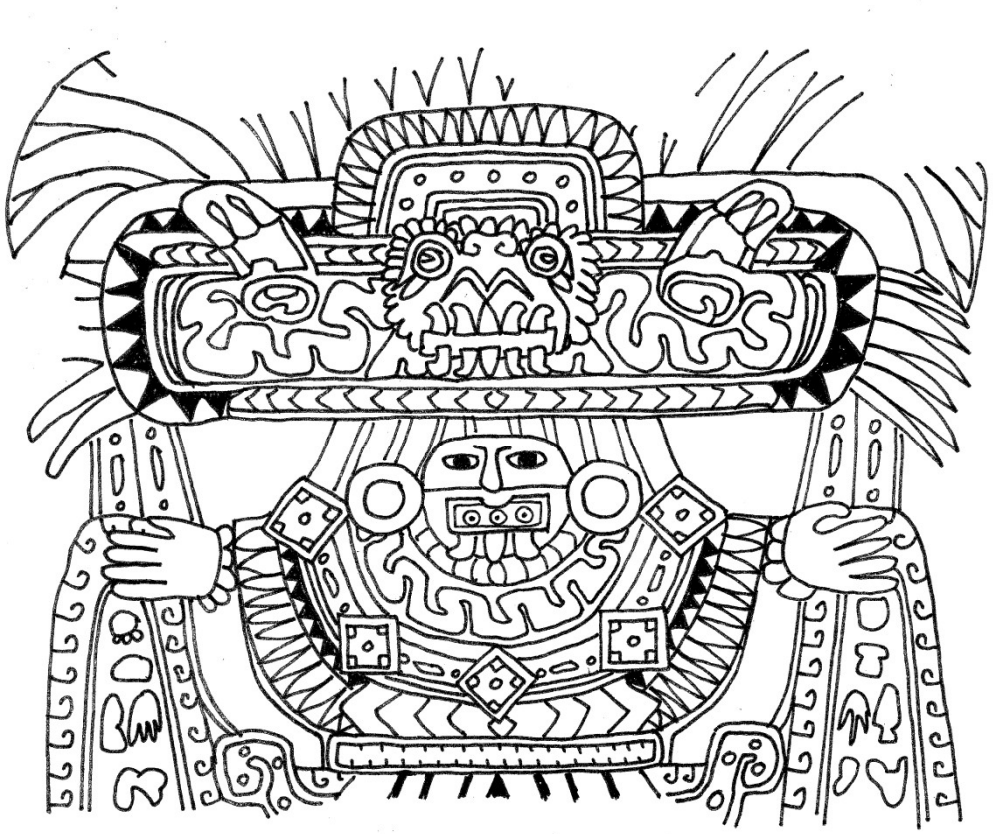

Figure 34. Great Goddess mural, Teotihuacan, Palace of Tetitla, Teotihuacano, ca. 150-700 CE (drawing by the author)

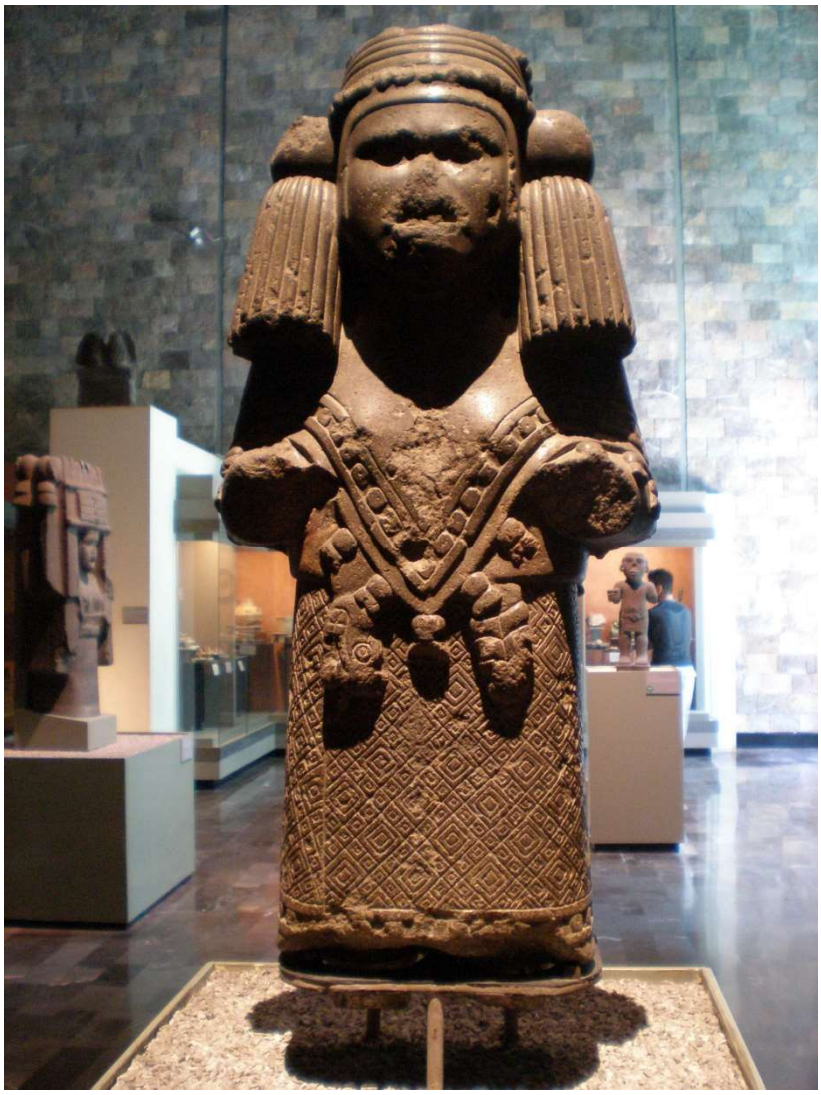

Figure 35. Chalchiuhtlicue, From Tenochtitlan, Located in Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, Aztec, Late Postclassic, stone (diorite), 33.5” tall (photograph by the author)

Figure 36. Chicomecoatl; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Primeros Memoriales*, folio 262r, ca. 1559-1561 (drawing by the author)

Figure 37. Xilonen; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Primeros Memoriales,* folio 263v, ca. 1559-1561 (drawing by the author)

Figure 38. Chalchiuhtlicue; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Primeros Memoriales*, folio 263v, ca. 1559-1561 (drawing by the author)

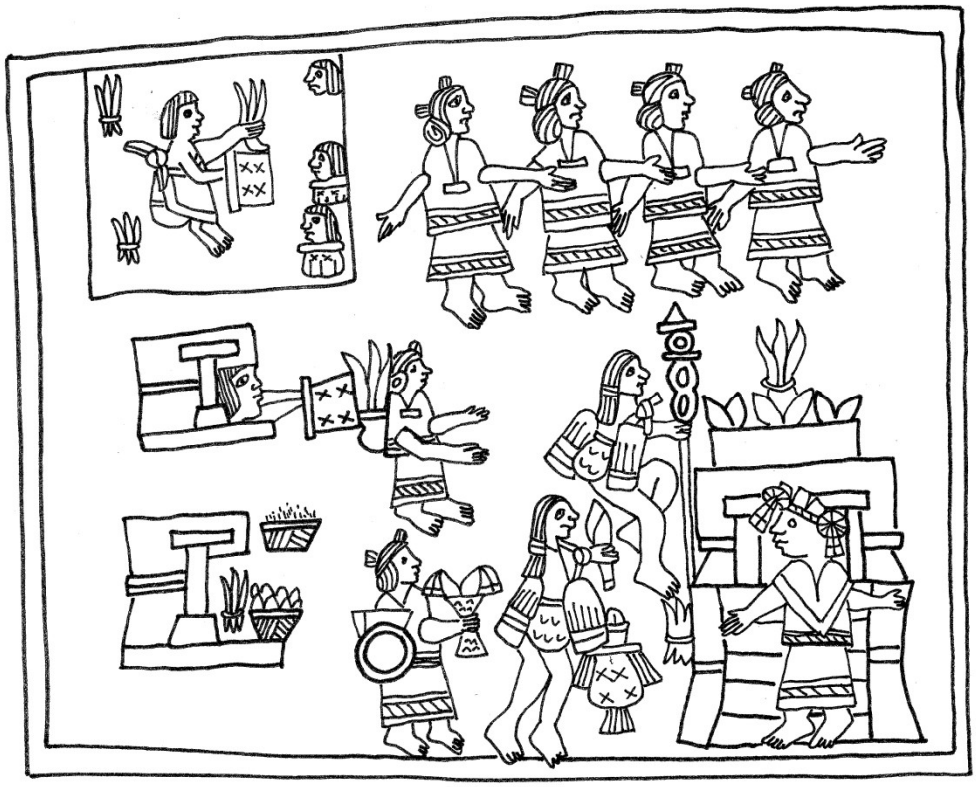

Figure 39. *Huey Tozoztli*; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Primeros Memoriales,* folio 250v, ca. 1559-1561 (drawing by the author)

Figure 40. *Ochpaniztli*; From the *Codex Borbonicus*, page 27 (1522-1540) (drawing by the author)

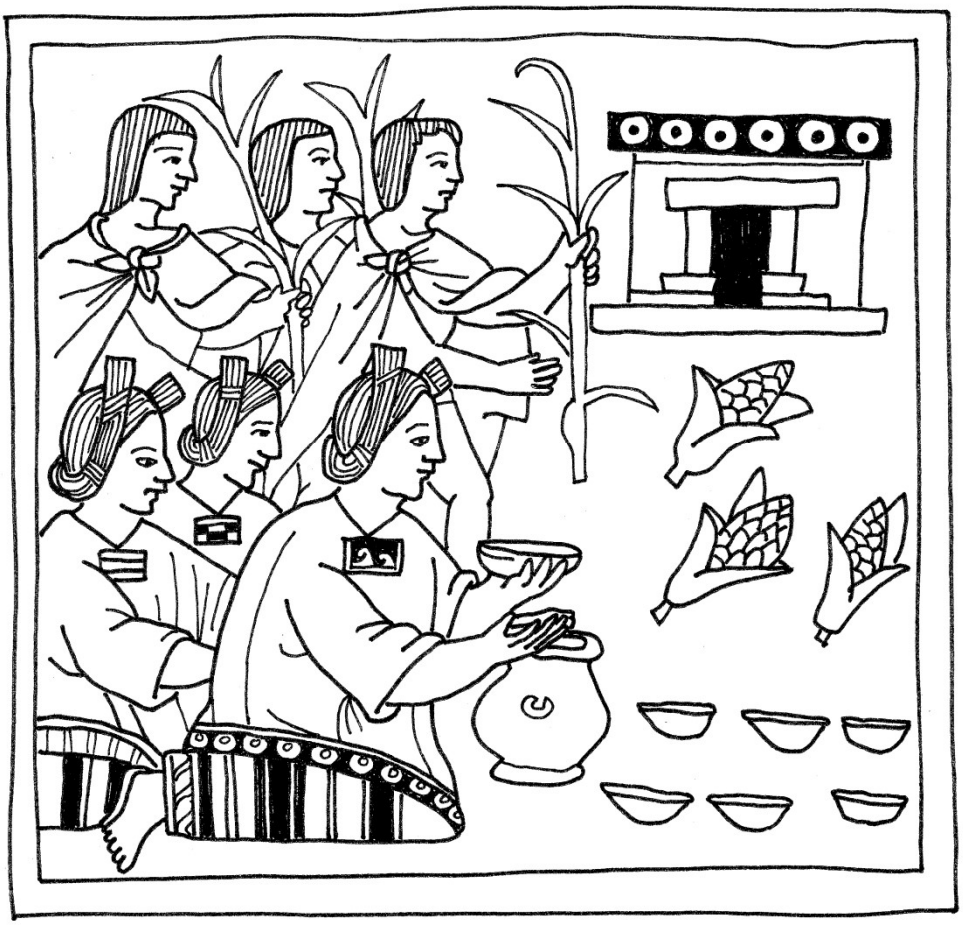

Figure 41. *Offerings to Cinteotl/Chicomecoatl*; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, folio 28 (drawing by the author)

Figure 42. *Venerating Chicomecoatl during Huei Toçoztli*; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Florentine Codex*, Book 2, folio 29 (drawing by the author)

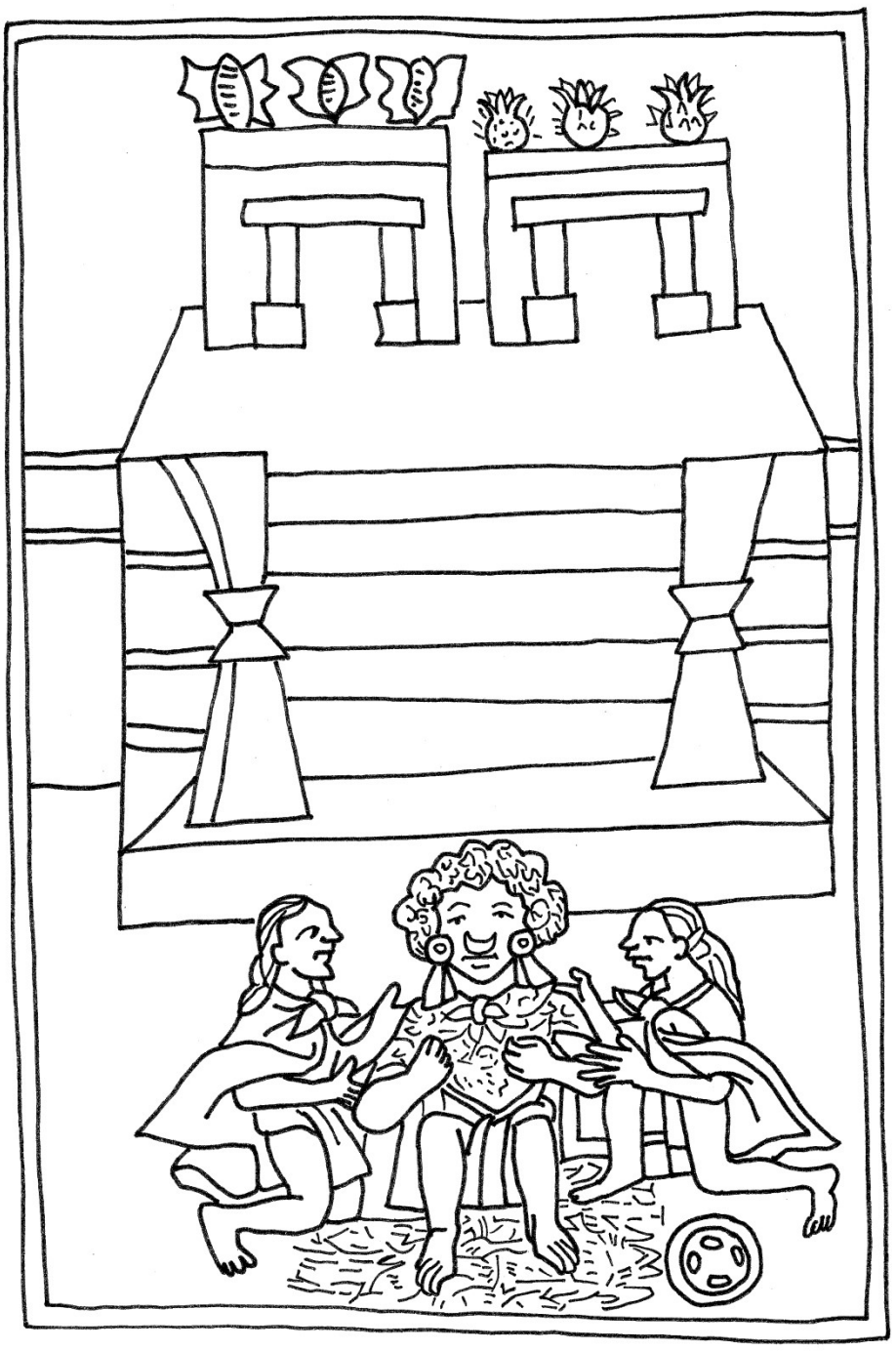

Figure 43.*Toxcatl*; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, figure 57 (drawing by the author)

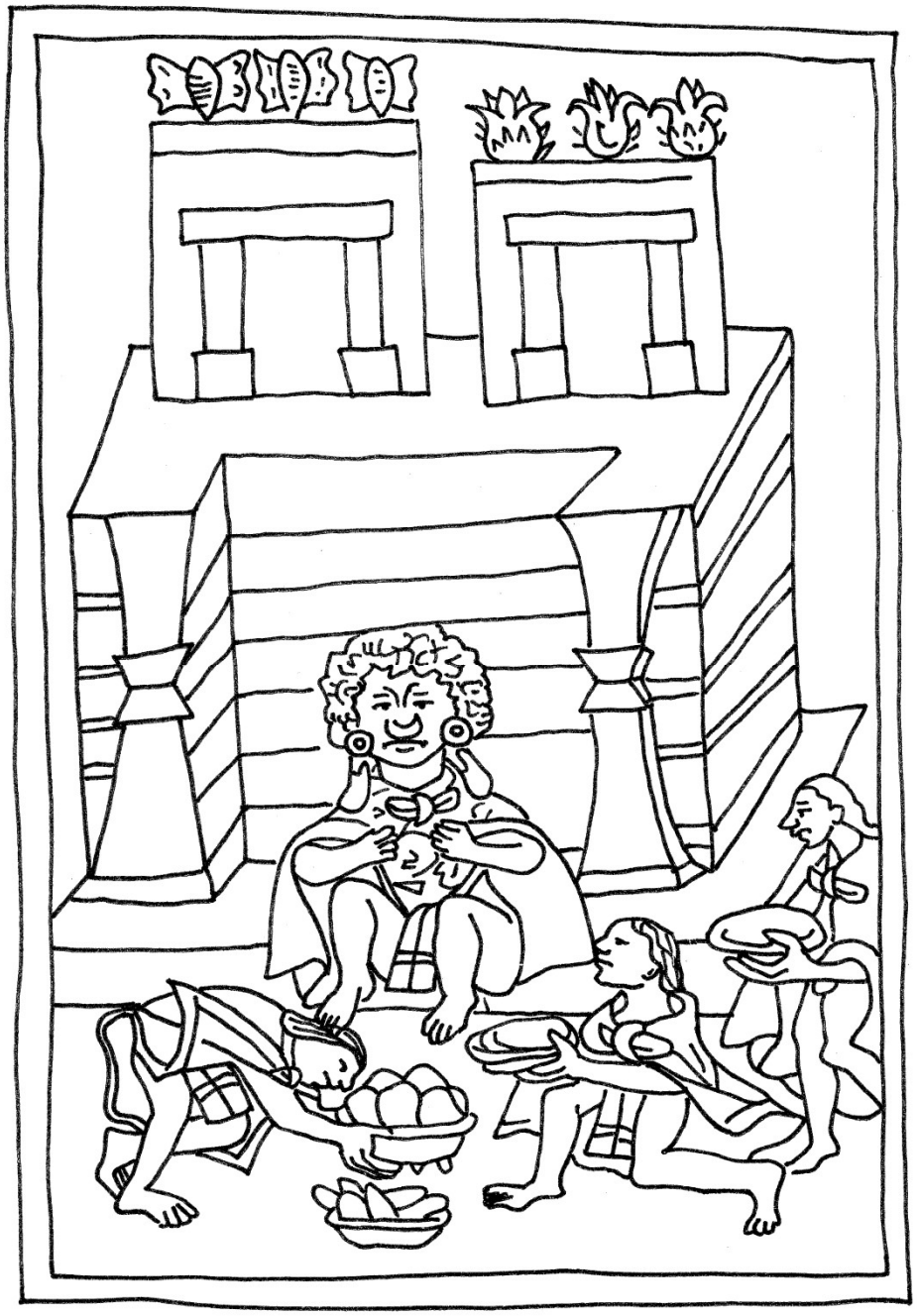

Figure 44. *Toxcatl*; Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, figure 58 (drawing by the author)

Figure 45. *Six supernatural couples*; From the *Codex Borgia*, plate 57

Figure 46. *The Center*; From the *Codex Borgia*, plate 53

Figure 47. *Aztec human sacrifice*; From the *Codex Magliabechiano*, folio 87v (drawing by the author)

Figure 48. *Aztec human sacrifice*; From the *Codex Magliabechiano*, folio 70r (drawing by the author)

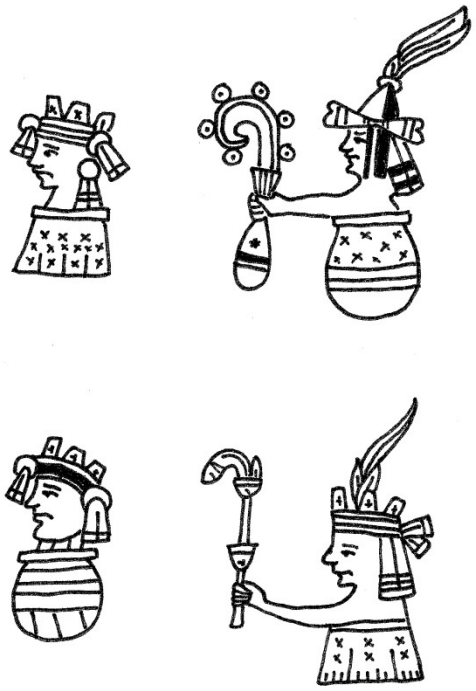

Figure 49. *Tepictoton*, Bernardino de Sahagún, From *Florentine Codex*, Book 1, figures 22-26 (drawing by the author)

Appendix: Known Aztec Ceremonies

Ceremony	Agricultural Deity	Tzoalli Dough
Atlcahualo or Cuahuitlehua (also known as Xilomaniztli according to Durán)	Chalchiuhtlicue	
Tlacaxipehualiztli		
Tozoztontli		
Huey Tozoztli	Chicomecoatl	X
Toxcatl		
Etzalcualiztli		
Tecuilhuitontli		
Huey Tecuilhuitl	Xilonen (Durán also names Chicomecoatl and Chalchiuhtlicue, though he conflates all three as the same deity)	
Tlaxochimaco or Miccailhuitontli	Chicomecoatl	
Xocotl Huetzi or Huey Miccailhuitl		X
Ochpaniztli	Chicomecoatl	
Teteo Eco		
Tepeilhuitl		X
Quecholli		
Panquetzaliztli		
Atemoztli	Chicomecoatl, Chalchiuhtlicue	X
Tititl		
Izcalli		

These ceremonies are as listed in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex (Book Two)*, and corroborated by Durán's *Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar*.

Catalog of Known Aztec Agricultural Deities in Museum Collections

Introduction:

The Catalog of Known Aztec Agricultural Deities in Museum Collections includes 122 Aztec sculptures of female agricultural deities from central Mesoamerica during the Late Postclassic period (ca. 1325-1521). It is organized first by the deity represented—Chicomecoatl or Chalchiuhtlicue—and then by material (ceramic, polychrome, stone). The name of the deity represented is listed alongside the object name in the collection, which is sometimes much more vague. I have also included the associated rituals, as described in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex (Book Two)*, and corroborated by Durán's *Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar.* Although all of the objects are sculptures in the broadest sense, I have indicated whether the object is a sculpture, figurine, or vessel. The type of object is followed by the media, size and a brief description of each object. In each of these columns I include as much information as I could gather from museum records and personal observation. Headdress style as it pertains to deity identification plays a role in this dissertation, so the type of headdress—*amacalli*, round banded, or geometric—is listed. The posture is either kneeling, standing, or no legs. In the next four columns, an "X" marks whether the sculpture has a distinctly female costume, is holding corn cobs, has obvious female sexual features such as breasts, or has a hole in its chest. Provenance gives information about where the object was excavated, discovered, or previously held in museum or private collections. Current location states where the object is currently housed, however does not take into account lending for exhibitions. The bibliography provides a brief reference about where the image has previously been published, either with an image or

description. For full bibliographic information, see the Catalog Bibliography following this introduction. There is a thumbnail sized image of each sculpture in the final column.

To assemble this catalog, I located sculptures in museums throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe by reviewing museum databases, catalogs, and physically visiting the vaults to include objects not currently published or on display. The Mexican museums include: the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, Fundación Cultural Televisa A.C. in Mexico City, the Museum of Anthropology and History in Toluca (Museo de Antropología e Historia, Toluca), Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum at Malinalco, and the Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca. The United States Museums include: the Denver Art Museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The European museums include: the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg (Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg), the Ethnological Museum of Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, which is one of the Berlin State Museums), the Reiss Engelhorn Museum (Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen) in Mannheim, the British Museum in London, and the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna (Museum für Völkerkunde Wien).

This catalog is as comprehensive as possible at this time, however it is a project that will continue to expand.

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---. "Gloria Y Esplendor de los Aztecas." *Arqueología Mexicana: Edición Especial* 13 (2003): 10-13.

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Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic		Headdress decorated with six bands, rectangular element falls past shoulders	Round banded	Standing					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic	Approx. 4" tall	Rectilinear headdress decorated with three bands of balls and two rectangular protrusions on top, four stranded necklace, long skirt	Amacalli	Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Vessel	Poly-chrome Ceramic	47" tall	Necklace of flowers and chilies, amacalli headdress decorated with knots and painted circles	Amacalli	Standing					Teotihuacan	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Relief	Poly-chrome Ceramic	12" x 12" square	Face with closed eyes and open mouth, banded headdress decorated with four rosettes	Round banded	No legs					Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Incense Burner	Poly-chrome Ceramic (Terracotta)	8.4" tall, 9.15" tall	Pleated paper fan (amacuexpalli) on back of headdress, necklace of ears of corn and flowers with many petals (marigolds? dahlias?), traces of blue and red paint	Round banded (with fan)	No legs					Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Pasztory 1983	
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Brazier	Poly-chrome Cermaic	39" tall	Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with a single three knots and one point and four rosettes, anklelength red striped skirt (cueitl), sandals, pitch stripes on cheekbones, similar to the Codex Aubin tonalamatl	Amacalli	Standing	X				Tláhuac, Mexico Federal District, 1996	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 (Votive vessel with an image of Chicomecoatl) Solís Olguín 2004 (Chicomecoatl ceremonial vessel)	

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Brazier	Poly-chrome Cermaic	39" tall	Brightly colored skirt (cueitl) with a red rhomboidal pattern, banded headdress decorated with little balls and capped by quetzal feathers, pleated paper fan (amacuexpalli), bow of pleated paper in back (tlaquehpanyotl), double scepter of interlaced serpents probably topped with a solar ray in right hand, pair of corn cobs in left hand, dressed similar to folio 36 of the Codex Borbonicus	Round banded (with fan)	Standing	X				Tláhuac, Mexico City, 1996	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 (Votive vessel with an image of Xilonen) Solís Olguín, 2004 (Xilonen ceremonial vessel)	
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	14" tall	Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with a two points and two rosettes and row of five knots, hole in chest	Amacalli	Standing		X		X	Toluca Valley	Museo de Antropología e Historia, Toluca		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	15" tall	Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with a two points and two rosettes, no feet (kneeling?)	Amacalli	Kneeling		X			Toluca Valley	Museo de Antropología e Historia, Toluca		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	15" tall	Amacalli headdress decorated with series of circles, hands held up to chest	Amacalli	Unclear					Malinalco	Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	10" tall	Amacalli headdress decorated with two large rosettes (one missing), hands held up to chest	Amacalli	Unclear					Malinalco	Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	10" tall	Amacalli headdress decorated with two large balls on either side, open mouth, arms to the side	Amacalli	Unclear					Malinalco	Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	20" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, amacalli headdress with four rectangular panels, skirt (cueitl), teeth	Amacalli	Standing					Malinalco	Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	23" tall	Amacalli headdress, skirt (cueitl), hands raised	Amacalli	Standing			X		Malinalco	Doctor Luis Mario Schneider University Museum, Malinalco		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Mask	Stone	30" tall	Corn cob necklace and black pitch face paint, round banded headdress decorated with circles	Round banded	No legs					Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	20" tall	Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with a single knot and two rosettes, quechquemitl	Amacalli	Standing	X	X			Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Aguilar-Moreno 2006, Matos Moctezuma 1996	
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	24" tall	Pair of corn cobs in right hand, amacalli headdress decorated with three points and two rosettes, thin, long skirt	Amacalli	Standing	X	X	X		Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	19" tall, 12" wide	Quechquemitl, long skirt (cueitl), round headdress decorated with flower motif and three small feathers in the front, headdress hangs down the back to the shoulders, tassels that hang behind the ears, earspools	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Pasztory 1983 (Goddess with Flowered Band)	

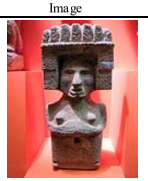
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	8" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), round headdress, paper fan in back of headdress (amacuexpalli), large tassels cover the ears	Round banded	Kneeling	X	X			Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma 1996 (Xilonen)	
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	17" tall	Long skirt (cueitl), belt tied in a knot in the front of the body, amacalli headdress decorated with two paper rosettes in the corners	Amacalli	Kneeling	X		X	X	Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	8" tall	Quechquemitl with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), amacalli headdress (amacalli) decorated with paper rosettes, corn on back in basket, holds pair of corn cobs in right hand and solar ray in the left hand	Amacalli	Standing	X	X			Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Solís Olguín 1998	
Chicomecoatl	Ochpanitztli Festival	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	53" tall	Long skirt (cueitl) with wide belt, amacalli headdress decorated with two paper rosettes in the corners, earspools	Amacalli	Standing	X				Tlalmanalco	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	8" tall	Long skirt (cueitl), amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Kneeling	X				Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	13" tall	Skirt (cueitl) that falls just above the knees, round headdress with rows of little balls on upper and lower rims, paper fan in back of headdress (amacuexpalli), large tassels cover ears, two feathers protruding from top center of headdress, red stone	Round banded	Kneeling	X	X			Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	9.8" tall	Quechquemitl, skirt (cueitl), tassels above a belted wrap-around skirt, belt fastens in front with a loose knot, headdress four bands in a row of little balls (beads?), (ears hidden by large buns beneath which hair emerges according to Art of Aztec Mexico), pleated paper fan in back if headdress (amacuexpalli), two tassels hang from bow in back	Round banded	Standing	X	X	X		Teloloapan, Guerrero, Mexico, 1964 (a tributary province of the Aztec empire)	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Nicholson 1983 (Xilonen, Goddess of Young Maize) Solís Olguín 2004 (Xilonen)	
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), double-stand necklace, banded headdress decorated with small balls on top border, double-layer tassels cover ears, paper fan at the back of the headdress (amacuexpalli), sandals, holds rattle stick	Round banded (with fan)	Standing	X				Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with large knot and two rosettes, long skirt	Amacalli	Standing	X				Valley of Mexico, purchased by the museum, 31.5160	San Antonio Museum of Art		
Chicomecoatl	Female Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), dangling belt, lacks a headdress, square hole in chest		Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Low geometric headdress, earspools, short skirt, hands held near chest	Geometric	Standing			X		Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Pair of corn cobs in right hand (left hand missing), long skirt, headdress deocrated with two rows of balls, possible traces of paint	Round banded	Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	Approx. 14" tall	Quechquemitl, large amacalli headdress that falls to waist decorated with two rosettes and tassels over forehead	Amacalli	Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Female Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, banded headdress decorated with two rows of balls, large double tassels on the sides of the head, hands held up near chest, open mouth	Round banded	Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Geometric headdress with two rectangular protrusions on top, long skirt, tow holes in chest, hands on hips	Geometric	Standing	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Head only, large geometric amacalli headdress decorated with two rosettes and one central knot, earspools	Amacalli	No legs					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Female Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Headless figure, two stranded beaded necklace, quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt, hole in chest		Standing	X			X	Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Head only, geometric headdress decorated with two rosettes	Geometric	No legs					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Rough rectangular headdress, open mouth, hands held up to chest	Geometric	Unclear					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Large geometric headdress hanging below shoulders, hands on hips, skirt, hole at navel	Geometric	Standing			X		Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Female Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Headless figure, quechquemitl decorated with tassels		Unclear	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Pair of corn cobs in right hand (left hand missing), headless figure, long skirt, topless		Standing	X	X	X		Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Head only, geometric headdress	Geometric	No legs					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Standing figure,amacalli headdress with four circular decorations, long skirt, breasts	Amacalli	Standing	X		X		Mexico, collected by Glennie, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	19.7" tall	Flat head broken from a sculpture or stelae, amacalli headdress decorated with a knot and two rosettes	Amacalli	Unclear					Mexico, collected by William Bullock, purchased from Rev Dr Buckland by the British Museum in 1825	British Museum, London		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the left)	Stone		Rough kneeling figure, amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Maximilian 1881	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, skirt, amacalli headdress, long skirt	Amacalli	Kneeling	X					Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Maize Deity (Chicomecoatl)	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	Approx. 7" tall	Kneeling figure, beaded necklace with pendant, quechquemitl, round headdress with floral design	Round floral	Kneeling	X				Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Maize Deity (Chicomecoatl)	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	19.5" tall	Large amacalli headdress decorated with a knot in the middle and four rosettes, pair of corn cobs in each hand	Amacalli	Kneeling		X			Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		

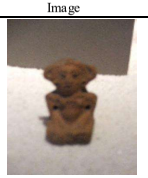
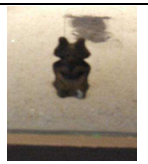
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Standing Female Deity	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	28" tall	Standing figure, amacalli headdress decorated with seven feather-like protrusions on top, hole in stomach, hands clasped, breasts	Amacalli	Unclear			X	X		American Museum of Natural History, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Kneeling Female Deity	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt)	Approx. 10" tall	Kneeling figure, skirt, amacalli headdress decorated with five circles	Amacalli	Kneeling	X		X		Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Maize Deity (Chicomecoatl)	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt)	14" tall	Standing figure, long skirt, rope belt, large amacalli headdress decorated with a knot in the midlle and two rosettes	Amacalli	Standing	X	X			Louis Petich Collection, New York, before 1893, on loan to Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1894–1900, Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Maize Deity (Chicomecoatl)	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt)	15.5" tall	Round banded headdress, pair of corn cobs in each hand	Round banded	Unclear		X			Louis Petich Collection, New York, before 1893, on loan to Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1894–1900, Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (black)	11.5" tall	Amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Unclear			X		Excavated in Acatlan, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Becker 1897	
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the left)	Stone (black, with white paint)	5" tall	Head only, geometric headdress	Amacalli	No legs						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		

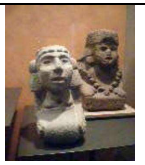
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the right)	Stone (brown)	11" tall	Standing figure, amacalli headdress decorated with six circles, small breasts	Amacalli	Standing			X		Excavated in Tezontepec Rancho, Municipality 86-1, Tepeyahualco, district de San Jose de los Llanos, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (brown, with red paint on face)	13.5" tall	Standing figure, long skirt, amacalli headdress decorated with five conical shapes on top, hands raised to chest, vertical groove in chest, deep basin on head 1.5 inches	Amacalli	Standing	X				Excavated in San Rafael, Tlaxcala	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Becker 1897	
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (brown, with red paint)	17.75" tall	Standing figure, arms raised to chest, amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Standing						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Chicomecoatl	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (dark brown grey)	26.8" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, amacalli headdress with four rosettes ankle-length skirt (cueitl), holds rattle stick (chicahuaztli), knotted belt	Amacalli	Standing	X	X	X		Aztec (c. 13501521), Carl Uhde collection, purchased by the museum, 1862	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 Arqueología Mexicana 2003 Nicholson 1983 (Standing fertility goddess) Pasztory 1983 (Goddess with	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (dark brown red)	18.75" tall	Standing figure, amacalli headdress decorated with two rosettes and four circles, small breasts, hole in chest, holding a pair of corn cobs in each hand	Amacalli	Standing		X		X		Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the left)	Stone (dark red) with white paint	9.5" tall	Abstract seated figure with elements of a headdress	Unclear	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Hackmack 1899	

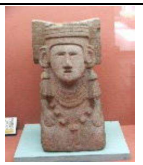
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (grey brown)	18" tall	Standing figure, amacalli headdress decorated with four circles and two large rosettes	Amacalli	Standing					Excavated in Chantzinco, Huejotzingo, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Becker 1897 Becker-Donner 1965: no. 117	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the right)	Stone (grey with black)	11.75" tall	Rough seated figure, amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Unclear						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (grey, with traces of red paint)	13" tall	Low relief, amacalli headdress, breasts	Amacalli	Unclear			X			Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the right)	Stone (light brown)	12.25" tall	Seated figure, amacalli headdress	Amacalli	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Hackmack 1899	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (light grey)	18.5" tall	Amacalli headdress decorated with two large rosettes, arms broken, long skirt	Amacalli	Standing	X				Excavated in Totemehuacan, Tecali, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Becker 1897 Becker-Donner 1965: no. 116, pg. 17	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (limestone)		Amacalli headdress decorated with two rosettes	Amacalli	Standing			X		Mexico, donated to the British Museum by Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in 1954	British Museum, London		

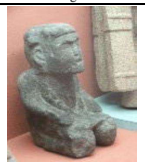
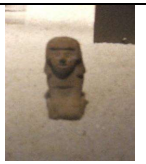
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (pink tan)	19.5" tall	Standing figure, amacalli headdress decorated with two rosettes, small breasts, hole in chest	Amacalli	Standing			X			Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Cuvey, Wagenhofer, Müllner 1965	
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the right)	Stone (pink)	12" tall	Seated figure, small amacalli headdress decorated with two rosettes on top	Amacalli	Knees Up						Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Hackmack 1899	
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the right)	Stone (red)	4.5" tall	Head only, geometric headdress	Amacalli	No legs						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chicomecoatl	Maize Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (redbrown)	13" tall, 16" wide, 12" deep	Seated figure with hands on knees, amacalli headdress decorated with two knots in the middle	Amacalli	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Becker-Donner 1965: no. 115	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (redbrown, volcanic)	36" tall, 20" wide, 12" deep	Seated figure, amacalli headdress decorated with four knots in the middle and rosettes with tassels that hang down past the ears, earspools, long skirt, hole through mouth	Amacalli	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Maximilian 1881 Becker-Donner 1965: no.120	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (tan brown)	20.5" tall, 11.8" wide, 4.7" deep	Standing figure, large elaborate amacalli headdress decorated with multiple layers and four large rosettes, hole on chest, quechquemitl with tassels	Amacalli	Standing	X			X		Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Bilineck 1878 Becker-Donner 1965: no. 119	

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (tan, with red paint on face and headdress)	17" tall	Standing figure, long skirt, amacalli headdress, hole in chest	Amacalli	Standing	X		X	X	Excavated in Atlixco, Santa Maria Natividad, distrito A, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Becker 1897	
Chicomecoatl	Corn Goddess	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (Volcanic)		Pair of corn cobs in each hand, amacalli headdress decorated with large knot and two rosettes, long skirt (cueitl), hole in chest	Amacalli	Standing	X	X		X	Valley of Mexico	Denver Art Museum		
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (with red paint on front)	16" tall	Long skirt (cueitl), short quechquemitl, round banded headdress with ear tassels, rope belt, earspools, pairs of corn in each hand	Round banded	Standing	X	X				Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Mühlenpfordt 1893	
Chicomecoatl	Amacalli Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (with red paint)		Amacalli headdress decorated with a knot in the center, small breasts, hole in stomach	Amacalli	Unclear		X	X	X		Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg		
Chicomecoatl	Standing female Deity	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (with stucco)	Approx. 14" tall	Standing figure, long skirt, robe belt, amacalli headdress decorated with knot in the middle and two rosettes	Amacalli	Standing	X				Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chicomecoatl	Headdress Figure	Huey Tozoztli, Tlaxochimaco, Ochpaniztli, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (with white paint on eyes and red paint on headdress)	16.5" tall	Standing figure, geometric headdress shape in front and rounded in the back	Geometric	Kneeling						Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		

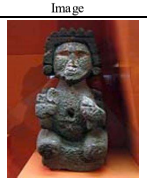
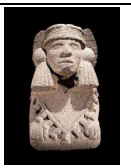
Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic		Kneeling figure, earspools, remnants of headdress	Unclear	Kneeling					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic		Kneeling figure, headdress (hairstyle?) with two tufts	Unclear	Kneeling					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic (molded terracotta)	4.3" tall	Banded headdress, with protruding feathers on top, beaded necklace, ear tassels, quechquemitl	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Mexico, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic (molded terracotta)	4" tall	Banded headdress, with protruding feathers on top, beaded necklace, ear tassels, quechquemitl	Round banded	Standing	X				Mexico, purchased from John Wetherall by the British Museum in 1849	British Museum, London		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic (molded terracotta)	5.5" tall	Banded headdress, with protruding feathers on top, beaded necklace, ear tassels, quechquemitl	Round banded	Standing	X				Mexico, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Ceramic (molded terracotta)	3.3" tall	Banded headdress, with protruding feathers on top, beaded necklace, ear tassels, pleated fan on either side of headdress, quechquemitl	Round banded (with fan)	Kneeling	X				Mexico, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Brazier	Poly-chrome Ceramic	25.4" tall	Headdress with cotton tassels and bands of woven material, headdress adorned with paper (and perhaps feathers according to Solís Olguín), pectoral or large pendant, necklace of maize cobs and flowers with many petals (cempoalxochitl), paper fan	Round banded (with fan)	No legs					Tlateloco, Mexico City, Alfredo Chavero collection, donated to the Museo Nacional in the nineteenth century	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 Arqueologia Mexicana 2003 Solis Olgun 2004 (Anthropomorphic brazier) Matos Moctezuma 1996	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue		Sculpture	Stone	20.9" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), elaborate sandals, banded headdress edged by a row of little balls, tied at the back in a double knot, two twisted cords ending in tassels hang in back, pleated neck bow at the back of the head	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Aztec (attributed to San Augustin del Palmar, Puebla), purchased in Mexico by a Mr Dohrmann, 1830; aquired by Gabriel von	Reiss- Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 Nicholson 1983 (Kneeling fertility goddess)	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	12.6" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with balls, long skirt (cueitl), single band headdress edged by a row of little balls, dangling tassels behind ear, ear spools, three layered necklace	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Red face paint, black paint on cheeks, banded headdress decorated with balls of cotton, holds bowl	Round banded	Standing					Valley of Mexico	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, quechquemitl decorated with circular motif and circular tassels, round headdress, large round earrings	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, quechquemitl decorated with circular tassels, round headdress, large round earrings, open mouth	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, round banded headdress decorated with round balls over the ears, hole in chest	Round banded	Kneeling			X		Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl, long skirt (cueitl), earspools, beaded necklace with large round pendant		Kneeling	X				Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, necklace, round headdress decorated with cotton balls over the ears	Round banded	Kneeling					Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, round banded headdress decorated with round balls over the ears, hole in chest, long skirt	Round banded	Kneeling	X		X	X	Unknown	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Head	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Head only, banded headdress decorated with two bands of balls, open mouth, red stone, black paint on cheeks, earspool (perhaps remains of headdress tassel?) on left side of head	Round banded	No legs					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Amacalli Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), four stranded beaded necklace, headdress decorated with four bands and paper fan and tassels hangind behind ears, kneeling figure	Round banded (with fan)	Kneeling	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Kneeling Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, skirt to knees, headdress base framing face, open mouth, kneeling figure		Kneeling	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Twisted band headdress, kneeling figure	Round banded	Kneeling			X		Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Headdress decorated with two rows of balls, pleated fan on back of headdress, long skirt, hands up near chest	Round banded (with fan)	Kneeling	X				Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, vestiges of a head covering		Kneeling					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Figurine	Stone		Kneeling figure, low twotiers headdress hangs below shoulders	Unclear	Kneeling					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Kneeling figure, remnants of large tassels hanging over the ears	Unclear	Kneeling					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Head	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Head only, banded headdress	Round banded	No legs					Calixtlahuaca	Site Museum at Calixtlahuaca		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	16.9" tall	Kneeling female figure, long skirt with rope belt		Kneeling					Mexico, purchased from C. Young by the British Museum in 1922	British Museum, London	McEwan and López Luján 2009	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	14.75" tall	Round banded headdress with ear tassels, fivelayered beaded necklace	Round banded	Kneeling					First recorded at the museum in 1880	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Amacalli Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the left)	Stone		Large amacalli headdress decorated with eight rosettes	Amacalli	Unclear						Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Hackmack 1899	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Head of Water Deity (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	Approx. 7" tall	Head only, round banded headdress with tassels that hang over the ears	Round banded	No legs					Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Seated Deity	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	10" tall	Seated figure, round banded headdress decorated with two cicles, hands in holding gesture	Round banded	Unclear						American Museum of Natural History, New York		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Seated Deity	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone	24" tall	Seated figure, geometric headdress, earspools, hole in chest, remnants of corn cobs in hands	Geometric	Kneeling		X		X		American Museum of Natural History, New York		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Standing Deity	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone		Standing figure, round banded headdress decorated with round ornaments and tassels over ears, hands clasped		Unclear						American Museum of Natural History, New York		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (andesite)	14.6" tall	Quechquemitl decorated with tassels, long skirt (cueitl), banded headdress edged by a row of little balls, pleated fan on the back of head (amacuexpalli), dangling ear tassels	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Mexico, collected by Glennie, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002: 121 McEwan, Colin; Ancient Mexico in the British Museum, London, BMP, 1994, pg 73 Arqueología	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (Basalt)	27.6" tall	Quechquemitl, large threestrand beaded necklace, circular earspools, paper fan in back of headdress (amacuexpalli), braided cords in back ending in tassels, skirt (cueitl), fourbanded headdress decorated with tassels, large tassels on sides of	Round banded (with fan)	Standing	X				Unknown	Colección Prehispánica, Fundación Cultural Televisa A.C., Mexico City	Nicholson 1983 (standing fertility goddess) Solís Olguín 2004 (Agriculture goddess/ Chalchiuhtlicue)	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt)	12.6" tall	Kneeling female, headdress, ear tassels, fringed quechquemitl	Unclear	Kneeling	X				Mexico, collected by Glennie, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Water Deity (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt)	Approx. 12" tall	Kneeling figure, quechquemitl, doublestrung beaded necklace, earspools, round banded headdress decorated with a fan on the back, pair of corn cobs in each hand	Round banded	Kneeling	X	X				The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Water Deity (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt, with lime mortar on eyes)	15.25" tall	Kneeling figure, quechquemitl decorated with short tassels, round banded headdress decorated with tassels over the ears	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Louis Petich Collection, New York, before 1893, on loan to Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1894–1900, Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Water Deity (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (basalt, with some pigment)	11.625" tall	Kneeling figure, quechquemitl, necklace, round headdress with floral design and decorated with tassels that hang past the ears, earspools	Round floral	Kneeling	X				Louis Petich Collection, New York, before 1893, on loan to Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1894–1900, Museum purchase, 1900	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture (on the left)	Stone (black)	10.75" tall	Standing figure, geometric headdress, breasts, long skirt	Geometric	Standing	X		X		Excavated in Atlixco, Santa Maria Natividad, districo A, Puebla	Museum für Völkerkunde Wien, Vienna		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Chalchiuhtlicue	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (Diorite)	33.5" tall	Quechquemitl bordered with circular shapes (chalchiuhitl—symbols for jade perhaps?) and ends in cotton tassels, skirt (cueitl) woven with geometric patterns, belt shaped like a rattlesnake, another piece of cloth draped over skirt, back of the hair covered	Round banded	Standing	X				Mexico City	Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	Matos Moctezuma and Solís Olguín 2002 Solís Olguín 2004 Pasztory 1983 (Standing Goddess with Tasseled Headdress)	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Female Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (granite)		Kneeling female figure, long skirt, banded headdress, ear tassels,	Round banded	Kneeling	X				Mexico, collected by William Bullock, purchased from Rev Dr Buckland by the British Museum in 1825	British Museum, London	Nicholson 1983 (kneeling fertility goddess) McEwan 1994: 73	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (red)	20" tall	Standing figure, long skirt (cueitl), round banded headdress with ear tassels, rope belt, hand out in a holding gesture	Round banded	Standing	X					Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin		

Deity Attribution	Object Name (in collection)	Associated Rituals	Type	Media	Size	Description	Headdress	Posture	Female costume?	Corn cobs?	Female sexual features?	Hole in Chest?	Provenance	Current Location	Bibliography	Image
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (red)	12.5" tall	Short quechquemitl, long skirt (cueitl), round banded headdress with ear tassels	Round banded	Kneeling	X				From Lueders collection (first head of HMFV), probably in museum before 1870	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg		
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture (in the middle)	Stone (red)	18.5" tall	Seated figure with round headdress, large eyes	Round banded	Knees Up						Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg inventory, Hackmack 1899	
Chalchiuhtlicue	Headdress Figure (Chalchiuhtlicue)	Atlcahualo, Atemoztli	Sculpture	Stone (reddish basalt)	8.9" tall	Head with banded headdress, ear tassels	Round banded	No legs					Mexico, collected by Glennie, donated to the British Museum by Henry Christie (18601869)	British Museum, London