

AN ETHNOARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HIGHLAND
GUATEMALAN MAYA DANCE-PLAYS

by

MARK HAROLD HOWELL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

AN ETHNOARCHAEMUSICOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HIGHLAND
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Mark Harold Howell

Adviser: Dr. Stephen Blum

Instrumental music played on two valveless trumpets and a wooden slit-drum currently accompanies the highland Guatemalan Maya dance-play *Rab'inal Achi*. These two instrument types are known from the Prehispanic record and have been associated with the play since its first mention in the mid-nineteenth century.

The script of the *Rab'inal Achi* is considered by many scholars to have Prehispanic roots. The possibility that its accompanying music also originated in Precolumbian times is the impetus behind my study. To explore this possibility I apply ethnoarchaeomusicological research methods, incorporating data supplied by iconology-iconography, ethnographic analogy, history, archaeology, and music analysis. Ethnoarchaeomusicological methods are also applied to three other dance-plays currently performed in highland Guatemala, the *Tz'unum*, the *Baile del Venado*, and the *Baile de*

los Moros y Cristianos. Like the *Rab'inal Achi*, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* is documented as using the same instrumentation, a duct flute and skin drum, since its emergence in highland Guatemala (during the Colonial period), and as it is an example of a Spanish-introduced dance-play type its performance components can be compared to those in the indigenous *Rab'inal Achi*.

The storylines and choreography of the four dance-plays are reviewed, and the prototypes of their instruments traced. In addition, music aspects of the *Rab'inal Achi* and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, including form, rhythm, and tonality, are listed and compared. Audio excerpts from these latter two *bailes* are on a compact disc, located in the back pocket accompanying this document.

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Although the general idea for this dissertation was formed years before I began graduate studies, its completion required the involvement of scholars and other informed individuals whose freely contributed insight and support were instrumental in making the final work possible.

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Maestro Don José León Coloch Xolop, in particular, I honor for his lifelong dedication to the preservation of the traditions of his ancestors. And like Coloch, the musicians José Chul, Libereo, Miguel Sum Meja, Pedro Morales, and Grecencio Quich Quich I regard as living cultural treasures, dedicated artists who opened up to me and patiently considered and thoughtfully answered my questions. K'iche' of a younger generation who have taken up the cause of cultural revitalization are similarly commended, including Marco Alonzo, Carlos González Xitumul, and Sebastian Sarpec.

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In conclusion, if there are faults in this document, they are mine. To the extent that they may appear to involve information from one or more of the persons listed above, such mistakes nevertheless reflect my misunderstanding of that information.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------|
| Abstract..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | vi |
| List of Tables..... | viii |
| List of Figures..... | xiv |
| List of Music Examples..... | xvi |
| Compact Disc Contents..... | xviii |
| Introduction | |
| Overview..... | 2 |
| Ethnoarchaeomusicology and the Procedures for Research..... | 4 |
| The Environment and its Indigenous People | |
| Highland Guatemala..... | 5 |
| The Maya in Highland Guatemala..... | 7 |
| The Soundscape of Modern Highland Guatemala..... | 13 |
| Music Archaeology..... | 15 |
| New Archaeology and Ethnographic Analogy..... | 18 |
| Sources | |
| Archaeology, Ethnography, and Ethnomusicology..... | 21 |
| Organology, Iconology-Iconography, History, Ethnohistory, and Music Notations and Transcriptions..... | 22 |
| Orthography..... | 23 |
| Prior Research..... | 25 |
| The Chapters..... | 29 |
| The Political Situation and its Effect on Research..... | 32 |
| Chapter 1 | |
| Instruments and Themes of Select K'iche' Dance-Plays | |
| Introduction..... | 35 |
| A Proposed K'iche' Baile-Instrument Typology..... | 37 |
| Tun and Su..... | 40 |
| Tz'unum Bailes..... | 43 |
| Baile del Venado..... | 47 |
| Tun Instruments in the Postclassic Era: Codex Becker I..... | 53 |
| Sacrifice and History as Themes of Tun Dance-Plays | |
| Sacrifice..... | 57 |
| History..... | 61 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 64 |

Chapter 2

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Tun Instruments: Slit Drum and Valveless Trumpet | |
| Introduction..... | 68 |
| The slit-drum | |
| Appearance and Methods of Construction..... | 69 |
| The Rab'inal Achi Slit-Drum..... | 71 |
| Decorations..... | 73 |
| Representations in Mesoamerican Paintings and Codices..... | 75 |
| Invention and Dissemination | |
| Shared Names and the South American Connection..... | 76 |
| North American Sources..... | 78 |
| The Kaminaljuyú Slit-Drum Sculpture..... | 81 |
| Teotihuacán Influence..... | 84 |
| Rubber-Tipped Mallets..... | 87 |
| Slit-Drum Sounds..... | 92 |
| The Valveless-Tube Trumpet..... | 96 |
| The Trumpets Used for the Rab'inal Achi..... | 97 |
| Appearance and Construction of Prehispanic Valveless-Tube Trumpets..... | 98 |
| Maya Ceramic Trumpets..... | 100 |
| Non-Maya Ceramic Trumpets..... | 102 |
| Representations in Mesoamerican Artworks | |
| Wrapped Trumpets..... | 103 |
| Telescope-Shape Trumpets..... | 108 |
| Trumpet Ensembles..... | 110 |
| Valveless Trumpet Sounds..... | 112 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 113 |

Chapter 3

| | |
|--|-----|
| A Tun Baile: The Rab'inal Achi | |
| Introduction..... | 115 |
| Clues to the Mystery of Early Performances..... | 116 |
| The Root Source(s) of the Rab'inal Achi Script(s)..... | 119 |
| Performance Elements in the Rab'inal Achi | 121 |
| Storyline..... | 122 |
| Costumes..... | 124 |
| Choreography..... | 126 |
| A History of the Script(s)..... | 129 |
| An Alternative Origin: Revivalism | |
| Revivalism Defined and Conditions Leading to its Occurrence in the Maya Region..... | 133 |
| Post-Conquest Maya Conflicts..... | 135 |
| A History of the Music..... | 138 |
| An Introduction to a Comparison of Two Performances..... | 146 |
| Performances in 1856 and 2002..... | 148 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 152 |

Chapter 4

Su and Tambor

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 154 |
| Su Instruments..... | 156 |
| Modern Flutes of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos..... | 157 |
| Possible Prototypes for Modern Highland Guatemalan Edgetone Instruments.. | 160 |
| Possible Prehispanic Maya Edgetone Instrument Performance Techniques..... | 164 |
| A Brief History of Mesoamerican Edgetone Instruments..... | 166 |
| Possible Indigenous Prototypes for the Double-Reed Su..... | 167 |
| Sounds of the Mesoamerican Edgetone Instruments..... | 169 |
| The Tambor, the Modern Skin Drum of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos... | 172 |
| Cultural Influences on Modern Highland Guatemalan Tambors..... | 174 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 183 |

Chapter 5

Conquest Bailes and the Warrior Dance

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | 186 |
| Similarities and Differences in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos as Performed in Cobán and Rabinal..... | 188 |
| Descriptions of Two Highland Guatemalan Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Performances | |
| Cobán..... | 189 |
| Rabinal..... | 192 |
| The Structures of Highland Guatemalan Conquest Bailes..... | 193 |
| Two Scripts of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos | |
| A Kaqchikel Script..... | 194 |
| A Rabinal Script..... | 195 |
| Similarities and Differences in the Two Scripts..... | 196 |
| Baile de los Moros y Cristianos: | |
| A Conquest Dance-Play Introduced from Spain..... | 197 |
| The History and Distribution of Conquest Bailes in Mexico and Central America | |
| Earliest Evidence..... | 200 |
| Conquest Baile Distribution in Guatemala..... | 201 |
| Music in the Highland Guatemalan Moros..... | 202 |
| Source(s) of the Instrumentation..... | 205 |
| The Late-Postclassic K'iche' Warrior Dance..... | 208 |
| A Preliminary Comparison of Performances of the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos..... | 213 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 214 |

Chapter 6

A Comparison of the Music of the Rab'inal Achi and Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 217 |
| Composition Forms and Their Uses in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos | |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| The Rab'inal Achi Music Forms..... | 218 |
| The Altos..... | 219 |
| The Sones..... | 220 |
| The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Music Forms..... | 223 |
| Rhythms in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos | |
| Terminology..... | 225 |
| The Rab'inal Achi: Slit-Drum..... | 226 |
| The Rab'inal Achi: Two Valveless Trumpets | |
| The Bajo Trumpet..... | 235 |
| The Alto Trumpet..... | 237 |
| The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos | |
| The Beginning-Ending Son..... | 239 |
| The Metrical Sones..... | 240 |
| The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Performance Form Revisited..... | 244 |
| Tonality in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos | |
| The Rab'inal Achi: Slit-Drum..... | 246 |
| The Rab'inal Achi: Valveless Trumpets..... | 248 |
| The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos: Duct Flute and Skin Drum..... | 249 |
| Other Sounds: War Cries, Rattling Shields, and Sword Bells..... | 250 |
| Summary | |
| Forms..... | 252 |
| Rhythms..... | 252 |
| Tonalties..... | 253 |
| Conclusions..... | 255 |
| Afterword | |
| A Review of the Methods and Results of Research..... | 257 |
| Suggestions for Future Research | |
| Slit-Drums..... | 261 |
| Valveless-Tube Trumpets..... | 262 |
| Duct Flutes..... | 262 |
| Skin Drums..... | 262 |
| Dance-Plays..... | 263 |
| Appendix..... | 264 |
| Glossary..... | 267 |
| Bibliography..... | 272 |
| Discography and Videography..... | 293 |
| Compact Disc..... | back pocket |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 1: K'iche Pronunciation Key..... | 24 |
| Table 2: PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification..... | 38 |
| Table 3: Character List for the Rab'inal Achi..... | 121 |
| Table 4: A Comparison of the Rab'inal Achi in Earliest and Latest Known Performance Forms..... | 146 |
| Table 5: Son and Alto Order and Lengths in the Rab'inal Achi, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002..... | 222 |
| Table 6: Son Order and Lengths in the Scene of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 224 |
| Table 7: Approximate Tempos of Sones in Contemporary Performances of the Rab'inal Achi..... | 235 |
| Table 8: Introduction and Conclusion Sections of the Sones in the Scene of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 245 |
| Table A1: Highland Guatemalan Maya Chronology Pertaining to Dance-Plays..... | 264 |
| Table A2: Mesoamerican Archaeological Sites Visited by Author..... | 266 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1: Map of Mesoamerica..... | 1 |
| Figure 2: Highland Guatemalan Language Groups and Select Sites..... | 9 |
| Figure 3: Baile del Venado Procession..... | 47 |
| Figure 4: Communities Where Tun Dances Are Now Performed..... | 50 |
| Figure 5: The Performers on the Two Trumpets and Slit-Drum in the Codex Becker 1..... | 55 |
| Figure 6: Mesoamerican Slit-Drums..... | 70 |
| Figure 7: Flower Design Depicted on the Rabinal Slit-Drum and Various Guatemalan Tambors..... | 73 |
| Figure 8: Kaminaljuyú Incense-Censer with Slit-Drum..... | 81 |
| Figure 9: Remojadas Ceramic Figurine with Slit-Drum..... | 86 |
| Figure 10: El Tajín Relief Sculpture with Slit-Drum..... | 88 |
| Figure 11: Miniature Slit-Drums with Affixed Mallets..... | 89 |
| Figure 12: Rab'inal Achi Instruments..... | 97 |
| Figure 13: Three Mesoamerican Trumpet Types..... | 100 |
| Figure 14: Merchant-Scene Vases with Wrapped Trumpets..... | 107 |
| Figure 15: The Main Plaza at the Kaqyuq Archaeological Site..... | 118 |
| Figure 16: Group Dance from the Rab'inal Achi..... | 123 |
| Figure 17: Cobán Moros Flute..... | 158 |
| Figure 18: Late-Classic Highland Maya Figurine Ocarina..... | 163 |
| Figure 19: Prehispanic Maya Flute-Rattle Performance Sequence..... | 165 |
| Figure 20: Goiter Flute..... | 168 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 21: Highland Guatemalan Moros Tambor..... | 173 |
| Figure 22: Pax Performance..... | 176 |
| Figure 23: Kai Yum Performance..... | 178 |
| Figure 24: Prehispanic Maya Pottery Drum..... | 179 |
| Figure 25: The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Procession with Flautist and Drum Porter..... | 189 |
| Figure 26: Distribution of Conquest Bailes..... | 202 |
| Figure 27: Voladores Performers at El Tajín..... | 206 |
| Figure 28: The Son Form in the Rab'inal Achi..... | 218 |
| Figure 29: The Alto Form in the Rab'inal Achi..... | 219 |
| Figure 30: The Typical Son Form in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 225 |

List of Music Examples

| | |
|--|-----|
| Music Example 1: Excerpts From the López-Sis Transcription..... | 139 |
| Music Example 2: The Beginning of Son del Quiche Achí..... | 141 |
| Music Example 3: The Template of the Rab'inal Achi Alto Performed on the Slit-Drum and Showing First and Second Trumpet Entrances, Ninth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002..... | 220 |
| Music Example 4: Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 1 of the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum..... | 227 |
| Music Example 5: Beginning Excerpt from the Body of Son 1 of the Rab'inal Achi, Nineteenth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002..... | 227 |
| Music Example 6: Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 3 of the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum..... | 229 |
| Music Example 7: Beginning Excerpt from the Body of Son 3 of the Rab'inal Achi, Twentieth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002..... | 230 |
| Music Example 8: Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 2 of the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum..... | 232 |
| Music Example 9: Beginning Excerpt from the Body of Son 2 of the Rab'inal Achi, Eighteenth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002..... | 232 |
| Music Example 10: Rhythmic Patterns and Variations in the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Bajo Trumpet, 1995 Recording..... | 236 |
| Music Example 11: The Glissando-Line Contour in the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Alto Trumpet, 1995 Recording..... | 238 |
| Music Example 12: Additional Examples of Glissando Contours in the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Alto Trumpet..... | 239 |
| Music Example 13: Beginning-Ending Son Pattern in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Performed on the Skin Drum in the Opening Piece, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 240 |

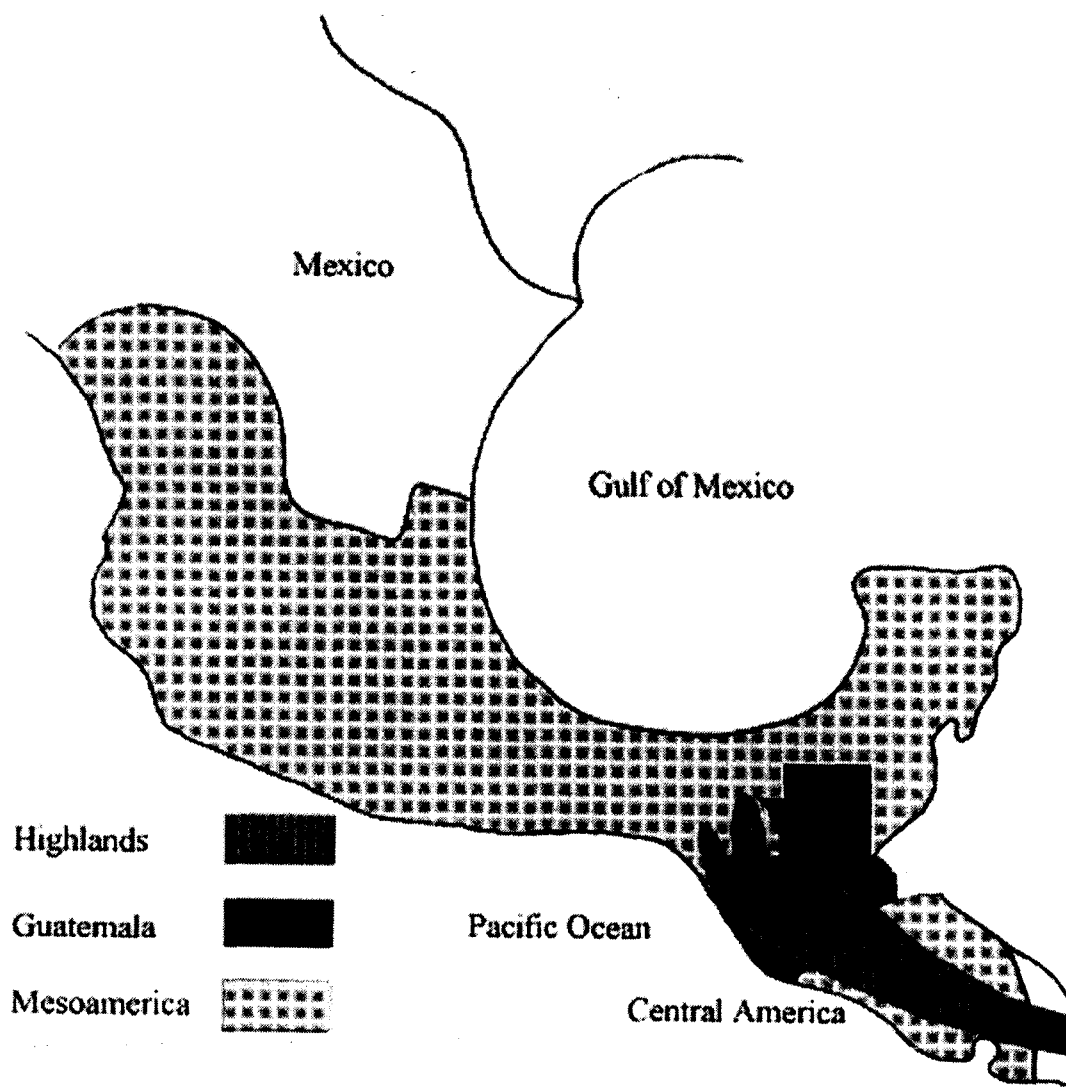
| | |
|---|-----|
| Music Example 14: Son 7 of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 241 |
| Music Example 15: The Structure of the Melodic-Rhythmic Flute Motives of Son 2 in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 244 |
| Music Example 16: A Sample of Flute Phrases in Sonos of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001..... | 249 |

Compact Disc Contents

- Index Number 1: Son 2, Rab'inal Achi, piece number eleven, Rabinal Calvaria, January 23, 2002
- Index Number 2: Alto, Rab'inal Achi, piece number nine, Rabinal Calvaria, January 23, 2002
- Index Number 3: Son 7, Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, piece number seven, Cobán, August 4, 2001
- Index Number 4: Body of Son 1, Rab'inal Achi, from piece number nineteen, Rabinal Calvaria, January 23, 2002
- Index Number 5: Body of Son 3, Rab'inal Achi, from piece number twenty, Rabinal Calvaria, January 23, 2002
- Index Number 6: Body of Son 2, Rab'inal Achi, from piece number eighteen, Rabinal Calvaria, January 23, 2002

Figure 1

Map of Mesoamerica



Mesoamerica is a geo-cultural area stretching between what are now Central Mexico and Nicaragua. In Prehispanic times the Maya predominately lived in and near the southern and southeastern parts of this area.

Map derived from M. Coe, 1966. Author's computer drawing.

Introduction

Overview

Despite nearly five centuries of European domination, the Maya, the largest native group in the Americas, retain significant Precolumbian cultural artifacts ranging from language and dress to literature and music.¹ Nowhere today is their autonomy stronger than in the Guatemalan highlands (Figure 1). Before the Spanish arrived, the local Maya, known as K'iche', wrote in an indigenous hieroglyphic script, evident on the walls of the highland Guatemalan archaeological sites Iximiché (Guillermín 1965) and Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951). Not long after the Spanish Conquest in 1524, the K'iche' adopted Roman characters to represent the sounds of their language and began to write documents in this latinized Maya. Scholars of highland Guatemalan writings, such as Robert Carmack (1968, 1973, 1981), Ruud Van Akkeren (2000), and Carroll Edward Mace (1966, 1967, 1970), view such transliterated K'iche' documents as the continuation of a literary tradition in existence well before the sixteenth century.

Music scores notated in an indigenous script have not been found. Partly for this reason, indigenous music of the K'iche' has not enjoyed the attention paid to their writings; yet certain instrumental musics from the region, including those used to accompany dance-plays like the *Rab'inal Achi* and *Tz'unum*, may have been as resilient under European domination as the surviving literature.

¹ According to the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología de Guatemala, the Maya population is currently estimated at six million.

K'iche' dance-plays (locally referred to as *bailes*) are communal events involving music, dance, and dramatic performance.² There are several types and versions; some of local origin and some introduced by Europeans. Highland Guatemalan dance-plays are the concern of my study because their accompanying music is in many cases supplied by Precolumbian-types of instruments, such as the valveless trumpet and the slit-drum, a short-section of log cut in such a way as to yield pitch differences.

This dissertation uses an ethnoarchaeomusicological approach to investigate the music played on these instruments for certain K'iche' *bailes*. Dale Olsen (2002:22), a scholar of South American music, and the founder of the discipline, defines ethnoarchaeomusicology as “the cultural and interpretive study of music from archaeological sources.” Joining this effort I will investigate whether ancient K'iche' instrumental music survives in the dance-dramas still performed today.³ In order to pursue this topic, I will review four currently performed highland Guatemalan dance-plays—the *Rab'inal Achi*, the *Tz'unum*, the *Baile del Venado*, and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, and the instruments used to accompany them; and I will compare the music traditionally played for two of these, the K'iche'-ascribed *Rab'inal Achi*, and the Spanish-ascribed *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*.

I have chosen the Postclassic period (AD 900-1524) as the period of focus because there are relatively good records of Prehispanic Maya life in highland Guatemala for this time. These records include archaeological remains, K'iche'an documents written in the sixteenth century, and early-Colonial accounts by Europeans. Information derived from these sources will inform theories concerning cultural practices continued from the past by the Maya living in Guatemala today. Excepting the *Baile de los Moros y*

² *Baile* and dance-play will be used interchangeably. In addition, as all of the dance-plays covered in this dissertation emphasize dramatic themes, the term dance-drama will occasionally substitute for these terms. It is important to note, however, that some K'iche' dance-plays have stories that do not emphasize dramatic themes; some are comedies, for instance.

³ Ancient is primarily defined as the time period comprising the Preclassic, Classic, and Postclassic eras of the Precolumbian period (1500 BC-AD 1524) (see Table A1).

Cristianos, it is possible that versions of the K'iche' dance-plays studied here were performed in the Guatemalan highlands during the Postclassic era. In fact, close examination of these works could yield a glimpse of Prehispanic music arguably more revealing than that available for any other time and place in Mesoamerica.

Ethnoarchaeomusicology and the Procedures for Research

To obtain information on ancient music, Olsen pioneered ethnoarchaeomusicology as a multi-disciplinary approach organized around four modes of inquiry, each informing the others: (1) ethnographic analogy, (2) music archaeology, (3) iconology-iconography, and (4) history (*ibid.*:23, 26). In each of the dance-dramas to be examined I will emphasize one or more of Olsen's analytical perspectives and add music analysis as a fifth investigative mode, as recordings and notations of the music used in dance-play performances are pertinent to Maya music investigation.

Six aspects of the music will be evaluated using this five-mode approach. They are: (1) the use of music in structuring dance-plays, (2) beginning and ending musical formulas, (3) the announcing of characters or cueing of events, (4) music textures, (5) the divisions of music components, and (6) rhythms, tempos, timbres, pitches, and intervals.

Ethnographic analogy is described later, but the ethnographical aspects of this dissertation are largely ethnomusicological and concern witnessed performances of highland Guatemalan Maya dance-plays, which along with *baile* music comparisons is an aspect of dance-play research that has received little attention in the past. Its music archaeology and iconology-iconography components center on Postclassic-era Maya instruments used in dance-play performances. Like comparisons of live versions of K'iche' dance-play music, music research focusing on a specific Prehispanic time (such as the Postclassic, Table A1) also has scant precedent. Information gleaned from an

investigation of these two Maya music aspects combined with records of instrument use during the historic period hopefully reveals instrument and dance-play relationships taking place over time.

In spite of the fact that this study explores aspects of Precolumbian Maya music that are under reported, like those listed above, it does not pursue equally obscure aspect that may be of more interest to other scholars of Maya music, although some are touched on during investigations of matters central to the purpose of this work. Examples of such aspects, include but are not limited to, analysis of the texts of the scripts, the relationship of words to music, the relationship of music to myth and ritual, vocal music and the evidence of its regard and place in Prehispanic times,⁴ and contemporary popular music in highland Guatemala.

The Environment and Its Indigenous People

Highland Guatemala

This research focuses on the *baile* performances found in the highland towns of Cobán and Rabinal, Guatemala. Demographically, the populations of both are dominated by the K'iche', many of whom continue to honor their cultural traditions by performing dance-plays composed by their ancestors. Cobán and Rabinal lie in the modern departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz, adjacently located in the middle of the mountainous area of southern Guatemala. The mountains extending from this area into

⁴ Henrietta Yurcheno (p.c., 2001), an authority on the *Rab'inal Achi*, believes that the text of the dance-play may once have been sung. Another authority, Dennis Tedlock (p.c., 2003), does not share Yurcheno's opinion in total, although he believes a portion, or portions of it, may have once been so rendered. Ensemble instrumental music without vocals is rare in Amerindian cultures above South America, which may be one reason Yurcheno suspects the play to have had a singing component. There are two K'iche' terms that might shed some light on this matter, *bixoh*, sing, and *k'ojom*, music. Many K'iche' words have multiple meanings, *k'ojom* being one of those. In addition to music, another of its definitions is drumming, a meaning that suggests a cultural differentiation between singing and instrumental playing.

the Mexican State of Chiapas and portions of Honduras and El Salvador are sometimes referred to here as the Southern Mesoamerican Highlands. In Guatemala they rise abruptly from the narrow Pacific coastal corridor to 2650 meters, and generally extend higher towards the north. The taller of two principal Guatemalan ranges, the Cuchumatanes, runs west-to-east across the country's northwest border with Chiapas, and some of its peaks surround Cobán. South of Rabinal is the second large range, the Chuacus, aligned in the same west-to-east direction. The upper reaches of these mountains are locally referred to as *tierra fría*, although like hills and basins at lower elevations the weather is confined to the typical tropical separation of rainy and dry (Borhegyi 1965; Carmack 1981; Colby and Berghe 1969; Hill II 2001; King 1974; O'kane 1999; Orellana 1984; Turner 1972; Vogt 1969).⁵

Rabinal is home to the *Rab'inal Achi*, arguably the best-documented Precolumbian dance-play in the Americas. Cobán is not as blessed, but of the several dance-plays produced there, the prototype of one, *Baile del Venado*, is also likely to have originated during the Precolumbian era. Geographically and metaphysically, Cobán is situated in a crossroads region. Its surrounding montane forest is often hidden by thick low cloud-cover, and the town has long been associated with the supernatural. Many K'iche' speak with awe of the witches of Cobán, and roads leading from there to the karstic formations in the east are considered the geographical manifestation of the mythical road to Xibalba, the underworld described in the foundational text of the Maya, the *Popol Vuh* (B. Tedlock 1982:111; D. Tedlock 1996:252, 342). In addition, Cobán sprawls over some of the last high ranges before the beginning of the monotony of the Maya lowlands stretching north through the Petén jungles to the tip of the Yucatan. In

⁵ The dry season in the Southern Mesoamerican Highlands is November through May and part of August. The temperatures vary according to altitude (about one degree centigrade for each 150 meters up or down), but normally range between 20° and 30° centigrade. The Guatemalan mountains are laced with fast rivers such as the Rio Motagua draining east to the Caribbean, and the Rio Chixoy (Rio Negro), flowing north to the Gulf of Mexico; these waterways were important in Prehispanic times because of their use for the transportation of ideas as well as people and products (Hill II 2001:189-90).

ancient times communities in this region were the highland gateways for the products from those northern realms such as rubber, animal pelts, medicines, salt, and manufactured articles.

During that same period, the valley around what is now the modern town of Rabinal provided the best route connecting the Cobán region to the Pacific Coast. Besides its strategic location, the warm climate and fertile soil of the small watersheds in the Rabinal valley were good for the cultivation of cacao, a bean used both as the ingredient in a drink prized by Mesoamerican upper classes and as a currency in the proto-market economies of the Postclassic era. Later in the 1500s, the lands between Rabinal and Cobán, and extending slightly beyond them, were given the name Verapaz (True Peace) by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas. He chose this area, formerly known to the Spanish by the Mexican name *Tezulutlán* (Land of War), as the region's reputation made it a conspicuous testing area for his revolutionary doctrine of conversion through pacification, which the friar proposed to the Spanish monarchy as a Christian alternative to war (Akkeren 2000; Carmack 1981).

The Maya in Highland Guatemala

By 1500 BC, three thousand years before the end of Postclassic K'iche' civilization in the Southern Mesoamerican Highlands, embryonic cultural developments were underway on the Pacific coast near the border region connecting modern Chiapas and Guatemala (Table A1). In coastal communities edging along hot mangrove swamps, people of a little-known agricultural culture, the Ocos, were building ceremonial centers and manufacturing pottery (Coe 1966:99; 1987:34-37). It is debatable whether Ocos society affected, or was affected by, the Olmec, a well-traveled people engaged in similar practices on the opposite (Gulf of Mexico) coast; however, by 500 BC Olmec influence was becoming discernible in the iconography of Izapa, the ensuing high culture in the Pacific littoral of Guatemala and Chiapas (Coe 1987:51-52).

The Izapans pioneered many cultural developments later adopted by the Maya, and are considered direct predecessors to Maya civilization (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, they probably spoke Mixe-Zoque (a Mesoamerican language also presumed to have been used by the Olmec). In fact, the Proto-Maya language likely originated in the Guatemalan highlands independent of Maya material culture and spread northwest (Huastec, Cholantzeltalan, Chontal) and northeast (Yukatek, Mam, Ch'orti') (Campbell 1977; Coe 1987; Lopez and Iboy 1998). K'iche'an is now the dominant Maya language group in the Guatemala central plateau, between the Cuchumatanes and Chuacus mountain ranges. It includes speakers of K'iche' and related languages, such as Achi, Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil, and Poqom. In discussing the music of the Postclassic K'iche' I include music practices ascribed to speakers of these languages and their dialects. On occasion I also include discussions concerning indigenous Amerindians living outside the K'iche' nuclear area, some of whom did not speak a K'iche'an, or even a Maya, language. One of these is the Nahuatl-speaking Pipil, a group that vied for control of the Verapaz region during the Postclassic period (Coe 1987:26) (Figure 2).⁶

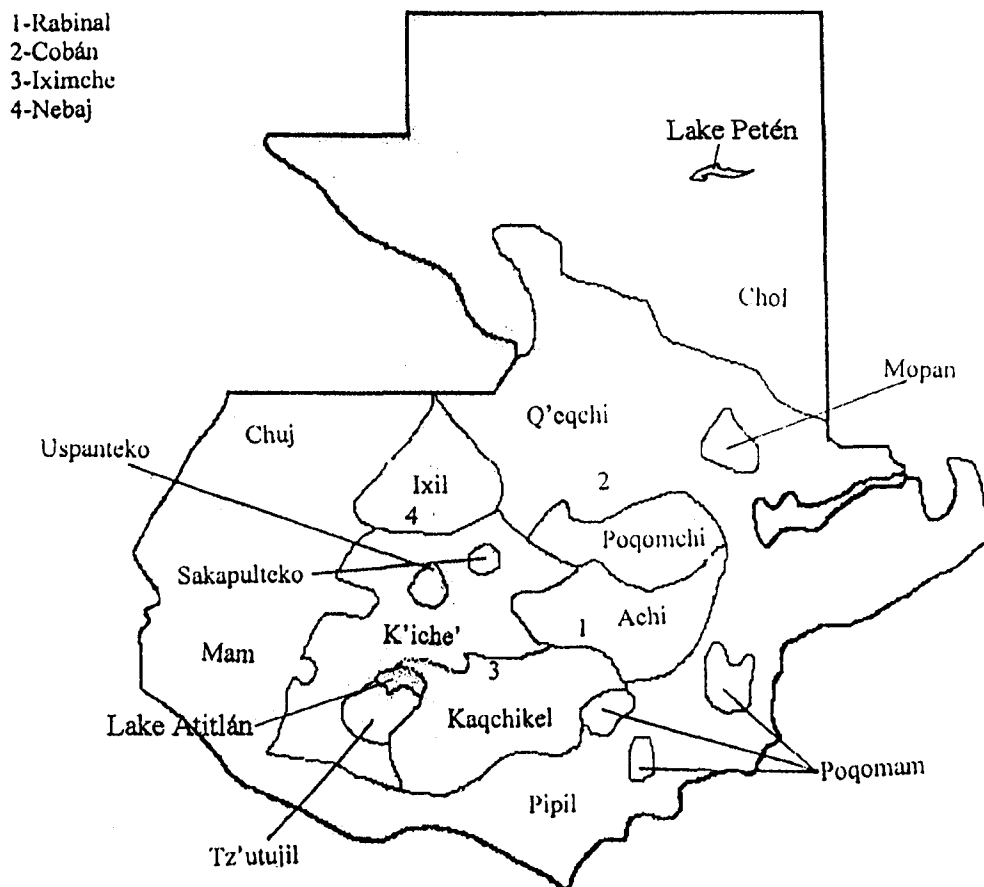
The Preclassic Miraflores culture, associated with the highland city of Kaminaljuyú, was the last major cultural florescence in Guatemala organized around Izapan ideas (*ibid.*:59). Before Miraflores decline, shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, speakers of Maya languages in the nearby mountains had begun melding indigenous ideas with those from Izapa and Kaminaljuyú, in what was to yield a highland version of Proto-Maya culture (*ibid.*:60). These highlanders shared in many macro-Maya cultural developments, which coalesced over a wide area from the Pacific coast to the Yucatan, but they did not build the large urban centers that were characteristic of the lowlands to the north. Because of this, Pre- and Early-Classic-era highland Guatemalan

⁶ Coe (1987:84-88) regards predecessors of the Pipil as the likely founders of an intrusive Mexican-speaking civilization, Cotzumalhuapan, which was centered in the southeastern part of modern Guatemala by the Early-Classic era. Pipil territorial claims once extended as far west as the land now inhabited by the Kaqchikel.

communities received less attention from pioneering archaeologists, and the extent of cultural developments there is still not well known (Byland p.c., 2000).

Figure 2

Highland Guatemalan Language Groups and Select Sites



Map derived from Campbell, 1977. Author's computer drawing.

Mitigating against the absorption of Lowland Maya ideas in the highlands were traders and armies from cultures located in what would become Mexico, endeavoring to control the rich resources of the Guatemalan mountains such as obsidian, jadeite, and

quetzal feathers. By AD 400, however, Mexican-based authority in the area had waned, replaced by influence emanating out of Copán, a Classic-era Maya city-state located in nearby (modern) Honduras (Tedlock 1996:46). But Copán, situated near the extreme southeastern periphery of Maya territory, had also absorbed many non-Maya ideas, from Mexico and also from lower Central America. Lowland and Highland Maya societies continued without extensive contact until around AD 1200 (the beginning of the Late-Postclassic era). It was at this time that larger cities began to be built in the highlands by people with a shared culture who called themselves K'iche'.

The *Popol Vuh*, a Maya creation and lineage tale written by descendants of the K'iche' ruling elite during the early Colonial era, establishes the royal lineage of its authors by documenting the migration to the highlands of their three ancestor groups, the Nima K'iche', the Tamub, and the Iloqab', all armed with rights of possession purportedly granted by the dominating Mesoamerican power of the time, the Toltec (Carmack 1981; Thompson 1970).⁷ Arriving in this region shortly thereafter were groups related culturally and linguistically to these lineages, one of which was the Achi, who eventually settled in the Rabinal valley.

In Postclassic Guatemala, K'iche'-speaking people were nominally divided into sociopolitical organizations known as *chinamits* (or *calpullis*), divisions based on residence in shared territory under the control of an elite family (Carmack 1981:164-66; B. Tedlock 1992:16). Alliances among two or more *chinamits* were called *amaqs*, but the

⁷ According to the *Popol Vuh* K'iche' ancestors immigrated to the Guatemalan highlands from the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico (north and east of Guatemala). Towards the end of the Postclassic era, around AD 1250, these coastal peoples began to establish dominance over local highland populations (Coe 1987:149-51; D. Tedlock 1987:13). Recently, this migration theory has been challenged by scholars who believe that K'iche'an society was indigenous to highland Guatemala (Brown 1985; Tedlock 1996:209), or that its practitioners immigrated there from the west as well as from the east and north (Akkeren 2000). Nevertheless, there is much evidence of influence from the Gulf Coast and other Mexican areas beginning by the Postclassic era. Cultural concepts introduced into the highlands at this time were not exclusively Maya but a synthesis of Lowland Maya, Gulf of Mexico, Toltec, Mixtec-Puebla, and Aztec cultures contributing to a hybrid sometimes called Mexicanized-Maya. The rise of Mexicanized-Maya, such as the K'iche' in Guatemala and the Itza in Yucatan, coincided with the final demise of Classic Lowland Maya civilization (Coe 1987).

most powerful sociopolitical units in the region were the *winaq* (people), which were something akin to a nation-state (*ibid.*). The three original K'iche' lineages apparently comprised the only *winaq* in Postclassic Guatemala, and their neighbors in the highlands, such as the Achi, the Kaqchikel, the Tz'utujil, and the Q'eqchi', were organized into weaker collections of *chinamits* and *amaqs*, rendering them more vulnerable to attack and exploitation (*ibid.*).

K'iche'an speaking people constructed fortified cities typical of those built by other Postclassic Mexicanized peoples and introduced practices such as historical texts centered on heroes, an organized military, marked separation in social ranking, a four-part distribution of rule, and Mixtec-Puebla art style in paintings and sculptures (Carmack 1981:6).⁸ They also used a Mexican language of commerce, a version of Nahuatl, common to traders from the Gulf of Mexico region, to label many of these concepts, which were new to the highlands. (Some of these Nahuatl words, such as *yaqi*, foreigner, have since been absorbed into K'iche'an languages.) Much of what is written in Posthispanic K'iche'an chronicles like the *Popol Vuh*, concerning the founding of the K'iche' Guatemalan capital of Jakawits before 1350, is corroborated in the archaeological record (Morley 1994:184). The indigenous writings detail the many wars the K'iche' waged against native inhabitants and outside armies, including those of the Spanish, who entered and conquered highland Guatemala in 1524 (Kelly 1932). This recorded history, including the migration tales and the wars, is the subject of numerous dance-plays still performed in Guatemala.

After the Spanish Conquest, the region was divided by the conquerors into *encomiendas* (land grants awarded by royal decree), with the resident Maya considered

⁸ The term "Mixtec-Puebla art style" was proposed by archaeologist George Vaillant to describe an artistic mode that emerged suddenly during the Postclassic period and was utilized over a wide area of Mesoamerica, including highland Guatemala (Byland p.c., 1999). Geometric and boldly painted outlines filled in with bright, solid colors, and a text-type employing standardized symbols characterize it. The Mixtec-Puebla art style has proven to be an effective diagnostic trait of the Mesoamerican Late-Postclassic period (approximately AD 1200-1520) (Carmack 1968).

part of the property and available for use as free labor (Carmack 1981:306). In spite of post-Conquest sociopolitical reorganization, many highland K'iche' communities have managed to retain Precolumbian elements, or a synthesis of the indigenous and the introduced, in civic organization and urban design. For example, although the towns of Rabinal and Cobán are now presided over by their respective Catholic patron saints (which merged with Prehispanic gods), each is also divided into four *calpules* (wards) delineated according to the four cardinal directions, important to their Precolumbian ancestors. (Each *calpule* is itself under the protection of a patron saint.) In addition, many K'iche' communities have complex bureaucratic hierarchies composed chiefly of Maya, such as the *auxiliatura* described for the town of Momostenango by ethnologist Barbara Tedlock (2001). The Momostenango *auxiliatura* consists of religious and political leaders selected according to K'iche' patrilineages, with the most important officer referred to as the *ilolqatinimit*, "seer of the town." Among his duties is the job of mediating between local (indigenous) and national (*ladino*) law (B. Tedlock 1992:34). Of the many subsidiary officials two are drummers (*ajk'ojom*) employed as town criers (*ibid.*, 2001:88-89).

The syncretism of Catholic and indigenous traditions in Latin America during the Colonial era is evident in the *cofradía* system, a quasi-religious organization often referred to as a brotherhood. Each of the one or more *cofradías* in a town includes functionaries acting as officials and assistants in descending levels of importance, and one of the primary jobs of these functionaries is the administration of festivals (*ferias*) that celebrate patron saints of the community. *Cofradías* retain a meeting place, called a *cofradía* house, which is the focus of activity during saint day festivals. Typically in highland Guatemala, saint-days include performances by one or more *baile* groups, which parade in processions and perform their dance-plays at prescribed locations throughout the community, including churches, graveyards (*calvarias*), and *cofradía* houses. It is

during saint day festivals that most of the dance-dramas described in this dissertation were presented (Colby and Berghe 1969.)

The Soundscape of Modern Highland Guatemala

As a developing Third World country, Guatemala struggles to balance its pre-industrial and modern worldviews. This is evident in a host of cultural artifacts and activities, from architecture to cuisine, but perhaps nowhere more so than in the sounds representing these coexisting worlds. In its cities it is common to hear roosters crowing as car alarms go off, and even in rural areas agrarian and industrial sounds mix. The country is not only home to a variety of sounds, but they are presented in an array of volume levels. By any measure, the modern Guatemalan highlands are a noisy place, and yet I suspect that this was always the case. Traditional K'iche' people are fond of diverse sounds, and in their festivals these are mixed together intentionally.

Music as soundscape, was introduced on my initial bus ride, from Guatemala City to Cobán in July 2001, when I was treated to a sample of cassette tapes from the personal collection of the bus driver. His taste was restricted to marimba music,⁹ but in such confinement I later heard a range of local musics (played on instruments like the accordion, diatonic harp, and guitarrilla), as well as other Latin American styles, such as *salsa* and *reggae*, and Western popular styles, such as American-British rock and pop. Musical sounds were diverse, but by far those most frequently heard were made by the marimba. Played solo or with other instruments, this idiophone was used for many functions, a few unexpected, such as live accompaniment for shoppers picking up

⁹ The *marimba de tecomate* is the simplest modern Maya marimba type. It consists of a wooden xylophone keyboard with resonating gourds attached to the bottom of the keys. Of the many versions of this instrument, the *marimba pura* is currently the most popular. It differs from the *marimba de tecomates* in having resonator boxes instead of gourds (Arce 1991).

supplies at the indoor market in Tactic. Among its more expected uses were as part of an ensemble (including a drum set, double bass, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, electric keyboard, and singers), which provided the music for a social dance held at the San Domingo *cofradía* house in Cobán, following the end of a *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* performance.

In Rabinal, the local radio station owner told me that his playlist consisted of three styles of music: (1) marimba, (2) *romántica*, and (3) traditional, each receiving equal radio airtime. Marimba as a style signifies *son piezas*, repetitive instrumental-song structures in 6/8 time, which are typically played solo on the instrument; *romántica* is a ballad form, usually accompanied by stringed instruments; and traditional denotes indigenous music, often played on flute and drum. Music of some type, heard live or over speakers, was a near constant where my research was conducted. For instance, when I interviewed Don Coloch at his home it was over the sounds from his granddaughter's radio-cassette deck. (Later he used the same machine to play me music excerpts from the *Rab'inal Achi*.) The only time that I did not hear music was in remote areas, such as at the archaeological site Kaqyuq and during my stay with a Q'ekchi family in the Cuchamatanes mountains.

An assessment of the appeal of *baile* music relative to other kinds of music in Guatemala requires a more detailed study than can be offered in this dissertation, largely due to the fact that such music rarely appears outside the context of *baile* performance or rehearsal. Flute-drum music of dance-plays like the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* may be an exception. Nevertheless, I can offer some information concerning the local regard for *bailes*. At Cobán a crowd that fluctuated in size from around twenty to fifty people attended the enactments of the *Baile del Venado* and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* performed simultaneously on August 23, 2001. Even the higher number (fifty) may seem small for a once a year saint-day festival featuring two colorful dance-plays, but the area of performance would have made it difficult for many more people to observe it

comfortably. The first performance of the *Rab'inal Achi* that I observed started around 8:30 a.m. and was presented at the *calvaria* on the western edge of Rabinal. At that enactment there were no more than fifteen people in attendance, and the performance was even ignored by the twenty or so persons attending a funeral who passed through its staging area on their way to the cemetery. Despite its inauspicious debut, subsequent performances of the *Rab'inal Achi* that day and evening (which amounted to four in total) drew successively larger crowds, until by the time of its last performance, midnight at the San Pedro *cofradía* house, there were some 200 people observing in an area that could only comfortably hold about 150. Most of those in attendance at this and the *bailes* at Cobán appeared to be local, suggesting to me that indigenous dance-plays are currently popular events, even in acculturated Guatemala.

Music Archaeology

The study of music instruments found in archaeological contexts is the provenance of specialists known as music archaeologists. These specialists endeavor to unlock the secrets of ancient music through the interpretation of records involving music or the musical instruments left behind. There are several examples of music-instrument discoveries in various parts of the world that have provided substantial information concerning the music practices of ancient cultures and offer potential for further research.

Two of the most significant finds in the twentieth century were chordophones discovered at Ur in Iraq and idiophones discovered in the central Yellow River region of China. Regarding the former, several large harps and lyres were among many music artifacts excavated in a Royal Cemetery at the site, some in relatively good condition. In the case of one harp that was not so well preserved, archaeologists had the foresight to make plaster casts of its impression in the soil, an excavation technique that yielded not

only the original shape of the instrument but the dimensions of its strings, aspects of the instrument as revealing for music research as the fragments of its frame (Berry 2003). Near the Yellow River in China, the fifth-century BC tomb of the Marquis Yí of Zeng (now Zenghouyi, Hubei province) contained what was apparently a complete ensemble of ceremonial instruments, including a rack of 32 stone chimes (*bianqing*), and one of 65 bells (*bianzhong*) (Lawergren p.c., 2000; Thrasher 2000:5). Due to the sound-making nature of these two instruments, with their pitch-producing components manufactured from materials that deteriorate only minimally over time (stone and metal), music archaeologists have begun to reconstruct Zhou-era Chinese tonal systems (Thrasher p.c., 2002).

In Mesoamerica the majority of sound-making objects that have been recovered differ from those of the Old World in being made of fired clay, the only exceptions being bells and tinklers of copper and a few questionable wooden and bone objects. Paralleling the lack of instruments of preservable materials in Mesoamerica is the scarcity of sites yielding instrument artifacts, at least on the scale of the two described above. In fact, of the many purported Mesoamerican instruments that have been recovered, few that are found listed in publications are backed by good archaeological evidence.

One of the few instances of controlled site archeology involving musical instruments in Mesoamerica was the 1938-39 excavation at Tres Zapotes, in Veracruz, Mexico, conducted by Mathew Stirling (1943) and Philip Drucker (1943). At early-Preclassic, Olmec era, stratigraphy levels (1500-1000 BC), the archaeologists discovered single-tone whistles and small multi-pitch vessel flutes. At higher (later-era) levels, they found one of the only panpipes ever uncovered in Mesoamerica, along with drum frames, remains of multi-chambered vertical flutes, flutes with hooded apertures, flutes with pellets that produced a “warbling effect,” and a number of other cleverly designed flute-type aerophones. The majority of instruments unearthed at Tres Zapotes date from the Classic period, and resemble artifacts associated with certain neighboring sites in and

around the adjacent Tuxtla Mountains. At Tres Zapotes, as elsewhere in Mesoamerica, these objects have been found in various states of completeness, but most often in fragments, sometimes making a determination of their function as musical instruments hard to substantiate. Many such objects may actually have had another purpose, or even multiple ones, only one of which may have been the making of sounds.

Fortunately, paintings and sculptures of sound-making instruments also exist in Mesoamerica, sometimes showing the instrument being played, an aspect of the imagery important in corroborating its sound-making function. Even so, it should come as no surprise that an unqualified interpretation of these representations still poses challenges. On a Classic-era vase catalogued as Kerr K5795, for instance, there are tubular flute-like objects extending from the mouths of two human-like figures, but they could instead be trumpets, blowguns, or something else entirely.¹⁰

In Mesoamerica there is also a discrepancy between the type of instruments most often depicted and those most often excavated. In Classic-era Maya artworks tube trumpets and drums are the instruments most often represented, but those recovered are more often ceramic flutes, ocarinas, or whistles. The rarity of Prehispanic Maya tube trumpets is evidently because most were made of organic materials subject to deterioration, while their disproportionate representation compared to other instruments may be due to their higher regard by the persons commissioning or creating the artworks.

In fact, the recent discovery of clay flutes in household units at the site of Aguateca, in Petén, Guatemala, may confirm a largely utilitarian purpose for these aerophones. Matthias Stoeckli (p.c., 2003), a music archaeologist contracted to work at Aguateca, proposed that flutes discovered there were intended for domestic use and may have been played mostly by members of the household for their own amusement. If so, flutes may have been given short shrift in public art because their representation was

¹⁰ This catalogue number is from a filing system for Maya pots devised by Mesoamerican art historian Justin Kerr (1989-2000). When referring to the pots in this collection I will give their catalogue entry without bibliographic reference.

considered mundane. Trumpets, in contrast, apparently had illustrative value in paintings and sculptures because of their association with elite functions. The representation of these instruments on objects made to last or in paintings or sculptures that were part of royal architecture, helps to affirm their significance to the Maya upper classes in announcing official events like war and sacrifice.

New Archaeology and Ethnographic Analogy

Ethnographic analogy is one of several investigative methods pioneered in “new archaeology,” a paradigm shift in archaeological study that emerged during the 1960s. As the research techniques of ethnographic analogy became standardized, its methodology was codified into a scholarly discipline now known as “ethnoarchaeology.” Because of ethnoarchaeology’s significance to my work I will describe its emergence and how it can be applied to Prehispanic K’iche music research.

In a 1962 article, “Archaeology as Anthropology,” Lewis Binford (1962) proposed that the patterning of archaeological remains could be used to indicate the thinking of the ancient people who left them behind. Research approaches based on this premise came to comprise the methods of new archaeology, with its emphasis on long-term processual change. Although “processual archaeologists” focus on material remains, their explication of prehistoric cultures requires some subjective inference to aid in interpretation. Such inference sometimes involves ethnographic analogy which, put simply, is hypothesizing social behavior for past cultures based on present practice by people near in time, space, and preferably ancestry. For example, ethnoarchaeological investigation of prehistoric herders in the Old World indicates that while architectural remains of their culture may be lacking, they nevertheless left behind distinctive traces in their environment that are different from the remains of other groups (David and

Kramer:2001:239). Once identified, such traces can be compared to the kind left by pastoralists living in those locations today, and aspects of the prehistoric culture can then be inferred according to what is known about the lifestyles of the modern group.

One change in Mesoamerican archaeology that resulted from the use of processual methods was a focus on settlement patterns without special regard for the homes of the elite (Miller and Taube 1997:205). Though the artifacts uncovered in these new surveys were often less spectacular than those from pre-processual excavations, scientists developed a more comprehensive view of Mesoamerican societies than would have been possible through the use of older methods.

In spite of the successes of new archaeology, during the 1980s, archaeologist Ian Hodder (1982) challenged the notion central to processual theory, that “the human mind can be adequately conceptualized as a rational, economizing processor of information” (David and Kramer 2001:23). Hodder’s view subsequently led to another shift in analytical procedure, “postprocessual archaeology,” which recognizes the unpredictability of humans and demands more sophisticated models of analogy than earlier sufficed. One such refined methodological model, called “actualist studies,” concerns empirically generated data using the materials and presumed technologies of the culture under study, in flint knapping or pottery making, for example (*ibid.*:13). Resultant experientially derived information (often a result of experiments conducted by the archaeologists themselves) is then used to interpret the evidence from associative archaeological records.

Bo Lawergren (1984,1990), a physicist and music archaeologist with considerable carpentry skills, utilizes empirically generated data to inform his theories concerning the music of Old World cultures. One way he does this is by reconstructing ancient instruments, duplicating the original materials and methods of construction whenever possible. The complementary nature of Lawergren’s skills and talents allows him to make informed judgements about construction materials and methods, and while building

his instrument copies he encounters many of the building issues that the original instrument makers faced. As a result, Lawergren's work offers a unique insight into the limitations and potentials for the sound makers he studies, expanding our knowledge of the ancient music these instruments may have produced.

Dale Olsen (2002:26), the founder of ethnoarchaeomusicology, also profits from postprocessual-type methods in his approach to the study of prehistoric musics. As a practicing musician and a trained ethnomusicological observer, he relies on his knowledge of instrumental performance techniques to better inform his theories concerning the production of sound on instruments found in archaeological contexts. Olsen has observed, for instance, that the Q'ero, an indigenous group who have lived in southern Peru since before the Spanish, always use two fingers to cover two of the holes on their four-holed flutes, and never one finger to cover one hole. Based on this rather unique method of playing, current Q'ero flute-performance practice, hypothesized as representing a Prehispanic southern Peruvian tradition, can be used to challenge theories of ancient Andean scale construction founded on the number of pitches available to players of an instrument (*ibid.*:38).

Similar to Olsen's experience with flutes is my ten years of formal training on the trumpet, qualifying me to draw upon my own empirical knowledge of that instrument. In addition, I have playing experience on the other three sound makers central to this study, the slit-drum, skin drum, and duct flute. An awareness of performance options helps to inform my conclusions concerning Prehispanic performance choices for those instruments.

One premise I have reached through my work is that indigenous K'iche' instruments are played today in a manner similar to the ways in which they were played in Precolumbian Postclassic times. This assumption is based on both Maya iconographic evidence and early-Colonial era reports of performance practices, reinforced by the persistence of instrument types that require specific techniques for sound production.

Most autochthonous sound-making instruments used by the ancient Maya—including duct flutes and whistles, straight end-blown valveless trumpets, conch-shell trumpets, a few membranophones (in particular a waist-high drum and a pottery drum), tortoise-shell idiophones, rasps of various materials, shakers and tinklers of diverse substances and shapes, and slit-drums—show very little morphological alteration throughout centuries of Prehispanic use. In most cases, extant or depicted instruments from earliest Maya times (before AD 250) resemble those found for the Postclassic era,¹¹ and versions of instruments that are still used today—such as the slit-drum, tortoise shell, shakers, waist-high drum, pottery drum, and conch-shell trumpet—resemble older versions of the same types known from before conquest. Even instruments adopted from European models, such as brass trumpets and duct flutes constructed from modern materials, resemble indigenous versions that they replaced.

Sources

Archaeology, Ethnography, and Ethnomusicology

Fieldwork for this dissertation involved visits to twenty-four Mesoamerican archaeological sites, including Kaqyuq in highland Guatemala, where the dance-play *Rab'inal Achi* may have been first performed (Table A2). Ethnographic information was derived from my observations of K'iche' culture, cultural objects, and music-related events (including recordings and transcriptions of music), and from interviews (in Spanish) with dance-play performance personnel in Cobán in July and August 2001, and in Rabinal in August 2001 and January 2002.

¹¹ Flutes are the exception, coming in a wide variety of shapes that indicate considerable changes over time.

My primary informants in Rabinal were director-musician-actor Don José León Coloch and one of his protégés, Carlos González Xitumul. Coloch's commitment to the *Rab'inal Achi* has been instrumental in its survival and his involvement in the dance-play is detailed throughout this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 3. Information concerning contemporary renditions of the *Rab'inal Achi* came from personal observations and from recordings of performances made during the town's annual saint day *feria* (Festival of San Pablo) in January 2002.¹²

In Cobán, my informants included four musicians who accompanied the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* as part of that town's annual San Domingo *feria*, presented in August 2001: the two flute players José Chul and Grecencio Quich Quich, and the two drummers Libereo and Miguel Sum Meja.¹³

Organology, Iconology-Iconography, History, Ethnohistory, and Music Notations and Transcriptions

Additional information used in this study was largely derived from (1) extant, functioning Precolumbian Maya instruments, particularly valveless trumpets, slit-drums, duct flutes, flute-like instruments, and membranophones found in both museums and private collections; (2) Precolumbian iconographic evidence of Maya musical instruments and performance practice (especially as found on highland Guatemalan pottery); (3) Post-Conquest K'iche'an-authored texts, including the *Popol Vuh*, *Título C'oyoi*, and *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, along with two scripts for dance-plays, in particular the *Rab'inal Achi*

¹² The first performance of the *Rab'inal Achi* in 2002 occurred on Monday, January 21. Five other performances took place on Wednesday and Thursday (January 23-24). In addition to those enactments, the actors and musicians participated in the traditional saint day procession on January 24. On January 25 the *baile* was performed in conjunction with the one-year anniversary of the Museo Comunitario "Rabinal Achi," built to honor Achi culture, past and present.

¹³ Quich (p.c., 2001) also plays the *chirimía* for the *Baile de la Conquista*, and is often contracted to play for dance-plays in *ferias* and processions throughout Guatemala. Supplemental information is derived from conversations with some of the authors listed in the bibliography and with members of my dissertation examining committee.

and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*;¹⁴ (4) Precolumbian codices, especially the *Codex Becker I*, the *Dresden Codex*, and the *Tro-Cortesianos (Madrid) Codex*; (5) Colonial-era accounts of Amerindian sound-making instruments and performance practices as described by Diego de Landa, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, Francisco Ximénez, Thomas Gage, Brasseur de Boubourg, and others; (6) notations of the music for traditional K'iche' *bailes*, starting with the earliest transcription of the music used for the *Rab'inal Achi*, by Colash López and Nicolas Sis in 1856; and (7) recordings of Maya dance-play music, including the first excerpts from the *Rab'inal Achi*, made by Henrietta Yurchenco in 1945.

Orthography

In my ethnographic accounts and in other descriptions where spelling choices are not dependent on published works, or on unpublished works in the possession of libraries or museums, I use the orthography recently developed by the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (1988), a group of Guatemalan scholars and other interested citizens concerned with the preservation of K'iche'an culture (Table 1).

In all cases K'iche' letters and diacritics are read as in Spanish. The accent generally occurs on the last syllable of a word, and sometimes there is an extra emphasis shown by an apostrophe. In instances involving quotations with older spellings, the phonetic pronunciation of a word should more or less match the sound produced by the Academia orthography.

¹⁴ Two versions of the *Rab'inal Achi* script are consulted. One, compiled by Brasseur (1862) while he was in Rabinal, was published in French and K'iche; the other, handwritten in Spanish by Pérez (1913), also in Rabinal. The two *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* scripts are "Moros y Cristianos," typed in Spanish by Mace from a version obtained in Rabinal and handwritten in Spanish by Perea Leal (1958), and "Original del Baile de los Moros y Cristianos," handwritten in Spanish by Octgin (1964). The latter is labeled a Kaqchikel version by the Tulane library, where it is housed.

Table 1

K'iche' Pronunciation Key

| Phoneme | Description | Grapheme | Example |
|---------|--|----------|------------------------|
| a | short sound, central, low | a | achi (man) |
| b' | occlusive consonant, bilabial, sonorous, glottalized | b' | b'aq (bone) |
| č | affricative consonant, alveopalatal, not glottalized | ch | cheé (tree) |
| č' | affricative consonant, alveopalatal, glottalized | ch' | ch'umill (star) |
| e | short sound, in the middle back | e | e (tooth) |
| i | short sound, in the upper back | i | il (to attain) |
| x | fricative consonant, velum, muted | j | jolon (head) |
| k | occlusive consonant, simple, velum, muted | k | kar (fish) |
| k' | occlusive consonant, muted, velum, glottalized | k' | k'aak (nine) |
| l | resonant consonant, alveolar, sonorous | l | liipan (to explain) |
| m | nasal consonant, bilabial, sonorous | m | miq'in (hot) |
| n | nasal consonant, alveolar, sonorous | n | nim (large) |
| o | short sound, in the middle back | o | okoh (enter) |
| p | occlusive consonant, bilabial, muted | p | peet (to see) |
| q | occlusive consonant, simple, muted, post velor | q | aqan (foot) |
| r | vibrant consonant, alveolar, sonorous | r | ronjeel (all) |
| s | fricative consonant, alveolar, muted | s | saq (white) |
| t | occlusive consonant, simple, alveolar, muted | t | ti' (mouth) |
| t' | occlusive consonant, alveolar, muted, glottalized | t' | t'uyulik (to sit down) |
| ʧ | affricative consonant, simple, alveolar, muted | tz | tz'am (nose) |
| ʧ' | affricative consonant, alveolar, muted, glottalized | tz' | tz'i' (dog) |
| u | short sound, posterior, high | u | utz (good) |
| w | resonant consonant, bilabial, sonorous | w | witz (hill) |
| y | resonant consonant, palatal, sonorous | y | ya' (water) |
| (ʔ) | occlusive consonant, glottal, muted | ' | ri't (solid) |

*Table 1 was derived from a translation (by this author) of the pronunciation key developed by the Academia de las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (1988), alongside consultation with linguist John Beatty.

Prior Research

Ethnoarchaeomusicology is a developing science and its application in the Guatemalan highlands is rare to nonexistent. Previous work pertinent to ethnoarchaeomusicological study there includes recordings of presumed Precolumbian music survivals made by Henrietta Yurchenco (*Music of the Maya-Quiché of Guatemala* 1978:discography and videography) and Carroll Edward Mace (1972:discography and videography), and notations, transcriptions, and analysis of the same or of similar music by Jesus Castillo (1977), Francisco Rodriguez Rouanet (1962), and Enrique Anleu Díaz (Fidel 1996). A few monographs have focused on specific traditional dance-plays and their music, such as the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* (Horspool 1982), the *Rab'inal Achi* (Navarrete 1994), and the *Baile de la Conquista* (Taylor 1999). None of their authors has concentrated on comparisons of live performances of these works, or of indigenous with introduced *bailes*, and none has investigated the functions of instruments of a specific Precolumbian time period, such as the Postclassic.

Sergio Navarrete (1994) did an excellent job in locating salient music features of the instrumental songs, called *sones de bailes* (shortened here to *sones*), that accompanied dances in the 1856 and 1945 versions of the *Rab'inal Achi*. Such characteristics include a continuously accelerating slit-drum roll and tonal phrases, both of which were shown to have been retained for nearly 100 years. Navarrete's conclusions were derived from two different types of evidence, a notation of music he did not hear (Brasseur 1862:appendix) and his own transcription of the 1945 recording (Navarrete 1994:77-82). Nonetheless, his use of data of diverse types is typical of research in fields like ethnoarchaeomusicology, which demands multi-disciplinary approaches, and it is a method that will be followed here.

Glen Horspool (1982) was one of the first researchers to propose that the performance of one scene from the Guatemalan *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* stands for an enactment of the play. (The version of the dance-play I observed in Cobán

comprised one such scene.) Horspool is also of the opinion that differences can be heard between indigenous and introduced musics in Guatemala. Nevertheless, his opinions are not always substantiated, and his conclusion that Prehispanic music is non-strophic contradicts Navarrete's view (*ibid.*:xi; Navarrete 1994:87).

Scott Taylor (1999) explored the K'iche' concept of time and its effect on their music. This is a promising direction for Maya music research due to the emphasis that the K'iche' place on time cycles. It is possible that spans of time associated with the durations in those cycles are applied to rhythmical or metrical units, but Taylor's musical information is minimal, and he does not include a transcription of any of the music of the *Baile de la Conquista*, the dance-drama that is the focus of his dissertation.

Robert M. Stevenson's (1964, 1968) work on Latin American music history has suggested sources for research relevant to marginalized topics like prehistoric music, bereft as we are of first-hand information. Unfortunately he has not scrutinized the written records related to Guatemala's Precolumbian music to the degree found in his work on the music of Mexico and Peru. Information that Stevenson has discovered from tangential Mesoamerican areas is nevertheless useful, particularly as regards Precolumbian organology.

Frank and Joan Harrison (1968) have chronicled the dissemination and retention of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish instruments and musical styles in Guatemala. Although their work is valuable for information concerning the introduction of European music to that country, some of their conclusions downplay iconographic evidence of a continuing tradition involving indigenous instruments and performance styles developed independently of European influence (Boilès 1966b). Linda O'Brien-Rothe's (1998a, 1998b; O'brien 1983) fieldwork in Guatemala, conducted intermittently over thirty years and focusing largely on contemporary practices, has helped synthesize current ideas about the country's indigenous musics including its Prehispanic roots.

Several ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and organologists have examined the musical instruments of the Maya, including Daniel Castañeda, Vicente Mendoza (1933; Mendoza 1956), Jose Franco (1971), Felipe Flores Dorantes y Lorenza Flores García (1982), and Samuel Martí (1955, 1970, 1998). The analysis of Precolumbian percussion instruments by Castañeda and Mendoza (1933) is a superb contribution to the field of acoustics, and Flores and Flores (1982) have begun acoustic examinations of Mesoamerican flute-like aerophones; although their work has focused thus far on Maya whistles, an instrument type marginal to this study. Martí (1955, 1970, 1998) has done perhaps the most extensive work tying Maya music artifacts to Prehispanic Maya cultural concepts, although neither he nor the others have focused on the organology of specific Maya areas or times.¹⁵

Archaeologists who have examined Precolumbian Maya instruments include Norman Hammond (1972a, 1972b) and Paul Healy (1988). Both have reported on a limited sampling of instruments specific to certain archaeological sites but these sites are located predominantly in the northern lowlands. Art historian Mary Miller (1986, 1988) has studied Maya music imagery on cultural objects, such as paintings on pots and carvings on sculpture, in an effort to discern the meaning of music activity in the context of Prehispanic Maya society. Most of Miller's work concerns the musicians and instruments shown on the murals at Bonampak, a small acropolis in southern Mexico, which are generally regarded as the best examples of a Classic-era lowland music ensemble.¹⁶ One of her conclusions is that Classic-period Maya instrumentalists are most

¹⁵ Martí has on occasion contradicted his own findings by listing different measurements for the same instrument in different publications. For instance, in *Music Before Columbus: Música precolombina* (1998) a ceramic triple-tubed flute from Tenenexpan, Veracruz, is described as 6 ½ inches long (16.5 centimeters), whereas in *Alt-Amerika: Musik der Indianer* (1970) the same flute is described as 29 centimeters in length (11 ½ inches).

¹⁶ This site was first studied archaeologically by Ruppert, Thompson, and Proskouriakoff in 1947; their results were published in 1955.

often shown in a standard, and she assumes pertinent, order: rattle player(s), drummer(s), tortoise-shell player(s), and trumpeter(s).

Extensive archaeological excavations in highland Guatemala include work at the Ixil Maya sites of Nebaj and Acul, supervised respectively by Augustus Smith and Alfred Kidder (1951), and Becquelin (1966). Robert Wauchope (1948) excavated at the Poqomam center, Zacualpa. Intriguing murals in the Mixtec-Puebla Amerindian style were uncovered near there, at the Kaqchikel capital of Iximché (Guillemin 1965), and at a site proposed as the original K'iche' capital, Jakawits (Lothrop 1936). Similar murals at Q'umarkaj (Utatlán) depict a Postclassic K'iche' warrior dance. More recent archaeological work in the Verapaz region has been conducted by Alain Ichon (1982) and Marie-Charlotte Arnaud (1993). Music-instrument artifacts found under controlled excavations in the Guatemalan highlands include an effigy drum and a ceramic flute unearthed in early-Colonial levels from Zaculeu (Borhegyi 1965), and a pedestal-shaped pottery drum from Late-Classic era Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951).

Robert Carmack (1973, 1981), a Maya language specialist, has synthesized and interpreted Spanish Colonial and indigenous highland Guatemalan documents using the “conjunctive method,” a multidisciplinary approach combining ethnography, ethnohistory, and archaeology (Akkeren 2000:18-19). Most work on highland Guatemalan dance-play scripts has utilized multi-disciplinary approaches, yielding valuable translations, interpretations, and commentaries by Linda Bode (1961), Lise Paret-Limardo (1963), Matilda Montoya (1970), Miguel Leon-Portilla (1986), Carroll Edward Mace (1970), Demetrio Brisset (1995), Alain Breton (1999), Ruud van Akkeren (2000), and Dennis Tedlock (2003). The anthropological study of Prehispanic dance includes Gertrude Kurath's (1949) pioneering work in dance interpretation, using analogy

and cultural history, expanded by Judith Hanna (1987) to incorporate processual change (1987).¹⁷

The Chapters

Chapter One—Instruments and Themes of Select K'iche' Dance-Plays

Chapter 1 details four K'iche' dance-plays and their prototypes along with the instruments used to accompany them. An association of dance-play types with specific instruments was in many cases in place by the Colonial era. Based on this tradition, I propose a typology for Precolumbian instrumentation and associated *bailes* derived from a method developed by music researchers Olivier and Rivière (2001). This typology includes the following types of dance-plays: sacrifice (*tun*), warrior (conquest), food procurement (*Tz'unum*), and pursuit (*Baile del Venado*). The primary concerns for the establishment of this association are the terms and symbols for components of traditional highland Guatemalan music and dance, the context of instrument use, and dance-play themes.

Chapter Two—The Tun Instruments: Slit-Drum and Valveless Trumpet

The slit-drum and valveless trumpet are instruments used to accompany the dance-drama type known as *tun*. The archaeological record confirms these instruments as Prehispanic Maya sound makers, but certain questions remain unanswered and are pursued here, in particular the origin of the slit-drum and the construction materials for trumpets. Due to the fact that rubber-tipped mallets used to strike the slit-drum were

¹⁷ More recent multi-disciplinary studies related to ancient Maya music include a roundtable conference at Dumbarton Oaks in April 1998 that featured papers (currently unpublished) on Mesoamerican-music topics by Mary Miller, Robert Stevenson, and Norman Hammond, along with one specific to Maya music by Dorie Reents-Budet, "Classic Maya Musical Instruments, Musical Forms, and Social Contexts." I have thus far been unable to obtain any of these papers.

possibly considered a necessary performance component, the source of rubber, the tropical lowlands, may prove to be the birthplace of the idiophone as well. It may also prove to be the source for the *tun*-dance-play type.

Pictorial and sculptural evidence suggests a Maya preference for long trumpets; therefore, versions comprising short cylinders pieced together to form long tubes may partly account for the variety of trumpet types found in the archaeological and iconographical record. The pitches derived from extant slit-drums along with estimates for a few trumpets are discussed.

Chapter Three—A Tun Dance: The Rab'inal Achi

The *Rab'inal Achi* is a *tun* dance-drama, with themes of sacrifice and history, which has been known since 1855. It continues to be performed with declamation, dance, mime, masks, and instrumental song (on slit-drum and valveless trumpets). Evidence of both Prehispanic and nineteenth-century roots for this dance-play is explored, along with a storyline summary and a survey of the scripts, performances, and accompanimental musics (from recordings, notations, and transcriptions). Additional information includes a description of current costumes and choreography. The chapter ends with a comparison of performances in 1856 and 2002 to determine the consistency of the dance-play's performance structure.

Chapter Four—Su and Tambor

In highland Guatemala the *su* (duct flute or double reed *chirimía*) and the *tambor* (membranophone) accompany Spanish-introduced dance-dramas based on the theme of conquest (such as the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* and the *Baile de la Conquista*). As this instrumentation was also used for an indigenous Precolumbian ceremony that celebrated warriors (the warrior dance), the morphology of contemporary duct flutes and skin drums from both Precolumbian and European instrument prototypes is considered.

Chapter Five—Conquest Bailes and the Warrior Dance

Chapter 5 examines conquest dance-plays in the New World. As with the *Rab'inal Achi*, ethnohistorical information concerning the conquest dance-drama and information derived from personally witnessed performances are compared to discover consistencies and changes over time in this *baile* type. One conquest dance-play, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* is scrutinized as a representative example of a European-introduced dance-drama. An examination of its origin in Europe and its relationship to both the Guatemalan *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* and the extinct K'iche' warrior dance (both accompanied by flute and drum), is expanded beyond the discussion in earlier chapters.

Chapter Six—A Comparison of the Music of the Rab'inal Achi and Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

Chapter 6 is a comparison of the music found in contemporary versions of the *Rab'inal Achi* and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* for what it can divulge about the sources for these sounds. Music forms, rhythms, and tonalities have been chosen as the focus for analysis. Recordings of contemporary Maya music used for this purpose here and in other chapters are:

- (1) *Rab'inal Achi*, field recordings by this author in Rabinal (Howell 2002a, 2002b);
- (2) *Rab'inal Achi*, recording possessed by Coloch (1995);
- (3) *Rab'inal Achi*, field recordings by Mace (1972);
- (4) *Music of the Maya-Quiches of Guatemala: The Rabinal Achí and Baile de las Canastas* (1978, Folkways, FE 4226, ed. Yurchenco), which includes the earliest known recording of excerpts of both the *Rab'inal Achi* (from 1945), and the *Baile de las Canastas* (from 1945);

- (5) *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, field recordings by this author in Cobán (Howell 2001) and Rabinal (Howell 2002a, 2002b);

Music notations include the following:

- (1) *The Rab'inal Achi*
- (a) López-Sis (notated in 1856): six *sones*, fifty-two measures (Brasseur 1862);
 - (b) Castillo (1977:106) (notated in 1921): an unnamed *son*, twenty-one measures;
 - (c) Francisco Rodriguez Rouanet (1962): excerpt of an unnamed *son*;
 - (d) Enrique Anleu Díaz (notated in 1986), a *son* from a 1985 performance (Fidel 1996);
 - (e) Navarrete (1994:98-99), from Yurchenco's 1945 recording;
 - (f) David Friedlander, from same (Yurchenco 1996:12);
 - (g) This author, from same;
- (2) *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*: Horspool (1982:305-53, 354-70), complete score of twenty-nine *sones* and a second version of a representative seven *sones*.

The Political Situation and Its Effect on Research

After Conquest the Spanish earmarked certain communities as “Indian towns,” a designation that included Cobán and Rabinal. In fact, one ongoing legacy of Guatemala's Colonial era has been divisive segregation along ethnic lines (Yurchenco p.c., 2001). Social classes with ethnic ties to the Spanish (*Ladinos*) have controlled the country's wealth ever since the Conquest, largely through the exploitation of marginalized groups such as the Maya and other Amerindians. The maintenance of this arrangement

constitutes a political agenda that has extended into the modern era, although reform movements have periodically emerged to counter it. Such a reformist period occurred during the middle of the twentieth century when a succession of governments beholden to the Guatemalan elite was briefly interrupted by the presidencies of Juan José Arévalo (1945-51) and his successor, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán (1952-54). Their liberal and pro-Amerindian policies stand in stark contrast to the patterns of resource exploitation and abuses of the poor that had been established earlier and continued afterward (González p.c., 2001; O'kane 1999; Yurchenco p.c., 2000).

Unfortunately, a particularly violent chapter began around that same time, when the United States entered Central America covertly to fight emerging socialist and communist groups perceived as too near its border and a threat to its way of life. In response to accelerated tensions, some opposition groups adopted guerrilla tactics, and violence became a way of life. With tacit support from the CIA, the Guatemalan military suppressed real and imagined dissidents and helped bring down the democratically elected president Arbenz Guzmán. Violence reached a peak in the 1980s and early 1990s when hundreds of thousands of people were tortured or murdered for their suspected political sympathies. Many more were made homeless. A terrible irony of this civil war was the military's use of Maya soldiers in confrontations with Maya citizenry. Civil abuses became blatant by the early 1990s and Guatemalan government leaders, routinely criticized by international human rights groups, ultimately agreed to a peace accord signed with the opposition in 1996 (*ibid.*).

In 2004 many of the aims of this accord (health care, education, and the prosecution of human-rights abusers) remain unfulfilled. During the time of my research, some of the fault of this remission could be assigned to the then president, Alfonso Portillo, who campaigned as a reformer, but who sympathized with the political policies of his campaign advisor, the former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. In spite of the lack of fulfillment of much of the accord, physical intimidation and murder of suspected enemies

of the state on the scale of the immediate past has abated. At the start of the twenty-first century, the economic and human rights conditions for indigenous and other disenfranchised people in Guatemala appear to have improved marginally and intellectual activists such as Rigoberto Menchu, Victor Montejo, and Irma Otzoy have begun to energize cultural reclamation (Carlsen 1997; Fash 2001:189; Fischer and McKenna 1996).¹⁸

To conduct field research for this dissertation I visited Guatemala on two occasions; the first trip occurred in July and August 2001, and the second in January 2002. While based in Cobán during the summer of 2001 I was made aware of the volatility of the Guatemalan political situation when, after returning from a night in the nearby mountains, I witnessed the aftermath of a riot instigated over a hastily implemented tax increase. Armed soldiers, smashed property, and the lingering odor of tear gas were reminders of a country and a people still all-too familiar with violence. A few days later in Rabinal, I watched a videotape of retrieval from mass graves of the bodies of citizens assassinated during the political upheavals of the 1980s and 1990s. Importantly, the Museo Comunitario “Rabinal Achí,” recently opened in that community, is not solely concerned with the preservation of cultural treasures like its namesake dance-play, but also with publicizing the plight of area victims of political abuses. Guatemalan views of me as an outsider, and in particular as a citizen of the United States, cannot help but have influenced all of the following ethnographic material, largely in ways that are beyond the scope of this work to assess.

¹⁸ One disenfranchised group is made up of African Americans, who are in large part the descendants of African slaves brought to the Americas after the Spanish Conquest. This ethnicity has greatly impacted the music of Central America, and in fact, the marimba, the unofficial national instrument of Guatemala, is African derived. Nevertheless, African-American influence on the music of sacrifice and conquest dance-plays otherwise appears negligible, and is therefore not considered here.

Chapter 1

Instruments and Themes of Select K'iche' Dance-Plays

Introduction

Dance-plays are central to K'iche' cultural life. Many emerged in an undocumented past and are kept alive through performances given at community saint-day festivals, typically lasting several days. During these celebrations statues of the *calpule* saints are paraded around the town in processions that include the musicians and actors of several *baile* groups who perform their dance-plays a number of times, usually at the town's central church, *calvaria*, and *cofradía* houses. Although *bailes* are now associated with Catholic saints, some of those still performed in highland Guatemala were undoubtedly first composed and enacted before the arrival of the Spanish. A study of the instruments used in the ensembles accompanying the dance-plays presumed to be in this category may offer evidence regarding the music and musical practices of the Prehispanic K'iche'.

I begin this ethnoarchaeomusicological investigation by proposing a typology for music instruments used for *bailes* in highland Guatemala during the Postclassic era based on a system developed by music researchers Emmanuelle Olivier and Hervé Rivière (2001) that has proven effective in instrument classification for other cultures of the world. Four dance-play types are considered according to their themes of sacrifice, food transition, hunting or wife procurement, and warrior or conquest, as disclosed through aspects of K'iche' culture including music, language, history, and mythology. Joined in

consideration of these four *bailes* are the five Precolumbian instrument types most closely associated with them, the valveless trumpet, slit-drum, tortoise shell, skin drum, and duct flute.

Music concepts as conceived in K'iche'an languages are crucial to the construction of this classification system, and two K'iche' words, *tun* and *su*, each with multiple meanings (some involving music and dance) are discussed particularly as they pertain to the two dance-plays central to this study, the *Rab'inal Achi* and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. Less is known about the *baile* form referred to here as *Tz'unum*. Although there is some evidence that it is of the same thematic category as the *Rab'inal Achi*, it may be specific to food transition and may therefore constitute a unique genre. In either case, instrumentation may be useful in determining the correct category. The fourth dance-play, *Baile del Venado* (based on hunting or wife-procurement) differs from the others in its predominant utilization of Old-World instruments. An explanation for this use is offered, involving Maya concepts of culture as related to instrument origin.

As the *Rab'inal Achi* is the dance-play with the best-documented ties to the Postclassic era, its theme of sacrifice is explored in some depth. Evidence for its instrument-theme association is present in Precolumbian iconography, such as is found on a Classic-era pottery piece, known as Grolier-vase no. 33, where a valveless-tube trumpet is shown being played during a blood-letting ceremony. The first indication of the valveless trumpet and slit-drum used together for a sacrificial ceremony is found in the *Codex Becker I* (*Codices Becker I/II*: 1961) a Mesoamerican document written during the Postclassic period that includes three sacrifices: gladiatorial, heart, and scaffold. Because of the codex's depiction of music activity in this context, information on its discovery, physical characteristics, and iconography is presented. Finally, views of ritual bloodletting and history, both as themes in *bailes* and as conceptualized by the Maya are discussed.

A Proposed K'iche' Baile-Instrument Typology

A typology for Precolumbian K'iche'an instruments as used in dance-plays is proposed because no autochthonous classification system has yet been found. As a model I look to a system devised by ethnomusicologist Emmanuelle Olivier and musicologist Hervé Rivière that is both “intrinsically and exclusively musical” and adapts to local concepts (Olivier and Rivière 2001:481). According to the Olivier and Rivière system, instruments, or the distinct sound of an instrument or group of instruments, can constitute all or part of a set that can be the “least common denominator” of a designated category defined by specific features (*ibid.*:488). They note, for instance, that for the Ntumu of Cameroon the musical bow is an instrument used exclusively by children, a social circumstance that is a distinctive feature in determining its category (*ibid.*:483). An example of how this classification system could be applied to music in the West is violin instruction for children in which a smaller version of the orchestral-size instrument is required. The smaller violin is not used for other standard Western-music situations and is therefore restricted to the social circumstance of violin pedagogy for children. In another example, the Choctaw, an indigenous North American group, present an even more pertinent comparison for my study. Traditional Choctaw employ few musical instruments in their cultural affairs and restrict the use of their only flute to the group's stickball game, when a shaman plays it in order to obtain supernatural advantage for his side. The restriction of the instrument to shaman performance at a stickball game is thus the distinctive feature defining the instrument's category.

In the Olivier and Rivière system, sets of instruments or instrument sounds can be viewed as combined into bundles of culturally sanctioned components that may include both conjoined music features (those exclusive to the bundle) or convergent music features (those found outside the bundle) (*ibid.*:481-82). For prehistoric musics such components are a matter of some guesswork. There is limited evidence for Postclassic highland Guatemala, for instance, concerning which music-specific features fully

characterized instrumental ensembles or exactly what their correspondences to social circumstances might be. The proposed classification scheme, here designated the Postclassic Highland Guatemalan (PHG) Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification, therefore modifies the Olivier and Rivière method to include features of Prehispanic sound making as determined by ethnographic analogy dependent upon current instrument use, the remains of instruments, scenes of music and dance in Precolumbian artworks, and descriptions found in Amerindian and ethnohistorical writings (Table 2).

Table 2

| PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <u>Type</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Theme</u> | <u>Instrumentation</u> |
| Tun <i>Xajoj tun</i> | Song of Tolgom | Sacrifice | Unknown |
| | <i>Lotzo Tun</i> | | Trumpet |
| | <i>Rab'inal Achi</i> | | Slit-Drum, Trumpet |
| Tz'unum | <i>Tzunun</i> | Hunting to Agriculture Transition | Slit-Drum, Trumpet, Tortoise Shell |
| | <i>Baile de las Canastas</i> | | Slit-Drum, Trumpet, Tortoise Shell |
| Deer | <i>B'alam Kej</i> | Hunting/Wife Procurement | Slit-Drum, Flute |
| Warrior* | Unknown | Celebration of War Heroes (Precolumbian) | Skin Drum, Flute |
| Conquest* | <i>Baile de los Moros y Cristianos</i> | Christian Conversion (Postcolumbian) | Skin Drum, Flute |
| | <i>Baile de la Conquista</i> | | Skin Drum, <i>Chirimía</i> |

*The similarity in instrumentation may mean that the warrior and conquest dance-plays represent pre- and post-Conquest versions of the same *baile* type.

Table 2 lists the instruments or instrument combinations characteristic of *baile* types and their corresponding themes. The thematic element of sacrifice is considered a K'iche'an social circumstance that can be traced to the Postclassic "Song of Tolgom" as documented in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos and Goetz 1953). Descriptions of this ceremonial performance do not include accompanimental instruments, but during the early-Colonial era a related sacrifice dance-play, *Lotzo Tun*, was described as accompanied by valveless trumpets (Edmonson 1976:145). Later, in the seventeenth century, Thomas Gage (1929:268) wrote about a similar K'iche' dance-play that was accompanied by the slit-drum. Today in highland Guatemala, both instruments comprise the ensemble for the dance-drama *Rab'inal Achi*. The PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification therefore treats the sound(s) of the valveless trumpet, slit-drum, or their combination as a set of music items which, when accompanying a dance-play including a (simulated) sacrifice, produce what is categorized as the sacrifice *baile* (*xajoj tun* in K'iche'), with examples of this type being the *Lotzo Tun* and *Rab'inal Achi*.

Another Precolumbian performance type, the so-called warrior dance, has vanished, although flutes and skin drums are listed in at least three K'iche'an documents as accompanying this ceremony.¹⁹ Utilization of the flute-membranophone ensemble in performances today of the Guatemalan conquest dance-play *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, may mean that for the highland Guatemalan Maya this European-introduced *baile* was considered a warrior-dance type and assigned its requisite flute and drum instruments accordingly. *Tz'unum* is a *baile* based on the transition from hunting to agriculture, and may have required instrumentation consisting of a trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise-shell idiophone in the Prehispanic past, as it often has when chronicled in

¹⁹ These three are the books *Titulo C'oyoi* (Carmack 1973:265-345) and *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos and Goetz 1953), and the play *Rabinal Achi* (Brasseur 1862).

Colonial and modern times (Navarrete 1994; Yurchenco p.c., 2000). In fact, according to some K'iche'an descriptions, *Tz'unum* was considered a *tun*-type *baile*, because of its use of *tun* instruments (McArthur 1973; Navarrete 1994). The *Baile del Venado* possibly uses hunting as a metaphor for wife procurement. It seems to have the most diverse instrumentation of any traditional dance-play currently performed in highland Guatemala (including many instruments introduced from the Old World) (Paret-Limardo 1963). However, as some contemporary ensembles for this *baile* use the indigenous slit-drum and duct flute, it is reasonable to assume that these instruments may also have accompanied the dance-play as it was performed before Spanish arrival (Yurchenco p.c., 2000).

Tun and Su

In the following sections of this chapter the premises and conclusions of the PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification are examined. I will start by defining two K'iche' words, *tun* and *su*, for what they can reveal concerning views of the region on music and dance.

Tun is a Maya word with ancient roots and in Lowland Classic-era languages its primary meaning was the calendrical length of 360 days. In the Guatemalan highlands *tun* can mean a mosquito, rays of sunlight, or even a plant that resembles rays of sunlight, such as the maguey cactus (Edmonson 1976:128). For the K'iche', the word can also stand for either of two musical instruments that differ in their ways of producing sounds: the slit-drum, an idiophone, and the valveless trumpet, an aerophone; or it can refer to the entire dance-play performed to the accompaniment of these instruments.

In the grammar section of an 1862 publication, *Grammaire de la Langue Quiché suivie d'un vocabulaire et du drame de Rabinal-Achí*, which contains the oldest-known

script of the K'iche' *tun baile* known as the *Rab'inal Achi*, its author, Brasseur de Bourbourg (hereafter Brasseur), listed *tun* as a long trumpet or a slit-drum. He additionally documented these two instruments as playing for a performance of the *baile* that he alternately called the *Rab'inal Achi* and the *Xajoh Tun*. Writing over a hundred years later, historian Rene Acuña (1973, 1975) confirmed that both the valveless trumpet and the slit-drum continued to be used for the *Rab'inal Achi*, as well as for other *tun*-type dance-plays in highland Guatemala.

Although in K'iche' organology the word *tun* is used to refer to two quite different instruments, Precolumbian-iconographical evidence suggests that the indigenous valveless-tube trumpet may have been the one originally called by this name. This evidence concerns the context of instrument use. A major theme of historic and contemporary *tun bailes* like the *Rab'inal Achi* is human sacrifice, and the earliest Mesoamerican depiction of this event associated with a specific instrument is painted on the Lowland-Maya vase known as Grolier no. 33, which was probably made sometime between AD 600-800. On this vase a valveless-tube trumpet is shown being played at a ritual known as a scaffold sacrifice. Although the slit-drum may also have accompanied such ceremonies during this period, the first documented evidence of its use in the same capacity is in a scene in the Mixtec-Puebla *Codex Becker I* painted sometime during the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries (although some events depicted may have occurred as early as AD 900) (Byland p.c., 1999). Despite the older known association of the valveless trumpet with human sacrifice, the meaning of *tun* in more contemporary K'iche'an usage is restricted to the slit-drum or the sacrifice *baile* it accompanies, while the trumpet is seldom referred to by that name. Modern references to this instrument are instead more likely to use the Spanish terms *trompeta* or *clarín*.²⁰

²⁰ Dennis Tedlock (2002:174-75) believes that *tun* is a Maya metonym for music but that its more specific meaning is, and always was, trumpet. He writes that it is the word *q'ojom* (*k'ojom*) that stands for slit-drum. Nevertheless, in my conversations with dance-play performance personnel in Guatemala the slit-drum was almost always referred to as *tun* and the skin drum as *tambor* or *k'ojom*.

Concerning the evidence of an association of the valveless-tube trumpet and slit-drum with indigenous *bailes* in the period after Conquest, in 1625 the judge Juan Maldonado singled out the dance-ceremony *tum (tun) ni uleutum* for condemnation (because of its so-called pagan elements), describing it as performed by costumed dancers accompanied by “trompetas largas” (Mace 1970:46-47). Thomas Gage’s (1929:268) description from the same century includes a mention of the slit-drum accompanying a K’iche’ *baile*: “With the dull, heavy, and somewhat loud sound of the (slit) drum, the master of the dance gives the dancers their songs, dance movements, and cues for when to dance and/or sing.” And in an account of Maya music in Baja Verapaz from the early eighteenth-century, Ximénez (1964:245) lists the slit-drum and valveless trumpet as two among several native instruments used to accompany indigenous dance-plays.

In the same way that *tun* can mean both a slit-drum and a valveless trumpet, another K’iche’ word, *su*, means both a duct flute and the European-introduced double reed *chirimía* (both aerophones but of different timbre) (Edmonson 1976; Horspool 1982:32).²¹ Moreover, each *su* instrument, when paired with a *tambor* (membranophone), accompanies one of two particular conquest dance-plays. The duct flute (*su*) *tambor* combination forms the standard instrumentation for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*,²² and the *chirimía (su) tambor* pair forms the ensemble commonly found for the *Baile de la Conquista*. The fact that the two aerophones share the same name may be a K’iche’ conception of the two dance-plays as conquest types. In other words, any aerophone that

²¹ There are various other translations of *su*. For instance, O’Brien-Rothe (1998:728-29) notes that the Maya in Guatemala group instruments by gender, and according to her informants the duct flute, *xul (su)* is considered male. Duality of instruments is also discussed by Akkeren (2000:324) who contrasts *pub* (blowing sounds) with *su* (sucking sounds). Further substantiation for *su* defining a means of sound production is provided by Navarrete (n.d.:85), but according to him it is *su* that refers to an instrument that is blown. An additional translation is provided by Horspool (1982), who claims that *su* refers to a Precolumbian style of music.

²² There are at least two traditional dance-plays in Guatemala that use *Moros* paired with an instrument name in its title: *Moros del Tun*, and *Moros de la Marimbata* (Rodríguez 1992). The accompanying instruments listed help define the differences between these dance-dramas. However, the duct flute and skin drum appear to be the default instrumentation for *Moros bailes*.

plays for a dance-drama concerned with the theme of conquest may be referred to as a *su*. Consequently, as with sacrifice *bailes*, the conquest-*baile* theme is apparently tied to instrumentation. In the next two sections of this chapter I will examine the *Tz'unum* and the *Baile del Venado*. The *tun baile*, the *Rab'inal Achi*, and conquest dance-play, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, will be treated in more detail in their own chapters, 3 and 5 respectively.

Tz'unum Bailes

Tz'unum is the name used here to refer to a rarely performed *baile* type based on the story of a Maya cultural hero, Tz'unum; a dance-play that represents the transition from hunting to an agricultural society. In the past this *baile* was listed as accompanied by the slit-drum, trumpet, and tortoise carapace (the latter instrument now known to the K'iche' by the Spanish name *tortuga* [O'Brien-Rothe 1998b:653]). *Tz'unum* as a *baile* form is thought to have gone by many names, including *Tzumun*, *Baile de las Canastas*, *Huasteco*, and *El Maíz*, and in the case of the latter two the instrumentation is now often listed as marimba (Mace p.c., 2002). Particulars of the theme of this group of dance-plays vary somewhat according to community and over time. For the purpose of the PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification, those works that share themes related to food transition, and that are performed with an ensemble including players of a slit-drum, a trumpet, and a tortoise shell (or, in some instances, a marimba) are identified as belonging to the *Tz'unum* group.²³

The earliest-described *Tz'unum* dance-play, *Baile de las Canastas*, was first mentioned as performed in highland Guatemala by the seventeenth-century chronicler

²³ *Tz'unum*, which in K'iche' can be translated as hummingbird, is also the name of a magical bird in the *Baile de la Conquista* (Bode 1961; Horspool 1982).

Fuentes y Guzmán (Fuentes y Guzmán 1932-33; Mace p.c., 2003). By the modern era, several versions of this *baile* appear to have existed simultaneously, even within a single highland community (Mace p.c., 2003, Yurchenco p.c., 2000). In 1945, ethnomusicologist Henrietta Yurchenco recorded the music performed for the *Baile de las Canastas* in the town of Chajul.²⁴ A local shaman explained the underlying story of the drama to her as concerning the semi-nomadic Ixil Maya people (indigenous to the mountains of northwestern Guatemala) at a time when they were starving due to a lack of game. In desperation the Ixil asked a man-god, Tz'unum, to steal away Mariquita, the daughter of a *brujo* (wizard) named Matagtanic, as Mariquita possessed the seed of maize in her womb. Tz'unum complied by inviting the *brujo* on a bird-hunting expedition, and while Matagtanic was pursuing birds with the other hunters impregnated Matagtanic's daughter (Yurchenco p.c., 2000). From this union of the man-god and a daughter of a *brujo* was born corn, providing the *baile* with its underlying theme, the transition from hunting to an agricultural society.²⁵

The narrative of the story in the *Baile de las Canastas* would seem easy to represent in a play, but in 1945, when Yurchenco witnessed a performance a few days after recording its music, she observed that the story did not conform to the version given by her informant.²⁶ In performance all that was evident of the storyline was a pair of

²⁴ Four *Baile de las Canastas* *sones* recorded by Yurchenco were included on the 1978 Folkways LP release that also featured the *Rab'inal Achi* (Folkways, FE 4226). The *son* titles of the former are "Son del Rey Gaspar," "Son del Gorrion, el Nino, el Viejo," "El Quetzal," and "Finale del Baile de las Canastas." Library of Congress catalogue numbers for Yurchenco's 1945 Ixil recordings are AFS 8122, AFS 8123, AFS 8124, AFS 8125, AFS 8126, AFS 8127B, and AFS 8128.

²⁵ One ethnobotanical theory concerns corn's derivation from *teosente*, a wild grass native to Guatemala (Wenke 1990:254).

²⁶ This 1945 enactment of the *Baile de las Canastas* was filmed by two cameramen from Guatemala City hired by Dr. Jorge Luís Arriola, the then Guatemalan Minister of Education. Yurchenco (p.c., 2001) was later told that the film had been destroyed in a fire at the archives of the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, but she is suspicious of this accounting and suspects that it still exists.

protagonists in opposition, perhaps representing farmers and hunters as cultural archetypes (Yurchenco p.c., 2000).

According to early twentieth-century research by Harry McArthur (1973:122) on indigenous Guatemalan dance-plays, a similar dance-drama, *Tz'unum*, was called a *tun baile* by his informants, because of the presence of the slit-drum in its accompaniment. (He did not specify if it used other instruments.) In the 1990s Navarrete (1994:33) noted that in the community of Huehuetenango, a dance-play with the related spelling, *Tzunun*, was accompanied by a slit-drum, trumpet, and tortoise-shell ensemble. Like the *Tz'unum* McArthur described, the Huehuetenango *Tzunun* was referred to by locals as a *tun* dance. (Navarrete's belief that *Tzunun* is a variant *tun* type that does not include the enactment of human sacrifice is taken up later.)

In addition to some shared instrumentation, it is possible that these two dance-drama types, *tun* and *Tz'unum*, have an over-arching cultural theme. One conclusion of ethnohistorian Alain Breton (1999:313-19) from his analysis of the *Rab'inal Achi* is that the character of the Rabinal king symbolizes the superior, sedentary life of the farmer, in opposition to the restless hunting lifestyle represented by the two warrior protagonists (a K'iche' and a Rabinal prince) (Akkeren 2000:383), duplicating the transition from hunting to agriculture that characterizes the *Baile de las Canastas*, although the story as told in the former is not clearly defined.

What is of primary concern here is that instrumentation may be used to help clarify the themes of K'iche' dance-plays. The earliest suggestion of this comes from a document written during the early seventeenth century by Bartolome Resinos de Cabrera, in which he states that trumpets were used to signal the start of a specific *tun baile* (Chinchilla 1951:19-20). Resinos noted that the Tzu'tujil rushed to *tun bailes* initiated by the sounds of trumpets but that they did not do this for other *tun bailes* (*ibid.*: Navarrete 1994:30). Unfortunately, for my study, Resinos did not specify what, or even if, instruments were used to initiate the *tun bailes* not announced by trumpets, but he implies

that the K'iche' identified *tun* dance-plays according to the sounds used to announce them. More evidence of instrumentation would be helpful, but Resinos is not alone in his inattention to such details. Specifics concerning music instruments are often missing in ethnohistorical documents from Mesoamerica. Nevertheless, with Resinos at least there is the suggestion that there were many *baile* types in Guatemala, which gives encouragement that the instrumentation for Colonial-era versions of the *Tz'unum* may eventually be revealed.

In her liner notes to the Folkways recording that included excerpts from the *Baile de las Canastas*, Yurchenco described the two variants of this type of dance-play mentioned earlier, *Huasteco* and *El Maíz*, as *bailes* performed in the Rabinal region (*Music of the Maya-Quichés of Guatemala* 1978:discography and videography). Corroboration of these three *bailes*, counting the *Baile de las Canastas*, is found in several sources. Francisco Rodriguez Rouanet used the names *Huasteco* and *El Maíz* interchangeably to characterize a *baile* once performed in Rabinal, as well as in the towns of Jocotán and San Antonio Huista.²⁷ In 1971, the Guatemala Department de Arte Folklórica established that two of these three communities, Rabinal and Jocotán, presented a *baile* called either *Huasteco* or *El Maíz*, and confirmation of a performance of the *Huasteco* in Rabinal, for the Festival of the Virgin of the Patrocinio on the last Sunday of November, was made by Mace (p.c., 2002), who described it as a “Maypole-winding (dance) accompanied by marimba.” That the marimba may have replaced the older three-piece *Tz'unum* ensemble is not surprising, as this instrument has been unofficially adopted as the signature musical instrument of Guatemala. It is increasingly used in traditional dance-play performances such as the one described below.

²⁷ *Tz'unum* dance-plays have also been reported for the towns of Chichicastenango and San Juan Ixcay (Tedlock 2003:335).

Figure 3

Baile del Venado Procession



Cobán, Guatemala, August 3, 2001. Author's photograph.

Baile del Venado

Chan Tuniah, a Maya version of the *Baile del Venado* (Deer Dance) performed in sixteenth-century Yucatan, was described in some detail by Landa (1941:155), lending confirmation for a Prehispanic source for this dance-play type. Contrasting with *tun bailes*, which are hypothesized as including Prehispanic music elements in their performance, the modern highland Guatemalan version of the *Baile del Venado* retains its indigenous character apparently bereft of those aspects. In fact its instrumentation is now

most often the marimba, the instrument introduced post-Conquest by slaves from Africa.²⁸

The lack of indigenous instruments is one of two aspects that make the *Baile del Venado* unique; the other is its minimal use of dialogue. In the two performances I witnessed (one each in Cobán and Rabinal) no words were spoken, although some variants apparently do include speech (González p.c., 2002).²⁹ Even in those latter versions interpretation still must be derived largely from choreography and costume. In the two enactments I observed the indigenous imagery included deer headdresses and capes covered with mirrors. In Precolumbian artworks capes are a commonly depicted item of clothing occasionally shown with representations of mirrors thought to indicate worship of the moon or the sun (Miller and Taube 1997:115-16) (Figure 3).

Regarding the dancing in the *Baile del Venado*, its choreography is meant to represent hunters in pursuit of deer and possibly concerns a Mesoamerican myth about the god of the Milky Way, known as Mixcoatl in the Aztec language, Nahuatl. According to this deer-dance story the Milky Way god pursues a magical deer that has been transformed into a human female. After she is caught, the woman is impregnated by the god and gives birth to a pan-cultural hero, Quetzalcoatl (*ibid.*:74-75). Based on the Mesoamerican association of the deer with women, Akkeren has proposed that, for the K'iche', deer imagery is a metaphor for women and the deer dance represents the pursuit of wives for lineage alliances (Akkeren 2000:181, 424).

Returning to instrumentation, although the marimba was probably invented in the Old World, many K'iche' consider it an indigenous instrument. In Rabinal, in fact, this

²⁸ There is tantalizing but ultimately insubstantial archaeological evidence of a Precolumbian version of the marimba developed by the Maya (see Pineda del Valle 1994). However, I am of the opinion that claims for an indigenous invention of this instrument may have more to do with feelings of ethnic pride than with the evidence at hand.

²⁹ Versions of the *Baile del Venado* that incorporate dialogue may be exclusive to Nahualá, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, and San Pedro la Laguna, Sololá towns that use the marimba and flute in accompaniment (Paret-Limardo 1963:18; Tedlock 2003:333).

idiophone is regarded by some local musicians as an instrument known to the Maya since the “beginning of time” (Navarrete n.d.:116). Certain religious concepts are held by the K’iche’ in a similar way. The pairing of the marimba with the Maya deer dance, for instance, is not unlike the Maya hybridization of Catholic saints and pre-Christian deities. In syncretic religious events, the K’iche’ regard all constituent components, including accompanimental musical instruments, as deriving from their ancestors (Quich p.c., 2001). For example, the guitar, harp, and violin—all string instruments introduced from the Old World—are sometimes played for religious activities and are considered by many Guatemalans to be Maya inventions.

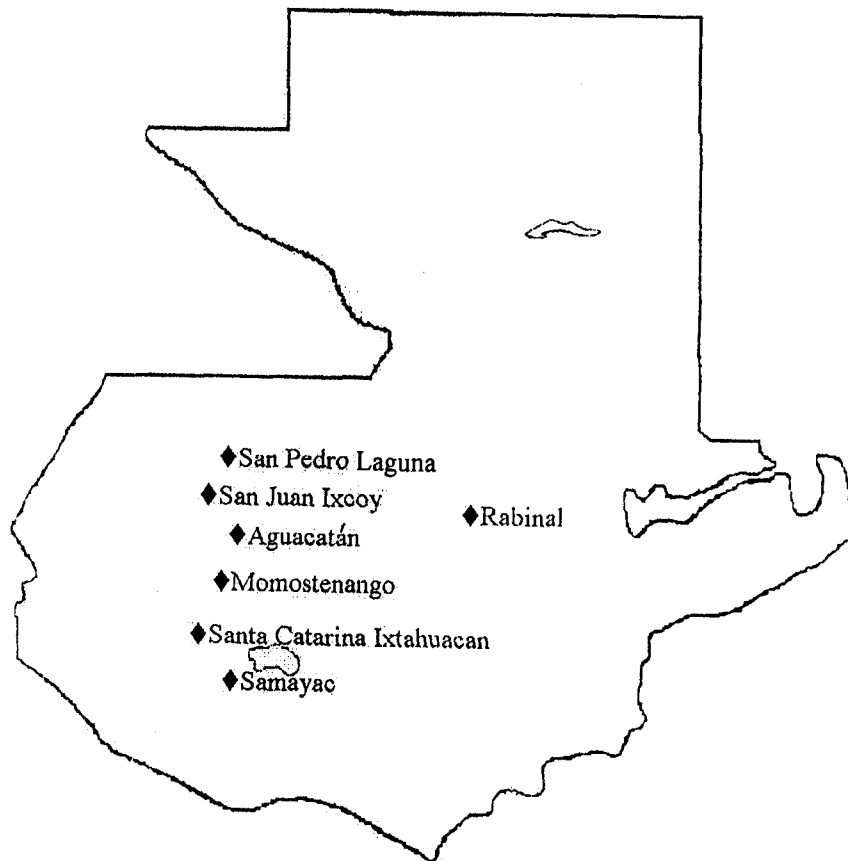
In spite of the more standard marimba-deer dance association, the *Baile del Venado* also differs from the other dance-dramas under discussion due to the variety of instruments otherwise used in its accompaniment. In the 1960s, Guatemalan-dance-play researcher Paret-Limardo (1963:18) compiled a list of Guatemalan town ensembles that played for the *Baile del Venado* using instruments other than, or in addition to, the marimba. These included: in Patzún, the flute and slit-drum (also found in 1945 Rabinal); in Estancia Grande, the skin drum and slit-drum; in Nahualá, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, and San Pedro la Laguna, the marimba and flute; in Palin and Cahabón, the violin and guitar; and in Comalapa, the guitar, guitarrilla, and double bass (*Music of the Maya-Quiché of Guatemala* 1978:discography and videography). The reasons for such variety in instrumentation are undoubtedly more involved than the cultural adoption of non-indigenous instruments for religious purposes, and a partial explanation based on Paret-Limardo’s evidence (concerning demographics and geography) is proposed below.

These communities singled-out by Paret-Limardo are mostly located near Lake Atitlán, a region famed for traditional *bailes*. Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, for instance, in the mountains west of Lake Atitlán, is one of only seven towns in Guatemala that apparently retains a *tun baile* tradition (Figure 4). Similarly, the ensembles from the three towns using marimba and flute—Nahualá, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, and San

Pedro la Laguna—are located in remote and indigenously dominated areas. All three of these communities are in Sololá, the department in Guatemala with a 94% Maya population, second only to Totonicapán, where the Maya population is 97%.³⁰

Figure 4

Communities Where Tun Dances Are Now Performed



Map derived from Guatemala Departamento de Arte Folklórico Nacional, 1971 and Rodríguez, 1992. Author's computer drawing.

Maya who live in such rugged and somewhat isolated areas as Sololá and the mountains around Lake Atitlán tend to be culturally conservative. The nature of such a

³⁰ This information was from a government survey posted at the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología de Guatemala in Guatemala City in 2002. The Maya population estimate listed in footnote 1 was from this same posting.

worldview was impressed upon me in the summer of 2001 during a brief stay with a Q'eqchi' family in the Alta Verapaz rain forest. The family there consisted of several generations but only the men spoke a bit of Spanish, and they acted as intermediaries between the family and their non-Maya visitors. (The women spent much of their time preparing and cooking tortillas on a large fire-stoked griddle, and ate their meals only after the men and guest(s) had eaten.)

Many of the towns covered by Paret-Limardo (1963) are located in similar rugged regions, yet paradoxically, in proximity of tourist centers such as Lake Atitlán and the nearby volcanoes hiked by adventurous visitors, where resident Maya musicians may be accustomed to foreigners and more receptive to influences from the outside. In addition, some of these towns are dominated by the Kaqchikel, an ethnicity traditionally noted for openness (a trait that during Conquest contributed to their near demise).³¹ Local attitudes of cultural pride mixed with tolerance may have provided the impetus for the people in this part of Guatemala to experiment with different accompanimental combinations for their dance-plays, more than other K'iche' Maya, even while maintaining traditional performance traditions (such as the *tun baile* in Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán). However, as stated earlier, instrument variability is not the only difference in this *baile* type and the others discussed.

While observing the *Baile del Venado* performed simultaneously alongside the *Baile del los Moros y Cristianos* at the Cobán saint day festivities, a man next to me explained that the styles of dance differed for the two dance-plays because the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* incorporated dialogue whereas the *Baile del Venado* did not, or used very little on the occasions when it did. In highland Maya *baile* performances the presence of dialogue changes the function of the dancer-actor. For instance, the dance style typical for *tun* dances—various medium-tempo round dances executed between long

³¹ Lingering discord is said to exist between members of the K'iche' and Kaqchikel ethnicities partly based on the fact that the latter initially welcomed Alvarado and sided with the Spanish early in the Conquest (Mackie 1972).

speeches given by the characters—contrasts significantly with the constant frenetic dancing of the *Baile del Venado*, where the dancers move in weaving geometric patterns propelled by the repetitious, quick-paced ostinato-like melodies endemic to Guatemalan marimba playing. In the seventeenth century, Gage (1929:245) compared the movements of the “hunting dance” with those for another, *toncontin* (accepted by Brasseur as a Nahuatl cognate for *tun*). Gage noted that *toncontin* dancing consisted of “walking and turning and leisurely bending...bodies.” In contrast, the hunters’ dance was “wholly in action, running around in a circle, sometimes out of circle.” Gage’s Colonial account remains a pertinent description of the differences in choreography between contemporary versions of the *Rab’inal Achi* and the *Baile del Venado*.

One wonders if a slit-drum or other percussion instrument playing rapid repetitive rhythmic patterns (similar to those that now characterize Guatemalan marimba performance) might have supplied momentum for the frenetic dances in a Precolumbian prototype of the modern K’iche’ deer dance. Corroboration of this possibility is found in the recording of the *B’alam Kej* (Jaguar Deer), featuring a music piece from what is apparently an early version of the deer dance, played on slit-drum and duct flute and recorded in Rabinal in 1945 by Yurchenco (*Music of the Maya-Quichés of Guatemala* 1978:discography and videography). In that recording the slit-drummer plays a steady, equally spaced pattern of downbeats at a quick tempo, one note at approximately 205 beats a minute.

It would seem reasonable to assume that the instrument of choice to replace the slit-drum for dance-plays in post-Conquest Guatemala would be the marimba, as sounds on both these idiophones are produced by striking wooden tongues or keys with mallets. If such a switch of instruments occurred, the combination of marimba and flute, a pairing chronicled by Paret-Limardo for the Maya-dominated department of Sololá, may have been an ensemble that evolved from the *B’alam Kej* slit-drum and flute pair as recorded by Yurchenco in Rabinal.

Tun Instruments in the Postclassic Era: Codex Becker I

Precolumbian paintings and sculptures confirm that the indigenous instruments discussed in this dissertation were sometimes used for public ceremonies, and these artworks often show how the instruments were played. At the archaeological site of Q'umarkaj, the last highland capital of the K'iche', mural paintings closely resemble the art style used in pictures found in Postclassic Maya and Mixtec-Puebla codices (Akkeren 2000:329). It is possible that Colonial-era-K'iche'-an-authored documents are a continued tradition of writing derived in large part from the Mixtec-Puebla style. Among Postclassic Mesoamerican codices, only the *Codex Becker I* documents a music ensemble comprising the instruments used in the *Rab'inal Achi* and *Tz'unum*, which suggests the importance of perusing the physical appearance, history, and content of this work for information pertinent to the study of ancient southern Mesoamerican dance-play ensembles.

The *Codex Becker I* is a collection of fifteen loose pages of pictographs painted on animal skin in red, blue, gold, and black, in the Postclassic Mixtec-Puebla international art style (*Codex Borgia* 1993; *Codex Zouche-Nuttall* 1975; *Codices Becker I/II* 1961). This picture book was acquired in the Mexican State of Puebla, near the modern city of Cholula, and is currently part of the Mesoamerican collection of the Vienna Museum für Völkerkunde. It is not a complete work and is presumed to originally have been part of the *Codex Colombino*, now in the Museo Nacional Antropología e Historia in Mexico City. Sometimes referred to as the *Codex Colombino-Becker I*, it is stylistically and iconographically related to six other Precolumbian codices known as the “Mixtec genealogies and histories” (Byland p.c., 1999). A specialist in Mixtec writings, Bruce Byland identifies the other six as *Codex Zouche-Nuttall*, *Codex Becker II*, *Codex Bodley*, *Codex Selden*, *Codex Vindobonensis*, and *Codex Egerton* (*Codex Borgia* 1993:xiv). Mexican archaeologist Alfonso Caso has demonstrated that all seven of these historical texts originated in the modern Mexican state of Oaxaca and were primarily concerned

with the rulers and affairs of two Prehispanic Mixtec towns there, Tilantongo and Teozacoalco (Byland p.c., 1999; Caso 1960a, 1960b).

Emily Rabin (1979:173) describes the primary focus of the texts as the twenty-eight-year “War of Heaven,” which took place in the Oaxacan highlands during the tenth century and established the lineages for the Mixtec Postclassic ruling dynasties.

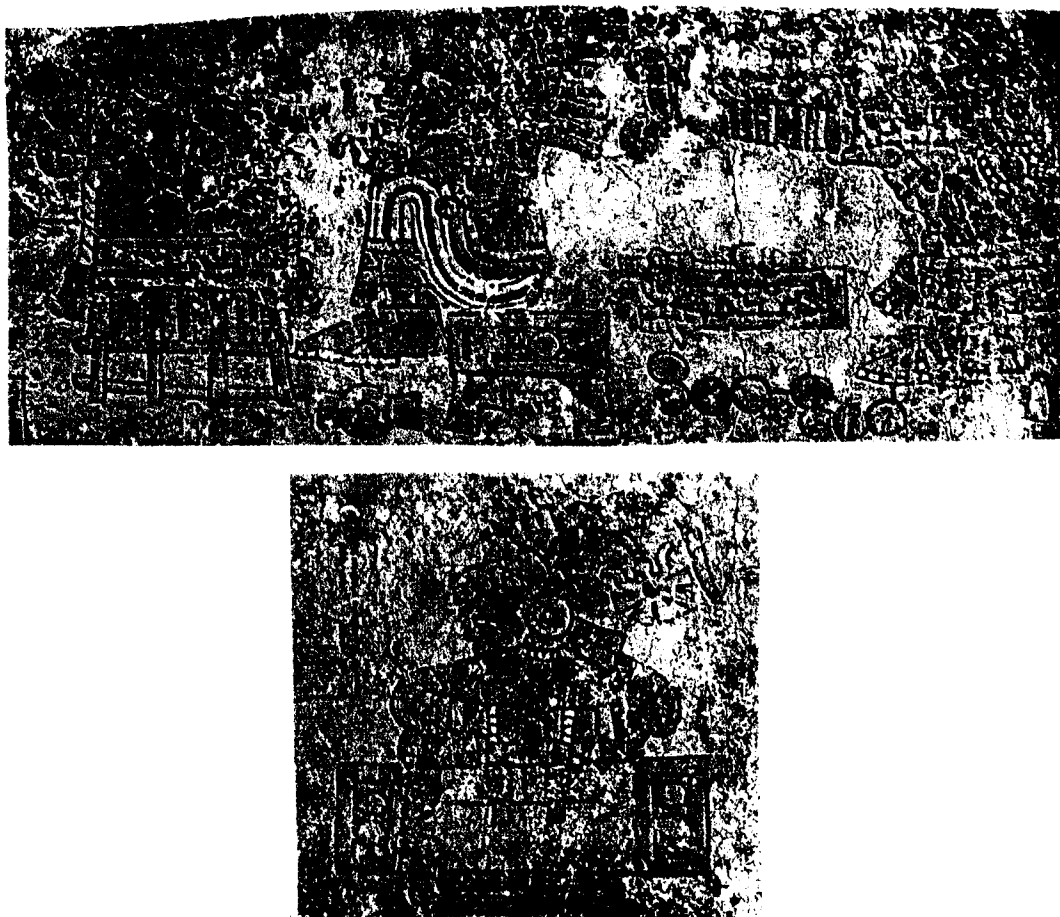
Activities described in these documents began as early as AD 940 and continued into the Late-Postclassic period (Byland and Pohl 1994:11), but the books are more concerned with incidents pertaining to Lord Eight-Deer-Jaguar-Claw’s rise to power than with describing his life story or that of any other character.

Pages eight and nine are of particular interest to this discussion for their depiction of six musicians grouped as a performing ensemble. These musicians are arranged in a single row in the upper middle of page nine and proceeding to the left-hand edge of page eight, reading from right to left—the usual order for Mixtec-Puebla picture books—they include: a tortoise-shell player holding a deer antler; a container-rattle player, one rattle gripped in his right hand; a standing valveless trumpeter; a seated valveless trumpeter, using a table-like stand to help support his trumpet; a percussionist standing on a platform while playing a waist-high drum; and a seated slit-drummer. All the musicians are turned to their right in profile except for the slit-drummer, whose body faces forward with his head turned to his right. The two instruments designated valveless trumpets are identical and appear as long tubes with bulbous middles encircled at similar points by different-colored bands. Music archaeologist Samuel Martí (1970:104) has described these objects as trumpets, and I agree with his assessment, but this designation is problematic as the objects bear little resemblance to the instrument in other Mesoamerican paintings or sculptures. The *Codex Becker I* artist(s) may have intended them to represent something other than trumpets, but, as “sound scrolls” emanate out of their distal ends, the objects

undoubtedly denote some kind of sound makers (Figure 5).³² The two objects have no finger-holes and are held at their proximal ends, suggesting that they are valveless trumpets rather than vertical duct flutes, although this instrument is a possible alternative.

Figure 5

The Performers on the Two Trumpets and Slit-Drum in the Codex Becker I



Goldwater Library Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photocopy.

³² Mesoamerican “sound scrolls” appear as smoke-like graphics, most often shown emerging from the mouths of individuals or sound-producing instruments. The more elaborate ones are believed to represent “heightened speech” and/or singing (*e.g.*, music). For more information refer to Mark King (1996).

In the *Codex Becker I*, all of the instrumentalists are richly attired, in clothing similar to that worn by the elite characters whose stories are told on pages eight and nine. In fact, Nowotny (1959) identifies three of the musicians as members of the family of Lord Eight-Deer-Jaguar-Claw, and assumes the standing trumpeter to be Lord Eight-Deer-Jaguar-Claw himself. Other family members in the group are his brother, Lord Nine-Flower, who is the seated trumpeter, and his half-brother, Lord Twelve-Movement, shaking the rattle (*Codices Becker I/II* 1961:14). All the musicians wear uniform cloaks that end at the knees in pleat-like delineations painted in different colors. The uniforms are similar to those worn by the instrumental group shown in another Mixtec-Puebla historical codex created around the same time, *The Zouche-Nuttall*. In that book a conch-shell trumpeter, a container-rattle player, and a stick-rattle player³³ accompany the marriage ceremony of Lord Twelve-Wind and Lady Three-Flint, which took place immediately prior to the “War of Heaven” (Byland and Pohl 1994:236; *Codex Zouche Nuttall* 1975:19).

The performance postures of the slit-drummer and the two trumpet players in this codex appear awkward. The fingers of the drummer are shown facing up instead of down. In other words, he holds the beaters with his hands flipped 180° as compared to a standard drumstick grip. However, such postures can be accounted for as stock poses utilized by Mixtec-Puebla artists to show three-dimensional action on a two-dimensional surface, rather than depicting an unusual performance technique or a scene copied in error (Byland p.c., 1999). Concerning the trumpet, gripping a horn at its proximal end with both hands adjacent to each other assigns unnecessary weight to the upper-end of the instrument and is perhaps why Lord Nine-Flower requires the aid of a table-like prop. Yet in spite of this illogical playing technique, Prehispanic Mesoamerican artworks often

³³ The container rattle is called *ayacachtli* in Nahuatl and *la sonája* in Spanish. K’iche musicians generally refer to it by its Spanish name. The stick-rattle is called *chicahuaztli* in Nahuatl (Guzmán Bravo 1984:172-73; Martí 1955:35-40).

show valveless trumpets held in this way. Some modern Maya trumpeters have also been documented in photographs gripping their instruments in similar fashion (Navarrete 2000:9; Yurchenco, unpublished photo).

The unique Mixtec-Puebla instrumental ensemble shown in the *Codex Becker I* closely resembles the group listed for *Tz'unum* dances. *Tz'unum* instrumentation as described by Yurchenco and Navarrete likewise includes the trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise shell, but the *Codex Becker I* also includes musicians playing a container rattle and a waist-high drum (Navarrete 1994; Yurchenco p.c., 2000). The scene in the codex for which the ensemble plays is either an actual event or a re-creation of the event as performance. In either case, it celebrates the conclusion of a dynastic struggle occurring around the twelfth century, ended with the deposing of Lord Eight-Deer-Jaguar-Claw's rival, which paved the way for his taking possession of a contested town, Hua Chino (Byland and Pohl 1994).

The events shown on pages eight and nine culminate in three sacrifices: gladiatorial, heart, and scaffold, with the scaffold sacrifice taking precedence by dominating the bottom of page nine. Scaffold sacrifice was a widespread Mesoamerican practice, which involved the shooting of arrows or darts at an individual stretched across a raised scaffold or tree. The drawn blood—with connotations of rainfall—fed the gods of fertility.

Sacrifice and History as Themes of Tun Dance-Plays

Sacrifice

Navarrete (1994:27) concluded that the dance-play *Rab'inal Achi* represented a *tun baile* comprising a sequence of “captivity-trial-sacrifice.” The *Lotzo Tun*, the *Tum Teleche*, and the *Quiché Uinac* are other Guatemalan Maya *bailes* that have been

documented as enacting similar themes of capture and sacrifice (Akkeren 2000; Edmonson 1976; Mace 1967; Tedlock 2003).

The earliest written evidence of a K'iche'an dance concerning blood-letting is a description of a Postclassic scaffold sacrifice in the "Song of Tolgom," a "song" performed during an episode described in the indigenously authored *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos and Goetz 1953:74-75). Written soon after Conquest, the *Annals* include a description of the migration into the Guatemalan highlands of the warriors of seven Kaqchikel ancestor groups who at one point encountered a being called Tolgom, whom their god, Gagavitz, ordered them to kill. These warriors captured Tolgom, tied him to a tree, and shot at him with arrows while dancing to the "Song of Tolgom" (*ibid.*:73-74). There is no listing of instrumentation for this Postclassic sacrifice dance, but the dance-play *Lotzo Tun*, from the Colonial era, included a similar scaffold sacrifice and was described as accompanied by trumpets (Chinchilla 1951:19-20; Edmonson 1976:145). Concerning the *Lotzo Tun*, Mace (1967:4) finds additional evidence for the *baile* in a 1624 edict forbidding its performance, which was authored by Prieto de Villegas, Commissioner of the Inquisition in the Guatemalan town of Mazatenango. In fact, sacrificial ceremonies are the subject of many Prehispanic Maya artworks from both Classic and Postclassic times.

Along with the scaffold sacrifice, two other Maya sacrificial methods can be used to illustrate the social implications of sacrifice for Prehispanic Maya. One involved the removal of the head (decapitation) and the other the removal of the heart (heart sacrifice). By removing the head the victim's face was made conspicuous, thereby emphasizing the individual, with the most famous documentation of this sacrifice type found in the *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1987, 1996) Following the outcome of a ballgame the head of the culture hero One-Hunahpu was removed by the lords of the underworld and placed in the cleft of a tree where it was transformed into a water-bearing calabash, of the type still used in

Guatemala to make bowls (Tedlock 1996:36).³⁴ Although there are no Maya pictures of decapitation that include accompanying instruments, Maya trumpeters are shown in some paintings with trophy heads attached to their costume. One such example is Plate 1989.110, currently on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Attached at the back waist of the trumpeter depicted on this plate is a detached head, painted as if facing the viewer.

I would suggest that the removal of the heart, a more anonymous human organ, depersonalizes the victim, and the sacrificers, in essence, remove the heart of the human collective. This was a common sacrificial method for the Aztec, but based on iconography it is thought to have been practiced relatively rarely among the Maya. I know of only six Prehispanic Maya representations of heart sacrifice, all chronicled by Sylvanus Morley and George Brainerd, and none of these included instrumental accompaniment (Morley and Brainerd 1994:463).

Navarrete (1994:33) was told by Maya residents in the town of Huehuetenango that the *Tz'unum baile*, *Tzunun*, was a *tun* dance. At the time of his research (mid-1990s) the thematic content of *Tzunun* seemed to differ significantly from that of the *Rab'inal Achi*, a *tun* dance-play with which he was familiar, leading Navarrete to conclude that there might exist various *tun baile* types differentiated by theme. For Navarrete the significant difference was the presence or absence of (enacted) human sacrifice in the storyline. In his thesis on the *Rab'inal Achi* for the University of Maryland, Navarrete proposed two *tun* forms, those featuring sacrifice, which included the *Rab'inal Achi*, and those that did not, which included the *Tzunun*. Another difference between these two dance-plays, unexplored by Navarrete, is instrumentation. The *Rab'inal Achi* uses the slit drum and valveless trumpet and the *Tzunun* uses the slit-drum, valveless trumpet, and

³⁴ Rabinal is famous for the manufacture of calabash bowls. Near their completion the bowls are decorated with distinctive red patterns (blood?) painted on a yellow background.

tortoise shell. If, as Navarrete surmises, the two dance-plays are *tun bailes* separated by theme, the difference in instrumentation might signify this thematic difference.

The effect on *baile* classification due to the presence or absence of particular instruments is central to my study, and during the summer of 2001 I undertook a cursory investigation of the tortoise-shell idiophone in order to learn what I could about its relationship to K'iche'an ceremonies. By chance, while in Cobán I had heard of such a shell on display at the "Centro Comunitario Educativo Pokomchi" in the nearby town of San Cristóbal, and went there to talk about the instrument with the museum's administrators. The officials there informed me that in San Cristóbal tortoise shells like the one included in the museum's collection were restricted to the *Posada*, a Catholic Christmas ritual that is associated in that part of Guatemala with rain ceremonies, and that it was always played solo. Corroborating this special use, ethnomusicologist Glen Horspool (1982:143) documented the same function and restrictions for the instrument in Momostenango. Varying here from its use in *Tz'unum bailes*, where it is part of an ensemble employed for the dance-play, the tortoise shell obviously does not have the same music-making function throughout Guatemala. But regardless of specific use, one is left with the impression that the idiophone is regarded as a special object; one that could have the potential for transforming an event. Furthermore, although I am uncertain of its role in defining *bailes*, I surmise that the Maya in Chajul and Huehuetenango did not combine this instrument with the slit-drum and valveless trumpet ensemble for *Tz'unum bailes* without there being some underlying cultural reason of long-standing behind it.

I do not know if San Cristóbal and Momostenango rain ceremonies involve some type of sacrifice, but the similarity of *Tz'unum* instrumentation to that shown in the sacrifice scene on page nine of the *Codex Becker I* at least casts doubt on an association of the tortoise shell with non-sacrifice ceremonies for the Mixtec. And in her description of the *Baile de las Canastas*, Yurchenco (p.c., 2000) implied that the addition of a

tortoise shell to a *tun* ensemble, as found among the K'iche', did not signal a change of dance-drama theme from sacrifice to non-sacrifice. On the contrary, she states that at the end of the Chajul *Baile de las Canastas* an angry Matagtanic had Tz'unum killed (sacrificed).

History

Carved on the face of a stairway at the Classic-era Lowland Maya site of Dos Pilas are a pair of seventh-century writings in stone, one describing a war between soldiers of Dos Pilas and the powerful city-state of Tikal, and the other recording a dance performance commemorating the same historic event (Tedlock 2003:157). Almost a thousand years later, during the Colonial era, highland Guatemalan Maya periodically defined *tun bailes* to Colonial administrators as historical dramas, and in one instance even used the historical nature of a dance-play in an attempt to overturn the prohibition of its performance by authorities. In 1676, citizens in San Juan, Sacatepequez (San Miguel Milpa Dueñas today) characterized the *Trompetas Tun* as an “entertaining history in song,” and further noted it as a “very common dance among all the Indians” (Acuña 1975:109). This characterization suggests that much Precolumbian K'iche'an history was being enacted in the *tun bailes* performed throughout the country at that time.

Unfortunately, the number and types of dance-plays being performed after Conquest is difficult to know, partly due to the variations in the names of thematically related *bailes*. For instance, Navarrete (1994:16) suspects that the *Trompetas Tun* is another name for the *Rab'inal Achi*, while Mace (1967:23-24) believes that it is an adaptation of an earlier *tun baile* called *Quiché Uinac*.

It is my opinion that *tun* dance-dramas were structured to accommodate topical events, evolving histories, and changing mythologies, within an established performance matrix. To cite as an example, Esteban Xolop, owner of the performance rights to the *Rab'inal Achi* and another dance-play, *Baile de Cortes*, during much of the twentieth

century, omitted a section on sorcery in the latter until complaints from participants and observers caused him to compose a new section based on information obtained from his sorcerer acquaintances (Navarrete 1994:92). In the 1950s, Mace (1957:11) observed a *Rab'inal Achi* performance which ended with the simulated decapitation of the play's villain, the K'iche' prince, a conclusion that differs from the heart sacrifice in the 1856 version witnessed by Brasseur (1862). Currently the actors strike small axes atop the head of the actor playing this prince, simulating a head sacrifice, a continuation of the type of performance Mace described.

Regarding Prehispanic history in highland Guatemala, the story told in the *Rab'inal Achi* pertains to the capture, trial, and execution of a renegade K'iche' warrior-prince who is accused of betraying an alliance between the K'iche' and Achi polities in a war waged against the Poqom and Uxab' (the latter a Pipil-Nahua-speaking people then living in that part of Guatemala). Part of this suspected betrayal focuses on the discovery of larger enemy forces than the number reported earlier by the prince, implying a conspiratorial plot hatched by the Poqom, Uxab', and K'iche' to join in a counteralliance against the Achi.

In the *Rab'inal Achi*, events are portrayed as factual occurrences in what is our fifteenth century. But as both Dennis Tedlock (2003) and Ruud van Akkeren (2000) have pointed out, some of these events could not have taken place as described during that time. In order to accommodate the chronological disunity, the script apparently utilizes dramatic techniques we refer to as flashbacks and fast forwards. Accepting these as inherent to the script, Akkeren has deconstructed the action and theorized that it actually compresses events associated with three wars from three different eras: (1) the Achi subjugation of the Uxab' and Poqom in the Rabinal Valley during the Early-Postclassic period; (2) the Achi occupation of the adjacent Joyab'aj area at a slightly later time; and (3) the Achi answer to K'iche' aggression in the southern Rabinal Valley during the Late-Postclassic (*ibid.*). Breton (1999) proposes his own similar scenario to account for the

chronological discrepancy, concluding that the play's storyline concerns various unresolved conflicts between the K'iche' and Achi over lands disputed between the two groups, the ancestral home of the Poqom, and the lands of another ethnic group, the Q'ekchi (Akkeren 2000).

Giving the K'iche' version, Carmack (1981) cites several indigenous accounts indicating military expeditions originating from Q'umarkaj that were launched against the Achi in Baja Verapaz at the end of the fifteenth century. Rebellion among their former subjects, the Achi, had by then become epidemic. According to Carmack (*ibid.*:141), these Achi insurrections were suppressed, leading one to wonder how the Achi would have been able to assassinate (sacrifice) one of the heirs of the K'iche' royal line (the warrior-prince of the play) with apparent impunity. If the assassination occurred, I know of no documented accounts of such retribution. All of these issues remain to be sorted out, and currently all that can be said is that events in the *Rab'inal Achi* are presented in a fictionalized chronology that perhaps exaggerate Achi accomplishments, but that they can also be considered to refer to factual events that occurred in Postclassic Mesoamerica.

Pre-Spanish history is undoubtedly being enacted in the *Rab'inal Achi*, but it is important to keep in mind that in addition to conveying historical narratives, the dance-play addresses several K'iche'an cultural concerns (ritualized blood payment to the gods and themes of transformation being two of the others). A Western focus on K'iche' history, however much it may divulge about the past, may nonetheless overemphasize the importance the ancient Maya placed on representation of such events in their dance-plays.

Moreover, history has not stopped for the K'iche'. As I learned during my visit to Guatemala in August 2001, the warrior-prince of Rabinal (the enemy of the K'iche prince in the *Rab'inal Achi*) has now been transformed into a modern folk hero, magically battling government abuses of the people of Baja Verapaz. According to one story, this Rab'inal Achi caused the town of Rabinal to disappear, and in another he invoked a wind

to disrupt a roundup of citizens by right-wing military troops (González p.c., 2001). Although these contemporary myths have not made their way into the *Rab'inal Achi* script, evidence supports the belief that they may, since the form of historical dance-plays apparently stays the same while new events are inserted, or a new *baile* is created. In fact, the *Trompetas Tun*, *Quiché Uinac*, *Lotzo Tun* and the *Rab'inal Achi*, as well as other *tun* dance-plays, might derive from, or represent, the same performance event that over time evolved into separate dance-plays with different beginnings, middles, and endings. Hence, the various dance-plays are still used by the K'iche' to understand and remember their social reality.

Summary and Conclusions

The main purpose of this chapter was to establish a Postclassic K'iche' instrument typology related to dance-play use. The one proposed (the PHG Music Instrument Dance-Play Classification) included the following associations: *bailes* using the trumpet and slit-drum associated with themes of sacrifice; *bailes* using the trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise shell associated with themes of a transition from hunting to agriculture; *bailes* using the slit-drum and flute associated with themes of hunting and/or wife procurement; and *bailes* using the skin drum and flute associated with themes celebrating war heroes (called conquest *bailes* following the Spanish invasion).

Highland Guatemalan conceptions of instrument-dance associations for two of these *baile* types (sacrifice and conquest) were partially disclosed through the definitions of the K'iche' words *tun* and *su*. Since Conquest, *tun* has alternately meant a slit-drum, valveless trumpet, and/or the sacrifice dance-play these instruments accompany. Also since Conquest, *su* has been defined as a duct flute or a *chirimía*, and when paired with a *tambor*, accompanies conquest dance-plays like the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. If

instrumentation is indicative of dance-play type, the flute and skin drum ensemble that the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* uses may link this European-introduced dance-play to an indigenous warrior dance cited as using the same instruments, a thesis which is explored in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5.

In the *Baile del Venado*, the Old World instruments used in accompaniment (such as the marimba and various chordophones) are perhaps regarded as indigenous inventions because of their association with syncretic religious ceremonies. (Other syncretic components include incense, flowers, and communion.) The majority of examples where instrumentation deviated from the marimba were documented as occurring in high-mountain communities near Lake Atitlán. One proposed explanation for instrument variety there involves cultural attitudes of openness tempered by the region's isolating geography. This may explain why various instruments were used, but does not account for the choices of instruments or those instruments' applicability to the deer dance, raising questions that remain to be answered.

The best evidence for a continuation of Precolumbian dance-play tradition in *baile* performance is the "capture, trial, sacrifice" theme found in sacrifice-type dance-plays like the *Rab'inal Achi*. To date, the earliest Maya ritual sacrifice shown in consort with one of the currently used sacrifice-*baile* instruments, a trumpet, is depicted in a painting on a Classic-era vase known as Grolier no. 33 (manufactured by AD 800), and the first documentation of the pair of *tun* instruments (valveless trumpet and slit-drum) shown accompanying a sacrifice in a scene in the Mixtec-Puebla *Codex Becker I*. This codex was painted between AD 1400-1500, although the activities depicted have been determined by scholars to have occurred as early as in the tenth century (Byland p.c., 1999).

The act of sacrifice is the paramount theme of *tun bailes*, and types of Maya sacrifice—head, heart, or body piercing (scaffold)—were examined for what they could reveal about the nature of these acts within Mesoamerican dance-plays. For example, a

change in sacrifice type for the *Rab'inal Achi*, from heart to head, first noted by Mace (1957), may indicate that there has been a shift in emphasis in presentations of this dance-play away from the community and towards the individual. More work needs to be done on the meanings of sacrifice in dance-plays before this can be fully determined.

The enactment of historical events also appears to be an important component in *tun*-type dance-plays, even where the histories are presented outside the chronology of their actual occurrence. For instance, there were several K'iche' warrior-kings that went by the name K'iqab', the original, a Postclassic leader who conquered and unified most of highland and southern Guatemala. For political reasons, subsequent rulers took this same name, perhaps to conflate that leader's accomplishments with their own (Carmack 1981:139). Whether they succeeded in deceiving later generations of Maya is debatable, but they have, at the least, succeeded in confusing scholars. To my knowledge, there is still no study connecting the specific accomplishments to the various persons known as K'iqab'. Perhaps this is where a further study of dance-plays may be of service, as *tun bailes* still performed (particularly those other than the rather well-documented *Rab'inal Achi*) could provide information about Prehispanic-highland-Guatemalan history and cultural interactions that is now lacking.

Navarrete (1994) proposed that the dance-drama *Tzunun* is a non-sacrifice *tun*-type. In addition to a difference in theme, the *Baile de las Canastas* and sacrifice-*bailes* like the *Rab'inal Achi* can be defined according to instrumentation, with the *Rab'inal Achi* using the valveless trumpet and slit-drum and the *Baile de las Canastas* using the valveless trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise shell. It could be theorized that instrumentation is as significant in defining differences in these *bailes* as theme. A Colonial-era document by Resinos suggests that the K'iche' recognized *tun bailes* by their announcing sounds. In that document, Resinos mentioned trumpets announcing certain types of *tun* dances, but he did not mention tortoise shells (or any other specific instrument[s]) announcing other types, nor did he distinguish dance-plays by the presence or absence of

sacrificial components (Chinchilla 1951:19-20). Evidence in the *Codex Becker I*, as well as in Maya records, suggests that this carapace idiophone was an instrument as common to sacrifice ceremonies as the valveless trumpet and slit-drum. In the mural at Bonampak and on the vase known as Dumbarton Oaks no. 16 Maya tortoise-shell players are depicted accompanying sacrificial acts. Regardless of possible tortoise shell use in non-sacrifice dance-plays, there is the possibility that the instrument was, and perhaps still is, used in food-transition *bailes* that include aspects of sacrifice.

Chapter 2

The Tun Instruments: Slit-Drum and Valveless Trumpet

Introduction

In the previous chapter we learned that K'iche' instrumentation is often specific to dance-plays, and that many of these instruments are indigenous inventions. This chapter is an examination of two such sound makers, the wooden slit-drum and the valveless-tube trumpet, both of which are used to accompany what are called sacrifice, or *tun, bailes*. We begin with an examination of the slit-drum currently used for the *Rab'inal Achi*. Several aspects related to the instrument's Prehispanic origin are next addressed, including names given it by various cultures in the Americas, possible origins of the drum and the beaters used to strike it, paths of dissemination, mentions of it in Mesoamerican records, and its designs. This first section of the chapter concludes with a discussion of acoustic characteristics of select slit-drum examples.

The second part concerns the valveless-tube trumpet. As with the slit-drum, the two trumpets currently used for the *Rab'inal Achi* are examined before discussion of Prehispanic versions of those considered to be prototypes. Concerning this latter issue, archaeological and iconographical records suggest a standard Precolumbian Maya trumpet form comprising a long-widening tube and at least two variations on that standard (here called wrapped and telescope-shaped). One of these three trumpet types might have been the indigenous predecessor to the one now used for highland Guatemalan dance-plays. Prehispanic Maya iconography also includes illustrations of

trumpet ensembles, shown alone and as sections of instrumental groups. The number of trumpets used is examined, along with the likely reasons for the consistency of these numbers. Also included is an estimate of the fundamental pitches of a few trumpets known from museum collections and those shown in the paintings at the Bonampak site.³⁵

The Slit-Drum

Appearance and Methods of Construction

The Mesoamerican slit-drum (sometimes called a slit-gong) is a log hollowed out by means of fire and cutting tools (similar to the construction methods used for dugout canoes) (González p.c., 2001).³⁶ A rectangle cut out of the bottom of the log to accommodate removal of the interior wood is sometimes glued back and sometimes not. Incisions generally resembling the letter “H” turned sideways are chiseled from the trunk surface down to the hollow section, yielding two facing tongues (Figure 6). Pitches of the instrument are derived from variation in the thickness of these tongues, and on occasion the drum body is struck, producing an additional tone. In Mexico and Central America slit-drums are constructed from the wood of the passion fruit, Spanish cedar, black cherry, walnut, *chicozapote*, oak, and *hormigo* trees (Castañeda and Mendoza 1933:11, 14; Martí 1955:27, Navarrete 1994:120; O’Brien-Rothe 1998b:653). Slit-drum beaters are most often tipped with rubber derived from various types of rubber trees,

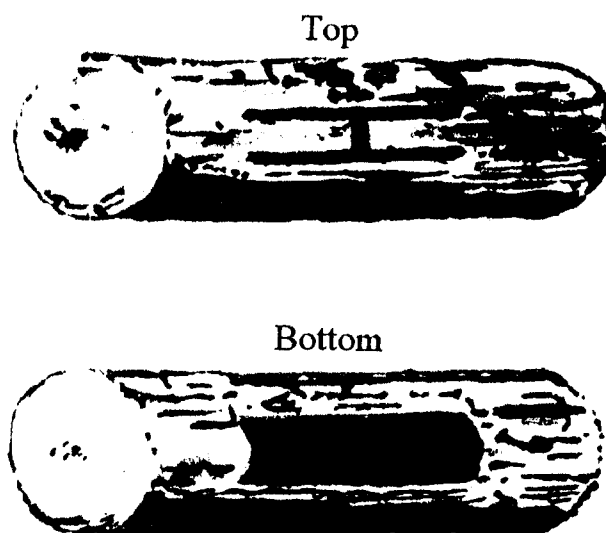
³⁵ In this chapter (and later ones) some interpretations of Mesoamerican artworks that include depictions of music instruments are offered. These explanations are informed by the context of discovery, ethnographic analogy, as well as interpretive approaches and conclusions advanced by art historians. However, as I am not a trained visual-art interpreter, I present my ideas as suppositions, not as facts.

³⁶ Most existing Mesoamerican slit-drums I have examined are of dimensions that range between 10-40 centimeters (cm) in diameter and 35-90 cm in length.

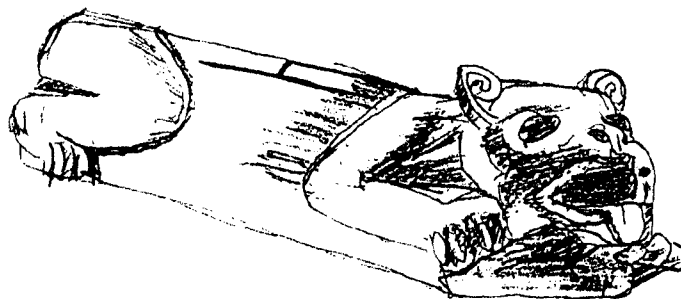
indigenous in all but one case to low-altitude regions of tropical America (Standley 1922:202).³⁷

Figure 6

Mesoamerican Slit-Drums



Taino Type. Author's ink drawing, after Oviedo, reprinted by Thompson (1993).



Cholula *Teponaztli*. American Museum of Natural History, no. 30/9756. Author's pencil drawing.

The slit-drum is classified in the Sachs and Hornbostel system (1990:131) as 111.231, a(n) “(individual) percussion tube.” This type of idiophone is also found in

³⁷ A type of rubber known as *guaylue* is indigenous to the dry regions of the North American southwest and northern Mexico (Filloy 2001:92).

other regions of the world, including New Guinea and Africa. Slit-drums were, and continue to be, used throughout the Americas as far south as the Amazon and northward into Mexico as far as the State of Durango. During the sixteenth century, chroniclers of indigenous activities in the Antilles mentioned such drums but no known Caribbean examples from that period survive (Olsen 1998:13; Thompson 1993:188). In Mexico the slit-drum is often referred to by its Nahuatl name, *teponaztli*.

Museums possess more than fifty wooden slit-drums that may have been manufactured in Precolumbian times, although none that I know of were found *in situ* at Mesoamerican archaeological sites. Most of those in the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City (the largest repository of such instruments) can be traced back no further than early twentieth-century acquisition records (Castañeda and Mendoza 1933; Hamburg-American Line 1901).³⁸

The Rab'inal Achi Slit-Drum

The slit-drum apparently used for the *Rab'inal Achi* since José Coloch assumed production of the dance-play in the 1960s is made of one piece of *hormigo* wood, approximately 88 centimeters (cm) in length and 36 cm in diameter. It has two handles, each eight-centimeters long, extending horizontally from the top surface, incorporated into its design; with their measurements excluded the length of the *tun* decreases to 72 cm. It is this shorter length that comprises the hollowed-out part of the log and determines the pitches and timbre of the instrument. The two tongues, approximately 29

³⁸ In the summer of 2001, I viewed a small single-pitch slit-drum (characterized by a cut-out “U”) in the Museo El Príncipe Maya at Cobán, Guatemala. The museum credits its manufacture to Classic-era Lowland Maya, but it closely resembles a slit-drum of the Costa Rican Precolumbian Chorotega culture, dated AD 1000 and pictured in Samuel Martí’s *Music Before Columbus: Música precolombina* (1998:18). The slit-drum in the Cobán museum was cut from the wood of the *chicozapote* tree, which is particularly weather resistant, and if the drum dates to around AD 900, as the museum claims, it could be one of the oldest *tun*-prototypes known.

cm long and 11 cm wide, differ only slightly from one another in thickness, and each is narrower at the open end than where it joins the body.

In the January 2002 San Pablo procession, the instrument was carried by a strap (tumpline) attached to the two handles and worn around the chest or forehead of a porter with the drum resting on his back. The porter walked just ahead of the drummer playing the drum. For the performance of the *Rab'inal Achi* observed that same year, the *tun* was set on a smooth round mat woven of fabric resembling the object shown supporting the slit-drum illustrated in the *Codex Becker I*. (Similar pads are included with the Aztec slit-drum-miniatures shown in Figure 11, found later in this chapter.)

Benedicto Alvarez built the new *Rab'inal Achi* slit-drum based on the design of the instrument retained by the Xolop family (holders of production rights to the dance-drama before Coloch [see Chapter 3]). The dimensions of the two instruments are supposedly the same, but Alvarez says they are dissimilar in sound (Navarrete 1994:56). The pitches of the currently used drum sound G1, D2, and E2, with the D produced when the body of the instrument is struck. Coloch informed me that the slit-drum as well as the valveless trumpets used for his productions of the *Rab'inal Achi* are kept locked in a secure place when they are not required for rehearsals and performances.³⁹ But this policy has more to do with traditions than security, and similarly, during the period required for the construction of a new slit-drum the craftsman adheres to culturally sanctioned conditions such as sexual abstinence and regular offerings of alcohol and incense smoke to deities. For the music required at *Rab'inal Achi* performances and attending processions, the slit-drummer beats the two tongues and the body directly below them with one or two drumsticks that are each approximately 38 cm long and tipped with rubber.

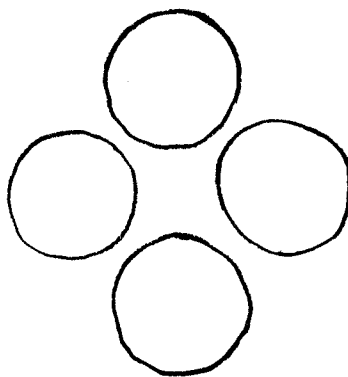
³⁹ As music director for the *Rab'inal Achi*, Coloch may have assumed many of the duties of the Protohistoric Maya music leader, *holpop*, as described for the Yukatek Maya by Landa. "They call him *holpop* and he is entrusted to care for all the instruments" (Tozzer 1941:93-94).

Decorations

The *Rab'inal Achi* slit-drum has four holes, cut through one side of the instrument below the tongues, which produce the shape of a flower (Figure 7). This four-holed flower design was also found on many of the Guatemalan *tambors* (skin drums) I examined and may indicate the continuation of a relationship between flowers and music present in some Prehispanic Mesoamerican artworks. (It is probably significant that two manifestations of a Postclassic Aztec god of music, Xochipilli and Macuilxochitl, were also patrons of flowers and beauty [Bierhorst 1985; Miller and Taube 1997:88-89; Navarrete 1994:120].)

Figure 7

**Flower Design Depicted on the Rab'inal Achi Slit-Drum
and Various Guatemalan Tambors**



Author's pencil drawing.

Images carved onto and/or into slit-drums in museum collections include protrusions from the playing surface or engravings etched into the instruments.⁴⁰ The apparent uses of slit-drum performance in Precolumbian times are sometimes represented in the design, as in the depictions of sacrifice or war, but in many more cases an interpretation of function cannot be derived from the imagery included on the drum's

⁴⁰ In this discussion I do not distinguish between engraving, incising, and etching.

surface. Existing examples of the Mesoamerican slit-drum probably can all be grouped according to four general categories or their composites: (A) plain (no engraved designs or sculpted wood); (B) dense narrative scenes engraved (Mixtec-Puebla codex style); (C) limited scenic material engraved, usually incorporating motifs related to war or sacrifice (such as a floating figure who holds a weapon and/or rattle), the Postclassic god(s) of music (Macuilxochitl-Xochipilli), jaguar(s), snake(s), eagle(s), or owl(s); and (D) drums replicating living forms, with the wood sculpted into the singular shape of a human (usually bound in rope), an animal (most often a jaguar, coyote, crocodile, or rabbit), or a combination of these and/or mythological beings. Of forty-one slit-drums or their pictures reviewed by this author, ten include no sculpture (category A); seven depict dense scenic narratives (category B); ten are engraved with limited imagery (category C); eleven show a complete figure (category D); and three are composite category types (A+C, C+D, and A+C+D).⁴¹

Museum authorities typically assign slit-drums with complex designs (style categories B, C, or D) to central Mexican cultures, predominantly Aztec or Mixtec. But a slit-drum in the Puebla museum, called *Xico*, is rumored to have been built in the Panuco River region of northern Veracruz, home to Maya-speaking Huastecs. According to Castañeda and Mendoza (1933:39-40), this slit-drum is a rare example of an extant Precolumbian Maya *tun*. If it is Huastec, it is one of the only known drums of elaborate design that is attributable to speakers of a Maya language, albeit a people with a culture very different from that of other Maya groups.

⁴¹ Art historian Barbara Mundy believes many so-called Mixtec slit-drums that show complex narrative scenes are post-Conquest copies, their imagery plagiarized from the pages of Mixtec-Puebla codices (Mundy p.c., 1999). Surreptitious copies of Prehispanic objects made by locals and sold to tourists, even to museums, constitute an established Amerindian enterprise that had begun by the sixteenth century (Coe 1998:85). The quality of such copies is often excellent, making it difficult to authenticate Mesoamerican artifacts that lack archaeological verification. In fact, well-known forgers, such as the “Fat Tabascan” and Brigído Lara, are so skilled at copying Precolumbian materials that they have become celebrities in art-history circles (Crossley and Wagner 1987).

Representations in Mesoamerican Paintings and Codices

Most Mesoamerican sources showing illustrations of slit-drums date from the time of Aztec domination or the period immediately after the Spanish Conquest (AD 1400-1600). Aztec hegemony in Mesoamerica when the Spanish arrived, coupled with the resultant initial European focus on Aztec culture, has helped influence arguments favoring invention of the instrument as occurring in or around their homeland, the Central Valley of Mexico, and dissemination from there (Hammond 1972a; Ziehm 1994).

Slit-drums are depicted in at least nine Mesoamerican codices, including: *Atlas de Durán* (*Códice Durán* 1990), *Codex Zouche-Nuttal* (1975), *Codex Becker I* (*Codices Becker I/II* 1961), *The Florentine Codex* (Sahagún 1951-59), *Codex Azcatitlan* (1995), *Codex Magliabechiano* (Boone 1983), *Codex Mendoza* (1938), *Códice Campos*, and *Relación de Michoacán* (the last two viewed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Of these only the Mixtec-authored *Codex Zouche-Nuttal* and *Codex Becker I* are attributed to the Prehispanic era (*Codex Borgia* 1993:xiv). No slit-drums are shown in any of the four extant Maya codices,⁴² nor are there any other Precolumbian Maya-ascribed pictorial representations of the instrument in sculptures, on ceramics or in wall paintings, except perhaps at Bonampak. There, both Miller (1986:84-85) and Tedlock (2003:159) have hypothesized a painting of an oval-shaped object as a representation of this instrument.⁴³

There are no known Mexican or Central American codices that specifically depict the slit-drum and two valveless trumpets considered here to be the characteristic instrumentation for the K'iche' *xajoj tun* (sacrifice dance). But as pointed out in Chapter 1, the *Codex Becker I* does show an orchestra that is similar to the one used for the

⁴² The four known Maya codices are the *Codex Paris* (*Codex Persianus* [1888]), *Codex Dresden* (*Codex Dresdensis* [1964]), *Codex Madrid* (*Codex Tro-Cortesianos* [1930]), and *Codex Grolier* (Coe and Kerr 1997).

⁴³ Music archaeologist Arnd Adj Both (p.c., 2003) claims that recently excavated caves in the Maya region were found to contain miniature slit-drum effigies. If so, these miniatures establish earlier evidence for the instrument for the Maya than has been documented thus far.

Tz'unum baile, and the scene it accompanies—scaffold sacrifice—is similar to the theme enacted in the Kaqchikel “Song of Tolgom.”

Based on the veneration accorded the slit-drum by indigenous Americans from Colonial to modern times, it is remarkable that the instrument is so poorly represented in verifiable Prehispanic Maya records. The paucity of representations is notable compared to the relatively abundant imagery of its presumed performance companion, the waist-high membranophone, or *pax* (*huehuetl* in Nahuatl), which appears in quite a few Maya paintings and sculptures done before Spanish arrival, and which dominates a scene in the (now destroyed) Postclassic Maya mural at Santa Rita, Belize.⁴⁴

Invention and Dissemination

Shared Names and the South American Connection

The fact that slit-drums are documented in North and South America suggests that Amerindian versions might have a common origin. Consideration of this possibility is reinforced by the similarity of names for the instrument found in both continents. The slit-drum used by the Jivaro (or Shuar) of Ecuador is called *tun tui* (Schechter 1998:414) or *tunkuli* (Castellanos 1970:46), names very similar to the Yukatek Mayan *tunkul* (Dultzin and Nava 1984:47) as well as the K'iche' *tun*.

Mexican ethnomusicologist Pablo Castellanos (1970:46) has traced an etymological trail for the slit-drum from Ecuador through Central America to Mexico. Castellanos's research indicates that slit-drum names are largely derived from the Nahuatl word *teponaztli*, or the Maya *tun*. *Teponagua* is a Honduran version of the instrument, for instance, and one in neighboring El Salvador is called *tun*. According to linguist Ronald Olsen, the language of the Chipaya, a South American people who currently inhabit Bolivia, is related to Maya (Baumann 1981:172). Theoretically, the Chipaya

⁴⁴ In drawings and paintings done in Colonial-era Mexico the *huehuetl* and *teponaztli* are often shown together, such as in the codices *Atlas de Durán* (*Codice Durán* [1990]), *Codex Becker I* (*Codices Becker I/II* [1961]), and *The Florentine Codex* (Sahagún 1951-59).

could have brought the instrument with its Maya name with them when, in the Archaic period (before 2000 BC), they branched off from a parent Maya-speaking group (then located in northern Central America) and migrated south towards the Andes. It is just as possible that the similar names used to describe these similar instruments are coincidental or that the name was adopted from one culture by the other in more recent times. More to the point, the occurrence of the same name in the language of two ethnic groups does not clarify origin: it does not indicate where the instrument was first developed. In fact, although the Maya root word, *tun*, is widespread and most likely old, the slit-drum it signifies appears to be absent from the Maya archaeological record. Linguistic evidence can only go so far, and as questions concerning the origin of the name do little to clarify issues of an initial source, the morphological and functional dissimilarities between South American and Middle American (Mexican and Central American) slit-drums assume more importance, and they suggest that the instruments are independent inventions.

The following is a list of differences between the two types based on an inspection of representative examples, depictions, and descriptions from both continents.

(1) The South American slit-drum is hollowed out through cuts made in its top (as opposed to its bottom).

(2) The South American slit-drum does not have incised tongues as does the Mesoamerican version. Instead, one finds two basic South American designs: slit-drums with varying numbers of holes cut on top (usually two or four) connected by a slit, and those with elaborately chiseled scrolls. These designs are also found combined.

(3) The Ecuadorian *tun tui* is typically longer and larger in circumference than the Mesoamerican slit-drum (except for one described by Ziehm [1994], detailed later), and is generally hung vertically or at something like a 30° angle by ropes which are often attached to rafters in homes or temples. In contrast, the Mesoamerican version is placed horizontally, resting either on the ground or elevated by some type of contrivance, such as four attached nubbins, a mat, or a separate frame called *teponaztatzaztli* in Nahuatl

(Stevenson 1968:71). Contemporary Mexican and Central American slit-drums are sometimes played while being held, usually by a second party, as during saint-day processions (Castañeda and Mendoza 1933:Photograph no. 21; Kampen 1972:50).

(4) Finally, the large size of South American slit-drums enables them to emit a loud sound as a warning across foliage-dense expanses of rain forests. Beginning with Orellana's initial exploration of the Amazon, ethnohistoric reports mention the use of loud drums to signal the approach of strangers (Smith 1994:54-55). In South America, this function evidently supersedes ceremonial use of the instrument. Nonetheless, in spite of this utilitarian purpose, the Witoto associated the slit-drum's sound with the voices of their "first parents" (Izikowitz 1934:24).

Speaking, as ascribed to the Witoto slit-drum, is also an attribute of the Guatemalan *tun*. In the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, a K'iche' group seeking salvation from a sky god is referred to as Tohohils (Recinos and Goetz 1953:58). Ximénez (1985:543) defines the K'iche' word *tojo* as "to sound," and Edmonson (1976), who traces this word to earlier sources, offers two related interpretations, "thunder" or "to resound." Anthropologist Victoria Bricker (1981:148-49) proposes that thunder may have been represented for the K'iche' by the sound of the struck *tun*. As Tojil, the thunder god in the *Popol Vuh*, was the patron deity of the Postclassic K'iche', it seems reasonable to propose that the voice of Tojil, the sound of thunder, may have been represented by the sound of the *tun*. This opinion was borne out in a conversation with Rabinal musician Carlos González (p.c., 2001), who referred to the sound of the slit-drum as the voice of god.

North American Sources

Use of the Mesoamerican slit-drum (identifiable by the stylistic attributes listed above) spread throughout the landmass of modern Mexico and Central America during Prehispanic times. The instrument's wide dissemination coupled with the retention of its

unique stylistic traits are the reasons that some researchers have proposed that it originated and spread from a single source, usually placed somewhere in northern Mesoamerica. In advocacy of this theory, musicologist Elsa Ziehm (1994) and archaeologist Norman Hammond (1972a) independently explain the introduction of the instrument to Guatemala as occurring through Mexican trade or invasion during the Early-Postclassic era (beginning around AD 900). While agreeing with the premise of a single origin, I would locate that source further south in Mesoamerica than where Ziehm and Hammond place it. And in order to examine this premise properly, instruments that probably preceded the Mesoamerican slit-drum will be taken into account. For this reason, a widely dispersed class of closely related wooden idiophones is included in the following discussion.

During the 1960s, in San Pedro Jícora, Durango, Ziehm (1994:21-22) observed a large log-drum, the size of a house-beam (160-cm long by 60 and 40 cm high), that she termed a “prototype *teponaztli*.” Normally serving as a headrest for sleeping dignitaries, it was used during the maize festival as a platform for dancing, where, the dance movements consisted of jumping upon the two sections of the beam, a pattern of kinetic activity yielding two tones that were matched by chanting singers. Thirty years earlier, organologist Karl Izikowitz (1934:16-17) cited examples of large hollow logs (without slits) played in similar fashion by Californian Amerindians. A performance technique like the ones Ziehm and Izikowitz described has been observed by Creel and Anyon (2003:67-92) in the Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah “four-corners region,” where some Pueblo Amerindians play log-drums, set into *kiva* floors, with their feet.⁴⁵ Floor grooves in pit structures of the Mimbres (a Prehistoric Pueblo group), dug in the ground to receive such logs, suggest that this practice began before AD 1000. Additional evidence of wooden idiophones in the Americas comes from the Northwest coast, where

⁴⁵ A *kiva* is a circular structure (usually placed underground) that is used to house special Pueblo religious activities. The Mimbres lived in the border region between what are now Mexico, and Arizona and New Mexico.

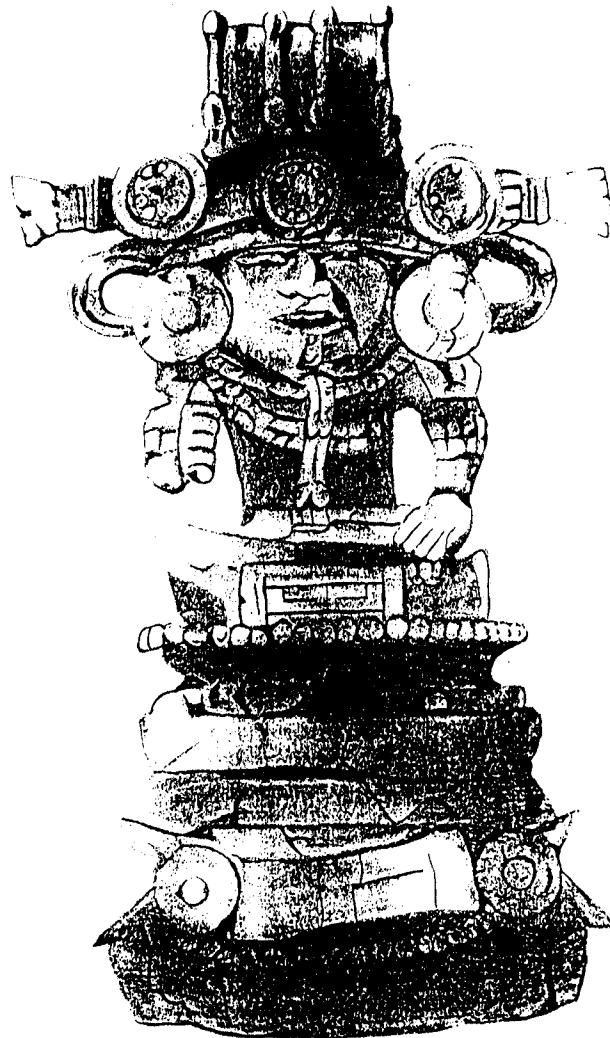
indigenous people as far north as Alaska have been described as striking large planks of wood for their percussive-sound effects (Drucker 1965:42-43). As with Mimbres *kiva* logs and Izikowitz's California examples, none of the Northwest coast percussive-planks appears deliberately cut to form tongues or other shapes that would yield pitch differences.

The log-drum in Durango that produced two pitches may have led Ziehm to advocate a north Mexican source for the Mesoamerican slit-drum. She likewise proposed a diffusion of the idiophone southward, with the instrument carried ever deeper into Central America by northern Mexican speakers of Uto-Aztecan languages, predecessors of cultures like the Toltec and Aztec. Aside from assumptions derived from ethnography, this theory of north-to-south dissemination is partly based on a belief that the instrument is largely, if not entirely, absent from the archaeological record before Toltec dominance in Mesoamerica (AD 900-1250).⁴⁶ It is a theory strengthened by the many Colonial-era reports that detailed the use of the *teponaztli* in northern and central Mexico, and it gains additional support due to the fact that indigenous Central Americans who contemplate a source for the drum have generally presumed it to be an ancestral object or one introduced by pre-Conquest Mexicans (Brasseur 1862:105-7; O'Brien 1975). Nevertheless, a discovery made during a scientifically controlled archaeological excavation in highland Guatemala in the early 1940s casts doubt on north Mexico as the source of the Mesoamerican slit-drum (Figure 8).

⁴⁶ Drier environments are more favorable to preservation than wet ones and such conditions may create a false impression that there were more slit-drums for Prehispanic cultures located in dry areas than for those located in wet ones (Pugh p.c., 2004).

Figure 8

Kaminaljuyú Incense-Censer With Slit-Drum



Kaminaljuyú anthropomorphic incense censer. Museo Nacional de Arqueología de Guatemala (A-VI, 20). Author's pencil and charcoal drawing.

The Kaminaljuyú Slit-Drum Sculpture

At the site of Kaminaljuyú, located in the western corporate limits of present-day Guatemala City, Alfred Kidder and his team of archaeologists discovered the earliest known evidence of an Amerindian slit-drum (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946). In Tomb VI Mound A, ensconced in Early-to-Middle-Classic era stratigraphy levels (AD

250-600), and at least three hundred years before the Toltec, they found a ceramic incense-censer-lid featuring a figure playing a small square-cut slit-drum set before its crossed legs.

Also included in this tomb were the remains of two individuals, a young adult male and an adolescent female, both placed in a cross-legged position with their hands in their laps. In close proximity to the young man were many valuable objects, including jade pieces, broken stingray spines, and five gray obsidian points. Surrounding the woman were the bones from a pair of jaguar jaws, two polychrome bowls, a *mano* and *metate*, and the cast of a cup-shaped object presumably of wood. Southwest of the human skeletal remains was a large cache of pottery, with the slit-drum-decorated incense-censer located at its northern perimeter, about midway between the eastern and western limits of the ceramic deposit. A second anthropomorphic *terra-cotta* piece, slightly larger than the incense-censer was placed near the opposite, southern edge. In addition to these items, a trace of a dog skeleton was found at the tomb's northwestern perimeter (*ibid.*:67-70). (This animal's association with *tun* instruments will be elaborated on in the second half of this chapter.)

The slit-drummer sculpted on the incense-censer-lid is shown wearing clothing and accessories similar to those worn by elite personages at Kaminaljuyú. Along with the rich vestments, the body was painted red, a color sometimes meant to symbolize supernatural power. Throughout the Americas red pigments were included in bundle offerings to deities deposited in graves (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:272; Harris 1980:128.) The red paint used in a mortuary context and associated with an animated figure, his movement captured in clay, may mean that the sculpted character represents a mortal who died symbolically in order to be spiritually reborn. If so, the sculpture may depict a shaman or some other individual capable of communicating with supernatural forces. Perhaps the slit-drum was part of the paraphernalia used by this individual for

such communication. Mesoamerican sculptures that include a slit-drummer often also include shamanistic elements, such as themes of transformation and rebirth.

The Kaminaljuyú drummer wears thick arm and wristbands, enormous earspools, and a heavy double-beaded necklace. Most of the adornments were customary for the well-to-do of this society, but two components are especially prominent: an elaborate hat covering an oversized head and a long goatee, the beard curling up at its end. The large head and the richness of costume seem out of proportion to the slit-drum that the figure is ready to play.⁴⁷ The size of the instrument seems further diminished by the fact that the drummer would be using only his right hand to strike it. In contrast, the drummer's left hand is palm up, posed so that an object can rest on it (perhaps an offering, or an additional musical instrument), but no item suitable for this purpose was discovered in the tomb. The right hand, the only part of the individual apparently engaged in making sounds, is shaped into a fist that could hold the handle of a sculpted drumstick, but an object that could be inserted into the fist opening has not been found.

The small, sculpted, square slit-drum sits on four protruding nubbins with the characteristic Mesoamerican "H" incised into its top. Although the square-shaped design is atypical for the instrument, I observed a *tun* in the San Pablo procession at Rabinal during 2002, that was brought from the town of Panajachel, Guatemala, which was of a similar square shape. The similarity in design between the wooden one from Panajachel and the sculpted Kaminaljuyú slit-drum could mean that the latter object represented an actual Prehispanic slit-drum type rather than a symbolic portrayal of the standard log-shaped instrument. In fact, the Chortí Maya of southeast Guatemala also currently use a square-shaped slit-drum (Pugh p.c., 2004.)

⁴⁷ Various sizes of Mesoamerican slit-drums have been documented. A famous example is the Aztec *tecomapiloa*, a small slit-drum with an attached gourd, which Stevenson (1964:61-62) described as a woman's instrument.

Teotihuacán Influence

Near the beginning of this chapter, I argued that Mesoamerican and South American slit-drums were independent inventions. In light of my assertion it must be mentioned that Kidder believed Kaminaljuyú had had contact with northwest South American cultures during one of the city's earlier phases (Miraflores) (Kidder, Jennings, and Shook 1946).⁴⁸ This contact has not been substantiated, but an important cross-cultural relationship has been confirmed as existing between post AD 400 Kaminaljuyú and Teotihuacán, a large city located in the Central Valley of Mexico. Teotihuacán, the dominant Mesoamerican power during the Early-to-Middle-Classic period (AD 250-600), was famed for elaborate incense-censers (like the one described above), and Kaminaljuyú was initially important to it because of the Guatemalan city's proximity to valuable jadeite deposits in the vicinity of the nearby Motagua River (Drew 1999:240).

Cultural components shared between the two cities may hold answers for music archaeologists, as an Aztec myth concerns the creation by a Teotihuacán deity of both the *teponaztli* and the *huehuetl*. This myth, relayed to the Franciscan Geronimo de Mendieta in the sixteenth century (Stevenson 1968:112-13), begins with the sacrifice of the old Teotihuacán gods in order to appease a newborn sun god, lord of our current age. After the old gods were sacrificed, two priests wandered the country in grief. One eventually proceeded to the court of the new god and petitioned for musical instruments to allay his sorrow. The new god refused, and forbade his own retinue to listen to the man's supplications. Nevertheless, two of the god's servants disobeyed and in so doing were moved to sympathy by the pleas of the priest, which were sung as sad songs. Named

⁴⁸ Weather and geographic conditions favored movement between northwestern South America and western Central America, but discouraged the same between northwest and southwest South America. This was at least partly due to northern Peru's separation from Ecuador by the 225-kilometer-wide Sechura desert and the strong counterclockwise flow of the Humboldt current that heads west adjacent to the Sechura. Detailed explanations for these weather systems can be found in Burger 1995; for ethnohistorical evidence of transcontinental trade note Balboa's encounter near northwestern South America with a large north-bound trading raft (Evans and Meggers 1964:263). There are few records of indigenous slit-drums from south of northern Peru (Izickowitz 1934:17).

Teponaztli and Huehuetl, the two servants were subsequently banished and transformed into the musical instruments that now bear their names.

There is no discernible written language attributable to Teotihuacán, and thus no recorded history of it, but diagnostic traits like green obsidian, “thin orange pottery,” and *talud tablero* motifs dispersed throughout much of Mesoamerica attest to the city’s widespread influence.⁴⁹ In addition to these and other associated art styles, Teotihuacán religious concepts, like the cult of the “feathered serpent,” were similarly distributed. For the most part, Teotihuacán-intrusive ideas dominated or transformed societies that came into contact with their emissaries. For instance, the Maya system of war changed after Tikal came under the influence of Teotihuacán in AD 379 (Drew 1999:196-97). Kaminaljuyú, like Tikal, was also dominated by the large Mexican city early in its history, but by the Middle-Classic era it had emerged as Teotihuacán’s near-equal southern trading partner in a pan-Mesoamerican exchange network, exporting among other items cacao, rubber, sea shells, animal skins, feathers, cotton, and jadeite (*ibid.*).

No solid evidence for a slit-drum has been recovered from the site of Teotihuacán itself. Castañeda and Mendoza’s 1933 *Instrumental precortesianos* includes a photograph of a miniature stone *teponaztli*, which was then in the possession of the local Teotihuacán museum. The small drum-effigy closely resembles the Aztec miniatures described later, but the above authors do not explain the archaeological circumstances of its discovery, in particular whether the drum-model was found during controlled excavations at or near Teotihuacán. (The Aztecs used Teotihuacán as a pilgrimage center and there are many Late-Postclassic deposits at the site attributed to them [Pasztory 1997].)

Additional early evidence for the instrument can possibly be ascribed to Remojadas, Veracruz, located on an eastern spur of the Teotihuacán-Kaminaljuyú trade

⁴⁹ *Talud tablero* is the name applied originally to a Teotihuacán architectural feature that includes a sloping base attached to a rectangular panel, often repeated in series.

routes. Assigned to this site is a clay figurine slit-drummer (Shein Collection).⁵⁰ Thus far I have only had access to a drawing of this sculpture, shown in Castellanos's *Horizontes de la música precortesiana*, and my drawing and description are based on this copy (Figure 9).

Figure 9

Remojadas Ceramic Figurine with Slit-Drum



Shein Collection. Author's pencil drawing, after Castellanos (1970:Figure 7A).

This clay drummer wears the perplexing grin that characterizes Remojadas “smiling face” sculptures, and is posed positioning a pair of mallets in adolescent abandon above a barrel-shaped slit-drum resting between his outstretched legs (Castellanos 1970).⁵¹ The drumming technique being demonstrated by the Remojadas

⁵⁰ Remojadas is also important in music archaeology for its acoustically complex flutes (1998:78-81).

⁵¹ “Smiling face” figurines are common in the west-central Veracruz region where they are associated with a cult of the dead. At El Zapotal (near Remojadas), similar figurines are found in connection with Mictlantecutli (a death god) and Cihuateteo (a deity honoring women who died in childbirth) (Ochoa 2001:68).

figure, with the drummer molded into a position suggesting an imminent striking of the object with both beaters at the same time, differs from the less-dramatic technique being shown on the Kaminaljuyú incense-censer-lid. The Veracruz instrument model is also much larger in scale, more prominent, and similar to known Mesoamerican slit-drums. And unlike the Kaminaljuyú drummer, the “smiling face” figure seems solely concerned with striking his drum.

In appearance, the Remojadas musician appears nude except for a feline-shaped skullcap. Like the red paint on the Kaminaljuyú incense-censer slit-drummer, this costume-feature could indicate supernatural interaction. The individual, again perhaps a shaman, could be transforming into his *uay*, or animal-spirit (probably a jaguar). According to organologist Jose Franco (1971:18), no actual Prehispanic slit-drums have been found in the middle-Gulf Coast region, although several figurine representations exist. Despite this assertion, the Remojadas example, along with the El Tajín and Olmec ones discussed in the upcoming section on rubber-tipped mallets, are the only slit-drum figurines or related freestanding sculptures attributable to this area that I have thus far been able to locate. Moreover, like many portable objects ascribed to Precolumbian cultures, the Remojadas sculpture lacks a verifiable archaeological context. If it is a Classic-period Veracruz work (AD 400-900), it and the Kaminaljuyú incense-censer suggest use of the slit-drum among provinces involved in the Teotihuacán trade network. Excavations at these and other sites located on these routes will help prove or disprove this theory.⁵²

Rubber-Tipped Mallets

Most Colonial-era sources and Prehispanic records concerning Mesoamerican slit-drums indicate that rubber-tipped drumsticks were used as beaters. Analogous to this

⁵² Teotihuacán-influenced regions such as Matapan in the Tuxtla Mountains and sites in the Nautla River Valley have been recently studied or await excavation.

union of the *tun* with rubber-tipped mallets is the coupling of tortoise-shell idiophones with deer antlers (as seen in codices and at Bonampak). Perhaps a way to conceive of Mesoamerican idiophones is as a set of components: the sounding-object and the striking-object.

No rubber-tipped drumsticks have been found in archaeological contexts but there is good circumstantial evidence of their use in Prehispanic times. An example can be found at El Tajín, a large site some two hundred kilometers north of Remojadas. (Following the decline of Teotihuacán after AD 600, El Tajín filled the power vacuum in northeastern Mesoamerica [Coe 1966:121; Pasztory 1997:249].) On the southwest panel of its South Ball Court, a relief-sculpture shows an important person (wearing an elaborate headdress) using a drumstick to beat a small, oblong, elbow-cradled slit-drum (Figure 10). An aspect of the relief pertinent to this study is the beater, a short, narrow mallet-shaped stick, topped with a conspicuously drawn ball, most likely representing rubber.

Figure 10



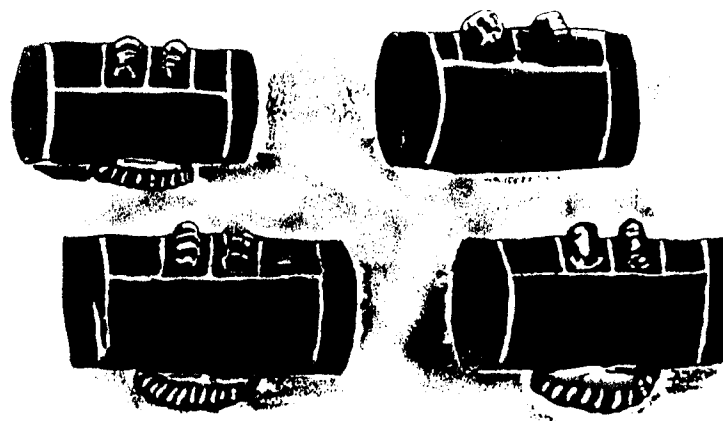
Southwest panel, South Ball Court, El Tajín, Veracruz, Mexico. Author's pencil drawing.

A diorama-like scene on a *terra-cotta* piece in the Karl Stavenhagen collection (attributed to the Classic-era Pacific Coast Colima culture located across the continent from El Tajín) has been interpreted by Martí (1970:68-69) as a shaman-led ceremony, involving a three-piece instrumental ensemble: slit-drummer, valveless trumpeter, and container-rattle player. While awaiting direction from the shaman, the slit-drummer brandishes two large ball-ended mallets with molded round tips that suggest rubber and are reminiscent of the ones depicted at El Tajín.

In contrast to these Classic-era Coast-culture artworks that merely suggest rubber-tipped mallets, a Postclassic Aztec votive offering found under a street in Mexico City featured several miniature clay *teponaztlis* sculpted so that pairs of ball-ended drumsticks of comparable size were molded directly onto the slits of each drum (Castañeda and Mendoza 1933:Appendix photograph no. 1) (Figure 11). Further suspicion that these mallets were meant to represent rubber is fueled by their use of the same kind of cross-hatching often shown on objects denoting rubber balls in representations of the Mesoamerican ball game (Koontz 1994:112).

Figure 11

Miniature Slit-Drums with Affixed Mallets



Excavated at *Calle Excalerillas*, Mexico City. Author's pen and ink drawing.

Along with data from the archaeological record, ethnohistoric reports provide evidence of both Lowland and Highland Maya use of rubber-tipped mallets with the slit-drum. *Kik*, was a sixteenth-century Yukatek word defined as rubber (Landa 1978:63). The early-Colonial highland Guatemalan Maya document, *Título C'oyoi*, includes the related word *quik* in the phrase, (x) *quik'oj quic*, which Carmack (1973:343) translates as: “They played the drum with rubber-tipped sticks.” Writing in Guatemala during the seventeenth-century, Fuentes y Guzmán (1932-33:212) reported that the *tepunaguastle* (a corruption of *teponaztli*) was hit with “unas baquetillas de madera sólida, calzadas por los extremos de *ule*, que es una materia resinoso.”⁵³ The earliest ethnohistoric account of Maya (Yukatek) slit-drum playing was provided in the mid-sixteenth century by Landa (1978:36): “This (slit-drum) they hit with a longish stick at the end of which is a ball of a certain gum that exudes from a tree.”

The principal source for Landa’s gum is the rubber tree (*Castilla elastica*) found in the American tropics at altitudes of 700 meters or less, the typical environment of Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and southern Mesoamerican Pacific coastal zones (Standley 1922:215). In the past, the Gulf Coast was particularly important for rubber production. In fact, *olli*, the Nahuatl name for rubber, is the root of the word *olmec*, which means “the rubber-people.” The Preclassic-era Olmec heartland bordered the middle and southern Gulf of Mexico, and the earliest examples of extracted rubber, some molded into balls and associated with offerings, were recovered from a spring at the Early-Preclassic Olmec site, El Manatí, located on the Gulf coastal plain in Veracruz, not far southwest of Remojadas (Miller and Taube 1997:126, 144). El Manatí rubber samples have been Carbon 14 dated to 1200 BC (Guthrie 1996:23).⁵⁴ Although they are most often assumed to represent offerings or balls for the ball game, I propose that some extant rubber samples may have been intended as ball-ends for slit-drum beaters.

⁵³ The *tepunaguastle* was hit with “mallets of solid wood tipped on the ends with *ule* (rubber), which is a resinous material” (author’s translation).

In his book *Instrumentos musicales precortesianos*, Martí (1955:32) briefly comments on a pair of artifacts in the collection of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia at Mexico City, sculpted in Olmec-style, which represent slit-drummers. These are probably the same sculptures shown in *Instrumental precortesiano* (Castañeda and Mendoza 1933:Photograph no. 112). In the photograph, two crouching human forms with snarling, down-turned, “were-jaguar mouths” in Olmec-style seem to be hitting large oblong objects cradled in their left arms with beaters held in their right hands. The stone sculptures (likely carved from basalt) have weathered significantly, so a determination of the nature of the object held, or the activity in which the figures are engaged is difficult. Nonetheless, the similarity of these anthropomorphic figures to the slit-drummer sculpted on the South Ball Court at El Tajín is worth noting. In each case the sculpted subjects cradle an oblong object in the crook of an elbow while striking the object with a beater held in the other hand.

Based on the limited evidence available, I posit the development of the Mesoamerican slit-drum (hollowed out from the bottom and with an “H” incised into its top) as having occurred on the east or west coast of Mexico or Central America (most likely along the Gulf of Mexico), at least by the Middle-Classic period (AD 600) but probably much earlier. There are three primary considerations that support this proposition. The first concerns the likelihood that the inventors were from a land that had an abundance of rivers (and a need therefore for canoes, including dugout ones) and an awareness of the woodworking techniques used in slit-drum manufacture. Second, the rubber used for slit-drum beaters grew wild in the Gulf and southern Pacific Coast woods, and the people living in those regions would have been more familiar with this resinous

⁵⁴ An inferior rubber was also derived from the sap of certain fig trees (such as *Ficus petiolaris* and *Ficus padifolia*). Fig trees were useful as sources not only for rubber but also canoes and the paper used for many Precolumbian codices. The Otomi in Hidalgo, Mexico, still made paper from these trees in the early 1920s (Standley 1922:206). It is interesting to consider the communicative potentials of this single source material, canoes for transportation, paper as a writing and painting surface, and rubber-tipped drum sticks to beat out sounds.

substance than their neighbors in other parts of Mesoamerica. And third, the earliest, albeit minimal, documented evidence for slit-drums was found at Kaminaljuyú, near the Pacific and at El Tajín near the Gulf of Mexico. The Remojadas and Olmec examples, if they are truly Prehispanic, help support this thesis.⁵⁵ To extrapolate further, if the Mesoamerican slit-drum was invented in a coastal region, the dance-plays it now accompanies may also have been. The K'iche' speak of an eastern origin (the Gulf or Caribbean Coast) when they described their dances to Ximénez as coming from “where the sun goes up” (Carmack 1981:22). Still, this description may not have concerned a direction so much as the eternal nature of the sun, and thus the timelessness of its associative dances (Pugh p.c., 2004).

Slit-Drum Sounds

In 1933 Castañeda and Mendoza published *Instrumental precortesiano*, which contained an acoustic analysis of fourteen of 43 *teponaztlis* made available to them by the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, in Mexico City. Despite its limited scope this work remains the largest comparative study on the acoustics of Mexican slit-drums and has been cited in many subsequent surveys on Mesoamerican music (Martí 1955, Stevenson 1968, and Ziehm 1994). Castañeda and Mendoza (1933:2-24) assigned the following numbers and corresponding labels to the instruments: (1) *Tlaxcala*, (2) *Malinalco*, (3) *Cabeza de Cipactli*, (4) *Macuilxóchitl*, (5) *Cabeza de Cipactli no. 7*, (6) *Cipactli 4035-B*, (7) *Rostros Mutilados*, (8) *Cuauhtli-Ocelotl*, (9) *Sellos Españoles*, (10) *Palo de Rosa*, (11) 1040-B, (12) *Tercera Menor*, (13) *Tercera Major*, and (14) *Dos Coatls*.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ I do not propose a southern diffusion of the slit-drum from tropical-coast Mesoamerica to South America, as I would not suggest a diffusion of the dugout canoe. Wild rubber is also found in Amazonian, and as discussed, the Middle American and South American types of slit-drums are sufficiently dissimilar in appearance and function to cast doubt on a common origin for the instruments.

⁵⁶ Some other noteworthy Mexican and Central American slit-drums in museum collections include those characterized as: “slit-gong with owl head image,” “anthropomorphic slit-gong,” and “slit-gong with codex style carved design” in the British Museum, London (Baddeley

The purpose of their measurements was to learn about the acoustical awareness of Mesoamerican slit-drum builders, and in order to do this the researchers examined the pitches produced by striking the tongues of the fourteen drums and subjected the hollowed interiors to sound-wave tests. Most of the slit-drums demonstrated a resonant relationship between the vibrating air column of the drum's interior and its two vibrating tongues. For instance, the *Malinalco teponaztli* air column vibrates at 228.9 Hz (hertz), which is an undertone ratio of approximately 1:2 and 1:3, relative to the pitches of its two tongues, vibrating at 447.7 Hz and 671.6 Hz respectively. Oscillating parts of many of the fourteen slit-drums vibrated at frequency ratios in the general vicinity of whole-number multiples, ranging from approximations of 2:1 to 5:1 (*ibid.*:55-63).

Castañeda and Mendoza's measurements also indicated possible Mesoamerican pitch preferences. Pitches for the vibrating tongues of six of the 14 *teponaztlis* were near equivalents to Western pitch-names G5 (ranging between 763.8 and 797.9 Hz), another six sounded A5 (ranging between 848.7 and 882.6 Hz), and a thirteenth tongue yielded an approximation of a Western A4. Even more remarkable were the matching pitches revealed for tongues of different slit-drums. One tongue each of slit-drums 9 and 12 vibrated at 731.5 Hz; one tongue of slit-drums 5 and 14 vibrated at approximately 922 Hz; one each of 8 and 13 at 976.5 Hz, and one of 6 and 10 at 1161 Hz. According to Castañeda and Mendoza's measurements the two predominant pitches of the fourteen slit-drums were those at 775 Hz—roughly equivalent to Western Gs (slit-drums 5, 7, and 13), and at 870 Hz—nearly matching Western As (slit drums 7, 9, and 12). Discounting octave specificity, the pitches produced by all tongues for the fourteen drums yielded approximations of the following Western pitch names: C (three examples), D (two examples), Eb (one example), E (two examples), Gb (two examples), G (six examples), A

1992); *un teponaztli à deux têtes* in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris (Lehmann 1959); *teponaxtli* in Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (Ziehm 1994); and one with a jaguar image incised on one end and an eagle on the other in the American Museum of Natural History, New York (Catalogue no. 30.2/9672).

(seven examples), Bb (three examples), and B (two examples). The intervals between the pitches produced by the two tongues of the instruments were close approximations of minor thirds (six examples); perfect fifths (three examples); major seconds (three examples); a major third (one example); and a perfect fourth (one example) (*ibid.*).

It appears that levels of interest in pitch are greater for Mexican cultures than for the Maya. Extant Guatemalan *tuns*, such as are known from the towns of Cubulco, Chajul, and Rabinal (termed “country models” by Yurchenco [p.c., 2001]), seem constructed with less concern for resonance than were their Mexican counterparts. The results of rudimentary examinations of two slit-drums located at either end of the ancient Maya world make me inclined to concur with Yurchenco. In the northern part of the Maya region, a slit-drum exhibited at Villahermosa’s CICOM⁵⁷ had two tongues that sounded an interval close to a major second, while a slit-drum manufactured in the south, on display at the Rabinal Museo Comunitario “Rabinal Achí,” had tongues that produced an interval audibly smaller than a minor second.⁵⁸ In appearance, the Guatemalan *tuns* in use, or in collections I have viewed, are plain in appearance or have relatively modest designs engraved or painted on their surfaces. All but one (the single-pitch version seen at the Cobán museum and described earlier) were probably constructed in the twentieth century.

Stevenson (1968:14; 2001b:357) wrote that in most studies of Mesoamerican slit-drums through the 1960s the tongues produced intervals a second to a fifth apart. Ziehm (1994:18) claims that the most common intervallic distance between tongues for modern *teponaztlis* is a fourth. Ziehm’s assertion implies that this interval, rare for known slit-drums in museum collections, has become more frequent in the modern era. It is worth

⁵⁷ CICOM is The Center for the Investigation of the Culture of the Olmec and Maya, located in Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico.

⁵⁸ Similar to these Maya slit-drums in Villahermosa and Rabinal, an additional *teponaztli* examined by Castañeda and Mendoza (1933:49) (from the Puebla museum) yielded a quarter-tone interval.

noting, that although the interval of a fourth does occur in the Sis-Lopez 1856 *Rab'inal Achi* transcription (see Chapter 3), the more common interval between the tongues of the *tuns* listed for this K'iche' dance-play is a third.⁵⁹ Yet despite the frequent occurrence of the third in documentation (seven of 14 slit-drums in Castañeda and Mendoza's survey), it is not possible to determine Precolumbian interval preferences or discern the possible scales implied by slit-drum intervals from studies like Castañeda and Mendoza's, or analyses of the *Rab'inal Achi*, as these are based on a limited sampling of instruments whose provenance in many cases cannot be verified. An examination of the pitches of all extant *teponaztlis* and *tuns* would be prohibitively difficult, not least in locating and gaining access to the untold number of instruments in private collections as well as those withheld by Amerindian cultural protectors.

The separate work of O'Brien-Rothe (1998b; O'Brien 1975) and Rodriguez (1962, 1992) concerning Mesoamerican music-survivals de-emphasizes pitch specificity, pitch standardization, and intervallic preferences. According to their conclusions, acoustic sophistication demonstrated in Precolumbian instrument design was largely aimed at producing sundry timbral effects. There is a body of evidence to support this belief (Boiles 1966a; Franco 1971), which leads to a supposition that the two or three tones sounded by Mesoamerican slit-drums may have been intended to produce simple contrasts in sound: high and low (and higher or lower) pitches. Nevertheless, the so-called pitch standardization discovered by Castañeda and Mendoza—with its intimation of Mesoamerican awareness of complex pitch relationships—should not be ignored.

⁵⁹ This information is derived from the following: Castillo's 1921 notation—major third (1977); Yurchenco's 1945 recording—minor third (discography and videography 1978); Anleu Díaz's 1986 transcription—major third (Fidel 1996); Mace's 1972 recording—minor third (discography and videography 1972); and Coloch's 1995 recording—minor third (discography and videography 1995).

The Valveless-Tube Trumpet

Non-conch-shell trumpets indigenous to Maya Mesoamerica are classified as “end-blown straight trumpets,” 423.121.1 in the Hornbostel and Sachs (1990) system.⁶⁰ Since none of the trumpets known from the Maya iconographical and archaeological records had contrivances in or on their surfaces that would change their lengths and therefore alter pitch, they are additionally classified as valveless.

As yet, no end-blown straight-valveless trumpets or their depictions can be directly attributed to Postclassic K’iche’ culture, and because the trumpets currently played for traditional Guatemalan dances are made of brass, an argument could be made that this aerophone type was introduced to Guatemala by Europeans.⁶¹ However, the fact that the K’iche’ prefer trumpets without valves for certain dance-plays, and ones with valves for other occasions (marching and dance bands), implies a valveless-trumpet tradition which probably preceded the one for brass instruments. Moreover, valveless trumpets described by Colonial chroniclers for K’iche’an ceremonies, and the use of the instrument by other Precolumbian highland Guatemala Maya, suggest that they were probably played for K’iche’ dance-plays prior to Spanish arrival.

⁶⁰ In the Hornbostel and Sachs (1990) system the modern versions of valveless trumpets used in highland Guatemala are “end-blown horns with the tube curved or folded” (423.121.2). The Lacandon Maya currently use conch-shell trumpets as do certain other Amerindians who retain ceremonies attributed to ancient Mesoamerica (Martí 1955:55). The Lacandon do not use shell trumpets to accompany *tun*-type or conquest-dance-plays or their prototypes (*i.e.* warrior dances), and ethnohistoric accounts concerning this and various other Maya groups, likewise, do not mention the instrument for such dance-plays. One presumes that if the conch-shell trumpet had been used for *tun* or warrior performances in Precolumbian times, it would continue in use today, or at least through an early portion of the documented-Colonial era. For this reason the indigenous predecessor of the modern trumpets used for highland Guatemalan dance-plays seems likely to be of the wholly-fabricated types described in this text. (The Lacandon are referred to again in Chapter 4 regarding their homemade *chirimía* and their pottery drum.)

⁶¹ Although wooden-valveless trumpets are cited by ethnohistorians in Colonial-era highland Guatemala (Tedlock 2003:161), one could argue that these were local versions of the metal bugles or trumpets introduced by Europeans.

Figure 12

Rab'inal Achi Instruments



Rabinal, Guatemala. *Calvaria* performance, January 23, 2002. Author's photograph.

The Trumpets Used for the Rab'inal Achi

The two valveless brass trumpets currently used for performances of the *Rab'inal Achi* have coiled tubing characteristic of European-designed instruments (Figure 12).

Despite this distinguishing feature, one of them also has an oval-shaped coupling on the middle section of its shaft, which recalls such components on the telescope-shaped

instruments shown in paintings from the Precolumbian period (described later). Coloch (p.c., 2001) says that both the *Rab'inal Achi* horns are copies of the trumpets used when his predecessor Xolop was the director of the play. I am unaware of the manufacturer of either the older or newer instruments.

The estimated distance from mouthpiece to bell end for both Rabinal horns is around 70 cm. The tubing of the two trumpets, coiled in different configurations, causes the instruments to appear dissimilar. The actual dimensions of each instrument—stretched out to its true size—have not been determined. In the context of the *Rab'inal Achi* the instruments are classified as *alto* (first) and *bajo* (second), but these names are meant to distinguish the range of pitches assigned to each player's part in the music rather than the instruments' comparative size. The fundamental (lowest) tone of both trumpets is a close approximation of the Western-pitch G2.

Appearance and Construction of Prehispanic Valveless-Tube Trumpets

I have counted fifty-four non-conch-shell end-blown valveless trumpet depictions attributable to the Precolumbian Maya, on twenty-six different objects and in various mediums, but few extant trumpets or their fragments. (The number of representations increases to fifty-five trumpets on twenty-seven objects if we assume the trumpet-like form on vase K 5795 to be a sound-making instrument.)⁶²

The valveless trumpet generally depicted as a gradually widening tube was used throughout the territory that would become Latin America. In contrast to this singular shape found for Maya trumpets, Precolumbian horns attributed to South American

⁶² The fifty-four trumpets are found among depictions on architecture at Tikal, two Jaina Island figurines, a Campeche column, Rooms 1, 2, and 3 at Bonampak, as decoration around respective doorways at Hormiguero and Chicanná, and on the following pieces of pottery: Grolier nos. 31, 33, 36; Kerr nos. 3092, 3814, 4120, 4412, 4625, K5534, K6294, K6317, a Kerr vase in Schele and Freidel 1990:268, the Xamac Vase, *Vaso de Ratinlinxul*, Dumbarton Oaks no. 16, and the plate 1989.110 (Metropolitan Museum of Art). In addition, I have seen photographs of large Maya ceramic collections—with depictions painted or carved on the objects in them—which suggests to me that there are probably more representations of the instrument than those listed here.

cultures exhibit greater variety in design and construction material. There are no known Prehispanic non-shell trumpets from north of modern Mexico. Due to the fact that the Maya widening tube trumpet remained unaltered in basic structural shape throughout Mesoamerican times, it is not presumed to have been influenced by designs originating in South America, or elsewhere.

The Mesoamerican trumpet with a gradually widening tube constructed of one material, may have been the standard Maya non-conch horn and the prototype for the aerophone called *tun* by K'iche'an people. There is some inconclusive evidence to suggest that two morphological variations on this form may have preceded the instrument in its current form. One of these two versions was a trumpet with a woven material on part of its body, which I call the wrapped trumpet; the other was telescope-shaped. The wrapped and telescope-shaped trumpets demonstrate different solutions to the restriction on length that might have been imposed by local materials. If, for example, the standard non-conch trumpet was a long, gradually widening tube, the absence of a local material of a suitable length might have necessitated that shorter sections of available material be attached together to achieve the desired length and shape (Figure 13).⁶³

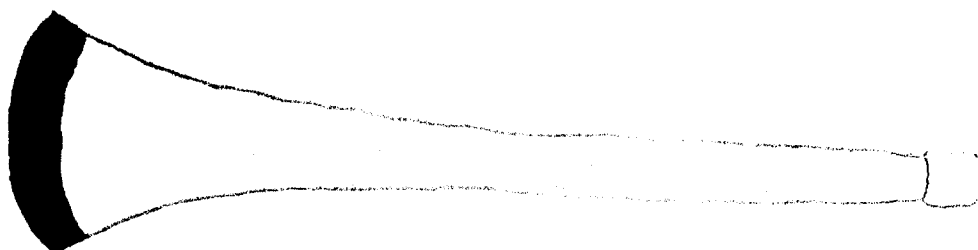
There is nothing in the way Prehispanic tube trumpets are represented in artworks to indicate the materials used in their construction, but Colonial accounts describe trumpets of organic materials, which if reconstructed would generally resemble those found in paintings and sculptures. One of the better Colonial descriptions was provided by Landa (1978:36), who wrote in the sixteenth century about Yucatan Maya “trumpets of hollow wood, ending in a long twisted gourd.” In the same century Diego

⁶³ The valveless-tube trumpets depicted at Bonampak are shown with their upper portions a darker orange-brown color than their lower parts, implying that they are instruments either in two pieces or in one piece painted with two colors. Nevertheless, the validity of either suggestion is compromised as the colors of the murals have altered because of environmental changes at Bonampak in the twelve hundred years since they were applied.

Muñoz Camargo (1892:135) described Tlaxcalan (Mexican) dance performances accompanied by “unas trompas de palo.”⁶⁴

Figure 13

Three Mesoamerican Trumpet Types



Long-widening tube. From east wall, room 1, Bonampak, Chiapas, Mexico.



Wrapped. From *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* (Kerr no. 594). Highland, Guatemala.



Telescope-shape. From Las Higueras mural. Veracruz, Mexico.

Author's watercolors.

Maya Ceramic Trumpets

Maya tube trumpets of perishable materials such as gourd and wood, like those described by Landa, have not survived. But there is at least one surviving Prehispanic

⁶⁴ In the same century Diego Muñoz Camargo described Tlaxcalan (Mexican) dance performances accompanied by “some trumpets like a stick” (author's translation).

Maya trumpet, of fired clay, in the Museo Regional at Villahermosa. It is approximately 3 cm wide at the mouthpiece, 5 cm at the bell, and in keeping with known extant Mesoamerican clay trumpets, it is short—only 17 cm long. This clay trumpet could be a model or a functioning instrument and if the latter, based on its length, it would probably yield a slightly sharp B4 as a fundamental tone.

The Villahermosa trumpet is of one piece, but molded to resemble an object in two sections, the mouthpiece end and the flaring bell. (Its mouthpiece is a cup shape with its outer edges widened sharply like the instrument's bell.) In addition to the functional sound-making components, the bell end is decorated with three slightly raised ovals molded to form a broken line proceeding up the widening tube. These three decorative elements appear to emerge from a fourth, an embossed upside-down vase-shape with its flared-end placed at the joint of the two sections (Stevenson 2001a:168).

Some light on the significance of this design may be shed by a small clay sculpture originally deposited as a funeral offering at the Maya Gulf Coast necropolis, Jaina Island. That object represents a musician who stands proudly holding a trumpet in the crook of his left elbow (Guzmán Bravo 1984:124). The flaring bell of the instrument extends above the figure's head, and based on its shape would seem to represent the single-material long-tube type. An embossed design on the body of the trumpet recalls the decorative elements on the Villahermosa example. The Mayanist Linda Schele (1997:146) has proposed that the embossed design on the Jaina Island horn represents a functional brace, used to help fasten the bell section to the body of the instrument, that the clay model copies. If her supposition is correct, the design on the Villahermosa clay trumpet also may have been an artistic rendering of the same feature.

The conical design and bell of the Villahermosa trumpet are its only two components that resemble the much longer tube trumpets shown in the majority of Maya depictions. But whereas most trumpets in Precolumbian Maya artworks approximate the height of the persons shown holding or playing them, a short tube trumpet painted on a

pot in Justin Kerr's photographic collection of Maya vases (no. 4625) suggests that small trumpets were sometimes played and were not simply employed as models of larger instruments.

Non-Maya Ceramic Trumpets

A more dubious artifact ascribed to an unspecified Gulf Coast culture is on display at the Museo de Antropología, in Jalapa, Mexico. This clay instrument could be the bell end of an originally longer trumpet, or it could constitute an entire instrument, only 15-cm long. It is 10 cm wide at its bell, and if it were a complete instrument the fundamental pitch produced would probably sound between Db4 and D4. A double-tube ceramic trumpet is also from this region (no dimensions available) (Stevenson 2001b:357), and its incorporation of multiple tubes is perhaps significant for simulating the multi-chambered flutes that were common to the Gulf Coast during the Classic period (see Chapter 4).

Perhaps the best-known extant example of a Mesoamerican but non-Maya ceramic trumpet was discovered at Teotihuacán in 1965. Like the examples in the Jalapa and Villahermosa museums, the Teotihuacán trumpet is short but differs from Maya types in not having a gradually widening body. Curiously, aside from its length this trumpet is more like European-trumpet prototypes from fifteenth-century paintings in texts such as the *Manuscript of Saint-Esprit* and *Book of Hours of the Duke of Berry* (Tarr 1980:216). According to Martí (1970:48-49), the Teotihuacán ceramic trumpet is approximately 27 cm long and is composed of a thin body that averages 2 cm in width, with a conspicuously flared bell 4.5 cm wide. If this is its true length, the instrument's fundamental tone probably approximates a slightly flatted G3. Amateur archaeologist Laurette Séjourné discovered this trumpet during excavations at the Tetitla apartment complex, a section of Teotihuacán built during the Middle-Classic period (around AD

500), which is also the time of manufacture that has been assigned to the Maya ceramic trumpet in the Villahermosa museum (*ibid.*:48).

As the above four functional aerophones are attributed to three different cultures, and as one is unconfirmed as a complete instrument, the presumed fundamental pitches of the three whose dimensions are listed (approximations of B4, D-Db4, and G3) is of limited research value. This situation may change if more such aerophones are found. But if, as I suspect, small clay trumpets were rarely if ever used for Postclassic K'iche' dance-plays, it is doubtful that information about their pitches would contribute to the goals of this dissertation.

Representations in Mesoamerican Artworks

Wrapped Trumpets

So-called wrapped trumpets are represented as gradually widening tubes with some type of thin-stripped material (probably of cane or cloth) wrapped around their proximal ends. There are seventeen Precolumbian depictions of straight valveless tube trumpets wrapped in this way, including twelve in scenes painted on six Classic-era Maya vases.

O'Brien-Rothe (O'Brien 1983) has proposed trumpet wrapping as constituting the instrument itself or being utilized to cover over the joints connecting separate pieces of wood tubing, held together (I would suggest further reinforced) by pins or dowels. She mentions an indigenous precedent for this design in South America, where there are native trumpets with bells of material woven in the manner of baskets (*ibid.*:22; Izikowitz 1934:233; 235:Figure no. 113). Basketry covering part of the solid surface seems a more likely use than O'Brien-Rothe's other suggestion, that it comprised the sole construction material.

One of the six Maya vases showing wrapped-tube trumpets is attributed to Xamac, a site located in the Ixil highlands near the modern town of Chajul, discussed

earlier in regard to the *Tz'unum baile*, and a region included in the Postclassic K'iche' polity. O'Brien-Rothe (O'Brien 1983) includes this vase painting in an essay on Maya bone instruments, where the reproduction is barely clear enough to show three elaborately dressed individuals performing on trumpets, each differing slightly in design. At least one of the horns, the one in the rear, has a wrapping on the lower part of its body. Glyphs (likely dates) are included above the trumpeters and under one is a dog (an animal sometimes depicted in association with wrapped-tube trumpets).

Another of the six vases, in a recognizable ceramic style known as Chamá, was manufactured during the Late-Classic period (AD 600-900) in the Chixoy River valley in the northern mountains of Guatemala. As the Maya ethnic group that made Chamá pottery preceded the K'iche' in this region, it is possible that the three trumpets shown on this vase, along with the three Xamac horns, represent instrument types that anticipated the trumpets used to accompany the K'iche' *tun* dance-plays of the Postclassic and early-Colonial periods.

Called the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* by organologist Carlos Asturias (1994) because of its discovery near Ratinlinxul, Guatemala, this vase (21 cm tall by 18.5 cm in diameter) is included in the Maya collection at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, where it is catalogued as NA 11701. A University of Pennsylvania publication lists the objects painted on this vase as either trumpets or paddles (Danien 2002:57), but there are four reasons for believing that they are horns. First, the scene including the objects is common to two other vases, where the features of the objects more readily recall trumpets (or at least cast doubt on them representing paddles). Second, in one of the common scenes, the object has a jaguar pelt attached around its distal end, and the idea of dipping into water a paddle with a material as culturally sacred as a jaguar pelt seems unlikely. Third, on each of the three vases an attempt has been made by the artists to depict a funnel shape, which is impractical for paddles. It is accomplished on the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* by black lines painted below and

following the instruments' indented ends, suggesting two sides of hollow tubes viewed obliquely. Fourth, the fact that the objects are not placed at the mouths of the individuals holding them contributes to their possible misidentification, but an object identical in nearly every detail is shown being blown in a scene on a Maya plate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (to be described shortly).

The *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* has been reassembled from cracked pieces (and may have been partly repainted in post-Conquest times), but the figures shown on it, as well as most of the objects depicted in the scene, constitute original components. The painting features a wealthy man in a litter, a small black and white-spotted dog growling underneath his sedan, and an entourage that includes two porters and three figures holding what I take to be gradually widening tube trumpets, encased in plaited wrappings on their lower portions.⁶⁵

Coe (1973) claims that Chamá vases were funerary offerings and that the scenes painted on them were probably of a mythological nature (Miller 1989:137). The dog may be included on the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* because of the animal's mythological connection to the underworld, where it often serves as a guide. Dog remains have been found in the context of human burials in Precolumbian highland Guatemalan tombs (such as the one at Kaminaljuyú containing the slit-drum incense censer), and in the *Popol Vuh* one feat performed by the hero twins before the lords of the underworld is the sacrifice of a dog, subsequently brought back to life (Miller and Taube 1997:80). On the vase painting, two

⁶⁵ The three yellow and white trumpets appear to have separate mouthpieces (which resemble modern Western ones). O'Brien-Rothe (O'Brien 1983) has researched numerous small clay and bone tubes found at Maya archaeological sites and has determined that some of these objects may constitute Precolumbian trumpet mouthpieces. A few bone tubes are even inscribed with plait-patterns, suggesting an association with other objects sharing that design. It may be significant that basket-weaves are a common Maya motif reflecting appreciation of home crafts and an acknowledgment of the humble roots of Maya civilization. One such weave simulates a mat, and a class of high-ranking officials went by the title of "keeper of the mat" or "he of the mat" (Miller and Taube 1997:110-11; Tedlock 1996:345). In addition, Miller and Taube (1997:110-11) define the Yukatek phrase *popol nu* as "mat house," and propose it as a community house for young people where, among other activities, dance performances were held.

figures carry articles that strongly suggest the man on the litter is a merchant, and the vase itself may have been a funerary object meant to celebrate, or at least describe, his life. (It is known that among the Aztecs deceased merchants were often placed on sedans and carried to a mountaintop to be cremated [*ibid.*:112].)

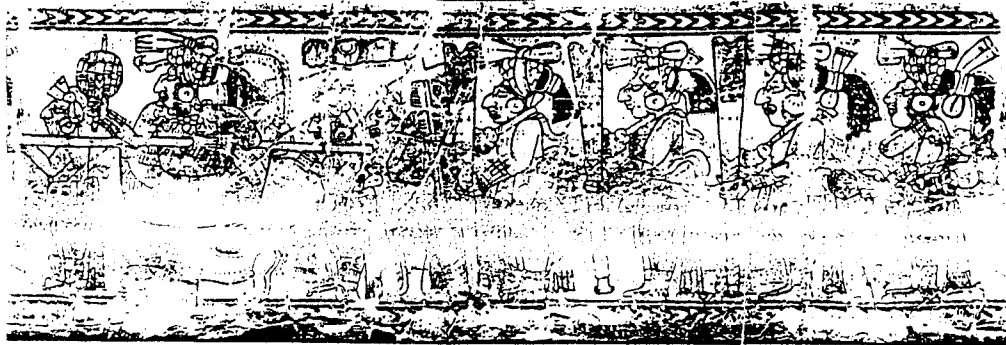
Along with the warp-weave plaiting that characterizes their lower halves, each trumpet of the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* has a bell, indented at the top and shown as a shallow U-shape. Below this is a design composed of horizontal lines and symmetrically placed dots that circumscribe a pattern across the body of the instrument. As mentioned, O'Brien-Rothe (O'Brien 1983:22) argues convincingly, that such dots represent pins that helped attach the bell to the body, and all three trumpets are tall, extending from the top of the feet of its player to above his head in typical Classic and Late-Classic Maya fashion.

Two other vases, Kerr file numbers K5534 and K6317, include the same four elements as the above-mentioned merchant scene: a wealthy man in a litter, a dog underneath it, and an entourage that includes porters and trumpeters. Although these two vases are of unknown provenances, it is likely, considering the style of painting, that they were manufactured in the Maya lowlands (but probably not from the same workshop) (Figure 14).

The *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* shows three trumpets, K6317 shows four, and K5534 (the one described with a jaguar-pelt covering) shows one; all the instruments are wrapped on their lower half, although two of the three vases feature trumpets with a different weave in the wrapping. Only the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* trumpets show warp-weave plaiting. The other trumpets display partly overlapping layers of material as if they were wrapped using a spiraling motion. On K6317 the instruments also include lines and dots that resemble those on the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul*, and conch shells are incorporated into the paintings on all three vases, suggesting that these aerophones were additional paraphernalia for the activity represented.

Figure 14

Merchant-Scene Vases with Wrapped Trumpets



Top: *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* (Kerr 594); middle: Kerr K6317; bottom: Kerr K5534.
Reprinted by permission of Kerr (1989-2000). Photocopy.

In *The Maya Scribe and His World*, Coe (1973: Grolier no. 31) includes a drawing of a vase (the fifth discussed here) that shows three kneeling figures playing tube trumpets wrapped with a material represented as horizontal lines painted around the bottom third of the instruments, similar to the wrapping around the trumpets portrayed on

vases K6317 and K5534. The similarity between all of these trumpet-like objects, one shown being played, is further evidence that the merchant-scene vase wrapped objects were used as sound makers.

Additional proof of a sound-making function for these similar objects is found on a Maya ceramic plate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, alluded to earlier. According to museum officials, this type of ceremonial ware was manufactured in the Petén, and is characterized by a solitary figure often shown dancing or playing a musical instrument inside a circular border made up of intricate geometric shapes. This particular plate (ht. 6.5 cm by diam. 32 cm) features an elaborately dressed trumpeter, playing an instrument that matches the trumpets shown on the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* both in its wrapping and in the U-shaped indentation at the bell-end.⁶⁶

Apart from paintings on pottery, the wrapped trumpet is also found on at least one Maya sculpture, a limestone column discovered in the modern State of Campeche, Mexico, and on display in the capital of the state at the Maya Sculpture Museum. Carved on its surface are two performers playing plait-wrapped trumpets in accompaniment to a ceremonial gift exchange. A distance of 600 kms separates its place of origin from that of the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul* but both are attributed to the Late-Classic period (AD 600-900), indicating the extent of distribution for the instrument type during that era.⁶⁷

Telescope-Shape Trumpets

In the last half-dozen centuries before the Spanish Conquest, K'iche' artworks, like those of many Postclassic groups in southern Mesoamerica, demonstrate Toltec, Mixtec-Puebla, and other central-Mexican influences. At Los Higueros (AD 500-800), a central-Mexican-influenced Gulf Coast site located near present day Jalapa, Veracruz,

⁶⁶ This plate (1989.110: C6264) was given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Eugene and Ina Schnell. It was first mentioned in Chapter 1 concerning sacrifices, as the costume of the trumpeter includes a trophy head.

⁶⁷ A placard accompanying the Campeche sculpture includes the time frame of its carving.

fragments from a wall mural show musicians playing two different types of trumpets. Notwithstanding their differences in shape, both appear to be constructed in the same manner, with shorter lengths of tube joined together to produce the full-length instrument.⁶⁸ One-type shows a wide cone affixed to a separate, wider bell section, painted a slightly darker brown than the brown of the instrument's proximal end. The second type is comprised of three joined tubes alternating in color between brown and white, and looks something like a collapsible hand-held telescope extended to its full length. Pictured in three pan-cultural representations in Toltec and Mixtec-Puebla painting styles, this tube trumpet is proposed as a possible *tun* trumpet prototype.

In the first example from the Los Higueros mural, three slender white sections are shown attached to two slightly wider brown-painted elements, which seem to function as coupling joints, joining the three white sections into one long tube. The coupling elements, in this and the following two examples, could be functional, decorative, or both. If they were used to attach tube sections, they functioned similarly to the fabric-like material on wrapped trumpets as theorized by O'Brien-Rothe (1998b; O'Brien 1983). In fact, the wrapped trumpets previously mentioned on two of the three vases featuring merchant scenes (Kerr nos. K6317 and K5534) each have one such coupling, near the instruments' bells. (At present, we know of no instrument that duplicates the telescope shape in Mexico or Central America, but a Tibetan trumpet, *dung-chen*, is of similar appearance [Dournon 1992:285].)

On a cave wall near Diablo, Mexico, a mural painted in Toltec style shows two telescope-shaped trumpets being played in accompaniment to a battle. Each instrument has two couplings separating three widening tubes, and differs from the Los Higueros instruments only in that the bells and mouthpieces are not depicted as separate sections.

⁶⁸ The Las Higueros mural pieces (removed from the site) are on display at the Museo de Antropología, Jalapa, Mexico.

Such a minor distinction could possibly reflect nothing more than the differences in the choices of two artists rendering the same instrument.

The most unusual depiction of a telescope-shaped trumpet occurs in the Aztec *Codex Borbonicus* (1899), where the instrument is shown in four sections and attached to what appears to be a segmented banner, extending stiffly from the trumpet bell and hanging at something like a 45° angle. The impression is of the banner as a distal and crooked extension of the trumpet. An alternate possibility is that this “banner” represents a sound scroll meant to indicate the sounds coming from the instrument. Because the codex is Aztec, the picture is likely to depict a trumpet of the Late-Postclassic period (AD 1200 through Conquest), a time corresponding with the pinnacle of K’iche’ power in the Guatemalan highlands.

In sum, the Late-Classic/Postclassic telescope-shaped trumpet associated with Mexican cultures was used closest to the era of K’iche’ dominance in the Guatemalan highlands, but the wrapped trumpet was apparently a Maya-specific instrument, used by highland Guatemalan people living in and near territories, such as the Chixoy River valley, that were eventually claimed by the K’iche’. The cited evidence is minimal and not sufficient to absolutely assign either of these trumpet types to ensembles that performed for Postclassic K’iche’ dance-plays. Nevertheless, regardless of other details of design, it seems likely that prototypes for the trumpets used in accompaniment to such K’iche’ performances would have been characterized by a gradually widening tube, or conjoined tubes, made of organic material.

Trumpet Ensembles

Since the mid-nineteenth century two valveless trumpets have been considered an essential part of the multi-instrumental ensemble for performances of the *Rab’inal Achi*. In Prehispanic-Maya music iconography trumpets are typically represented in pairs, or groups of three or four. On the vase known as Grolier no. 33, a scene depicting a scaffold

sacrifice shows an ensemble that includes two trumpeters along with two flautists and a percussionist playing a waist-high drum. Two trumpeters are also featured in the ensemble shown in the *Codex Becker I*, and two trumpets are featured in the imagery on both the Campeche column and the mural in Room 1 at Bonampak. Trumpets in groups of three are depicted on the *Vaso de Ratinlinxul*, Kerr Vase no. 594, and Coe Vase no. 31, and in groups of four on Kerr vase no. K6317 and in the Room 3 mural at Bonampak.

For the Classic and Postclassic-period Maya pairs of objects often represented opposites (Miller and Taube 1997:81-82), and binary divisions continue to inform many aspects of Maya society, including music, today. Sound-making instruments are sometimes classified according to whether they are blown or struck, and in contemporary *tun baile* productions one of the featured trumpets emphasizes two pitches, the fundamental and the fifth. By the same token, the significance of the number three may relate to Maya cosmology. Three bright stars in the Milky Way constellation are known by both Lowland and Highland Maya as the “three stones of creation,” and they are represented by the three stones used to support the hearth in Maya households, a center of family activity (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:95-98). Just as three tends to represent the center of things, four symbolizes the cardinal directions (Pugh p.c., 2004).

In the artworks of the Prehispanic Maya, trumpeters are often shown apart from other musicians or instrumental groups. In Room 1 at Bonampak the two trumpeters are separated by extravagantly dressed dancers from the rest of the music ensemble, made up of three figures striking tortoise shells with deer antlers, a drummer beating a waist-high drum, and five performers shaking container rattles. On the vase Dumbarton Oaks no. 16, depicting a scaffold-sacrifice, the accompanying ensemble duplicates this instrumentation and its order—trumpets, tortoise shell, drum, and rattle—but with the two trumpeters facing opposite the other musicians (Miller 1986:85).

On Maya pottery a rather typical composition is to show long trumpet bodies intruding into a scene from the position farthest from the action depicted. Normally the

trumpets extend above or in front of a mass of heads, which are sometimes—but not always—those of the players. In *A Forest of Kings*, Schele and Freidel (1990: Photo no. 28) include a Kerr rollout photograph of a vase with two straight valveless trumpets (one even has a brace) intruding into a scene concerning a nobleman from the lowland Classic-era site of Motul de San José. In the majority of cases intruding trumpets occur in threes, as on the Kerr 4120 vase, where a trio of trumpets rises above an ensemble, accompanying a dancer entertaining an elite individual. Similarly, on Kerr Vase K6294, the three trumpets intrude with their bells pointed up, and on Kerr Vase 3814, three trumpets extend in front of the trumpeters (only one of whom is visible) toward a large rubber ball resting between two teams of opposing ball players. UCLA art historian Julia Sanchez (p.c., 2003) believes that such paintings represent trumpet players moving into the scene; if so, the painting may be an attempt by the artists to represent motion. An alternate theory I propose is that intruding trumpets are meant to symbolize sounds, perhaps the ones heard at the depicted event.

Valveless Trumpet Sounds

Like modern trumpeters of the *Rab'inal Achi*, Precolumbian Maya musicians undoubtedly produced trumpet sounds by forcing air through pursed lips vibrating against the receiver end of a tube made from one or more resonating materials. Using varying degrees of lip tension and air pressure, a specific tone is produced, derived from partials of the overtone series relative to the fundamental pitch of the horn. The fundamental pitch of the particular instrument depends predominantly on the length of its tube (Tarr 1980:211, 213). An eight-foot-long (244 cm) valveless trumpet would sound the following pitches: C1, C2, G2, C3, E3, G3, Bb3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, A#4, B4, C5 (Piston 1955:209). The width of the bore primarily determines the instrument's timbre.

According to Hammond (1972b:225), the lengths of the trumpets painted on the three walls at Bonampak, estimated in proportion to the presumed height of their

performers are: Room One, 108 cm; Room Two, 106-50 cm; and Room Three, 160 cm. If the paintings represent the actual lengths for these trumpets, the fundamental pitches in Western terms would likely be: Room One—E2 (slightly flat); Room Two—E2 (slightly flat, but not as flat as the trumpet in room one) to Bb (slightly flat); and Room Three—between A1 and Ab1 (closer to A). Again, the one Maya ceramic trumpet known would probably yield a pitch between B and C, closer to B.

Summary and Conclusions

There are few if any renderings of slit-drums in Maya iconography and no verifiable examples from those times attributable to highland Guatemala. Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that the Mesoamerican version of the idiophone likely developed independently of South American, Northwest coast, or other influence, with the earliest record of the Mesoamerican version (with an incised “H” on top) found at Kaminaljuyú and sites located along Teotihuacán-Kaminaljuyú trade routes (by AD 600). Many of these sites were in centers of rubber production or were involved in its commerce, and as artworks and ethnohistoric reports verify an association of the slit-drum with rubber-tipped beaters, it is proposed that sites along the trade routes like Remojadas and El Tajín may eventually be shown to be the source of the instrument. Indications of slit-drum origin on the Gulf Coast may be significant for K’iche’ music research because highland-Guatemalan records, such as are contained in the *Popol Vuh*, point to a cultural association between K’iche’an and Gulf Coast societies (Tedlock 1987, 1996).

Concerning ancient slit-drum sounds, an examination of the data from Castañeda and Mendoza’s acoustic analysis of purported Precolumbian examples in Mexican museums suggests a Mesoamerican emphasis on specific pitches or intervals (music elements that have been undervalued in recent research, which has stressed timbral

differences). On six of 14 slit-drums examined, one of the two tongues approximated G5, and one of the tongues of another six approximated A5; one tongue on an additional drum sounded A6. Furthermore, in six of Castañeda and Mendoza's examples the predominant interval between the two tongues on an instrument was a minor third, and on another drum it was a major third. According to most documentation, the intervallic distance between the tongues of slit-drums used for the *Rab'inal Achi* is also a third.

In examining the valveless trumpet, it was acknowledged that extant K'iche' non-shell valveless trumpets of the Precolumbian era have not been located. However, such instruments are depicted on Classic-era pottery from the Ixil and Chamá areas of the Guatemalan highlands, and Colonial accounts mention valveless instruments in the form of gradually widening tubes made of organic materials, which if reconstructed would generally resemble those shown on the pottery and in other artworks. One such example, distinguished by layers of woven material wrapping its lower portion, is proposed as a possible prototype for the K'iche' instruments used for *tun* dance-plays, duplicating the type found on Chamá pottery that was manufactured by a Maya culture that preceded the K'iche' in the highlands. Another valveless trumpet type, characterized by its telescope shape and used across Mesoamerica during the Postclassic, is also suggested as a possible *tun* predecessor due to K'iche' ties to Postclassic pan-Mesoamerica cultures (Toltec, Gulf of Mexico, Mixtec-Puebla, Aztec). Nevertheless, no solid evidence exists in highland Guatemala from the Postclassic for either trumpet type. The pitches for some extant or depicted Prehispanic Maya valveless trumpets were estimated, but the estimates were confined to a few clay instruments and those pictured on the walls at Bonampak.

Chapter 3

A Tun Baile: The Rab'inal Achi

Introduction

The K'iche' *baile* of the *tun*, or sacrifice, type was introduced in the first chapter. Here the focus is on the *Rab'inal Achi* as a representative of this type and one that is probably of Precolumbian origin, to examine the assumption that the music used in its accompaniment may be of similar antiquity. The five performances witnessed in 2002 allow discussion of aspects of contemporary productions, including characters, storyline, costumes, choreography, and music. Also discussed is the history of the scripts in recent and current use, encompassing controversies concerning their introduction to scholars, past performances either dependent on or independent of a script, and the history of the musical accompaniment as known through performances, notations, recordings, and transcriptions.

Much of the knowledge of the *Rab'inal Achi* script presented here comes from a synthesis of data previously gathered by Mace (1966, 1967, 1970), Carmack (1973), Fidel (1996), and others. Also, much of the information concerning the play's musical accompaniment has been examined before, particularly by Acuña (1973, 1975) and Navarrete (1994). However, in the years since Navarrete's study, further research by Breton (1999), Akkeren (2000), and Dennis Tedlock (2002, 2003) has necessitated a reappraisal of older theories regarding the history, content, and music of the *baile*. This

chapter concludes with a comparison of the performance form of the *Rab'inal Achi* in descriptions of enactments separated by nearly 150 years, 1856 and 2002.

Clues to the Mystery of Early Performances

There is no record of a *baile* explicitly titled the *Rab'inal Achi* before the mid-nineteenth century. Two reasons that may account for the lack of its documentation before this time are the region's isolating geography and demographic segregation. In the sixteenth century, when the Dominican priest Bartolomé de Las Casas relocated K'iche' Achi settlements from the hillsides to the valley floor, he promised their citizens that their settlements would not be colonized by Europeans. Remarkably, the Dominicans and the Achi did apparently interact in near isolation from other groups for the next two centuries (King 1974:21). Even in the mid-twentieth century Rabinal remained far removed from the outside world and was approached by only a single mule trail, which was improved shortly before 1945 at the order of the then president Jorge Ubico to facilitate military suppression of uprisings against his right-wing government. In spite of the improvement, this trail remained unpaved until the 1950s (Yurchenco p.c., 2000).

Rabinal is no longer so isolated nor exclusively Amerindian, although ethnic parity has been slow to emerge. In 1770 only 300 of the nearly 4,000 inhabitants were *Ladinos* (Mace 1967:10). Between 1940 and 1960 estimates of the Amerindian population for the department of Baja Verapaz dropped from 60.4% to 52.3% (Colby and Berghe 1969:196), but the Maya population in the department has since stabilized, and it is currently estimated to be 56%.⁶⁹ Regardless of ethnic identification, the 1994 census

⁶⁹ This information was verified by the posting at the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología de Guatemala mentioned in footnotes 1 and 30.

lists 82% of the 24,063 residents in Baja Verapaz as speakers of K'iche'-Achi; for many, this is their primary or only language (Navarrete 2000:14).

Along with demographics, and geography, an additional factor affecting disclosure of the *Rab'inal Achi* would have been the limited viewing opportunities imposed by traditional performance occasions. Syncretism of the Catholic and Maya religions is well documented, and like most Guatemalan dance-plays produced since conquest, the *baile* is now associated with the Catholic calendar (Bricker 1981; Harris 2001; Harrison and Wauchope 1961; Kurath 1949; O'brien 1975; Orellana 1984; Stevenson 1962; Taylor 1999; B. Tedlock 1992; Vogt 1976; Warman 1985). The *Rab'inal Achi*, like other Guatemalan dance-plays, is traditionally presented during the community's saint's day celebration (the day honoring a saint's conversion to Christianity). The patron saint for Rabinal is San Pablo, and his official feast of conversion is January 25 (Benedictine Monks 1989). San Pablo celebrations in Rabinal can last ten days, usually occurring January 17-27. Supposedly, the *Rab'inal Achi* has sometimes been enacted on other saint's days, particularly those honoring San Sebastian and San Pedro, but in modern times it has not been performed every January, or even every year (Coloch p.c., 2001; González 2001).

It is possible that some *bailes* now performed in honor of San Pablo were originally performed for One Toj, the indigenous patron deity of the Achi people (Edmonson 1976:124). There is no direct evidence of *tun bailes* enacted during the Postclassic period, when the Achi entered the Rabinal area, but scenes painted on two pieces of pottery from the highlands in the Late-Classic era, dealing with Lord Yellow Monkey, duplicate the sequence of capture, trial, and sacrifice detailed in the *Rab'inal Achi* (Tedlock 2003:127-28). Both of these pottery pieces were manufactured at San Agustín Acasaguastlán, Guatemala. On one of them, Lord Yellow Monkey is shown in his military garb pursuing two enemy combatants while leaving an earlier captured warrior in the hands of an assistant. On the other piece, he is shown presenting this

captured soldier to a higher authority, Lord Toasted Maiz. The posture of the prisoner, kneeling with crossed arms and bowed head, suggests that this encounter will end in the prisoner's sacrifice.

Akkeren (2000) has postulated that *tun bailes* represent one of two related types of Prehispanic ceremonies, which he calls Shield Dances. One of these is the Little Shield Dance, performed once every thirteen years, and the other is the Great Shield Dance, performed once every fifty-two years. The latter completes what constitutes a Maya "calendar round" (time-keeping cycle). Akkeren has proposed the *Rab'in al Achi* as an example of a Great Shield Dance, written and first presented at Kaquyq in AD 1478, to commemorate a belated victory of the Achi over their K'iche' overlords (*ibid.*:476-80) (Figure 15).

Figure 15

The Main Plaza at the Kaquyq Archaeological Site



Author's photograph.

Purportedly, after its inaugural presentation the Great Shield Dance *Rab'inal Achi* was enacted to mark subsequent fifty-two year periods (*ibid.*:476-80). If Akkeren's proposed timetable had been adhered to since 1478, there should probably have been a performance of the dance-drama in 1842, fourteen years earlier than the first one documented, in 1856. In explanation, Akkeren emphasizes that his attempts at dating Shield Dances are at a preliminary stage, and events that occurred following Conquest may have disrupted these cycles (*ibid.*). One such disruptive event may have been Spanish prohibition against ongoing Precolumbian practices, including dance-plays. In fact, during the Colonial era eleven official edicts were issued in highland Guatemala to prohibit *tun baile* performances, indicating both that the Spanish were resolute in their desire to eradicate these dance-plays, and that they continued in spite of this pressure (Tedlock 1998).⁷⁰

Separately or jointly, the following conditions could have prevented the *Rab'inal Achi* from being reported on before the nineteenth century: an indigenous, reclusive, protective, and suspicious population; official edicts; geographical isolation; government policy; and restrictions to ritual calendars (European and Mesoamerican).

The Root Source(s) of the Rab'inal Achi Script(s)

The K'iche' are famously protective of their traditional writings. The *Popol Vuh*, was written in K'iche' using latin characters during the sixteenth century, but a version of the text was not revealed to the world until nearly 200 years later, when the Dominican

⁷⁰ *Tun* dance-plays were banned in Guatemala in 1593, 1624, 1631, 1632, 1650, 1678, 1679, 1684, 1748, 1749, and 1770 (Tedlock 1998). These bans concerned *bailes* performed in the towns of San Bernardino, Sanayac, Patulul, Mazatenango, San Martín Zapotitlán, Retalhuleu, Alotenango, and San Miguel (formerly San Juan Milpa Dueñas) (Tedlock 2003:201). In addition, there was a plea by Colonial-era authorities for the prohibition of a similar type dance-drama performed in the Tabasco, Gulf Coast, region (*ibid.*:200).

friar Francisco Ximénez made a copy (Tedlock 1996:25-27). Carmack (1973:25) believes the original version is still hidden away somewhere in Chichicastenango.

Similarly, until the mid-nineteenth century little was known about the *Rab'inal Achi* outside the area where it is now performed. This changed with the 1862 publication of the *Grammaire de la langue quiché suivie d'un vocabulaire et du drame de Rabinal-Achi*, in both K'iche' and French, by the Belgian cleric Brasseur. The priest's work provided Western society with a text of the *Rab'inal Achi*, previously preserved through oral tradition or a small number of hand-written copies. K'iche' dance-play scripts like the one used today for the *Rab'inal Achi* are traditionally passed down through a patrilineal lineage in hand-copied form where they are utilized by a director of the dance-play, the *maestro*, to cast and direct the roles. From Brasseur's version, the play was translated into Spanish by Leonardo Montalbán (1929) and Cardoza y Aragón (1972). In 2000, Claire Stracke made her English translation available on-line.

Notwithstanding, the fact that Brasseur's is the oldest known script of the *Rab'inal Achi*, the version currently used in Rabinal derives from another source, a longhand script in K'iche' written by Miguel Pérez in 1913 (Acuña 1975:vii; Breton 1999:31). Although this is the script that has been used for performances during most, if not all, of the twentieth century, scholars consider the Pérez version controversial (Tedlock p.c., 2003). It may derive from a different and earlier source than the one used for Brasseur's version, but it also shows clear signs of having been copied from the priest's book. Regardless, the local importance of the Pérez script is established and Alain Breton (1999) published a French translation of it in 1994, and also reproduced a facsimile of the text along with an analysis translated into Spanish by Jorge Mario Martínez in 1999. Dennis Tedlock (2003) recently published an English translation of this as well as a review of the play's historical sources and an analysis of its role in K'iche' society.

By the middle 1940s Esteban Xolop had become the *maestro* of the *Rab'inal Achi* using the Pérez script to teach the cast its parts. In 1952 his son, Eugenio made a copy of the script evidently because the pages of the original had started to deteriorate. Eugenio's copy is the one that has been used by Don José León Coloch, the producer, director, and a performer in the dance-drama since assuming *maestro* duties from Esteban in the 1960s (Breton 1999:31-32; Tedlock 2003:215).⁷¹

There is only one major difference between the Pérez and Brasseur versions: what Brasseur records as the second monologue spoken by the Rabinal prince is absent in the Pérez text. In addition, Brasseur's 1862 publication includes notation examples of *Rab'inal Achi* music, the location of this music relative to events in the play, and a description of the sound of the music in the 1856 performance (described later). There are no music descriptions or notations included in the Pérez version.

Performance Elements in the Rab'inal Achi

The following descriptions of the dance-play as enacted are based on my observations of five *Rab'inal Achi* performances presented over two days (January 23 and 24) during the 2002 San Pablo saint day festival in Rabinal, Guatemala.

Table 3

Character List for the Rab'inal Achi

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rabinal Achí----- | <i>Rabinal warrior-prince</i> |
| Quiché Achí----- | <i>K'iche' warrior-prince</i> |

⁷¹ The K'iche' traditionally transmit hereditary rights from father to son. Because Eugenio Xolop died at a rather young age, his sister, María, assumed possession of the script of the *Rab'inal Achi* and production rights to the dance-play. Apparently, with the consent of her father, these rights were extended to her husband, José León Coloch (González p.c., 2001).

| | |
|---|--|
| Ixok-Mun----- | -----Primary servant of the Rabinal prince |
| Ahau-Hobtoh----- | -----Rabinal king |
| Xokahou----- | -----Rabinal queen |
| U-Chuch-Gug-U-Chuch-Raxon, Ri Yamanim-Xtecokbi----- | -----Rabinal princess |
| Mun----- | -----Servant of unspecified sex |
| E Cablahuheb Ganal Cot Balam----- | -----Twelve eagle and Twelve jaguar* |

*In addition, an unspecified number of extras may appear as attendant warriors and servants to the Rabinal Achi.⁷²

Storyline

The *Rab'inal Achi* begins with the defiant arrival of a K'iche' warrior of the Cawek lineage at the Rabinal citadel Kaquyq. There he threatens the assembled populace but is soon lassoed and captured by his counterpart, Rabinal Achi, a Rabinal warrior-prince. After a series of exchanges between the two in ritualized dialogue, the K'iche' warrior is brought before the Rabinal king where he is accused of and tried for a number of crimes, most egregiously, betraying a K'iche' and Rabinal military alliance, conducting renegade attacks against the Rabinal people, and previously kidnapping the Rabinal king from a thermal bath. In his defense the K'iche' warrior boasts of his heroic deeds and insults the Rabinal elite for their own craven behavior. Even so, the Rabinal

⁷² K'iche' spellings given here are from Brasseur (1862). Breton (1999) transcribes the Pérez names as *Cawek Quiche* (Quiche prince), *Ixoq Mun* (female servant), *Job Toj* (Rabinal king), *Xoq O Jaw* (Rabinal queen), *U-Chuch Q'uq'chuch Rax-on N-yamanik* (Rabinal princess), *Mun* (servant of undetermined sex) and *Ekab-lajuju-Q an-al Kot Balam Ki-bi* (Twelve eagle and Twelve jaguar). According to both the Brasseur and Pérez scripts, the two princes, the king and the servant(s), *Mun* and *Ixok-Mun* have speaking roles. In the performances I witnessed, *Mun* was not represented. In fact, I am doubtful that this character has remained in the play, an opinion based on the absence of the character in the performances observed, and the ambiguous manner in which the word *Mun* is written in the Pérez script (with ellipses placed before the name). It may be that *Mun* (K'iche' for slave) is simply used as shorthand for *Ixok-Mun* (the female slave). In his translation of the *baile* Tedlock (2003:342, 344-45) chose names that helped to explain the roles of the characters. For example, The K'iche' Achi is *Cawek of the Forest People*, a member of one of the dual ruling lineages of the K'iche' nation; the Rabinal Achi is the *Man of Rabinal*, a warrior of the Rabinal nation, in the service of Ahau Hotob, the ruler of the Rabinal and Cawuk (not Cawek) people. The Rabinal warrior-prince is not related by blood to the Rabinal king.

king seems to regret this consequence of events and reminisces aloud of the time when he thought this prince might one day become his son in law. Custom, however, dictates that because of the severity of his crimes the warrior be punished. Sentenced to death by sacrifice, he is nevertheless granted several last requests including a visit to his homeland and a dance with the Rabinal princess, daughter of the Rabinal king, and the woman who under different circumstances might have been his wife. Following this dramatic dance the K'iche warrior engages in a mock battle pitting him against the Eagle and Jaguar warriors, each representing one of the two Rabinal warrior societies, which reaches its climax in his sacrificial death. At the end of the *baile* the K'iche' prince rises to join the ensemble in a final group dance (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Group Dance From the Rab'inal Achi



Rabinal, Guatemala. *Calvaria* performance, January 23, 2002. Author's photograph.

Costumes

The role of the Rabinal queen, Xokahou, was played by a girl approximately fifteen-years old, wearing a traditional Highland Maya skirt with alternating patterns of black and gray and a white *huipil* (blouse) with multi-colored bands of fabric in geometric shapes typical of textile patterns characterizing the Rabinal region. Around her neck were multiple strands of beads, and she wore a headband, with green (quetzal bird-like) feathers rising from the front. The girl in the part of the Rabinal princess (U-Chuch-Gug-U-Chuch-Raxon, Ri Yamanim-Xtecokbi) was of similar age and wore a black and gray ankle-length skirt and a white *huipil* with multi-colored fabric designs woven into it, which differed from the queen's blouse in being typical for the Q'ekchi, living in the Alta Verapaz region around Cobán.⁷³ The part of Ixok Mun, the only "female" role featuring an actor with a speaking part, was played by a male dressed similarly to the queen and princess but with a headband adorned with red feathers and a mask representing a man with a goatee. All these characters, like most others in the play, carried small axes in their right hands.

Two actors were observed in the role of the K'iche' warrior-prince. In the performances at the San Pablo and San Pedro *cofradía* houses *maestro* José Coloch acted the part and a second man, not identified, took the role at the *calvaria* and church. The two actors wore costumes that were identical except in two ways, their feathered headdresses and the presence or absence of a mask. At the *calvaria* and church performances the actor in the role of the K'iche' prince wore a mask like that worn by Ixok Mun, but when Coloch played the part a scarf substituted for the false face.⁷⁴

⁷³ Characters in the *Rab'inal Achi* are composites of historical and mythological figures as well as being manifestations of cultural archetypes. In the case of the "females," each may embody roles of women in K'iche' society. It is possible that the aspect of the princess as a foreigner is used to symbolize bride exchange and its importance in Precolumbian Maya society. This would explain why the daughter of the Rabinal king would be dressed as if she were from the Cobán region. My informal discussions with various Guatemalan Maya suggest that K'iche' women and men typically marry by the age of twenty. This contemporary custom does not preclude marriage as early as by fifteen at the time of the events described in the *Rab'inal Achi*.

Concerning their headdresses, the one Coloch wore represented a lion's head, and the other actor's represented a parrot's head. Regardless of the actor and the location of performance, the K'iche' prince was dressed in cobalt blue pants and a matching shirt, belted at the waist with a length of red fabric adorned with colorful geometric designs. The ankles of the pants, the shirttail, and shirtsleeves were ringed with bands of gold piping, some of it fringed, and around the shoulders was a red mantle also fringed in gold.

The costume of the Rabinal warrior-prince was close to a reverse of that worn by his counterpart, with pants and a shirt of red and a blue mantle. On his head was also a feather-covered animal headdress, representing a coyote. The costume of the Rabinal king was similar, except that his pants and shirt were dark green and the design on his mantle was a flower-pattern in violet, green, and blue. For the *calvaria* and church performances the king wore the same style mask worn by Ixok Mun and the princes, but he had no animal headdress. Instead, jutting from the tuft of feathers covering the top of his head was a Maya glyph representing his name. Along with the small axes in their right hands, these three royal characters carried shields in their left hands.

The eagle warrior wore blue pants and a shirt similar in color and design to those worn by the K'iche' prince. He had a dark blue-black mantle and a feathered headdress. In each hand the warrior held a scarf with paisley designs and his face was covered from below his eyes past his neck with a diaphanous white cloth. Attached to his back was a large scaffold-like structure housing a coat of arms made of wood, featuring a two-headed multi-colored eagle, its two heads separated by a red heart-shaped object and facing opposite away from each other.⁷⁵ Feathers and ribbons in various colors enclosed this

⁷⁴ None of the actors wore masks at the enactments given near the *cofradía* houses. At those locations performers who had previously worn masks (like the K'iche' prince) wore scarves over their faces instead.

⁷⁵ Tedlock (2003:142) points out the similarity of this emblem to the Austrian Hapsburg family crest, only one of many syncretic Old and New World elements in the *Rab'inal Achi*. Another example is the Western-style trousers and the Amerindian-style feathered-headdresses worn by all of the male characters.

semi-circular construction, which extended up the warrior's back, ending in a basket that towered half a meter above his head. The pants and shirt of the jaguar warrior matched the dark-colored flower pattern on the king's mantle, and his coat of arms featured two gold and black-spotted jaguars facing each other and gripping a multi-colored column. Ironically, these two combatants were the only characters who did not carry axes.

In all five dance-plays observed, the preservation of the actors' costumes appeared to be a priority during the enactment of the *baile*. If a part came loose or fell off, the character stopped while a non-actor entered the performance area to repair it. As repairs were made the other actors continued in their roles. Except for the saint-day procession and its culminating *Rab'inal Achi* performance, January 24, the music ensemble wore everyday clothing typical of the region (dark slacks and button shirts). On the 24th they wore matching uniforms consisting of white pants and shirt belted with sashes of red, white, and blue, and headscarves in the same colors.

Choreography

During the course of an interview at his home on August 5, 2001, Coloch taught me some of the dance steps of the *Rab'inal Achi* that were performed to the instrumental piece, "Son del K'iche'," the composition played first at the *calvaria* performance, January 23, 2002. I videotaped this dance at that location, and because I cannot reconstruct the other dances enacted (some to the same music) as accurately, it constitutes the single example of *Rab'inal Achi* dance choreography described here. In all the dances witnessed the movements were similar enough to suggest that various groupings of dancers, not different steps, primarily distinguished the choreography.⁷⁶

The dance for the "Son del K'iche'" began with all eight dancers standing erect and in separate locations throughout the staging area (left to right from the audience perspective: eagle warrior, K'iche' prince, Rabinal prince, Rabinal king, Rabinal

⁷⁶ Coloch said that there were three group-dance types in the *baile* (Coloch p.c., 2001).

princess, Rabinal queen, and jaguar warrior). An accelerating roll on the slit-drum signaled the *son*'s beginning, its speed gradually increasing as the dancers began to move into a large circle, congregating in three categories: "females," princes and king, and warrior societies. After the *bajo* trumpet joined the drum, the dancers began to circle in a counter-clockwise direction while dancing exclusively with members of their own group in smaller counter-clockwise circles. Only the king departed from this segregated pattern by sometimes joining the "females."

Individual dance steps were differentiated according to the "sex" of the group. The "men" (princes, warriors, and king) first advanced one foot forward by approximately one-half meter and then brought the other the same distance in front of the first. The initially moved foot was then transferred behind with the toes pressed down and the heel raised. Following these motions, the foot in back was advanced forward and the steps were repeated in a daisy-chain progression moving forward. Although Coloch did not teach me the step(s) of the actors in "female" roles (the queen, princess, and servant), based on my observations, I concluded that as the male dancers were moving in the manner described, the "females" would first lift a foot, step and pivot in that direction, set that foot down, repeat the movement on the opposite foot, and then step a foot back. In sum, for this piece the movements for all of the dancers could be summarized as: step forward (one beat), step forward (one beat), step back (two beats). For other *sones* with different pulses different numbers of steps were incorporated. This means that a dancer would take extra steps forward, approximately in the time of a beat; making that number match the musical phrases of a particular *son*. (In addition, one of the motion always took two beats). Beats and their locations relative the music phrases in the *Rab'inal Achi sones* are covered in chapter 6, which also deals further with choreographed dances in relation to the music. Notwithstanding, one other aspect of the music-dance relationship in the *baile* is briefly discussed in the following paragraph.

The dance steps and music of the *Rab'inal Achi* synched up most conspicuously at a particular moment when, at a recurring point in the music, there was a sense of inevitable motion, or “groove.” This happened when the slit-drum played an accented note, which initiated a repeat of a rhythmic phrase. Simultaneous with this accented note, all of the dancers took their most confident steps (sometimes forward and sometimes back). A similar music-dance example that might be familiar is the waltz, where the primary step is taken on the first—the accented—of the three beats. The music side to this *Rab'inal Achi* music-dance equation can be seen in Music Examples 4, 6, and 8, in Chapter 6. In example 4 the accented note is beat 4, in example 6 it is beat 3, and in example 8 it is beat 3.

Prescribed movements and non-movement were also choreographed for non-dance segments of the performances. While giving a speech, for example, each prince paced several steps forward then turned and paced the same distance in the opposite direction, repeating the pattern until a music cue was given, his action mirrored by the other prince pacing in the alternate direction. At the same time the two representatives from the warrior societies moved as sentinels in tight oblong circles at the southern and northern perimeters of the dance-play's staging area, in a loosely coordinated way.

During the speeches exchanged between princes, all movement continued until the instrumental ensemble played its short fanfare-like cues (described in Chapter 6), at which time the two princes and their sentinels took positions facing at attention in the four cardinal directions (either with the K'iche' prince at the northeast corner, the Rabinal prince at the southwest corner, the jaguar warrior at the northwest corner, and the eagle warrior at the southeast corner, or with the K'iche' prince and jaguar warrior, and the Rabinal prince and eagle warrior reversing positions). After a short time the four men then gave a war cry, “ee-oh,” helping to signal the end of the fanfare. At the conclusion of the longer music pieces that accompanied the dances, they repeated these cries.

Towards the end of each dance the performers would all pace counterclockwise into

position for the next episode. After the third dance, performed early in the play, these moves placed the “female” characters and the king into “offstage” positions, not to return to performance in the *baile* until nearer its end.

A History of the Script(s)

Brasseur, a Catholic cleric and Precolumbian enthusiast, was appointed by Bishop Francisco de Paula García Peláez to the town of Rabinal, where he served as parish priest between May 1855 and May 1856 (Breton 1999:20; Mace 1967:12). The brevity of his stay, and the absence of any earlier evidence of the *Rab'inal Achi*, have focused attention on the mysterious aspects concerning his transcription of the script to an extent almost superseding attention to the script's content.⁷⁷ The lack of prior mention of the work is curious considering that the renowned friars Las Casas and Ximénez were at different times intimately involved with the town of Rabinal. Las Casas helped establish its modern location in 1538 by relocating Precolumbian Achi settlements to a place near the present site, and during the early eighteenth century Ximénez (the discoverer of the *Popol Vuh*) served for ten years (1704-14) as Rabinal's priest (Mace 1967:8). At times during his long stay, Ximénez (1964:245) described the presence of indigenous dance-plays and listed the valveless trumpet and slit-drum as instruments played by the Achi; however, he never mentioned the *Rab'inal Achi* by any of its known names, in contrast to his mention, for instance, of the dance-play *Quiché Uinac* (Mace 1967:4).

In the introduction to his *Grammaire*, Brasseur claimed to have heard of the dance-drama within a week of his arrival in Rabinal and shortly thereafter to have copied the spoken dialogue in a latinized K'iche' as it was dictated to him by Bartolo Ziz

⁷⁷ During his time in the Americas, Brasseur also acquired—among other items—Indigenous copies of the *Popol Vuh* and the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Carmack 1973:24, 47).

(spelled Sis in the church records). Brasseur received the assistance of Sis by agreeing to officiate at the funeral of the man's mother and by supplying him with free medical aid. (Despite this medical assistance the fifty-one-year-old Sis died a year later, a consequence some locals attribute to his having divulged the *Rab'inal Achi* to an outsider [*ibid.*:13].) On January 20, 1856, Brasseur (1862:18) paid to have the *Rab'inal Achi* performed. According to notes in the introduction to his book, it was the first time the dance-drama had been enacted in thirty years. There is no corroborating evidence for this earlier production (in 1826), or for any performance prior to 1856, but there is also no reason to doubt the source of Brasseur's information, Bartolo Sis (*ibid.*:1862). Before that time and until the 1940s the *Rab'inal Achi* was rarely enacted and even more rarely reported. In fact, I know of only one mention of it between 1856 and 1945, when Jesus Castillo (1977) visited Rabinal in 1921 and copied some of the music performed at his request.

In the short preface to Brasseur's 1862 publication, Sis claimed that he had first transcribed the dialogue of the *Rab'inal Achi* in 1850 to honor his ancestors (Carmack 1973:45).⁷⁸ An oblique reference to a possible Sis copy is included in a letter written by Brasseur in the spring of 1855 to a friend, Dr. José Mariano Padilla. In the letter the cleric claimed to have found the "manuscript" of an indigenous play, the "Rabinal Achi" (Mace 1967:14). Despite discrepancies in accounts over an oral or written source, respected authorities on early highland Guatemalan history like Carmack (1973:45-46), Breton (1999:20-23), and Acuña (1973) have concluded that the accumulated evidence confirms Sis as the author of a script transcribed either from memory or from an earlier text; meaning that in either case a version older than Brasseur's, if only by five years, did exist.

Tangential evidence in both the Brasseur and Pérez scripts supports the pre-European authenticity of the dance-play. Unlike many Post-Conquest writings recorded

⁷⁸ The preface, with this important information, was left out of the Cardoza y Aragon (1972) translation.

in a latinized K'iche', for instance, the *Rab'inal Achi* does not contain a word of Spanish. In contrast, Sis's introduction to Brasseur's work uses words from both languages (Carmack 1973:45). Moreover, the syntax of the *Rab'inal Achi* text, with its use of echoed dialogue (in which an actor begins a speech by repeating part of the speech of the prior actor) and paired phrasing, first pointed out by Brasseur, is typical of chant structures in Maya oral literature. Akkeren (2000:54-56) emphasizes that these are mnemonic devices used to aid the recall of long oral passages, and that they occur not only in the *Rab'inal Achi* but in prayers delivered by the *abogados*, or K'iche' priests, before the performance of the dance-play. The following excerpts contain examples of these two dramatic devices. In the first—from the opening line in the play—echoed dialogue is used to acknowledge the royal credentials of the two primary protagonists.

“come on out, lord who's been pierced, lord who's been fitted with gems”

This statement, referring to the piercing of the nose (and perhaps the chin) so that ornaments of precious stones can be inserted to denote royal status, is first shouted by the K'iche' prince to the Rabinal prince, and afterward by the latter to the former (Tedlock 2003:26-27). In this next example paired phrasing is used in a speech by the Rabinal king as he speaks for the first time, thanking the Rabinal warrior for capturing the outlaw prince (*ibid.*:77).

“My brave, my man, thanks be to sky, thanks be to earth”

Paired phrasing is also used in a statement by the K'iche' prince that includes a description of Precolumbian K'iche' drumming (Stracke 2000:12).

“I rolled on the drum thirteen times twenty days, thirteen

times twenty nights, because I had not won anything below the sky,
over the earth”

The total number of rolls played by the K'iche' prince adds up to 260 during the day and 260 during the night. Two hundred and sixty is an important calendrical number for the Maya, but I have not found this number of rolls (or beats) in any of the music, or sections of the music, used for the *Rab'inal Achi*. Still, like echoed dialogue and paired phrasing, instrumental music is incorporated as a structural device. At the San Pedro *cofradía* house on the night of January 23, 2002, the performance was stopped briefly until the *bajo* trumpeter resuscitated his lips by moistening and fluttering them before he finally managed to play a cue.

Maya language scholars including Akkeren (2000), Breton (1999), Carmack (1973:44-45), and Edmonson (1964:273) have cited both the lack of Spanish in the text and its incorporation of memory aids to buttress their conclusions that the *Rab'inal Achi* is largely, if not entirely, Precolumbian.⁷⁹ Further evidence of the play's ancient roots lies in the fact that the dialogue not only preserves the formulas and cadences of traditional K'iche' spoken-word performance, it also includes plot incidents that some scholars believe refer to the eventual takeover of the Rabinal valley by the Achi people (Akkeren 2000:475-76; Breton 1999). In fact, it was a retracing of the route described in the play taken by the K'iche' prince to the Rabinal citadel, Kaquuq, that led Alain Breton and the archaeologist Marie-Charlotte Arnauld to Tres Cruces, originally a Poqamam site located southwest of the Rabinal valley, and now theorized to be Tzamamneb, the “sunrise place” of an early Rabinal lineage and a base for their reconnaissances into southern Tezulutlán (Baja Verapaz) (Akkeren 2000:447-49). Yet in spite of the corroborating evidence in this discovery, certain other actions in the dance-play might not have occurred as described, some of which have been pointed out in the history section of Chapter 1.

⁷⁹ For more on Amerindian syntax see Gossen (1986), Swann (1992), and Tedlock (1993).

Uncertainties over the original source for Brasseur's 1862 publication have fueled speculation by some authorities, including folklorists Antonio Goubard Carrera and John Englekirk, that the *abbé* falsely promoted the *Rab'inal Achi* as an extant example of a Prehispanic *baile* (Mace 1967:17).⁸⁰ In justification of these suspicions Mace found during his research in the 1950s that citizens from San Miguel Chicaj and San Gabriel Pansuy, two Baja Verapaz towns founded by the Achi during the eighteenth-century, knew little about the *Rab'inal Achi* (*ibid.*:16-17).⁸¹ Unanswered questions concerning Brasseur's acquisition and the late surfacing of the Pérez script have led me to explore another possible origin, revivalism, before finally assigning the *Rab'inal Achi* to pre-contact times.

An Alternative Origin: Revivalism

Revivalism Defined and Conditions Leading to Its Occurrence in the Maya Region

Cultural revival movements often emerge within a social pattern that begins with stability followed by a period of deprivation, leading to indigenous cultural revitalization (Wallace 1966:158-60), a sequence found in Guatemala through the Colonial period. In other locations, such movements have sometimes incorporated performance traditions which function as symbols that besieged societies can rally around. Due to the fact that the *Rab'inal Achi* emerged from obscurity during the nineteenth century, when Yukatek Maya had initiated a war of independence against Mexico (the Caste War), the dance-

⁸⁰ Prior to his journeys to the Americas Brasseur wrote two romantic novels, *The Sister of the Caliph* and *The Martyr of the Cross* (Mace 1967:12). The priest's novels have been used by critics to stress his ability to exaggerate, embellish, and fabricate.

⁸¹ Such isolation is not unusual for the Maya in the Baja Verapaz region. One of my sources in Rabinal, Carlos González, was unaware of the performance times and the particular instruments used to accompany the rather well-known *Palo Voladores* in Cubulco, a community only 19 km northwest of Rabinal.

drama's creation in Maya Guatemala in the 1800s could be viewed as an example of K'iche' revitalized pride in cultural roots. To explain the conditions that led to this situation I will first review Spanish demographic policy in Colonial-era Mesoamerica and its effect on inhabitants.

Shortly after the Conquest of Mexico, the Spanish tried to split up indigenous populations there through class identification, with the inducement of land grants offered to elites (a political arrangement defined in Latin America as the *cacique* system). The Spanish hoped such offers would compel high-ranking Mexicans to align themselves with their conquerors rather than with members of their own ethnicity. In Guatemala, land grants and other favors were also given to high-status Maya although there is some controversy as to when these offers were first made. According to anthropologist Nancy Farriss (1984:231), in contrast to the special favors bestowed on Aztec aristocracy in the deployment of the *cacique* system immediately after Conquest, it was not until the 1700s that upper-class K'iche' were granted similar privileges. Carmack (1973) counters this view, writing that the *cacique* system was at work in the Guatemalan highlands soon after the Spanish arrived. His argument is based on the fifty-plus K'iche' documents that he has catalogued, written partly to substantiate Prehispanic ruling status for their signatories and therefore their rights to ancestral land holdings.

In either case, by the time the *cacique* system was initiated in highland Guatemala, Spanish authorities had adopted a policy emphasizing Maya class distinction, partly based on the assumption that the social divisiveness this action caused would benefit their own administrative status. Over the ensuing decades, as Spanish demands on resources increased commensurate with their own population growth, the advantages at first enjoyed by the K'iche' elite deteriorated even as their traditional influence over fellow Maya remained strong (Farriss 1984:235). Such bonds maintained among their own people compensated for the inability of the Maya elite to affect official government policy, and it is now presumed that persons with prestigious positions in *cofradías* and

members in traditional dance-play associations had lineage ties to Prehispanic K'iche' aristocracy (*Ibid.*:232-33). If so, it would be due in large part to the efforts of high-ranking K'iche' that many of the ancient traditions of their culture have been preserved.

Post-Conquest Maya Conflicts

By 1712, a Colonial-era attempt at Maya cultural reclamation had been instigated in Chiapas, after a girl in supposed communication with the Virgin Mary was said to prophesy the end of Spanish rule and a return to self-governance. An attempt to fulfill this prophecy was made by locals who expelled the clergy, but the authorities soon retaliated by executing hundreds of Chiapans (Tutino 2001:71). Later, in the Caste War that began in the early 1800s, Juan de la Cruz, considered by many of his followers to be the second coming of Christ, motivated his Yucatan rebels to action with messages he received from god speaking through a “talking cross” (Scheper 2001:73). This rebellion was somewhat more successful than the one in 1712, and the fight to establish a Maya-governed Yucatan continued into the early twentieth century.

While the Chiapas and Yucatan revolts entailed the incorporation of Christian symbolism in the service of Maya goals of independence, behind both were also more ancient indigenous beliefs. The “talking cross” of the Caste War, for instance, has been equated with *Wakah-chan* (the world tree), the center of the Maya universe (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:39). As a result, rather than signaling conversion and a retreat from Maya culture, this and related symbols could be viewed as a reaffirmation of Precolumbian worldviews. Moreover, in the Yucatan, Precolumbian idols, like the *Wakah-chan*, were said to speak (*ibid.*:457). This aspect of sacred Maya objects was transferred to the Christian equivalent of the world tree, the Cross of Christ, when it began communicating with Juan de la Cruz.

Syncretism of elements from indigenous and introduced belief systems was equally present in one of the best documented American revival movements, the Ghost

Dance “religion” initiated by Jack Wilson (Wovoka) in late-nineteenth-century Nevada. The Ghost Dance was a response to the devastating effect on Amerindian cultures of the United States policy of “Manifest Destiny.” A quasi-religious movement, the Ghost Dance combined Paiute magic trances and vision quests with devotional Christian songs to solidify Amerindian aims of cultural reclamation (Kehoe 1989:4-5, 127). The incorporation of Christian elements was read by some Ghost Dance followers as a pan-deity endorsement of their cause. And as the movement grew, Jack Wilson’s stature as a supernatural mediator expanded until he, like Juan de la Cruz, was assumed by some to be the second incarnation of Christ (*ibid.*:6).

More relevant to the people of Baja Verapaz would have been the 1820 revolt in Totonicapán, Guatemala, initiated by Atanasio Tzul against royal tribute demands. Due to his heroic efforts in the face of government opposition, Tzul was crowned king of the K’iche’ by his followers, a symbolic act indicative of Precolumbian culture as locally perceived, and an example of highland Guatemalan Maya attempts at cultural reclamation as late as the nineteenth century (Tedlock 2001:88). The 1820 date for this event, which would have been publicly known, has interesting implications—as explained earlier—because Sis informed Brasseur that prior to the 1856 performance of the *Rab’inal Achi* it had last been enacted in 1826. The closeness in time between these two events is intriguing, but I know of no other evidence linking the *Rab’inal Achi* to the Totonicapán revolt.

There is a well-known known example of theater used in support of Guatemalan Maya revivalism, the *Baile de la Conquista*. This K’iche’ version of a conquest *baile* emerged soon after the beginning of Spanish colonization but it spread rapidly throughout the highlands only during the latter half of the nineteenth century (Bode 1961). The K’iche’ *Baile de la Conquista* includes historical events from the Guatemalan conquest as well as Precolumbian elements (shaman prognosticators and Tz’unum as a magic bird), but its emphasis is on the aftermath of conquest, when the Maya were essentially adopted

by the Christian god. As with the Ghost Dance and the Caste War, the syncretic elements of this conquest dance were used to affirm god's approval of Maya culture.

According to concepts and terms developed by anthropologist Anthony Wallace (1966:165), the *Baile de la Conquista* is an example of a revival movement operating with an "expropriate attitude," in which customs of the alien group are imported and combined with native ones.⁸² Conversely, the "revivalistic attitude" of the "nativistic" *Rab'inal Achi* would seem to be the restoration of a golden age assumed to have existed in a past era untainted by contact (*ibid.*:164). While it is true that the *Rab'inal Achi* does offer a view of a pre-contact era, restoration of that period does not seem to be its primary intent. In fact, there are aspects in the *baile*—human sacrifice for instance—which would seem to run counter to a K'iche' idealization of its past, at least as viewed through the eyes of an acculturated Guatemalan people. Instead, the dance-play presents facts of a Prehispanic past in an unapologetic and wholly unromanticized way, retelling events that appear to have originated in another era organized according to a different worldview than that of the Spanish.

The primary difference between the *Rab'inal Achi* and the performances named here in association with other revival movements is the lack of concern in the *tun baile* for reconciling cultural conflicts between the indigenous and the imposed. (An exception could be made for the "resurrection dance scene" discussed in Chapter 1 and at the end of this chapter.) Although the *Rab'inal Achi* contains some thematic elements found in both the *Baile de la Conquista* and the Ghost Dance, such as syncretism, celebration of indigenous culture, and charismatic figures, no scholar to my knowledge has offered revivalism as its alternative origin. Edmonson (1976:145), however, has suggested that

⁸² Wallace (1966), who did extensive research on revitalization movements in the 1950s and 1960s, organized them into seven basic types according to culture area. These seven movements and their representative areas are: (1) Cargo cults—Melanesia, (2) *Terre sans mal* movements—South American tropical forest, (3) Mahdist movements—Islamic areas, (4) Millenarian movements—Christian areas, (5) Messianic movements—Judaic areas, (6) Nativistic movements—North American Indian, and (7) Separatist churches—African (Black).

the *Rab'inal Achi* could have derived from the apparently older indigenous dance-play *Quiché Uinac* (Tedlock 2003:190-96). If he is right, this derivation might explain why neither Las Casas nor Ximénez mentioned the *Rab'inal Achi* by name.

A History of the Music

The music for the *Rab'inal Achi* was first notated by the Rabinal choirmaster Colásh López and his assistant, Nicolas Sis (nephew of Brasseur's informant Bartolo Sis), in 1856, using Western music notation to write out the parts for two valveless trumpets and a slit-drum (Brasseur 1862). They purportedly did this in real time as the music was played during the 1856 production, and their notation was included as an appendix in the 1862 Brasseur publication (Music Example 1). Because of the overt Western characteristics of the score (such as the use of barlines and meter), Yurchenco (p.c., 2001) and Castillo (1977) have been critical of the claims to Prehispanic authenticity of the López-Sis version.⁸³ Such doubt raises an interesting possibility: that the script and music may have had different histories, and that verification of one as Prehispanic does not hold for the other. This point is worth remembering when considering other Maya dance-dramas, particularly the Spanish-derived *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* described in Chapters 5 and 6.

In 1921, sixty-five years after López and Sis wrote down the music for Brasseur's production, Guatemalan musicologist Jesus Castillo (1977:6) journeyed to Rabinal and copied an unspecified *son* from the *Rab'inal Achi* as played by Francisco Perez, Patrocinio Sucup, and José Roman, on trumpets and slit-drum respectively. These

⁸³ Regarding the transcribed music published in 1862, it has not been suggested, but seems possible, that the original notation was "corrected" by the publisher (Bertrand) in Paris.

performances were not produced during an enactment of the dance-play, a condition not relevant to the purpose of the musicologist.

Music Example 1

Excerpts From the López-Sis Transcription

Entrada del Rabinal-Achi

Son del Quiché.

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first, titled 'Entrada del Rabinal-Achi', consists of three staves of music in a single system. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature, containing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle and bottom staves are bass clefs, likely representing a guitar accompaniment, with rhythmic patterns and some melodic fragments. The second excerpt, titled 'Son del Quiché.', also consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature, featuring a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle and bottom staves are bass clefs, providing a rhythmic accompaniment with some melodic elements.

Brasseur, 1862:Appendix. Photocopy.

Castillo's aim in part was to make an accurate transcription of the music of the *baile*, and the musicians played the *son* several times over, which presumably helped him achieve his goal. But because of its implication regarding early twentieth-century performance practice, Castillo's observation that the musicians altered what they played in successive renditions is as valuable as his copy of the music. The ramifications of this

interpretative approach are useful for comparative research, and Coloch (p.c., 2001) has confirmed the continuation of this practice, informing me that current *sones* for the dance-drama vary slightly from one performance to another.

In the spring of 1945, shortly after the swearing in of Guatemala's new president José Arévalo, Henrietta Yurchenco (p.c., 2000) entered the country under the sponsorship of the United States State Department, the Library of Congress, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, and the Instituto Indigenista Interamericano to document local musical traditions as she had done previously in Mexico. During the time of her stay in Guatemala, Yurchenco spent five days in Rabinal interviewing and recording local musicians. One group who showed up at her outdoor recording studio included P. Socub, with slit-drum, and E. Xolop and G. Hernandez, each with a valveless brass trumpet, who offered to record music for the *Rab'inal Achi*, a dance-drama unknown to Yurchenco at the time (*ibid.*). As suggested by Navarrete (1994), if the slit-drum player P. Socub was Patrocinio Sucup, which seems likely, this would have been the same trumpet player who performed for Castillo in 1921.

These Maya musicians played several takes for Yurchenco, including two somewhat-complete *sones* and a sample of slit-drum patterns, all of which totaled approximately fifteen minutes, tracked onto a portable disc recorder (Yurchenco p.c., 2000).⁸⁴ Yurchenco's is the oldest known recording of any K'iche' *tun* dance-play, and the portions of the two *sones* from that session, "Son del Quiché Achí" and "Son del Rabinal Achí" (totaling a little over five minutes), were released in 1978 as part of an LP, *Music of the Maya-Quiches of Guatemala: The Rabinal Achi and Baile de las Canastas*

⁸⁴ Magnetic tape copies of these discs are catalogued by the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress as AFS 8110 A1, A2, A3, B3, B4, and B5; AFS 8111 A1, A2, A3, and A4; 8117 B2; and AFS 8118 A1. Navarrete also lists AFS 8117 sides A, and AFS 8119 side A and B as containing *Rab'inal Achi* related music examples (1994). But AFS 8117 side A is flute and drum pieces unaffiliated with the *Rab'inal Achi*, and AFS 8119 side A and B are excerpts from the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. The Folkways collection is administered by the Smithsonian Institution and as of this writing cassette-tape copies of the LP can be purchased from Folkways Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies.

(discography and videography). Transcriptions, or portions, of one or more of the *sones* from these recordings were subsequently made by David Friedlander (Yurchenco 1985:46-47), Navarrete (1994), and this writer (Music Example 2).

Music Example 2

The Beginning of Son del Quiche Achí

1st phrase sample

Alto Trumpet

Bajo Trumpet

Slit-Drum

$\text{♩} = 96$ much rubato $\text{♩} = 94$ slower

f accel. roll, 6-7, 20 strokes

$\text{♩} = 92$

accel. roll, 3-4, 15 strokes

$\text{♩} = 86$ slower $\text{♩} = 84$

Music of the Maya-Quiché of Guatemala 1978: discography and videography. Author's transcription.

In 1955, Esteban Xolop Sucup, who was the trumpeter at Yurchenco's 1945 recording session (and, as mentioned prior, father of Coloch's wife María), was *alto* trumpeter and *maestro* of the *Rab'inal Achi* for the rehearsals and performances sponsored by the Dirección General de Bellas Artes de Guatemala for the "First Festival of the Arts and Culture," in Antigua (Yurchenco p.c., 2001). That Xolop performed in the *Rab'inal Achi* at this festival helps substantiate the Maya *baile* tradition of long-term membership in music ensembles, ideally based on kinship ties. (If not passed down from father-to-son, it is imparted generationally, from senior-to-junior musician.) In Antigua, Rafael Ruiz played the *bajo* trumpet and José Roman the slit-drum, perhaps the same José Roman of the Castillo sessions. This music was described in an article by Francisco Rodríguez Rouanet (1962).

In 1966, eleven years after the "First Festival of the Arts and Culture," anthropologist Clementina Otero organized and presented another out-of-town performance at the "Teatri Fabregas" in Mexico City (Yurchenco p.c., 2000). A subsequent performance in Rabinal in 1970 likewise involved the participation of an anthropologist, Stella Quan Rossell (*ibid.*:1985:41). Commentaries on both these productions contained little relevant musical information, but at Mexico City the instrumentation was listed as slit-drum, *chirimía*, and marimba (the last two uncharacteristic of prior versions of the *Rab'inal Achi*, and I suspect a concession to the growing interest in the dance-drama resulting in an assumption of the need to modify performances to meet popular demand).⁸⁵ International interest in the dance-play culminated in an ethnopoetic adaptation at the Cornell Theater, State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY), on April 24 and 25, 1998.⁸⁶ This adaptation, translated and retitled "Man of Rabinal," was produced by Dennis Tedlock, a professor of linguistics at

⁸⁵ Tedlock (p.c., 2003) told me of an additional 1970 performance, at Cobán. He did not tell me its instrumentation or whether Stella Quan Rossell was involved in its production.

⁸⁶ According to Akkeren (2000:1), an opera based on the *Rab'inal Achi* by Eduard Stucken and Egon Wellesz was performed in Paris in the 1920s.

SUNY Buffalo, and a K'iche'-trained *ajk'ij*, or “day-keeper.”⁸⁷ In January of that same year Tedlock (p.c., 2003) made a videotape of the traditional performance of the *baile* in Rabinal, which informed both the SUNY adaptation and his 2003 book, *Rabinal Achi: A Mayan Drama of War and Sacrifice*.

In 1972 Carroll Edward Mace (discography and videography) recorded a rehearsal of the *Rab'inal Achi* directed by José Coloch. His audiocassette included three rather long *sones* played between short speeches given at the beginning, and eighteen shorter pieces (fanfares) between the longer talks that comprised the majority of the dance-drama's dialogue, all performed on two valveless trumpets and a slit-drum. According to Mace (p.c., 2003), “the last five minutes of the play are missing.” The tape is 90 minutes (45 minutes a side), and some 40 minutes past the beginning of side B is the beginning of a *son*, which lasts approximately one minute, the last portion of music (part of the fourth *son*) recorded before the tape runs out. In spite of its being incomplete, Mace's recording is the first documentation of the music of the *Rab'inal Achi* in the context of a performance.⁸⁸

A 1986 music notation by Enrique Anleu Díaz of a *son* he titled “Musica del Rabinal Achi,” from a 1985 performance, was included in the first publication detailing the *baile*'s choreography (Fidel 1996). Anleu's notation does not utilize bar-lines and is scored for the traditional ensemble of two trumpets and a slit-drum. During the 1990s

⁸⁷ Among other duties, the *ajk'ij* interprets the various traditional highland Guatemalan Maya calendars (Tedlock p.c., 2003).

⁸⁸ To my knowledge, Mace's recording has not been catalogued or described in prior publications concerning the *Rab'inal Achi*. His audiocassette is listed as part of the 1957 Mace collection of Rabinal materials in the Latin American Library, Tulane University, but I suspect that it was recorded in 1972 for three reasons. (1) An additional tape sent to me is a duplicate of the one described and is labeled as recorded in 1972. (2) Coloch directs the rehearsal that is the subject of the recording and he was not involved with the play until the 1960s. (3) Audiocassettes did not exist in the 1950s and the original tape does not appear to derive from a disc or reel-to-reel recording. As the *Rab'inal Achi* is actually longer than ninety-five minutes (being typically over two hours), I am confused by Mace's statement that only five minutes are missing. But due to the fact that his recording is of a rehearsal, this practice session may have concluded before a complete run-through of the *baile*.

Navarrete (1994) recorded the music from productions mounted by Coloch. Unfortunately, transcriptions of these are not included in his 1994 thesis, which is a detailed analysis and comparison of the sources for music used with the *Rab'inal Achi* prior to and including Yurchenco's 1945 recording. In January 2002, the performances I witnessed in Rabinal at the San Pablo *feria* included Coloch on slit-drum, Sebastian Sarpec on *alto* trumpet, and Pedro Morales on *bajo* trumpet. I did not learn the name of the slit-drummer who performed when Coloch switched to his acting role.⁸⁹

Since the appearance of the López-Sis appendix to Brasseur's (1862) work, titles of the various *sones* in recordings and notations of the *Rab'inal Achi* have generally been approximations of the ones in the original list. Anleu titled his notation "Musica del Rabinal Achi" (Fidel 1996), and Friedlander his transcription, "Rabinal Achi" (Yurchenco 1985). Yurchenco's "Son del Rabinal Achi" and "Son del Quiché Achi" possibly correspond in name and function to López-Sis' "Entrada del Rabinal Achi" and "Son del Quiché" respectively (*Music of the Maya-Quichés of Guatemala* 1978:discography and videography). Coloch (p.c., 2001) identified the 1945 "Son del Quiché Achi" as similar to the "Son del K'iche'" performed by his contemporary group.

The scores of the dance-play made by López-Sis (Brasseur 1862), Castillo (1977), and Anleu (Fidel 1996), and those made from the same Yurchenco recording by Friedlander (Yurchenco 1985), Navarrete (1994), and this author, span 146 years (1856-2002), and outwardly show little musical similarity, perhaps because of differing circumstances related to the four performance situations. The inconsistency of the transcriptions from Yurchenco's recording also highlights the difficulty of rendering the music in Western notation. Just as an example, a few of the pitch differences taken from these three scores: the beginning F#4 *alto* trumpet pitch in Friedlander's (Yurchenco

⁸⁹ According to Navarrete (n.d.:99), for *Rab'inal Achi* performances the slit-drum is placed right of the two trumpets. At the 2002 enactments that I observed, the arrangement of instruments was opposite to this. The ensemble's setup in 1985 as shown in a schematic by Fidel (1996) is a third variation, with the drum placed in between the two trumpets. This latter arrangement is the same as that described by Tedlock (2003:24) for the performance he watched in 1998.

1985) transcription is F4 in the transcriptions made by Navarrete (1994) and myself; and a *bajo* trumpet pitch I score as Eb4 is written as E4 by Navarrete, and B3 by Friedlander (*ibid.*; Yurchenco 1985). Leaving notation discrepancies aside, the 1945 recording simply sounds different (it is more heterophonic) compared to other known versions of the dance-drama.

Dissimilarity in music notations, transcriptions (and more recently—but to a lesser degree—recordings) support a conclusion, shared by Castillo (1977) and Yurchenco (p.c., 2000), that the absence of stylistic continuity over the years indicates a loss of a Precolumbian tradition. There is also the possibility of continuities which Western notation would not reveal, a prospect explored by Navarrete (1994), Rodriguez (1962), and O'Brien-Rothe (O'Brien 1975). Stripping away the music's foreground dissimilarities, notably pitch and duration elements, other commonalities emerge, which these researchers believe are more significant for highland Guatemalan Maya than melodic and rhythmic uniformity. The points of similarity on which they agree are that: (1) rhythmic complexity takes precedence over melody, (2) overt pitch specificity is of little concern, and (3) structure relies conspicuously on opening and closing formulas.

To this list could be added the presence of binary constructs, as in high pitch versus low pitch, and struck instruments versus blown ones, as well as a preference for handing down musical knowledge from father to son. Likewise, for the K'iche' *son*, "song of the ancestors," is in opposition to *piezas*, "foreign musics" (Navarrete n.d.:101). A more detailed analysis of the *sones* of the *Rab'inal Achi* is presented in Chapter 6.

An Introduction to a Comparison of Two Performances

In this section I will chart commonalties and differences in performance structures of the 1856 and 2002 versions of the *Rab'inal Achi* to determine if any music-related elements from the dance-play's first documented production can be considered to have survived (Table 4). Before comparing these two it is important to review an audiocassette owned by Coloch containing music from his 1995 production of the dance-play.⁹⁰ Included among its samplings of dialogue are four instrumental pieces, the first three identified by Coloch as "Entrada," "Son del K'iche'," and "El Baile."⁹¹ Each of these pieces is approximately one-to-two minutes in length (although the last two fade out before they conclude) and roughly matches in sound the long pieces performed during the 2002 performances. The fourth *son*, called a *son alto* by Coloch (*alto* here), is a 10-to-20 second fanfare that occurred thirteen times in versions of the performances I witnessed, and was also used to frame the longer *sones*. Coloch seemed pleased with the music performances on his tape, and therefore the four pieces on it will be used as current standards of acceptable *Rab'inal Achi* music.

Table 4

A Comparison of the Rab'inal Achi in Earliest and Latest Known Performance

| Forms | |
|--|--|
| <u>1856</u> | <u>2002</u> |
| Scene 1 | Scene 1 |
| Slit-drum cues the beginning of the play | Slit-drum cues the beginning of the play |
| (Dancing to <i>sones</i>) | (Dancing to <i>sones</i>) |
| "Principio del Baile" | "Entrada," <i>son</i> 1* (or <i>son</i> 2) |

⁹⁰ I was made aware of this audiocassette during my initial visit to Rabinal, August 6, 2001, when during an interview at his home Coloch brought it out and played it.

⁹¹ On another occasion Coloch identified these three pieces as "Son Rab'inal Achi," "Son K'iche Achi," and "Todos Grupos" (Coloch p.c., 2001)

| | |
|--|---|
| Quiché prince speaks | K'iche' prince speaks |
| “Entrada del Rabinal Achí” | “Son del K'iche,” <i>son 2</i> |
| Rabinal prince speaks | Rabinal prince speaks |
| “Son del Quiche Achí” | “El Baile,” <i>son 3</i> (or <i>son 2</i>) |
| Dialogic exchanges between the two princes | Dialogic exchanges between the two princes |
| (Probable <i>altos</i>) | <i>Altos</i> interspersed (13 total) |
| Scenes 2 and 3 | Scenes 2 and 3 |
| Dialogic exchanges between the two princes | Dialogic exchanges between the two princes |
| Scene 4 | Scene 4 |
| Meeting with the Rabinal king | Meeting with the Rabinal king |
| “Presentación del Quiché al Rey” | <i>Son 2</i> repeated |
| Quiché prince dances with the cloth | K'iche' prince dances with the cloth |
| “Trumpets sound” | <i>Son 2</i> repeated |
| Quiché prince dances with the princess | K'iche' prince dances with the princess |
| Dialogic exchanges between the King and the Quiché prince | Dialogic exchanges between the King and the K'iche' prince |
| | <i>Son 1</i> repeated |
| | Dialogic exchanges between the King and the K'iche' prince |
| “Son de Gurerro” | <i>Son 3</i> repeated |
| Quiché prince speaks | K'iche' prince speaks |
| Quiché prince fights with the warriors | K'iche' prince fights with the warriors |
| “La Muerta del Quiché Achí” | <i>Son 1</i> repeated |
| Quiché prince sacrifice | K'iche' prince sacrifice |
| Quiché prince resurrection | K'iche' prince resurrection |

*I assign numbers to the three *sones* in the sequence in which they occur on Coloch's 1995 tape (discography and videography). These numbers and their representative *son* titles are: *son 1*=Entrada, *son 2*=Son del K'iche', and *son 3*=El Baile. The repetition of numbers indicates the repetition of those particular *sones* at those points in the dance-

play. The *sones* not in parenthesis are the suggested standard order; the ones in parenthesis were the pieces played in versions at the *calvaria* and the church. The *son* titles for the Brasseur version are López-Sis.' The descriptions for dances and other events in the 2002 performances are this author's. Other music, dance, and event descriptions for the 1856 performance are translations from the Brasseur text.

Performances in 1856 and 2002

In 2002 I witnessed five performances of the *Rab'inal Achi* in Rabinal, including an enactment at the *calvaria* on the morning of January 23; another at noon the same day at the central church; and two that evening, once at each of two *cofradía* shrines, San Pablo and San Pedro. On January 24, beginning at noon at the shrine of San Pedro, I saw the dance-play presented simultaneously with several other *bailes*.⁹² As the structure of performance was roughly similar for all enactments, I have selected the one at the *calvaria* for comparative purposes because it was the first rendition of the day, when there were fewer spectators and less ancillary noise, making it easier to observe.

The *calvaria* performance (as with the other four performances) lasted approximately two hours, with musical accompaniment interspersed throughout, comprising about twenty-five minutes of the total time. Information on the running length of the January 1856 production is not included in Brasseur's book, but other aspects of the performance are, which aid in recreation of the event.

In Brasseur's book are cues for the trumpet and slit-drum, set apart from the dialogue in a different-sized type. Unfortunately, the López-Sis music notation in the appendix is less clear. There the titles of the *sones* do not always match the names used for *son* cues in Brasseur's transcript, as a result, the chronological ordering of the music

⁹² San Pedro is the barrio saint of *zona 1*, the quadrant of the town where the San Pablo *cofradía* house is located. In Rabinal, patron saints are sometimes paired, and possibly because of the proximity of the two houses, members from the respective *cofradías* share some obligations during saint-day ceremonies.

cues in the text has to be used to help determine the appropriate positions in the play for the transcribed *sones*. The music in the López-Sis score is organized under six headings (presumed *son* titles) but the beginnings and endings of each—such as could be shown by consistently used double bar lines—are not always clearly defined. Their titles and order of appearance are: (1) “Principio del Baile,” (2) “Entrada del Rabinal-Achí,” (3) “Son del Quiché,” (4) “Presentación del Quiché al Rey,” (5) “Son de Guerra,” and (6) “La Muerta del Quiché-Achí.”

The most glaring discrepancy between the Brasseur and Coloch versions concerns the number of *sones* employed. In contrast to the six *sones* scored in the 1862 appendix, in 2002 Coloch used three (each repeated one or more times). One explanation for this discrepancy is that three *sones* have been lost since the days of Brasseur. But as the six in his book do not differ significantly in notation from one another, an alternative possibility is that these six names represent titles for very similar or even identical compositions. In other words, the order presented in the appendix may be intended as a generalized match of music to the dramatic action of the script.⁹³ Viewed from another perspective, there are two places in Brasseur’s script that mention music without a corresponding score in the appendix. If these two are added to the six notated in the appendix the total number of *sones* would equal the eight played in witnessed enactments in 2002. Nonetheless, confusion over the accounting of the pieces in the book means that there is probably no way to know the actual number of *sones* that were performed during the 1856 enactment.

Commenting on the sound of the music in that production, Brasseur (1862:22-23) wrote that the dance-play began with the “melancholy sound of the *tun* (slit-drum)” and ended with music that was “grave and melancholy.” He also described the music as “extremely simple,” with a “small number of notes repeated constantly,” leading him to conclude that “European audiences would find it very monotonous.” The López-Sis

⁹³ The source of *son* titles used in Brasseur’s (1862) appendix, presumed to derive from López-Sis, has not been examined.

score includes only a few tempo markings: a brief “moderado” in the beginning, then “andante” until an “alegro” ending. A slit-drum solo, which begins “La Muerta del Quiché Achi” is described as “abajo modo.”⁹⁴ There are no dynamic markings.

With the exception of its beginning with a slit-drum solo, my impressions from live performances differ somewhat from Brasseur’s. Primarily, I would not characterize the music as simple. But as the instruments seemed to rely on a set number of patterns (probably a dozen or more) which were used to construct each of the *sones* and the *altos*, the recurrence of the patterns might strike some listeners as monotonous. An additional factor affecting perception is the volume level, which in 2002 was relatively loud and unchanging.

Concerning form, the music at that year’s *calvaria* performance consisted of three *sones* played at the beginning of the dance-play and five played near the end. All of these pieces basically duplicated the three *sones* identified on Coloch’s tape as “Entrada,” “Son del K’iche’,” and “El Baile.” Each of the three was repeated either two or three times, adding up to a total of eight renditions of *sones* for the entirety of the dance-play. One purpose of the *sones*, therefore, was to help structure the *baile*, with three placed at its beginning and five near its ending. The shorter *altos* (fanfares) were sounded after certain speeches by actors, and were supplemented by war cries, cymbals rattled in the left hands of certain male characters (representing shields), plus unspecified ancillary sounds (some made by members of the audience).⁹⁵ Dennis Tedlock (p.c., 2003) points out that the *Rab’inal Achi* dialogue is sometimes partly improvised, and it is possible that the number of *altos*, or longer *sones*, could be altered accordingly. Such alteration could account for the fourteen fanfares that Tedlock (2003) noted in 1998, the eighteen fanfares

⁹⁴ Brasseur’s statements on the music are my translations from the original French.

⁹⁵ The shields resemble medium-sized Western-style marching band cymbals with small metal objects attached to the center.

on Mace's tape (1972:discography and videography), and the two points in Brasseur's (1862) script where music is indicated without a corresponding notation in his appendix.

In 2002, "Son del K'iche'" was the *son* played for each of the first three dances at the *calvaria* (and the church). Notwithstanding the consistency of this structure at those locations, I believe that the more typical order for the first three pieces is "Entrada," Son del K'iche'," and "El Baile," as found on Mace's tape. (A proposal for why "Son del K'iche'" was substituted for the other two beginning *sones* is detailed in Chapter 6.) Although the sequences differ in the two respective performances, Brasseur's "Entrada del Rabinal" and Coloch's "Entrada" are likely related as they both announce the arrival of the Rabinal prince. The similarly titled "Son del Quiché Achí" (López-Sis) and "Son del K'iche'" (Coloch) announce the K'iche' prince. Coloch's "El Baile," could be a version of the *son* listed in Brasseur's appendix, "Principio del Baile." In Brasseur's text and Coloch's productions the initial *son* accompanies the actors in their first round dance. And according to both of these sources, after the third *son*, the dancing and accompanimental music ceases until their resumption in the fourth scene (Brasseur 1862; Coloch p.c., 2001).

In scene 4 of the 1862 script, the music continues with "Presentación del Quiché al Rey," during which the K'iche' prince and Ixok Mun dance a "fabric dance," with each actor holding an end of a length of cloth that had been a gift from the servant to the prince. A text cue follows: "The trumpets sound," introducing a dramatic dance between the K'iche' prince and Rabinal princess. In the appendix, there is no music specifically assigned to this dance, despite its significance in the storyline. The notated piece that follows is "Son de Guerre," which anticipates a ritual battle between the K'iche' prince and the warrior societies, segueing to the heart sacrifice of the K'iche' prince, which is the play's climactic moment, performed to the *son* "La Muerta del Quiché-Achí," which engages the entire cast in a round dance.

The scene 4 sequence of dances witnessed in 2002 at the *calvaria* loosely followed the 1856 order listed above (although an ensemble piece accompanied the prince and princess dance), with the various accompanimental *sones* also matching in sound the three compositions on Coloch's tape. In the penultimate *son*, accompanying the sacrifice of the K'iche' prince, he was on his knees and bowed as the other actors danced around him, alternately striking their small axes atop his head (except for the eagle and jaguar warriors, who draped small cloths across his face as they danced by). After death, as mentioned earlier, the K'iche' prince rose and joined the rest of the cast in its final dance.

Three similarities in performance form derived from this comparison of 1856 and 2002 enactments are: (1) a solo slit-drum signals the beginning of the dance-drama; (2) *sones* for ensemble dances frame the narrative text; and (3) *sones* introduce the leading characters in the play. The major differences are the six *son* titles listed in the 1856 appendix versus the three in 2002 (replicating Coloch's 1995 tape), the order of the *sones*, and the type of sacrifices depicted, a heart sacrifice in 1856 and a decapitation in 2002. Fanfares (*altos*), played after speeches in the 2002 version, are not mentioned for the 1856 performance, although Brasseur noted that the dialogue was sometimes interrupted by round dancing, which implies accompanimental music not otherwise described or transcribed.

Summary and Conclusions

This examination of the *Rab'inal Achi* addressed a number of issues first discussed by other researchers, including the source of Brasseur's script and the claims of legitimacy for the Pérez version. Based on the syntax of the dialogue and the accuracy of Postclassic history in the storyline, as well as the play's lack of concern with reconciling

the indigenous to the introduced (as is typically found in revival movement performance events), the *baile* is believed to have emerged in Prehispanic times, probably during the Postclassic era. The one dramatic alteration noted since its first documented performance in 1856 is the change in sacrifice type, from heart to head.

A review of *Rab'inal Achi* music in notations, recordings, and transcriptions produced by different investigators revealed much disparity, which might have been expected given the various approaches used for the documentation of its sound. But a lack of consistency concerning which instrumental pieces or portions of them were documented compromises comparisons. In spite of these inconsistencies, as based on a comparison of performances witnessed in 2002 to that described by Brasseur for 1856, at least four music aspects have been retained for nearly 150 years: (1) a continuation of instrumentation (two valveless trumpets and a slit-drum); (2) a slit-drum beginning the *baile*; (3) music introducing characters, and (4) a similar music form, with *sones* played at the beginning and ending, and used to frame the text. Two differences may be a change in the order and the number of *sones* performed, although these differences may instead constitute a change in the way the *sones* have been listed. In spite of these differences, on the whole there has been a continuation of performance form between 1856 and 2002, a remarkable illustration of K'iche' cultural conservation, but one that does not clearly establish the music used for the *Rab'inal Achi* as Precolumbian in origin.

Chapter 4

Su and Tambor

Introduction

With an overview of the instruments important in the performances of four K'iche' dance-plays having been presented in Chapter 1, and having focused on the valveless trumpet and slit-drum as essential to the *Rab'inah Achi*, I turn now to the duct flute, or *su*, and skin drum, or *tambor*, the instruments identified with the other *baile* of principal concern here, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. Compared to the slit-drum and valveless trumpet, there is ample archaeological and iconographical evidence of flutes and flute-like instruments, and skin drums in Prehispanic Maya areas.

The flutes discussed here are those that were observed in performances of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* at Cobán (in 2001) and at Rabinal (in 2002), as well as their possible prototypes. The characteristics considered include the materials used in their construction, types and shapes of flutes (and flute-like instruments), performance techniques, and the sounds of some representative contemporary and Precolumbian models. The discussions of skin drums will also be in terms of performance techniques, drum types, construction materials, possible Prehispanic and European predecessors, and the drums now used for highland Guatemalan conquest *bailes*. Three membranophone types will be covered in some detail: (1) the European-style military drum, (2) the indigenous pottery drum (*kai yum*), and (3) the indigenous waist-high wooden drum (*pax*).

Before proceeding, some terms related to flutes need clarification. Instruments of the flute family (including whistles and ocarinas) are those that generate pitches by deflecting air off a hard edge, and they are referred to generically as “edgetone instruments.” Differences exist among various types regarding shape, sound, and cultural association. In past research on Mesoamerican music, three forms of edgetone instruments—whistles, ocarinas, and flutes—have sometimes been considered as interchangeable. While most investigators (although not all) have correctly limited the term “flute” to a tubular-shaped edgetone instrument that sounds more than one pitch, the words whistle and ocarina have too often been used to refer to the same instrument, a misuse that has contributed to confusion concerning both the number of such instruments in Mesoamerica and their distribution. In this chapter the three instrument types will be more narrowly defined, namely, the whistle as an instrument that sounds only one pitch, regardless of shape; the ocarina as a vessel-shaped instrument that sounds more than one pitch; and the flute as a tubular-shaped instrument that sounds more than one pitch.⁹⁶ Thus, tubular-shaped edge-tone instruments which resemble flutes but which sound only one pitch are classified here as whistles.

Jose Franco (1971), a specialist on Mesoamerican flute systems, has determined that sound production for ancient Amerindian edgetone instruments was generated by the use of one of three airflow methods, which he calls (1) ductless, (2) duct, or (3) “airspring.”⁹⁷ On a ductless instrument a performer blows across the edge of the object,

⁹⁶ The number of pitches assigned to the edgetone-instruments listed in these categories would be those generated by a performer using a moderate force of air. In the Hornbostel and Sachs (1990) instrument classification system Mesoamerican duct flutes are listed as 411.121, duct-type whistles as 411.12, and duct-type ocarinas as 411.22.

⁹⁷ Alternately, Susan Rawcliffe (1992) has devised a classification system for Mesoamerican edgetone instruments according to shape: (1) tubular (duct, blowhole, or cross-blown); (2) vessel (duct and blowhole); (3) hybrids (chambers sharing air-duct, ball[s] and tube[s]); and (4) chamber duct (inner duct[s] [like Franco’s airspring type]). A third system devised by researchers Richard Payne and John Hartley classifies Mesoamerican edgetone aerophones by means of sound production: (1) cross blown (end-blown, notched, transverse, and vase) and (2) duct (without stops, freely moveable ball [slide whistle], vessel with stops, whistle pot [inner duct], bitonal whistles, and chamber duct [several ducts]) (Payne and Hartley 1992).

splitting the air at the edge-point and causing sound waves to emanate from there and spread out. A pop bottle is an example of this type; a more complex but equally familiar example is the transverse flute used in Western symphony orchestras. Despite the simplicity of their sound-making design, ductless airflow systems are rarely found on instruments in Mesoamerica. In the case of a duct flute, the performer exhales air through the instrument's proximal end, where a restricted opening (the duct) channels it to the back edge of an aperture. The air is split at that edge, creating sound waves that—though initiated differently—are similar in shape to those produced on a ductless flute. “Airspring” is a word coined by Franco to describe a Mesoamerican invention in sound-production, in which one or more ducts inside an edgetone instrument are activated by various performance processes. For example, a small amount of air blown into the opening of a flute having such a system might activate one duct, producing one pitch, while a larger amount of air might activate two (the second pitch produced by the activation of the interior duct) (*ibid.*).

Su Instruments

In Chapter 1 it was noted that K'iche' words for music instruments often differentiate them according to function or shape, making meanings interchangeable, as in the case of *tun* for both a slit-drum and a valveless trumpet, and *su* for two types of a straight-tubular instrument, incorporating either an edgetone mouthpiece or a double-reed (Horspool 1982:139; Martí 1998:139; Rawcliffe p.c., 2003; Stevenson 1968:81). In highland Guatemala it was discovered also that one of these two *su* instruments, when combined with a *tambor* (a local name for skin drum), was identified as providing the instrumental music for conquest-type *bailes*. In the case of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, the *su* is a tubular duct flute, of which there are countless Prehispanic

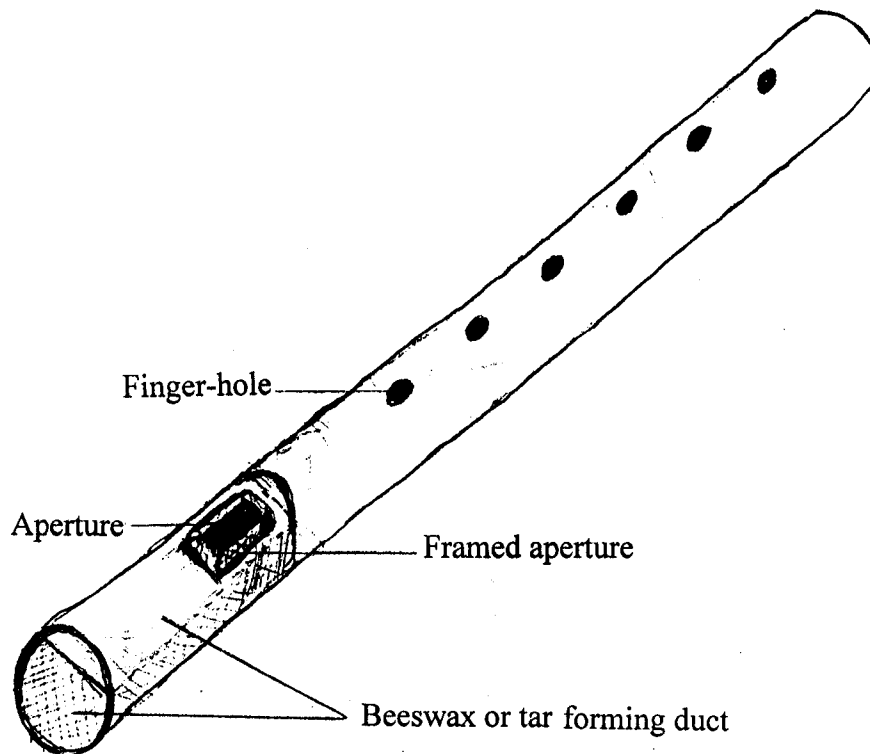
examples; in the case of the *Baile de la Conquista*, the *su* is the *chirimía*, an instrument not considered of Precolumbian Maya origin although its timbre has been described as similar to that of the airspring flute known as the goiter flute. Along with its shape, it is perhaps this timbral similarity that explains the *chirimía*'s consideration by the K'iche' as a *su*.

Modern Flutes of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

The edgetone *su* used in the ensemble that accompanied the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* observed in Cobán on August 4, 2001, was a duct flute made from a section of PVC (plastic) plumbing pipe, some 3 cm in diameter and 35 cm long (no. 411.12 in the Hornbostel and Sachs [1990] instrument classification system). This flute had six equidistant holes, drilled along a straight line, and a larger square-shaped aperture, or “window,” cut on the same side. At its proximal end, a portion of tar or beeswax had been inserted part-way into the tube, filling about 2 cm of the bottom half at a point about halfway between the proximal-end and the edge of the aperture closest to it, restricting the opening so that it functioned as a duct. More of the same resinous substance had been kneaded around the aperture, producing a ridge, 1.5 cm wide and 3 millimeter (mm) in depth, that outlined its perimeter (Figure 17). This ridge influenced the volume level of sound waves by controlling the direction and force of airflow at the point where it was split, and as a result affected the instrument's tone quality (Crossley-Holland 1980:10-13; Rawcliffe 1992). The higher the ridge the fewer audible overtones are incorporated into the sound of the fundamental tone, the instrument's lowest pitch (Rawcliffe p.c., 2003). (The acoustics of edgetone instruments are taken up again later in this chapter.)

Figure 17

Cobán Moros Flute



Cross-section of the PVC duct-flute used in the *Moros* performance, Cobán, Guatemala, August 4, 2001. Author's pencil drawing.

In the performance of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* observed at Rabinal on January 24, 2002, the duct flute was constructed from a metal tube that in other ways resembled the Cobán one described above. Unfortunately, I was unable to scrutinize this instrument to the same degree as the PVC flute, and therefore I do not know if beeswax or tar was used around its aperture or formed its duct.

Performers on two other duct flutes (as well as two other drummers) joined the duo that played for the *baile* in the procession that preceded the dance-play at Cobán.⁹⁶ Their instruments were constructed from a type of local cane known as *carrizo*. Two additional flute-drum duos in the procession preceding the Rabinal *Baile de los Moros y*

⁹⁶These duos did not seem coordinated, but they played almost non-stop as the procession made its way through the city's streets to the central church.

Cristianos performance used flutes made of the same material. In both the Cobán and Rabinal processions the cane flutes were roughly similar in size, shape, number of stops, and means of sound production to the PVC and metal ones.

From what I have been able to determine, the standard number of finger-holes for highland Guatemalan duct flutes used in the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* is six, although other numbers (from 3 to 7) have been occasionally reported (Horspool 1982; O'Brien-Rothe 1998b; Taylor 1999). As the PVC Cobán flute was the only one examined closely, its pitches are the only ones ascertained with some certainty. In performance, its six finger-holes, plus its open holes, yielded seven fundamental pitches. With all of the holes open, the pitch was an approximation of the Western pitch Ab₄, and when the hole nearest to the aperture was stopped the pitch was Gb₄. The next five stops, with the addition of a finger over the assigned hole, yielded the pitches F₄, Eb₄, Db₄, C₄, and Bb₃, consecutively. The Cobán flautist used the first three fingers of his left hand to cover the top three holes (nearer the embouchure) and the first three of his right hand to cover the bottom three. Some of the other flute players in Rabinal and Cobán used the opposite hands, and Horspool (1982:139) recorded the use of a fingering technique in Momostenango that employed the second, third, and fourth fingers of each hand. Due to the moderate force of air employed by all of the flute players observed, few overblown pitches were noted.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Overblown pitches are produced by a forceful exhaling of air. Typically, they are one or more of the upper partials of the overtone series relative to the lowest pitch of a given instrument.

Possible Prototypes for Modern Highland Guatemalan Edgetone Instruments

While it can be said that modern K'iche' flutes used for conquest-type dance-plays incorporate the same sound-making parts as are found on recorders, a kind of duct flute widely used in Europe during the Conquest era, there is good reason to believe that the Guatemalan versions are based as much, or more, on autochthonous Precolumbian prototypes. Tubular duct flutes recovered from Maya archaeological sites not only look and function in the same way as modern Guatemalan duct flutes, but in the case of ceramic ones they often have a raised structure around their aperture, in such examples made of clay; duplicating the form for the modern flute examined in Cobán. Ethnomusicologist Peter Crossley-Holland (1980:10) frequently noted this design feature for Prehispanic flutes of a culture located in the modern west-Mexican state Colima and gave it the name "framed aperture." Rawcliffe has since documented this design on instruments from other parts of Mexico and Central America, including Guatemala (Rawcliffe p.c., 2003). I am unaware of the framed aperture as an element common to duct flutes of European derivation.

The only known literary references to a particular type of flute that may have preceded the ones currently used in *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* productions are found in documents written by the K'iche during the sixteenth century, which briefly mention a flute used for a warrior dance. According to these documents this particular flute was probably made of bone. *Bak* means bone in K'iche' and *subakiba* (bone flute) is a term mentioned at least twice in the *Título C'oyoi* in the context of warrior dances (Carmack 1973:351). Bone flutes are also described in the *Popol Vuh*, where they are included among the symbols of lordship ceremonially given to three members of the dominant K'iche' lineage by an even more important Yucatan ruler, Nacxit (Tedlock 1987:328). In the Lowland Maya document *Chilam Balam*, Nacxit is further mentioned as a manifestation of the Mesoamerican cultural hero, Quetzalcoatl (*El libro de los libros de Chilam Balam* 1948:147). Due to the association of the bone flute with K'iche'

royalty and their warriors, bone may have been a preferred—or perhaps culturally essential—material for flutes used for the Postclassic warrior dance.

A reputed Prehispanic bone flute purchased by the music scholar Vincente Mendoza at an antiquities shop in Oaxaca (northwest of Guatemala) has six finger-holes, duplicating the number found for flutes in witnessed K'iche' conquest *bailes* and related processions (Stevenson 1968:81). A second bone flute, documented by Robert Stevenson, apparently with better Prehispanic credentials (but with five finger holes), is said to be Toltec, of the dominant group of the Postclassic era (*ibid.*). In spite of the fragility of the material, more than 125 hollow bones of various lengths, from birds and mammals (including humans), have been uncovered at Lowland and Highland Maya archaeological sites (O'Brien 1983:14). Hollowed-out bones have been reported in the Guatemalan highlands at Kaminaljuyú, Zacaleu, Nebaj, and at various smaller sites on the Motagua River (Borhegyi 1965:450; Dixon 1958:57; O'Brien 1983:Map; Smith and Kidder 1943:161). In addition, reports from Colonial chroniclers in Maya lands describe musicians playing flutes and flute-like instruments made of bone (Healy 1988:27). Landa reported that the Yucatan Maya used deer-bone whistles for their dances (Stevenson 2001b:357).

Despite the evidence of bone as a K'iche' flute material, intact edgetone instruments of clay are the only types that have been verified archaeologically, even though the number of these fluctuates according to time periods. Late-Classic-era ceramic edgetone instruments are relatively common to highland Guatemala, for example, but few have been found for most earlier and later eras, including the Postclassic (Borhegyi 1965:49). The drop-off in ceramic aerophones after the Classic period could be ascribed to the scaling back of edgetone-instrument manufacture or a change in materials. Yet over time, the most commonly found edgetone instruments in highland Guatemala are ceramic duct whistles or ocarinas in the shapes of human figures. Two such ocarinas representative of the style were discovered near the northern highland

town, Nebaj. The first described here is from the Late Classic and is rather large, 21 cm, with its front shaped in a mold, a factor that may have been necessitated by its size. The figure on the front wears a skirt, a longer apron, and a sprouting headdress, and carries a rattle in each hand. The resonance chamber was affixed by hand to the back of the ocarina, and pitch change was activated by four finger-holes aligned in a rectangle, roughly reflecting the outline of the shape of the figure on the front, with an external duct mouthpiece placed in the middle of, and slightly below, the bottom two holes (Smith and Kidder 1951:Figure no. 87).

The second, smaller (16.7 cm), Nebaj figurine is older (Early Classic), but somewhat similar in appearance to the first, with a mold-made front and a hand-shaped back. This ocarina, however, has two instead of four finger-holes, with the duct mouthpiece centered between and slightly below the two (*ibid.*). On both instruments, the figure would have appeared to face out when the ocarinas were played.

Along with these two examples, I have examined six large Late-Classic highland Guatemalan ceramic figurine duct ocarinas (each approximately 23 cm) at the Museo El Príncipe Maya in Cobán, all representing a similar cross-legged figure (as based on the figure's appearance and adornments, probably a woman) wearing a necklace, bracelets, earspools, and an elaborate feathered-hat, and holding an incense ladle in the right hand (Figure 18). The back of each figurine has four stops and a duct mouthpiece, in a pattern duplicating that found on the first of the Nebaj ocarinas described above. In addition, three non-figurine ceramic duct ocarinas were discovered at the highland site of Zaculeu, which also included pellets as a second sound maker (Woodbury and Trik 1953). Isolated examples of other *terra-cotta* figurine and non-figurine ocarinas and whistles are known from other sites in the region (Borhegyi 1965).

In spite of the predominance of clay whistles and ocarinas in archaeological contexts and the K'iche' written record documenting bone flutes for the warrior dance, it is likely that most edgetone instruments in Postclassic highland Guatemala were

constructed of cane, like the flutes of *carrizo* played in the region today. But cane does not preserve well, and there are no known examples of K'iche' edgetone instruments of this material from the Prehispanic era.

Figure 18

Late-Classic Highland Guatemala Maya Figurine Ocarina



One of six similar ceramic ocarinas as seen from the front. The resonant chamber with four finger-holes and duct mouthpiece is on the back. Museo El Príncipe Maya, Cobán, Guatemala. Author's pen drawing.

Possible Prehispanic Maya Edgetone Instrument Performance Techniques

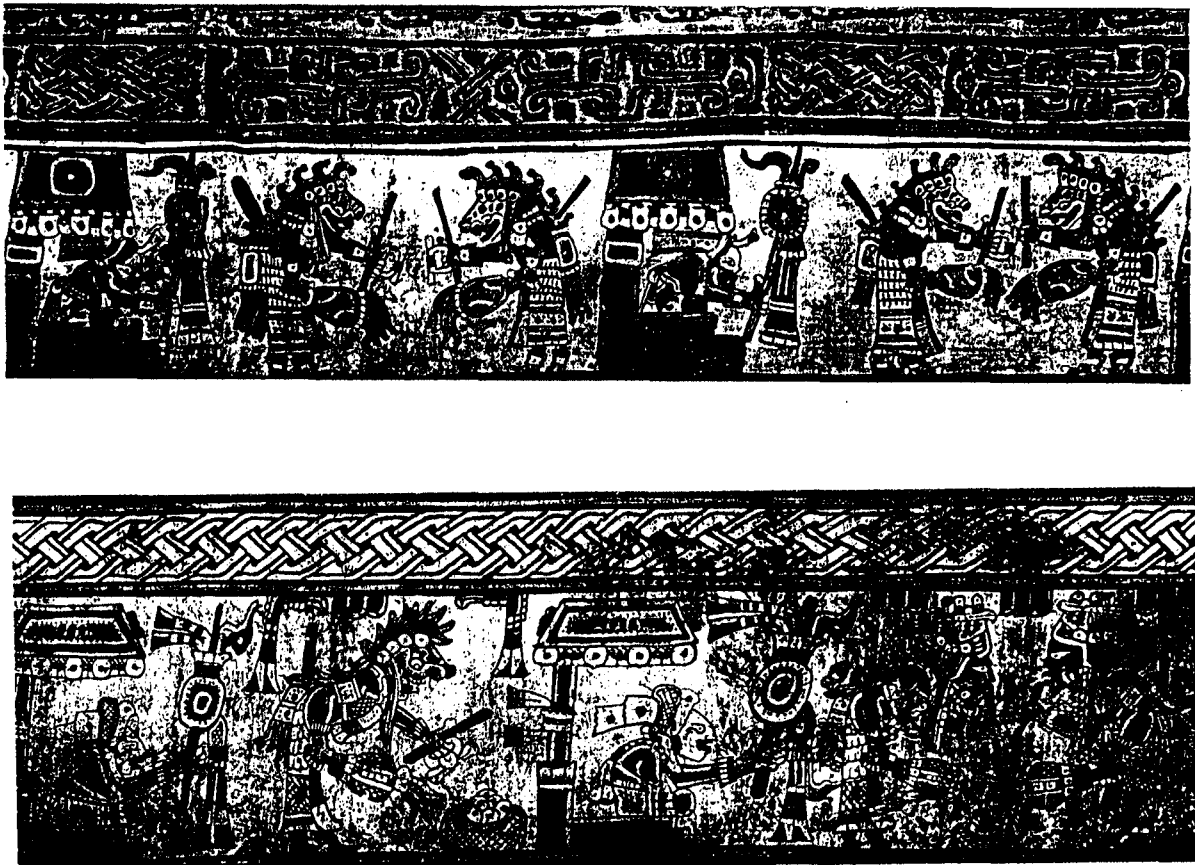
There are many more Mesoamerican edgetone-instrument artifacts than Prehispanic artworks depicting the instrument, but those few represented do reveal information concerning Prehispanic performance techniques lacking elsewhere. Paintings that include such Maya instruments generally depict one or two flute players, and more often than not the flute player is shown simultaneously fingering the flute with one hand while shaking a container rattle with the other. On the highland Guatemalan Chamá vase Kerr K6995 just such an instrumental combination is shown. The musician (painted twice and in the same pose) appears frontally, with his head in left profile and covered by a crosshatched armadillo mask. He is kneeling on his right knee with his left leg bent, and his right hand is fingering the downward-facing flute while his left hand holds the rattle above his head.

More telling for music research are the scenes painted on Kerr vases 4628, 4629, and 4968, which are thought to convey moments in a sequence of events pertaining to Classic-era Lowland Maya flute-rattle performance. The three vases appear to feature the same general scene, although the specific persons and places represented are different, and only one of these vases, 4629, actually shows flutes being played. On all three an elite individual with a staff peers intently from atop a pyramid at similarly dressed musicians, in animal masks and long skirts, who face each other while holding out what appear to be tubular flutes in one hand and feather-tipped rattles gripped by their sides in the other. On vase 4629, four musicians are shown, but I suggest that they represent the same two individuals at different moments in the same event. In one of the two representations the pair are presented in the pre-performance costume and pose described above, and in the other they are shown with their masks removed and with flutes at their mouths. In this latter scene, they are bent sharply forward at the waist and while still facing one another finger their flutes with one hand and hold their rattles loosely with the other. As the composition on all of the three vases includes at least one masked musician

in the pre-performance costume and pose, the scene is hypothesized as representing formal events in a ritual (Figure 19). Such formality is not currently observed in K'iche' productions of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, although the *Moros* flautists do tend to point their instruments towards the ground while playing them.

Figure 19

Prehispanic Maya Flute-Rattle Performance Sequence



Kerr vases, file nos. 4628 (top) and 4629 (bottom). Reproduced by permission of Justin Kerr (1989-2000). Photocopy.

A Brief History of Mesoamerican Edgetone Instruments

The oldest edgetone instruments known for Mesoamerica are small simple ceramic whistles (with or without duct mouthpieces) ascribed to the Preclassic era, which are often made in anthropomorphic or zoomorphic shapes. Their fabrication from the same clays used in figurines and miniature effigy vessels implies that whistle construction may have been a byproduct of experiments in figurine and effigy manufacture (Drucker 1943; Weiant 1943). Holes unintentionally created in the clay figures during the firing process might have provoked curiosity in the makers, who in blowing air across the edges of the holes would have discovered sounds. Once the sound-making potential of clay objects with strategically placed holes was discovered, deliberate ceramic whistle manufacture might have begun, along with experiments in designs that could affect and control the sounds. Subsequently, zoomorphic whistles may have been given their shapes and sounds in order to imitate or call the animal depicted in the design. This interest in duplicating the sounds found in nature might have initiated a long-lasting pan-cultural fascination with timbre; a fascination confirmed by the wide array of timbres detected for the various Mesoamerican edgetone instruments discovered.

Simple whistles have been uncovered at many early Mesoamerican sites, including Lowland Maya ones like Uaxactún and smaller communities along the Guatemalan Pacific coast, but the oldest known Mesoamerican edgetone instruments of acoustical complexity are the large ceramic duct ocarinas with multiple chambers found in the Central Mexican Highlands at the Preclassic sites of Tlatilco and Tlapacoya (Borhegyi 1965; Grove 1987).

By the Classic era the full range of edgetone types now considered characteristic of Mesoamerican societies was either being locally manufactured or was available by trade throughout what would become Mexico and Central America, although during this time there were fluctuations in the number and types for certain locales. Archaeological evidence and Colonial reports attest to a large assortment of Classic-era Mesoamerican

edgetone instruments including multiple-tube duct flutes; panpipes; figurine duct ocarinas, some with polyglobular chambers; slide-whistles; duct flute and rattle combinations; and other combinatorial forms. Many, but not all, of these edgetone instruments continued to be made up until, and even after the arrival of the Spanish (Woodbury and Trik 1953).

Although a majority of the above edgetone aerophone types were pan-cultural, certain ones appear to have been associated with specific Mesoamerican societies. Short single-tube ceramic duct flutes with flower-like bells and four stops are diagnostic of the Postclassic Aztec culture, for instance, while multiple-tube ceramic duct flutes of three or more tubes are typically associated with Classic-era Gulf Coast cultures (Stevenson 1968:81; 83). The large Late-Classic figurine duct ocarinas described earlier were not exclusive to highland Guatemala, but they are commonly found there and also at Maya or Maya-related sites along the Gulf of Mexico Coast.

Possible Indigenous Prototypes for the Double-Reed Su

For the *Baile de los Conquista*, the *su* used along with a *tambor* is a European-derived double-reed instrument known in Latin America by its Spanish name, *chirimía*.¹⁰⁰ As the *baile* it accompanies is not central to this study, this instrument is only of peripheral interest here, but as its characteristically nasal sound is very similar to that made by the Precolumbian Maya edgetone instrument known as the goiter flute, a few details concerning this type deserve mention.

The goiter flute is so-named because of the goiter-shaped bulb attached to the instrument, usually near the mouthpiece end (Stevenson 2001b:357). This bulb is in

¹⁰⁰ In 2001 and 2002 I viewed at least a dozen *chirimías* in highland Guatemala. These were all made of cherry wood and had six stops.

essence an ocarina, a second edgetone instrument affixed to the flute, which produces a second sound that blends with the sound(s) generated by the tubular part of the instrument. (The bulb is sometimes in the shape of an animal or part of an animal, such as a pelican or a bat's head.) The timbre of the goiter flute varies according to the sizes of the two ducts, their distance from each other, and the spatial dimensions of the sound-making parts (Rawcliffe p.c., 2003). Although some instruments of this type have finger holes (usually one or two), and are therefore correctly called flutes, others are restricted to one fundamental pitch, and are more correctly "goiter whistles." In either case, the instrument type is somewhat common. I have located three in music-related publications (Martí 1998; Rawcliffe 1992; Stevenson 2001a), and have seen one of these on display, at the Museo de Antropología e Historia in Merida (with a bat-head goiter [shown in Stevenson 2001a]). I have also seen a second goiter flute at that location, a third one, from Jaina Island now at the community museum in Hecelchakan, Campeche, and a fourth one ascribed to a highland site at the Museo El Príncipe Maya in Cobán (Figure 20). Goiter flutes continue to be found, and four (averaging 18.5 cm in length) were recently excavated from the Lowland site Pacbitan, in what is now Belize, further substantiating the instrument's Precolumbian provenance (Healy 1988:30). (Each of the four goiter flutes I viewed also approximated 18.5 cm in length.)

Figure 20

Goiter Flute



Goiter flute with bat-head goiter. Museo de Antropología e Historia in Merida. Author's ink drawing.

In addition, in his survey of ancient Maya instruments, archaeologist Norman Hammond (1972b:225) reprinted accounts by Landa and Herrera describing a “five-holed reed oboe” (homemade *chirimía*), which Hammond suggests may have been an indigenous reed instrument, although he acknowledges that there is no evidence—nor would there likely be any—for it in the Prehispanic record. Nevertheless, the Lacandon, an isolated Lowland Maya group, today play a homemade double-reed instrument (no name given by source) that could conceivably be a remnant of this Precolumbian type (Stevenson 1968).

Sounds of the Mesoamerican Edgetone Instruments

Although six is the number of stops on the Oaxaca bone flute, and on a ceramic Maya one from Jaina Island (Martí 1955:114), this number does not appear on archaeologically recovered edgetone instruments often enough to constitute a standard. In fact, Prehispanic Maya flutes have been discovered with finger-holes ranging in number from one to eleven, the latter example being a single large multiple-tube specimen (Martí 1998:86-87).

Edgetone pitches are normally rich in overtones. In fact, the characteristic whistle-like sound of a flute is a result of the instrument’s emphasis of even-numbered partials of the overtone series. Moreover, some edgetone instruments produce partials at volume levels equal to or louder than the volume of their fundamental tones. To a certain extent, the pitches or timbres of a given flute as produced by one performer may be different than those produced by another, even when the second performer uses the same finger position(s).

Intact edgetone aerophones recovered archaeologically can at least present the full range of pitch and timbral options available to such an instrument, in contrast to certain

other instrument types, such as chordophones.¹⁰¹ Indeed, it is not so difficult to at least determine the ranges of possible pitches and timbres on a flute, whistle, or ocarina. This can be accomplished by measuring their pitches in a systematic manner, such as by first playing the instrument with no finger-holes covered, followed by measurements of each configuration of covered stops, with all of the sounds produced at a pre-determined range of volume levels. Such study should yield both the fundamental and overblown pitches for each stop as well as the open holes.

Although I have been unable to locate an acoustic study of Maya edgetone instruments attributable to highland Guatemala archaeological sites, I have benefited from the work of Felipe Flores Dorantes and Lorenza Flores García on Lowland Maya whistles and ocarinas (Flores and Flores 1981).

In choosing to limit their examination to what they called Maya whistles (although it in fact includes ocarinas), Flores and Flores intended in part to develop methods useful for future acoustical studies of Prehistoric instruments, and their choice of instruments of limited pitch-making potential was to allow better monitoring of the effectiveness of their research methods. Of the 355 ceramic duct whistles or ocarinas they examined, the greater number by a large margin (57%), were attributable to the Yucatan necropolis, Jaina Island (*ibid.*:7). Most of the rest were also from the southern Gulf Coast region (*ibid.*), a part of Mesoamerica that had a documented impact on the K'iche' during the latter's Postclassic cultural apogee. In fact, the ocarinas studied were predominantly of the figurine type described for Late-Classic highland Guatemala.

A total of 401 pitches were available on the whistles and ocarinas Flores and Flores studied. The most common were found to be C4 and E4, occurring twenty-two times; the second most frequent were G4 and G#4, with twenty examples each. The least typical were E2, G#2, A#2, C3, C#6, D6, D#6, and F6, with one example apiece. The

¹⁰¹ Strings (such as are used for harps) easily break over time, and if they do not, their tension will certainly change. Therefore, if even preserved, the pitches produced by strings on an ancient instrument cannot be assumed to reflect the original tuning(s) of that instrument.

lowest to highest pitches of the 355 instruments covered a range of five octaves (E2-F6), and all twelve pitches of the Western-chromatic scale were documented in at least three of those ranges. Discounting octave-specificity, the most common pitch was G, found in forty-nine instances, and the least common was F#, found in twenty. The number of pitches according to the Western chromatic scale, in order of preference was: G=49, A=37, C=37, E=35, G#=35, A#=35, D#=34, F=33, D=31, B=30, C#=25, and F#=20. The latter five pitches, F, D, B, C#, and F# fell below the average number of pitches produced in total for the examined instruments (*ibid.*:53-54).¹⁰²

A second music element considered was amplitude (*ibid.*:57-59). It was discovered that instruments sounding the pitch G did so at a wider range of volume levels than instruments sounding other pitches. Instruments with similarly wide dynamic ranges sounded the pitches C, D, and D#. The wider volume range for instruments yielding G, C, and D# relative to the other nine pitches could be hypothesized as indicating pitch preferences as these pitches were also frequently sounded. (D, however, occurred below the average number.) Familiar pitches might best be used to carry additional audio information (like varying volume), particularly if instrumental music had some signaling purpose (as is currently found in K'iche' dance-plays). But the fact that D was also a pitch sounded at a wide compass of volume levels suggests that volume diversity may not be an effective way to assess pitch preference. Nevertheless, the preponderance of G and A in this sample (both for frequency of occurrence and volume diversity) is interesting, as these are also common pitches of the slit-drums documented in Chapter 2.

A music element that applied specifically to ocarinas was intervals (*ibid.*:61). Those intervals documented were predominantly major seconds. Minor thirds were the second most frequent, followed by major thirds and minor seconds. The large percentage of thirds for ocarinas, like the pitches G and A, may be a significant find as Castañeda

¹⁰² One discrepancy in the Flores and Flores (1981:53) pitch table is that what they catalogue as the pitch "Do indice 5" (C3) is actually La (A3).

and Mendoza (1933) found thirds to comprise half of the interval-type for the two tongues of the fourteen examined slit-drums. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 2, thirds are the most common interval documented for the slit-drums heard in performances of the *Rab'inal Achi* as notated in 1921 (Castillo 1977) and 1986 (Fidel 1996), and recorded in 1945 (*Music of the Maya-Quichés of Guatemala: discography and videography*), 1972 (Mace, discography and videography), and 1995 (Coloch, discography and videography).

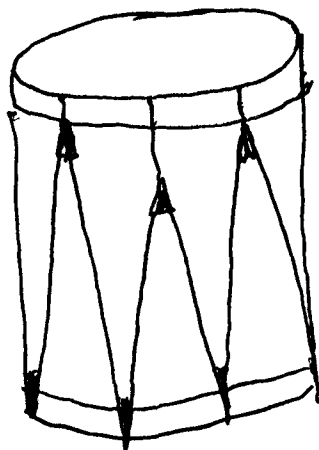
The Tambor, the Modern Skin Drum of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

The tambors witnessed at the Cobán and Rabinal performances of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* were roughly the same size, approximately 60-cm long and 40 cm in diameter. The instruments resemble a type of double-headed rope-tension skin drum common in Latin America (known in South America as a *bombo*, and catalogued as no. 211.11 in the Hornbostel and Sachs [1990] system). Regarding their construction the Cobán drummer, Libereo (p.c., 2001), informed me that the frame of his drum was made of a wood known as *mora*, and that the membrane on one side was the skin of a male deer and on the other that of a female.¹⁰³ The two skins were affixed to the drum frame by thin ropes that ran diagonally along the drum body and were alternately threaded through perforations made in the circumference edges of each skin, tying the top skin to the bottom one. Pieces of leather that were secured around the ropes could be moved up or down to tighten or loosen one or the other membrane in order to tune the instrument. Thus strung, the ropes created the appearance of several “V and Y” shapes along the vertical circumference edge of the drum frame (Figure 21).

¹⁰³ *Mora* is a local name for the fruit of a tree that is prized for cabinetry. It may derive from the Spanish word, *moreno(a)*, which means “dark.” A similar-sounding k'iche' word, *mor*, is translated as “wild” (Edmonson 1976:74).

Figure 21

Highland Guatemalan Moros Tambor



Tambor used by Libereo at Cobán, Guatemala, August 3, 2001. Author's pen drawing.

In performance, the drummers held a mallet in each hand as if gripping a spoon. Their stroking pattern was to alternately strike the drum with one mallet and then the other, sometimes bringing them down on different areas of the skin surface to elicit different timbres. At the Rabinal performance of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* the drummer sat on the ground behind his drum, which was placed on the ground directly in front of him. At the performance at Cobán, where the musicians sat on the entrance steps to the church, the drummer sat one step higher than the one on which his drum was placed. During the informal demonstrations of the music used for conquest *bailes* given at the San Domingo *cofradía* house before the Cobán *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* performance, the two drummers placed their drums on the patio floor and sat behind them in chairs. In processions preceding *baile* enactments in both towns the *tambor* was carried by a porter with a tumpline secured to the drum frame and wrapped around the man's forehead or chest. In some instances the drum porter was also the flautist the

drummer was paired with, but this role did not prohibit him from performing on his flute as both musicians walked through the town.

Like Libereo, Miguel Sum Meja (p.c., 2001), another drummer in Cobán specializing in the music for conquest *bailes*, used both male and female deerskins for his drum membranes. While demonstrating the music for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* for me, he played on one side of his drum, and when demonstrating the music for the *Baile de la Conquista* he played on the other side. When turning his drum over, Sum Meja made a dramatic gesture with his arms and face, as if indicating that I would soon notice a difference in sound, but to my ears the timbre or pitch of his drum did not change significantly from one side to the other. As duality is a major ordering principle in Maya cosmology, the change of drumheads for different dance-plays may suggest a concern with metaphysical balancing that supersedes timbral or pitch differences.

The drumsticks used by both Libereo and Sum Meja were thin sticks of wood approximately 30 cm long and tipped with rubber. The latter material was either in short supply or rather expensive, as Libereo (p.c., 2001) indicated that the rubber used for his mallets came from the soles of his discarded wading-boots.

Cultural Influences on Modern Highland Guatemalan Tambors

Although there is evidence that a drum and flute ensemble provided the accompaniment to what were called warrior dances in Postclassic highland Guatemala, the skin drum now paired with duct flutes for conquest *bailes* owes more to introduced European designs than to indigenous ones, raising the question of why an indigenous version would not continue to be used, as indigenous versions of other instruments are still played. (Some answers to this question will be offered shortly.)

Archaeological and iconographical records of Precolumbian Maya

membranophones confirm two primary types, the small vase-shaped pottery drum called *kai yum* by the Lacandon Maya, and the waist-high pan-Mesoamerican drum called *huehuetl* by the Aztecs and *pax* or *zacatan* by the highland Maya (Hammond 1972a; Stevenson 1968). I will use the term *pax* in this discussion. In addition to these two skin drum types, Carmack (1981:61) writes that in Prehispanic wars a drum made from gourd was used with a flute to signal to the K'iche' when to attack. If true, this may be the type of skin drum described in indigenous documents that was paired with the bone flute for K'iche' warrior dances, but as it was of gourd it would not be expected to survive from Postclassic times, and I know of no archaeological evidence of such a drum from the highlands. It is conceivable, nevertheless, that the gourd drum, if it existed, may have been played with mallets, used double skins, or used ropes to secure the skins, all of which are characteristic of modern *tambors*.

In Precolumbian iconography both the pottery drum and the *pax* are shown with a single head (usually of animal skin), which was attached to the top of a hollow-cylinder frame and struck with a musician's hand(s). The skins were apparently attached by glue, as no ropes are shown. Iconographical evidence includes paintings of the *pax* on highland Guatemala pottery, most conspicuously the Chamá vases catalogued by Kerr as no. 3332 and K. 5104. On Kerr 3332, an opossum in a wide-brimmed sombrero-like hat is depicted playing a jaguar-skinned *pax* for other animals, who are shown dancing (Figure 22); on Kerr K. 5104 an individual in an armadillo costume also accompanies dancers dressed as animals, playing a drum with a cross-hatched membrane (perhaps representing snake-skin). (I suspect that this use of animal imagery concerns animal attributes assigned to individuals playing archetypal roles in rituals.)¹⁰⁴ In addition to the

¹⁰⁴ In the *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1987; 1996) six dances are named for animals. These include the armadillo (*iboy*), the weasel (*kux*), the macaw (*itzul*), the owl (*pu'huy*), the centipede (*xtzul*), and by implication ("deer dance place"), the deer dance (*kej*) (Kurath and Martí 1964:213-14). In his dictionary, Edmonson (1976:145) lists an armadillo dance that survived into colonial times, performed in sixteenth century Chichicastenango.

waist-high Maya drums shown on the two Chamá vases, I have counted five other *paxes* in Maya paintings, and one carved on a stele (no. 3 from Ceibal, Guatemala), the most famous of which are probably those shown in the Lowland Maya murals at Bonampak (Room no. 1) and Santa Rita.¹⁰⁵

Figure 22

Pax Performance



Kerr vase 3332. Reproduced by permission of Justin Kerr (1989-2000). Photocopy.

Like the pan-Mesoamerican slit-drum (*tun* or *teponaztli*) discussed in earlier chapters, the *pax* is still used in Mexico. Ethnographer Carl Lumholtz (1902b:32-35) described a version of it made from the log of an oak tree and covered by deer skin which was performed on at the turn of the century by an isolated Amerindian group, the Huichol. What is remarkable about this drum is that the bottom of it was cut to form three legs in the stepped shape characteristic of the *talud tablero*, first developed by Teotihuacáanos more than a thousand years earlier and almost always found as the shape

¹⁰⁵ The three other examples of the Maya *pax* include those shown in the vase paintings: Kerr nos. 3247, 3007, and Coe no. 33. This instrument is number 211.11 in the Hornbostel and Sachs (1990) instrument classification system.

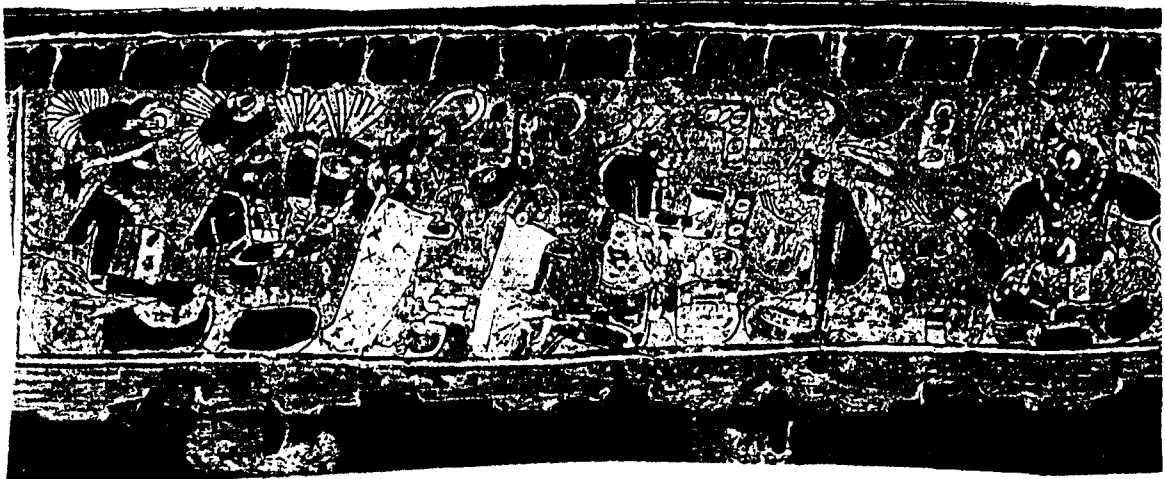
of the legs for this instrument in Prehispanic artworks (*ibid.*). Yet in spite of its documented use by the Maya, and its continuation in some parts of Mexico and Central America, the *pax* is no longer played by the Maya of highland Guatemala.

On Kerr vase file no. 1563 is a painting of the pottery drum *kai yum*, which shows the instrument in at least one of the ways it was played. In the depicted scene, two identically dressed human percussionists are seated cross-legged next to each other along with several other figures partaking of food and drink in a ritualized manner. One of the two musicians holds a container rattle in each hand while the other holds a decorated *kai yum* in the crook of his right arm with the instrument positioned parallel to the ground. The drum shown is slightly larger relative to the figure holding it than drums known from archaeological sites would be compared to the average height of a modern-day K'iche' man (estimated at 170 cm).¹⁰⁶ Based on the height of the Prehispanic musician depicted, I would calculate the length of the instrument that served as the model for this painting as 60 cm. The drummer's right hand steadies the instrument in a horizontal position by gripping it several centimeters below its pronounced lip. Due to the fact that this hand is far removed from the drum's assumed membrane surface; the unseen left hand must be considered the one used to strike the instrument (Figure 23). This assumption is reinforced by the technique demonstrated on a clay sculpture from the Belize site, Lubaantún, depicting an individual cradling a *kai yum* with his right arm crooked at a 90° angle while holding a container rattle in his right hand and striking the drum skin with the palm of his left hand (Hammond 1972b:223).

¹⁰⁶ Recovered pottery drums range from 15.6 to 45 cm in length. There are at least twenty-three examples that have been recovered from archaeological sites, including those from: Pacbitun, Barton Ramie, Benque Viejo, San Jose, Altun Ha, Zaculeu, Lubaantún, Uaxactún, Tecolpan, Piedras Negras, Jaina island and at least one unspecified Yucatan site (the latter two now on display in Merida), Nebaj, Altar de Sacrificios, Yalloch Nakum, Flores, near Cobán, near Villahermosa, and five from unspecified sites in the Belize valley. This information is derived from instruments seen in museums as well as listings in Hammond (1972a), Bohegyi (1965), and Healy (1988).

Figure 23

Kai Yum Performance



Kerr vase file no. 1563. Reproduced by permission of Justin Kerr (1989-2000). Photocopy.

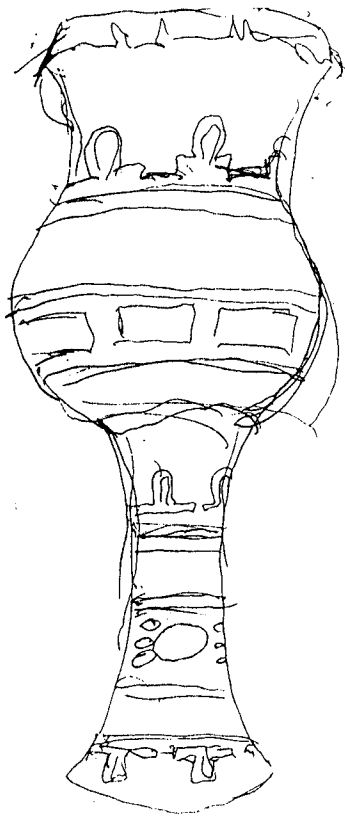
Unlike the *pax*, which was pan-Mesoamerican and went by many names, the *kai yum* seems to be exclusively Maya. Furthermore, the Lacandon, living today in the upper-Usumacinta river valley (just north of the western Guatemalan highlands) continue to play a ceramic drum that resembles archaeologically recovered versions of this pottery drum. Because they are the only known group who continue to play a version of the instrument, I have decided to use their word for it, *kai yum*. Moreover, the Lacandon not only call the pottery drum by this name, but view it as the manifestation of their god of music, also called Kai Yum (Hammond 1972a:129). In fact, the sound of the drum is equated with the voice of this god, and I remind the reader that in Chapter 2, it was noted that the K'iche' believe the sound of their slit-drum represents the voice of their god Tojil. The related-sounding word *k'ojom* is a K'iche term for skin drum as well as for music.

Intact pottery drums or the fragments of these instruments are rather commonly found in Maya excavations, and a well-preserved one was discovered at Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951:72-73; Stoeckli p.c., 2003). This drum, open at both ends, is 45 cm tall and

pedestal shaped, with the lower half thinner than the upper, and with its middle section wider than either. The drum's fired-clay surface is uniformly coated with a cream-colored slip except for its upper rim, which would make sense if, as suspected, glue was used to secure a membrane. The smooth surface that results from a slipped finish would resist glue. I have observed three similar instruments in museums in two towns, one at the Museo El Príncipe Maya in Cobán and two at the Museo de Antropología e Historia in Merida (Figure 24).

Figure 24

Prehispanic Maya Pottery Drum



Museo El Príncipe Maya, Cobán, Guatemala. Author's pen drawing.

Hammond (1972a:127) defines two basic *kai yum* types, those with a “pedestal shape” (featuring “a wide body with outflaring sides mounted on a narrow cylindrical base”), and those with a “lampglass shape” (featuring “a bulbous body between a tall base and a long neck”).¹⁰⁷ Regardless of specific shape, *Kai yum* examples that have been found at Prehispanic Maya sites are almost always hollow on both ends, the wider of which would have been outfitted with a drumhead. I know of no Precolumbian *kai yum* with the original drumhead preserved.

A variation on the pottery-drum type is pictured in two of the four known Precolumbian Maya codices, the *Dresden Codex* (*Codex Dresdensis* 1964) and the (*Madrid*) *Tro-Cortesianos Codex* (1930). In each of these documents the instrument is depicted as double-framed with the two shafts sharing a single base. In the *Tro-Cortesianos Codex* the double-shafted drum (catalogued by Mayanist William Gates [1978] as M.157.a.3) constitutes a word-glyph, which probably translates as “offering” (*ibid.*:163; Thompson 1962:291). In addition, on page 37, in the right-hand panel (from the reader’s perspective), is a depiction of a striped dog, singing or baying while simultaneously using its front paws to play a double-shafted pottery drum set upright. The membrane edge of the instrument is shown clearly attached at the top of the shaft.¹⁰⁸

In the *Dresden Codex* (*Codex Dresdensis* 1964) the double-shafted *kai yum* appears twice, at the top and at the bottom of a three-panel page, 34, in the section known as the “Farmer’s Almanac” (Thompson 1972). In the bottom panel the rain god Chac is depicted in three separate poses, and in the pose farthest to the right (from the reader’s perspective) is shown playing a pottery drum. In the top right-hand panel painting, an

¹⁰⁷ The pedestal-shaped *kai yum* with a skin attached by glue is 211.131 in the Hornbostel and Sachs (1990) instrument classification system, and the lampglass-shaped one is 211.151.

¹⁰⁸ In the same panel a human figure is shown playing a smaller single-shaft hand-drum. This drum has three legs, suggesting the *talud tablero* motif characteristic of the *pax*, but it is also bulbous and short, and may instead represent a version of a *kai yum*. The focal point of the scene is a tall individual (probably the maize god) shown digging up soil with a stick and dropping seeds in the furrow.

unidentified *kai yum* drummer is part of an ensemble that also includes a stick-rattle player, a container-rattle player, and a flautist playing what could be a duct flute. The four performers are seated around a pyramid presumably making sounds to encourage a stalk of corn to grow from the up-turned nose of the decapitated corn-god resting on an earth-sign glyph at the top tier of the pyramid. On this page both Chac and the unidentified drummer are using their right hands to strike their drums, which are double-shafted and set upright with a skin affixed to the drum frame, indicated by the perimeter edge overlapping the shaft. In the top-panel painting, glyphs and elaborate sound-scrolls emerge from the cylinder part of the drum that is not being struck. From this example, a proposed explanation of the function of a second cylinder is that it was used as a sound projector, like a modern loudspeaker.

In contrast to the players of the K'iche' *tambors* currently used for conquest dances, the performers shown in almost all Prehispanic Maya illustrations beat their skin drums with their hands. A few Maya vase paintings show individuals striking some objects with what appear to be ball-ended mallets, but what is being struck in these paintings cannot be determined (perhaps a slit-drum, the best known Prehispanic instrument played with beaters) (see Kerr vase no. 3007). There is at least one Precolumbian example of a skin drum clearly shown being hit with mallets, although it is non-Maya. This sculpture, a crudely made representation of a seated figure striking a vertically placed skin drum with a mallet held in the right hand is attributed to a West Mexican Culture (Olsen 1998:15).

Regarding an indigenous precedent for the modern single-shaft double-skin *tambor*, Hammond (1972a:129-30) published a rubbing he made of three Late-Classic plaques from Lubaantún, perhaps representing such a drum. Only two of the rubbings are clear enough to interpret, and in both the drum looks like a modern bass drum (Hammond estimates each at around 50 cm in circumference) (*ibid.*:130). In one of the two representations, the instrument is played by a drummer who is at the rear of what appears

to be a group of seated musicians, one of whom holds a container rattle aloft in his left hand. The drummer is in left profile, and holds the “bass drum” in front of his body, which is turned to the viewer, in essence positioning the instrument in the same way as modern Western musicians do when marching. This drummer’s left hand is placed in the middle of the drum, but because Hammond’s reprint is not clear I cannot determine if this musician holds a mallet or simply makes a fist with his hand. Due to the position of the instrument, one also cannot know if this instrument had two skins, and the assumption that it did is solely based on the similarity of this instrument to the Western bass drum rather than the evidence presented. In the second representation a drummer appears to sit on a bass drum-like instrument, with only the left leg visible and dangling in front of the drum skin. One would have to assume that the other leg dangles in front of the drum’s other side, which perhaps had another skin, but as with the first picture described, there is no way to know this. In fact, the musician appears to beat the drum near his visible thigh with both hands, implying that this was the only side of the drum affixed with a skin.

Given the lack of evidence for mallet-played skin drums or double-skinned single shaft types, plus the lack of any evidence for the use of ropes to secure and tune drum skins, I believe that the skin drum now used by the K’iche’ for conquest *bailes* is more closely associated with European versions of the instrument. Consequently, of the four principal instruments examined in this dissertation, the slit-drum, the valveless trumpet, the duct flute, and the skin drum, the latter used for conquest *bailes* appears to be the most directly associated with a European predecessor.

In fact, the skin drums now used for conquest-type *bailes* in highland Guatemala are nearly identical to sixteenth and seventeenth-century European military-style drums (Blades 1980a; 1980b). The Maya apparently adopted this instrument following Conquest, and it may have been employed for conquest dance-plays precisely because it was the drum type that was sounded by the victors at battles between the Spanish and Maya armies. Of course it also may have been preferred over an indigenous version

because it was louder, easier to play, or to make, or for any of a number of other reasons not ascertained.

Summary and Conclusion

The Spanish may have introduced the *chirimía* and the *tambor*, like the conquest dance-dramas they accompany, into highland Guatemala. The modern equivalents of these instruments found in the highlands are nearly indistinguishable from European prototypes. The duct flute used for conquest *bailes* may have also been brought from Spain, but it is an instrument that was equally prevalent in Prehispanic Guatemala. One currently used flute examined in detail (from Cobán) had a framed aperture, a rather common characteristic of Prehispanic Mesoamerican edgetone instruments.

In order to trace the development of flute-like instruments in Mesoamerica, I have reviewed them according to three categories of design based on shape and the number of non-overblown pitches characteristic for each: whistles, capable of producing one pitch; ocarinas, vessel-shaped and capable of producing more than one pitch; and flutes, tubular-shaped and capable of producing more than one pitch. The earliest of these aerophones in Mesoamerica were simple ceramic whistles, which may have originated as byproducts of figurine and effigy manufacture, then developed as sound makers as their timbral potential began to be exploited. Interest in tone color probably first centered on an instrument's ability to imitate the sounds of animals, but eventually embraced sound colors of all types, contributing to the development of a wide variety of sound-making systems which evolved over time into edgetone aerophones sporting multiple-tubes, vessel-tube combinations, and other assorted shapes.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ One reason for instrument and animal association could be the instrument's use as an animal call for hunting purposes. Instruments also may have given voice to the animal spirit. A metaphysical relationship between animals and humans has much documentation in

Many edgetone-instrument types were used throughout Mesoamerica, at least during some Prehispanic periods, but others were associated with only one or a few cultures. A rather large ceramic ocarina type, partially mold-made and in anthropomorphic shapes, was an instrument diagnostic of the Late Classic and common to highland Guatemalan and Gulf Coast cultures. Bone flutes, listed in Colonial K'iche' written records, may have been the instrument of choice for the Prehispanic warrior dances described there. Although no extant Maya versions of the instrument have been found, there are over 125 hollow-bone fragments of varying lengths that have been recovered from Maya archaeological sites, some of which may once have been instruments (O'Brien 1983).

The *chirimía*, the double-reed *su* aerophone used for the *Baile de la Conquista*, was likely introduced from Europe to the New World after Conquest, but a whistle or flute known as the goiter flute has a similar "reedy" sound. In fact, the Lacandon Maya living near the Guatemalan highlands used a homemade version of this aerophone, which has led some ethnographers of the Colonial and later eras to suspect that the Lacandon instrument may have had an indigenous predecessor (Hammond 1972a; Stevenson 1968).

Prehispanic paintings of edgetone instruments suggest that the flute was often paired with a rattle, and that flute-rattle players were often paired in performances. The performers on these instruments are also frequently shown wearing masks, and their gestures suggest prescribed movements and postures, with the instrument extended before playing and pointed towards the ground when played. As mentioned, K'iche' flautists for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* currently play their instruments with the distal end pointed down. Arguing against an ergonomic reason for this is the fact that the heavier

Mesoamerica, and there is even a Maya glyph that represents this concept, shown as the king (*ahau*) symbol half covered by a jaguar pelt (Friedel, Schele, and Parker:442-43). In the Americas this animal spirit goes by many names; in modern K'iche' it is usually spelled *uay* (and pronounced "way"). In several Maya languages similar sounding words have been translated variously as to dream, to divine, or to transform (*ibid.*).

aerophone, trumpet, has been most often observed played with its bell held out or even up.

An acoustical analysis of sounds from edgetone instruments has been confined here to the modern flute used in a Cobán performance of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, and to Lowland-Maya whistles and ocarinas examined by organologists Flores and Flores (1981). In the Flores and Flores study the pitches G and A were discovered to be among the more common pitches emitted by those aerophones, and a prominent interval for ocarinas was found to be a third (*ibid.*). It is noteworthy that G and A as well as the interval of a third were also common to the slit-drums studied by Castañeda and Mendoza (1933), and that a third is an interval common to most known *Rab'in al Achi* slit-drums (see Chapters 2 and 3).

The skin drum, *tambor*, now used for highland Guatemalan conquest dance-plays appears to be derived from European prototypes. Characteristics distinguishing the skin drum heard today from Precolumbian Maya ones (the waist-high wooden frame *pax* and the smaller pottery frame *kai yum*) include double heads, ropes to secure those heads, and performance with mallets. There are many surviving examples of the Prehispanic *kai yum* (intact because of their material of construction), but no known *paxes* (apparently because they were always made of organic materials). Data concerning skin drums obtained from Olsen (1998) suggests a mallet-played drum used in Mesoamerica, but the influence of this, or similar instruments, on drums utilized for Colonial-era and modern conquest *bailes* was probably minimal. Still, at least one indigenous cultural concept, binary opposition, indicated in the use of male and female animal skins for the two heads on two Cobán drums, has carried over to modern instruments.

Chapter 5

Conquest Bailes and the Warrior Dance

Introduction

By the seventeenth century, European dance-plays introduced to the New World began to replace or transform most of the remaining indigenous ones (Bode 1961; Harris 2001; Horspool 1982; Taylor 1999). One type in this new category was the conquest *baile*, representing Spanish military victories over various adversaries, sometimes based on actual battles that had taken place between Spanish and Native American forces. Today, New World conquest dance-plays are performed in villages and towns from South America to the North American Southwest, with names like *La Danza de la Pluma*, *Baile de los Mexicanos*, and *El Cortés*, usually evoking particular events in history.¹¹⁰ Although the stories enacted in these *bailes* frequently differ, they all end with an acceptance of European political hegemony and the Catholic religion (often conflated to mean the same thing) by the defeated.

In Guatemala, two conquest dance-plays, *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* (generally shortened to *Moros*) and *Baile de la Conquista*, continue to be performed. The *Baile de la Conquista*, produced in some sixty-nine of the three hundred largest Guatemalan municipalities, has become the most popular traditional dance-play performed there (Brisset 1995; Rodriguez 1992). Various titled versions of the *Moros*

¹¹⁰ Other types of the European-introduced dance-play include: the *loa*, in honor of the Virgin Mary; the *pastorela*, celebrating the birth of Jesus; and the *auto sacramental*, allegories about the Eucharist (Correa and Cannon 1961:5-9; Hunter 1961:107).

are currently performed in approximately fifty of the larger Guatemalan towns (Guatemala Departamento de Arte Folklórico Nacional 1971; Rodríguez 1992).

This chapter focuses on the ethnohistory and ethnography of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* in Europe and in Latin America, with special attention paid to the form as found in highland Guatemala. As there is evidence that the highland Guatemalan versions of the *Moros* may have developed as a hybrid dance-drama that combined a Spanish-conquest storyline with instrumentation used for a Postclassic K'iche' warrior dance, indigenous records and archaeological evidence pertaining to Precolumbian Maya war ceremonies in the highlands are surveyed. The earliest indigenous references to the warrior dance are found in two documents from the sixteenth century, the *Título C'oyoi* and the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, as well as the *Rab'inal Achi*, and a mural painted at the Postclassic K'iche' capital, Q'umarkaj (Brasseur 1862; Carmack 1973; Recinos and Goetz 1953).

For the highland Guatemalan *Moros*, the primary sources include two Guatemalan scripts written in Spanish in relatively recent times, *Moros y Cristianos* (Perea Leal 1958) and *Original del Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* (Octgin 1964); ethnographic accounts by Horspool (1982) for Momostenango and Taylor (1999) for Quezaltenango; interviews with *Moros* musicians in Cobán, flautists José Chul (p.c., 2001) and Grecencio Quich Quich (p.c., 2001), and drummers Libereo (p.c., 2001) and Miguel Sum Meja (p.c., 2001); and personal observations of the dance-drama as performed in Cobán (in 2001) and in Rabinal (in 2002). The history of the *Moros* in Spain is compiled from research by folklorist Max Harris (1994, 2001), and a description of its performance is distilled from an ethnography by Ryuta Imafuku (1986). Analyses of the music used for this dance-drama and comparisons of it to the music for the *Rab'inal Achi* are presented in the next chapter.

Similarities and Differences in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos as Performed in Cobán and Rabinal

Similarities between two representative productions of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* in the towns of Rabinal (January 2002) and Cobán (August 2001) for their saint's days included the following: (1) *baile* musicians and dancers marching in procession through the streets of the towns to the place of performance; (2) casts and musicians made up exclusively of males; (3) European-style costumes; (4) choreography emphasizing round dancing and swordplay; (5) three duct flute (*su*) and skin drum (*tambor*) ensembles accompanying the dancers in procession, of which (6) only one actually played for the *Moros* performance; (7) duct flutes (in processions and performances) with the same number of stops (six) and a similar length and width (presumably capable of playing the same melodies and in roughly matching keys); (8) skin drums of approximately the same-sized wood-framed *tambor*-type typically seen in Guatemala (from 3/4 to 1 meter in length by 35 to 50 cm in circumference); (9) enactments of approximately thirty minutes; and (10) consultations among participants during the performance over the order of the music pieces and dances.

Contrasting with the numerous similarities, the one notable difference was the greater number of *bailes* at the saint-day festivities in Rabinal. There, three other *baile* groups performing their dance-plays in the general vicinity and at the same time as the *Moros* included the *Baile del Venado*, the *Baile Santo Jorge*, and the *Rab'inal Achi*. In Cobán the one other *baile* group that performed simultaneously with and near the *Moros* performed the *Baile del Venado*.

Descriptions of Two Highland Guatemalan Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Performances

Cobán

Beginning around noon on August 4, 2001, the *Baile de los Moros* was performed in Cobán as part of the town's annual celebration of San Domingo. A procession to the central church before the performance organized by the San Domingo *cofradía* included office holders of this and other *cofradías*, along with musicians and dancers of the *Moros* and those of two other traditional dance-plays, *Animalitos* and *Baile del Venado* (Figure 25). After the festival participants arrived at the church, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* and *Baile del Venado* were performed simultaneously in front of the church's entrance.

Figure 25

The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Procession with Flautist and Drum Porter



Cobán, Guatemala. August 4, 2001. Author's photograph.

This *Moros* performance at Cobán featured a twelve-man cast of actor-dancers, playing six Moors and six Christians. The event lasted approximately thirty minutes and included short speeches given by the actors interspersed between dances they performed to the accompaniment of a duo ensemble of duct flute and skin drum. The musicians stood on the church steps, above the actors spread out on the street below, and for more than three-quarters of the performance time this ensemble played their instrumental pieces (*sones*). The climax of the *baile* came with an enactment of a choreographed sword battle between the “Moors” and the “Christians,” and at the battle’s conclusion a group dance was performed representing reconciliation between the two sides. Fireworks were exploded throughout the enactment of the dance-play and at the same time a mass was taking place inside the church in a cacophony of simultaneous events that is standard for Guatemalan saint’s day festivals. Among the competing sounds on this day was a marimba played by three musicians in almost non-stop accompaniment to the *Baile del Venado* being performed only a few meters away.

The *Moros* actors all wore identical over-sized masks painted to indicate pink skin, blue eyes, and yellow eyebrows and mustaches, regardless of the faiths they represented. Their clothing—while not exactly the same—was similar. It consisted of red shirts, yellow bibs, and aprons decorated with vertical bands in primary colors (the bands seemed intended to represent stripes found on some medieval-style military uniforms), with heavy boots and thigh-length capes. All of the actors held a sword with a bell attached at its hilt. Headpieces were the most distinguishing features of the costumes. The six performers playing the parts of Moors wore large flower-covered circular hats rising in four tiers, each decreasing in circumference toward the top. The caps of the Christians were vertically elongated, resembling Turkish *fezzes*, each with a tiny cross attached at the front. The two musicians in the performance wore the dark slacks and light-colored button shirts, typical of the clothing worn by men of the region.

The choreography consisted of a number of circular dances, usually beginning and ending with the two “religious” groups facing each other in parallel lines. In one dance, the Christians and the Moors joined in a large circle moving clockwise, from which individual dancers spun away to circle on their own. At other times the dancers separated into duos or trios to perform smaller versions of the larger group dances. There was much use of the sword as a prop. One often-repeated pattern was a skip dance, in which each dancer performed under the raised swords of the dancers who had preceded him, and a short choreographed movement based on this skip concluded each dance sequence. Some of the circular-dance movements resembled the dancing imagery shown in Mixtec-Puebla codices, such as the *Codex Borgia* (1993:39), and some were similar to those in the *Rab'inal Achi*.

Despite the rehearsed nature of the performance, there were haphazard moments when the action stopped due to confusion over what should happen next. The flautist would then halt his playing and walk down the steps to correct the dancers, or just as frequently one or more actors would shake the bells on their swords to stop the musicians. While performance issues were being sorted out, some of the cast would saunter into the crowd, or the adjacent area, where the *Baile del Venado* was being performed, and give a brief parody of its dance steps. Whether typical or not, this rather casual approach to the performance hindered my efforts at determining what portion of the dance-play's story was being presented. Further difficulties resulted from two other factors: the competing sounds from the deer dance being performed nearby and the masks worn by the *Moros* actors, which covered their mouths and sometimes rendered their speaking inaudible. Nonetheless, while I do not know everything included or excluded from the story as performed, local observers seemed satisfied with the rendition.

Rabinal

On January 24, 2002, I observed a performance of the *Moros* at Rabinal, presented near the San Pedro *cofradía* house as part of that community's San Pablo festival. As at Cobán, the dance-play was preceded by a procession that began shortly before noon, made up of *cofradías*, musicians, and dance groups, with the *baile* presented soon thereafter. The costumes of the twelve actors at Rabinal (again, six Moors and six Christians) included the same motivic elements as those in Cobán: colorful Colonial-era garments in European-style, and elaborate headpieces distinguished by the presence or absence of a small cross. The music ensemble also wore dark slacks and light-colored button shirts similar to those worn by the musicians at Cobán.

The *Moros* at Rabinal lasted thirty minutes, and featured dialogue, swordplay, and dances choreographed to represent pre-battle negotiations, a battle, and reconciliation, similar to those previously described. The music (again, played on duct-flute and skin drum) was also similar, although competing sound from the several other *bailes* (the *Rab'inal Achi*, the *Baile del Venado*, and the *Baile Santo Jorge*) being performed simultaneously nearby, plus a larger and noisier audience, made this event even more difficult to hear. Moreover, the *Baile Santo Jorge* music ensemble, also incorporating a duct flute and skin drum, was performing closest to the *Moros*, and when the two music groups played at the same time it was practically impossible to determine which of the flute melodies and which of the drum patterns belonged to which *baile*. As at Cobán, the performance was interrupted by consultations between the *Moros* musicians and dancers over the order of the music pieces and dances.

The Structures of Highland Guatemalan Conquest Bailes

Based on the difference between the duration of the two witnessed *Moros bailes* (thirty minutes) and the amount of time it would take to read either of the two scripts I have viewed (at least an hour), I am of the opinion that what I saw at both Cobán and Rabinal were excerpts from the dance-play, what ethnomusicologist Glen Horspool (1982:158) calls a “scene.”

Horspool, who did extensive research on the highland Guatemalan *Moros* during the early 1980s—particularly as performed in Momostenango—determined that the *Moros baile* presented in that community included some twenty separate scenes of approximately twenty-plus-minutes each, although the scripts utilized by local performers were rarely, if ever, divided to show such divisions (*ibid.*:82). He concluded that if a performance of the Momostenango version of the dance-play were presented in its entirety it would take approximately eight hours to complete. For locals apparently, the enactment of a single such scene has come to constitute an entire *Moros* performance. In Momostenango during saint-day festivals all of the scenes are apparently presented separately and intermittently over a twenty-four hour period, so that the entire dance-drama will eventually be enacted in the course of a day (*ibid.*:158).

Another ethnomusicologist, Scott Taylor (1999), reporting on the related *Baile de la Conquista* as performed in Quezaltenango in the 1990s, observed that certain aspects of its story were explored in depth during one performance, followed by subsequent aspects, hours or even days later. Taylor also found that the events of the *baile* were often presented out of sequence, and came to the conclusion that such chronological disassociation indicated an incorporation of K'iche'an concepts of time and a divorce from Western perception of sequentially unfolding events (*ibid.*:50-51). (K'iche' perspectives of time were first brought up in Chapter 1.) Underscoring Taylor's assessment, a specialist in K'iche' calendar systems, Dennis Tedlock (p.c., 2003), claims that the K'iche' so abhor the suspense built into the chronological disclosing of

information as found in the Western storytelling tradition that they will give away the ending at the very beginning of their own tales.¹¹¹

Two Scripts of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

A Kaqchikel Script

To ascertain the degree of consistency in the storyline of the *Moros* as enacted in the Guatemalan highlands I reviewed two scripts authored by writers from two different ethnic areas of the region. One is from Rabinal and the other from an unspecified part of Kaqchikel-speaking Guatemala to the west of that town. Copies of both scripts are housed in the Tulane University Latin American Library. The one titled *Original del Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, written in longhand in Spanish between January 29 and February 11, 1964, by Jose Angel Octgin, is in the library's Kaqchikel Collection.

There is no information concerning an earlier source for Octgin's script (if there was one), although the two individuals honored on the title page, Arcadio Otoy and Pedro Pelen, may have had some earlier involvement with it. (One or both men could have once owned versions of the script.) A cast list gives names for six characters—Rey Moros Asirio, Fierabras, Paliacer, Belin, Benamar, and Turin Gracejo—identified as Moors, and six more—Rey Christianos or Carlos Magno, Don Roldan, Oliveros, Fietre, Ganalón, and Mata Moros Gracejo—identified as Christians.

The story of the dance-play involves a Christian king, Carlos Magno, who solicits soldiers to join him in his effort to remove the Moors who then occupy Spain. Those he

¹¹¹ While Tedlock concurs with Taylor concerning the existence of highland Guatemalan time-keeping systems based on repetitive cycles, he believes that the idea of predestination, sometimes assumed to be implicit in systems of cyclical time, is overstated. Tedlock (2003:174) contends that the K'iche' do not feel resigned to accept the inevitability of events as predicted by a calendar. Whether this view should be considered true for all K'iche', and whether it should be considered as recently evolved or one that existed in Precolumbian Guatemala, is open to debate.

approaches proclaim their bravery and their desire to assist in his cause, but some also express hesitation at the prospect of war. The Moorish king, Moros Asirio, makes a similar solicitation of his soldiers, and members of both sides give speeches directed at their compatriots as well as their adversaries. Some speeches involve negotiations to avoid war, but ultimately the negotiations fail and fighting breaks out. During the battle the Moorish king is killed, an event interpreted by both sides as a symbol of Christian victory.

A Rabinal Script

A script from Rabinal called *Moros y Cristianos*, and included as “Item no. 127” in the Carroll Mace Collection of the Tulane University Latin American Library, is identified as: “Typescript of 19th-century *baile* ‘Moros y Cristianos,’ translated into Spanish, written for the *Virg n del Patrocino*. Also published in *Guatemala Ind gena*, with a different ending. Copied by Sergio Alfredo Perea Leal, Rabinal, July, 1958.” Mace undoubtedly made the typescript, probably from the longhand Perea original. (I do not know if it corresponds to the script of the play I saw enacted in Rabinal.)¹¹²

This *Moros* story begins with the Moorish king Marcirio rallying his forces for a campaign against the Spanish Christians. Four Moors—Clotaldo Embajador, Abenbucar, Abenamar, and Estartecido—are sent as ambassadors to negotiate a surrender with the Christians. Clotaldo declares to the Christians that “time is limited if you want to avoid war,” and his companion Estartecido stresses that avoidance is possible only if the Christians quit their religion. Here, too, negotiations break down, and combat ensues until the death of a Christian soldier, Principe, when an angel appears to deliver the man’s

¹¹² There are a few differently named *bailes* of the *Moros* in Rabinal. According to Gonz lez (p.c., 2001), the most popular one is known by the name *Moros Tamorl n*. I am unsure if the names for conquest dance-plays as performed match the names of the plays according to the scripts used. This writer translated the two scripts discussed in this chapter.

soul to heaven, a spiritual event so impressive to the Moors that they surrender to the Christian king and his religion.

Similarities and Differences in the Two Scripts

The Rabinal *Moros* script differs from the one from the Kaqchikel region in that seven Christians (not six) oppose the (standard) six Moors. In only two cases do the names of these thirteen correspond to any of the twelve characters in the Kaqchikel version. Those two are the *gracejos*, identified in both scripts as a clown from Turin, and the Moorish king, called Rey Marcirio in the Rabinal script and Rey Moros Asirio in the Kaqchikel one. The cast of Moors in Perea's script includes Rey Marcirio, Clotaldo Embajador, Abenbucar, Abenamar, Estartecido, and Toriron Gracejo; the seven Christians are Emperador Alejandro, Principe Peterve, Don Enrique Embajador, Don Clerencio, Don Claudio, Un Angel, and Un Gracioso Brito Gancho. Unique to Perea's Rabinal script is three characters who speak but are not listed on the front page with the rest of the cast: "the Inca" and two unnamed *brujos*.

The Kaqchikel and Rabinal versions of the play are similar in syntax, point of view, and even some of the language. In particular, both scripts include the phrase, "arma, arma, guerra, guerra" (load up, load up, time for war, time for war), which is repeated several times. Both scripts also exhibit vestiges of feudal medieval-European conventions such as emphasis on chivalric diplomacy over religious polemics, and the characters give as much fealty to their respective kings and their offices of rule as they do to the symbols that distinguish their respective faiths.

Apart from similarities in concept and language, there are also differences that distinguish the scripts, such as the previously detailed sequences of events. In the Kaqchikel version, in short, it is the Christians who assemble first, in contrast to the Moors of the Rabinal version. And although the outcome of the confrontation—the defeat of the Moors—is the same, it is achieved differently. In the Kaqchikel play

Christian victory is signaled by the death of the Moorish king and in the Rabinal play by the deliverance of a Christian soul. Otherwise, both stories are similar and follow a pattern of troop assembly, negotiations to avoid war, a battle, and a Christian victory.

Neither script provides any clues about the staging of performances. And in both versions, the characters tend to speak sequentially, although those of the same “faith” occasionally speak collectively, as if in chorus. The single obvious example of indigenous influence is found at the end of the Rabinal version where the two *brujos*, who have no other role in the play, provide a concluding summary of events.¹¹³

Baile de los Moros y Cristianos: A Conquest Dance-Play Introduced From Spain

Many of the constituent elements found in the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* as currently performed in highland Guatemala can be traced to a type of pre-Renaissance European dance that emphasized fertility and war. During the late Middle Ages, this dance was referred to as a “Morris dance” or the *moriscas* (Moorish) (Kurath 1949:94, 96; Sachs 1937:87; Warman 1985:16). Curt Sachs (1937:333) attests to its popularity in his book, *World History of the Dance*, where he describes the *moriscas* as the most frequently mentioned European dance of the fifteenth-century. Sachs discusses the *moriscas* as having two forms: a solo dance, derived from Moorish court performances; and a dance of two or more performers, emphasizing swordplay between Christians and Moslems (*ibid.*). A version of the second form emerged in the Spanish kingdom of

¹¹³ Somewhat in accord with what would be expected based on live versions, both the Rabinal and Kaqchikel scripts are marked throughout with cues that indicate drumming (“tambor”), but not in the same places. The only other instrument mentioned in either text is a flute (“pito”), called for on page 37 in the Kaqchikel version. The Rabinal text (typed with single spacing) is twenty-four pages long with fifteen cues for “tambor,” one occurring on each of the following pages: 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 23, and 24; in addition two pages, 17 and 21, indicate two occasions for drums. There are fifty-five pages in the Kaqchikel script (in longhand) and ten “tambor” cues are given on pages 3, 12, 19, 20, 21, 26, 34, 46, 54, and 55.

Valencia following the expulsion of Moors from neighboring Andalusia (after 1492), and was probably exported to New Spain (Bode 1961:211). That the Valencia version would have traveled across the Atlantic is not surprising, as the *Reconquista* of Iberia was not only centered in this southeastern part of Spain, but occurred shortly before the Spanish and Portuguese invasions of the Americas. What follows is a summary of the historical conditions that led to the invention of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* in Spain and an account of its performance there.

In the thirteenth century three rulers, James I of Aragon-Catalonia, Ferdinand III of Castile, and Alfonso X of León, joined together to achieve a major military victory over the Moors, which resulted in the ratification of the Treaty of Almirante (Harris 1994:47). Signed in Valencia near the town of Alcoy, the treaty established the boundaries of the modern provinces of northeastern Spain, and over the next two centuries Christian armies from there launched forays to the south that were a major factor in their eventual control of the entire peninsula.¹¹⁴ In 1638, to honor their community's role in this achievement, the citizens of Alcoy created a play, even then apparently titled *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, which spread throughout Spain (*ibid.*:45-47). Folklorist Max Harris has compiled a list of sixty-two Spanish towns, including Alcoy, where it continues to be performed, attesting to its widespread and long-standing popularity in that country (*ibid.*:45).

In April 1980, Ryuta Imafuku (1986) witnessed a performance of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* in Alcoy, where it now marks the annual celebration of the feast day of San Jorge. This ethnographic account largely matches one supplied by Harris (1994) for the same dance-play, enacted in the same town a decade later.

¹¹⁴ James I, the most popular warrior of the Spanish *Reconquista*, was a folk hero exported to the Americas where he is generally known as Santiago. According to dance-play observers this mythic-historic figure is featured in his own dance-drama, known in Guatemala as *Baile Santiago* or *Santiago*.

According to Imafuku, the day before the feast of San Jorge, a troupe of actors in the roles of Christians arrive in Alcoy to the accompaniment of a brass band. Their captain is given the keys to a wooden castle built especially for this celebration in the town plaza. Later that same day actors in the roles of the Moors arrive to similar brass band accompaniment.

The next morning, an actor playing a Moorish ambassador approaches the castle and submits a letter to the Christians, requesting surrender of the fort. The Christian captain reads the letter and rips it apart, after which the Moorish emissary flees. A short while later, the Moorish captain arrives at the castle and begins a speech intended to achieve the surrender that his letter did not, but he is soon taunted by his Spanish counterpart. Verbal exchanges escalate into an exchange of blows leading to the enactment of a full-scale battle, which reaches its climax when the Moors overrun the castle and replace the Spanish flag with their own, temporarily signifying Islamic victory.

In the afternoon of the same day the Christian captain, repeating an earlier tactic of the Moorish leader, approaches the castle and demands its surrender. Verbal exchanges again give way to battle, at the height of which a boy rides up on horseback, personifying San Jorge, and the Christians rallying behind the saint's manifestation retake the castle for good. A mass follows at one of town's local cathedrals (*ibid.*:9-11).

The *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* as performed in Alcoy emphasizes three events: an attack on a Spanish castle by the Moors, expulsion of the Moors, and conversion of the Moors to Christianity. It also contains at least four performance components that can be found in highland Guatemalan versions of the same-named dance-play: (1) an incorporation of the play as part of a saint day festival, (2) a procession to a church, (3) characters in masks, and (4) accompanimental music (Harris 1994; Kurath 1949). Significant to my research is the fact that all but components 1 and 2 also occur in purported indigenously authored Guatemalan dance-plays. And even these two components, K'iche' saint day festivals and a procession to church, may have

had preexisting Precolumbian equivalents, such as calendrical celebrations and ritual processions.

The History and Distribution of Conquest Bailes in Mexico and Central America

Earliest Evidence

In 1538, the first dance-play performance documented in the Americas occurred in the town of Tlaxcala, Mexico (Hunter 1961:118). This unnamed dance-play included dialogue in Nahuatl, and a final scene featuring a dance to the accompaniment of a *villancico*.¹¹⁵ The inclusion of two culturally disparate components—Mesoamerican language and Spanish music—is illustrative of the way early conversion dances were conceived, with European and indigenous elements both incorporated into the form.

Although there are other occasional ethnohistoric references from the sixteenth century to European or European-inspired dance-dramas performed in the Americas, the major dissemination of those intended for conversion purposes occurred between 1650 and 1700, a century or more after Conquest (Brisset 1995:205; Taylor 1999:38; Warman 1985:90). Indeed, a dance-play listed by writers as the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* was not performed in the Americas until sometime during the reign of the Spanish monarch Charles III (1759-1788) (Taylor 1999:38). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that an unidentified *baile* based on a similar theme is described as performed in Mexico in 1680 (*ibid.*:39), a time period that coincides with the beginnings of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* tradition in Spain.

¹¹⁵ The *villancico* is a European Baroque-period polyphonic song form comprising stanzas set to the same music with a repeated refrain (Fuller 1987:207). *Villancicos* became popular in both the Old and the New World during the seventeenth century (Laird 1997).

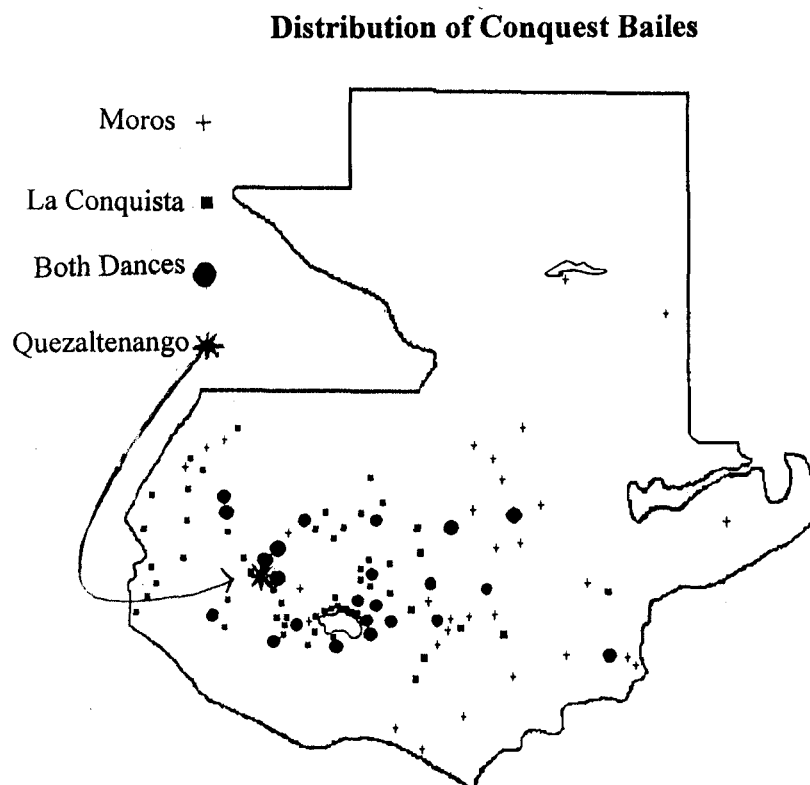
Conquest Baile Distribution in Guatemala

In 1542, the first documented Guatemalan conquest dance-play was performed to commemorate a transforming event in the history of the Guatemalan highlands: the final battle between the troops of Pedro de Alvarado and the K'iche'an warrior Tecum Uman that took place in 1524. The 1542 performance was produced at Quezaltenango, near the original battle site (Mariani 1995:69, 74-75; Harrison and Wauchope 1961:223). Today, *Baile de la Conquista* tradition remains centered in southwest Guatemala, in and around Quezaltenango, and this particular *baile* continues to be Guatemala's most widely performed, if unevenly represented, dance-play.¹¹⁶ For unknown reasons, performances of the *Baile de la Conquista* are rather rare in the northern, eastern, and extreme southern regions, where it appears to have been replaced by the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* as a conquest type. (In the north the lack of popularity of the former may be due to the fact that the area was the scene of fewer military encounters between the Maya and the Spanish.) In much of the rest of the country the two *bailes* are often paired, and are typically performed for the same saint-day celebrations (Guatemala Departamento de Arte Folklórico Nacional 1971; Rodríguez 1992) (Figure 26).

The Guatemalan *baile* tradition is dependent on local financial patronage as well as interest in its preservation, and factors in support of this tradition differ from town to town. In any given year the success of a production will influence subsequent revivals within the community (Bode 1961:236). As a consequence, the *Moros* or the *Baile de la Conquista* may have once been performed in towns where one or both dance-plays have since been discontinued, temporarily or permanently. Therefore, the locales of performance for the *Baile de la Conquista* and the *Moros*, as well as the number of enactments over the years cannot be absolutely confirmed.

¹¹⁶ Although the storyline of the Guatemalan and Mexican *Baile de la Conquista* is the same—confrontation and conquest, it is Alvarado in Guatemala, not Cortés, who is the agent of Spanish aggression, and Tecum Uman, not Montezuma II, who is the Amerindian defender (Quich p.c., 2001).

Figure 26



Map derived from Guatemala Departamento de Arte Folklórico Nacional, 1971 and Rodríguez, 1992. Author's computer drawing.

Music in the Highland Guatemalan Moros

In both Cobán and Rabinal the music for the *Moros* was provided by a duo performing on a duct flute (*su*) and skin drum (*tambor*). Their playing signaled the start and conclusion of the scene presented and provided music for the dances that alternated with the dialogue sections. At the 2002 Rabinal San Pablo festival it was difficult to determine the exact number of music pieces intended because of previously mentioned distractions and other factors. The performance at Cobán was somewhat easier to follow and its enactment is used to furnish details for the discussion below. In addition, at Cobán I was able to speak with the *Moros* musicians, and they provided details about the

music of the *baile* from a musician's perspective. Other ethnographers listed in the text supply supplementary information useful for comparative purposes.

The discussion at Cobán took place the evening before the *Moros* performance at the local San Domingo *cofradía* house. Two pairs of flute and drum players of the three that had accompanied the dance-play in procession during the saint day festival that morning (August 3, 2001) were sitting at separate locations on the veranda playing their instruments in an informal way. These two ensemble pairs were: Grecio Quich Quich, flute, Miguel Sum Meja, drum; and José Chul, flute, Libereo, drum.

I was among a handful of people at the *cofradía* house listening intently to their music, which may have contributed to their being forthcoming with answers to questions I asked. It was during this time that the two drummers described the construction of their instruments (as presented in Chapter 4), but José Chul and Libereo departed before I could examine Chul's flute, as I had the one used by Quich (also detailed in Chapter 4). The remaining pair of musicians, Grecio Quich Quich and Miguel Sum Meja, eventually played excerpts of the music used for the *Moros*, along with the pieces used for the *Baile de la Conquista*, which I recorded. During that evening, in discussions concerning the *Moros*, they indicated certain pieces as specific to particular events within the play and others as representing individual characters. They did not, however, name the compositions or list their order of performance. When the dance-play was presented, the duo performed sixteen instrumental pieces, varying in length from ten seconds to more than seven minutes.

In Momostenango in the early 1980s, the Lajpop brothers, two of Horspool's (1982:158-59) musician informants for the *Moros*, stated that eighteen instrumental pieces were used there, each representing the introduction of specific characters or dramatic activities. The Lajpops listed titles for each of these eighteen pieces, and they said that in order to accommodate the twenty-five dances in the performances some pieces were repeated. Although instrumental-song titles and character names sometimes

matched, it was Horspool's opinion that the pieces representing characters did not function as *leitmotifs*, at least not in the Western music sense (*ibid.*). For example, the music for the clown was not the same each time it was played.

None of my *baile*-musician informants showed me a score, and I never saw any of them read from one. Largely based on this information, I suspect that the music now used for many (if not most) K'iche' versions of the *Moros* is passed down primarily by ear. There is, however, the possibility that the play's music in some communities is notated at times, and there is evidence that at least one type of notation has been invented and used by indigenous Guatemalans. Horspool described this particular rudimentary system, devised by the Lajpop brothers to aid in assigning the correct music piece to its appropriate scene (*ibid.*:158). According to the Lajpop system, alphabetic letters representing instrumental songs were allocated to scenes numbered with Arabic numerals (*i.e.*, 1a, 2b, 3a, 4c, etc.) (*ibid.*:159). But in spite of their life-long professional involvement in this dance-drama, neither the Lajpops, nor the Ambrosio brothers—another Momostenango duo specializing in the *Moros*—could recount the complete order or the exact number of pieces normally played in a performance (*ibid.*:199). Maya-dance-play specialist Barbara Bode has also discovered a local music transcription using Western notation symbols from the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century for the *Baile de la Conquista* (Bode 1961:244). The script viewed by Bode was owned by Domingo Cáal y Cáal from San Pedro Carcha (Alta Verapaz), born in Cobán in 1887. Cáal y Cáal believed his father copied the text, in 1897, from an earlier version, and that he added a score of accompanimental music at around that same time, but the score is actually dated 1909 (*ibid.*). At present, this is the extent of evidence for the use of notation systems for highland Guatemalan conquest *bailes*, suggesting that substantial interpretive flexibility is tolerated in the music, as theorized by this writer and by Horspool.

Source(s) of the Instrumentation

In Spain, the choice of instruments used by ensembles to accompany the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* varies among communities, and includes in some instances a special pairing of a flute and drum played by one individual, referred to as the pipe and tabor. Other instruments used are assorted combinations of castanets, violin(s), flute(s), oboe(s), bagpipe(s), accordion(s), and brass and woodwind ensembles (Harris 1994:47; Horspool 1982:252). None of the Spanish ensembles precisely duplicates the flute-drum duos found accompanying the dance-drama in highland Guatemala, but as the pipe and tabor is the closest, it is focused on here.

The pipe and tabor is a virtual one-man-band, comprised of a single musician simultaneously playing a flute and a drum. This tradition is important in an ethnoarchaeomusicological study of indigenous American music not only because it is the closest Spanish equivalent to the flute-drum ensembles found in highland Guatemala for the *Moros*, but because it may have developed independently in both the Old and New Worlds (Boilès 1966b).

Attesting to its Amerindian roots, solitary musicians can be found today in and around Papantla, Veracruz (including the archaeological site El Tajín), who perform on a cane duct flute and a small wrist-strapped drum, particularly for the Totonac version of an aerial ceremony known as the *voladores* (flyers) (Figure 27). In this ceremony, the pipe and tabor musician plays his two instruments while dancing on a small rotating platform attached to the summit of a tall pole as four acrobatic-dancers spiral downwards thirteen times on unwinding ropes attached to their waists, a descent that symbolizes a special Mesoamerican method of time computation involving interlocking and revolving calendar wheels. Evidence of the persistence of the music-performance aspect of the ceremony can be found in Landívar's Colonial-era ethnography, *Rusticatio Mexicana*, which includes a picture of a seventeenth-century version of the *voladores*, in which an

individual sits atop a pole while playing a flute-like instrument and tambourine-shaped drum (Kurath and Martí 1964:158).

Figure 27

Voladores Performers at El Tajín



Pipe and tabor musician leading three of the four acrobatic dancers to the pole in a *voladores* performance, July 3, 1998, at El Tajín, Veracruz, Mexico. Author's photograph.

Ethnomusicologist Charles Boilès (1966b) has used clay figurines in Mesoamerican styles that show individuals simultaneously playing a drum and what appears to be some kind of aerophone to support his claim for a Prehispanic pipe and tabor tradition in the Americas. On the surface it is compelling evidence, but as with many small sculptures, the date of origin of these figurines can in some instances be questioned, and in any case, it is difficult to determine exactly what kind of sound-making instrument extends from the mouths of the figures depicted. Nevertheless, if one

or more of these sculptures is truly Prehispanic and if the instrument shown is a flute (which seems likely in those I have viewed), the composite instrumentation would duplicate the Spanish pipe and tabor and go a long way towards proving this pairing as shared by pre-contact cultures in both continents.

As was noted earlier, the first documented Spanish introduced dance-play was performed in Mesoamerica at Tlaxcala and incorporated the Mexican language and a European song form, the *villancico*. Later, highland Guatemalan versions of the *Baile del Venado* paired an indigenous story with accompanying instruments introduced from Spain. Other shared performance components such as processions and the incorporation of dance-plays in religious ceremonies suggest that the sharing of elements such as musical instruments could have been employed by Spanish-Colonial authorities for their introduced or altered *bailes*. If pan-cultural, the pipe and tabor could have been such a performance component. Among Maya *bailes* I am aware of a dance-play, *Lo'Hil K'in* (2003:discography and videography) performed by the Tzeltal in Bachajón, Chiapas, which is considered indigenous by locals, and that features a pipe and tabor among its many accompanimental instruments. Still, I have found no sign that a solitary musician playing both a flute and drum provided the music for any introduced *baile* in highland Guatemala.¹¹⁷

Despite the lack of evidence for a pan-cultural use of the pipe and tabor in the Southern Mesoamerican Highlands, there is a tradition of flutes and drums played by more than one person in accompaniment to European-introduced dance-dramas that can be traced in the area to at least the mid-seventeenth century, when Gage (1929:246) wrote of Guatemalans honoring a Catholic saint with a dance accompanied by a “small drum

¹¹⁷ Taylor (1999:54) uses information he credits to Franco Arce to propose that the pipe and tabor accompanied what he calls the “Dance of the Giants,” “Tzijolaj,” and “Dance of the Conquest.” It is my belief that Taylor misinterprets pipe and tabor to mean an ensemble of flute and drum, with two musicians each assigned an instrument. During my visit to Arce’s museum (in 2001) I did not find evidence of a pipe and tabor accompanimental tradition pertaining to any highland Guatemalan dance-plays.

and pipes.” Gage’s example likely describes an ensemble, as one person presumably could not play a drum and more than one flute at the same time. In the next section I will explain why I believe that the flute-drum pairing for conquest *bailes* was probably an indigenous contribution to what is suggested as a pan-cultural performance form.¹¹⁸

The Late-Postclassic K’iche’ Warrior Dance

The Precolumbian K’iche’an ceremony referred to as a warrior dance is described in at least two indigenous texts, the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* and the *Titulo C’oyoi*, and in one play, the *Rab’inal Achi*.¹¹⁹ According to Carmack (1973:267-68), the *Titulo C’oyoi* is a lineage-migration tale most likely written at Q’umarkaj by members of the C’oyoi ruling lineage (its principal author being Juan de Penonias de Putanza), probably between 1550-70. Hernández Arana, of the elite Kaqchikel Xajil family, who, like Penonias de Putanza, was a witness to the Conquest, wrote the first section of the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos and Goetz 1953). The authors of its second section were likely related to Arana, and events are referred to that extend into a mythological past and may be based on an unfound Precolumbian codex. Nevertheless, events of known dates do not begin until AD 1493 (*ibid.*:47-50). Supplementing the literary data for a warrior dance is a lone Postclassic mural featuring a dancing warrior at Q’umarkaj.

Unfortunately, this dance is no longer performed in Guatemala, and there is no known

¹¹⁸ Separate from its instrumentation, the *voladores* was disseminated throughout Mexico and Central America, and a version, *Palo Volador*, survives in Cubulco, Guatemala (near Rabinal). But there—unlike in Veracruz—the accompanimental ensemble is a marimba and rattles.

¹¹⁹ Carmack reprints the *Titulo C’oyoi* in its entirety and in K’iché in his book *Quichean Civilization* (Carmack 1973:273-86). He also includes an English translation, pp. 287-306, and notes on the translation, pp. 307-45 (*ibid.*). The original is now part of the Robert Garrett Collection of Middle American Manuscripts of the Princeton University Library (*ibid.*:39). Recinos and Goetz translated the sixteenth-century *Annals of the Cakchiquels* from the original Kaqchikel into English. Included in the footnotes is information concerning their translation choices (Recinos and Goetz 1953).

ethnohistoric record of its origin, content, form, or decline. A lack of any corroborating evidence implies that it disappeared before the advent of the Colonial period.

In spite of the likelihood that the warrior dance has disappeared, it is my view that it may not have declined so much as been transformed. The Postclassic warrior dance once used the same instrumentation (flute and drum) now found for the conquest dance *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* suggesting the possibility that for the K'iche' the two dances are related. It is conceivable that in Colonial times the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* began to be perceived by the K'iche' as a type of warrior dance and accompanying instruments were assigned to it accordingly. If so, the incorporation of Maya music components in the *Moros* would lend support to my theory that the K'iche' custom of associating specific types of instrumentation with dance-plays is a practice existing by the Late-Postclassic period, a time period dealt with in some detail in the *Título*, the *Annals* and the *Rab'inal Achi*.

K'iche'an documents, in particular the three listed above, sometimes include words or phrases related to flutes or drums, among which are *su*, *cham*, and *k'ojom*. *Su* was defined in earlier chapters as a flute, or a *chirimía*, and my sources in Cobán define it as either (although, as previously discussed, there is no evidence of reed instruments in Prehispanic Mesoamerica). For the Poqom, *cham* means "long," which would describe the shape of both a vertical flute and a *chirimía* (Ramirez and Ramirez 1997: 151). Edmonson (1976) defines *cham* as flute and there is evidence the word *k'ojom* designated a percussion instrument: "an instrument struck or plucked" (O'Brien-Rothe 1998a:723). At present *k'ojom* is sometimes used for the marimba, which has led Tedlock to propose that the word may have formerly meant a slit-drum as well as marimba (Edmonson 1976:101; Tedlock 2003:292). In fact, it is now used as a generic term for music, as in *Casa K'ojom*, "House of Music" (Samuel Arce's small private museum near Antigua).¹²⁰ However, the *Moros* drummers at Cobán, Libereo, and Sum Meja all defined *k'ojom* as

¹²⁰ *Casa K'ojom* is a non-profit educational center that features museum exhibits pertaining to

skin drum, contrasting the term with *tun*, which they used for slit-drum. To my untrained ear, *k'ojom* also sounds like *kai yum*, the Lacandon Maya name for the pottery drum discussed in the preceding chapter.

On the page in the *Título C'oyoi* numbered 21 by Carmack (1973:277, 295, 325) are the adjacent phrases, *ixajil tun* (sacrifice dance) and *bixa subakiba* (song with bone flute).¹²¹ Carmack determined that this section of the text (his pages 21-22) included an inventory of Prehispanic dances (*ibid.*). Unfortunately this passage, as with much of the document, is missing letters or words that could help verify this interpretation. If Carmack is correct, the phrase *ixajil tun...bixa subakiba* suggests that *tun* dances (which during the time of the *Título's* writing used a slit-drum and/or trumpet[s]) should be considered separate from the *su* dances, or *bixa subakiba* (identified then as now as those using flutes). Indeed, if the words and phrases in this document are part of a dance inventory, then *bixa subakiba* (or a portion of this phrase) may have been the K'iche' name for the highland Maya warrior dance, which would mean that *su*, as in the case of *tun*, once stood for both an instrument and a dance. (I have not located the pairing of *xajil* [dance] with *tza* [warrior]—or related spellings for these words—which would translate literally as warrior dance. Carmack gives this *baile* the name *tzala tun* [*ibid.*:299].)

In the *Título C'oyoi*, the best evidence of an association of the flute and skin drum with the warrior dance is found in a description of ceremonies known to have been enacted prior to the fateful encounter between the K'iche' leader Tecum Uman and

traditional Guatemalan music and dance. It also houses an audiovisual library and recording studio, and presents live performances. The center opened in 1987 in Antigua but has since moved to the outlying community, Jocotenango.

¹²¹ In this section of the chapter all of the K'iche' translations in parentheses without quotation marks are mine.

the Spanish Captain Alvarado, at Xelaju (near Quezaltenango) (*ibid.*:282-83, 302, 340).¹²² Mention of *su uk'o* (flute-drum) is near the end of a passage detailing this event, which lists several K'iche' warriors (identified by their titles) who “performed the song and dance with the flute(s) and drum at the stone buildings of Xelaju” (*ibid.*:302). In a full reading of this passage, the implication is that Tecum Uman joined in this pre-battle music-dance ceremony following an earlier *xajoj cham cham* (flute dance) in which attending warriors danced in his honor (*ibid.*).

According to the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, flutes and drums were also sounded before the start of a war initiated during the late fifteenth century by several vassal groups against their K'iche' overlords. As suggested by the *Título C'oyoi*, use of these instruments in this case might also indicate a pre-battle warrior dance. In the *Annals* it is recounted that Cay Hunahpu, a leader of the rebelling Tukuches, led a successful attack on the K'iche'. To paraphrase from the latter document: On 11 Ah (May 18, 1493), the morning of the attack, the sound of his flutes and drums was heard (Recinos and Goetz 1953:108).

Precolumbian iconographic evidence confirms that flutes and drums were used in combat as noisemakers, and writings describe Kaqchikel battles as characterized by “war cries, the sound of flutes, the beating of drums and the shells” (*ibid.*:103). Indeed, flutes may have been part of the requisite paraphernalia of warriors. In the *Título C'oyoi* warriors are named in association with companion objects that include lances, deer hooves, lion's (puma?) claws, and *ubak cham* (bone flutes) (Carmack 1973:277); flutes and drums may have been just two among many sound makers they carried. At the same time, it is noteworthy that in cases of K'iche' an pre-battle ceremonies that are explicitly described, instruments other than the flute and drum are not listed.

¹²² Tecum Uman was a *Rajpop Achij* (Warrior of the Mat), and grandson of one of the K'iche' rulers at Q'umarkaj. Prior to his entry into Western history, he had been living at Tzjibachaj, near present day Ixtahuacan, in mountainous terrain west of Lake Atitlán (Carmack 1973:318, 339).

There is at least one instance where these two instruments are requested by a warrior for a dance independent of the commencement of war, and this is in the *Rab'inal Achi*. Near the end of the play is a scene in which the captive K'iche' warrior-prince asks to hear the sound of flutes and drum: “yaqui zu...yaqui gohom...Queche zu...Queche gohom” (Brasseur 1862:106-07), ([foreign, *i.e.* Mexican flute...Mexican drum...K'iche' flute...K'iche' drum). When the request is denied, the warrior “moves back and forth to and from the four corners of the court to the (imagined) rhythm of flutes and drums” (*ibid.*:107). According to the storyline, no war is in immediate preparation, but the dance does occur shortly before the K'iche' warrior engages in a ceremonial battle with the Rabinal warrior societies. The inclusion of the three main components of the warrior dance as described in the *Título C'oyoi* and the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*—the combined flute and drum, the dance, and the battle with warriors, suggests that this may be what the K'iche' prince performs.

The dancing warrior, like the one who moves to the imagined music in the *Rab'inal Achi*, may also be the subject of a scene painted on a palace wall at the K'iche capital, Q'umarkaj. This mural (in Mixtec-Puebla style) features a splendidly dressed K'iche' warrior in ritualized motion, his preparation for combat confirmed by his outfit of feathered leg-bands, armbands, sandals, and loincloth, and the round shield with attached arrows held in his left hand (Carmack 1973:295). The extended stance of the figure, and the container rattle in his right hand also imply a dancing motion, an interpretation that I share with Akkeren (2000:329) and Carmack (1973:295). But if any instruments in addition to the rattle (like a flute and drum) were meant to accompany this dance, no evidence is found in the mural's composition.

A Preliminary Comparison of Performances of the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

Performance similarities between the indigenous dance-play, *Rab'inal Achi*, and the introduced one, *Moros*, as enacted in highland Guatemala include performers in masks and costumes, and a form that alternates dialogue with dance sections accompanied by instrumental ensembles. Among the differences are the performance conditions, performance length, and the competency of performers. In both Cobán and Rabinal, what was presented as the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* I found to be a single, relatively short scene from a dance-drama of considerably longer length. In contrast, the *Rab'inal Achi* was always enacted in its entirety and sometimes alone. Moreover, the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* was not as skillfully presented as the *Rab'inal Achi*. The unique character of the *tun baile* helps to explain this last distinction, in that the *Rab'inal Achi* is specific to the town of Rabinal and requires instrumentation rarely utilized outside the context of the dance-play. A commitment to a local and rather isolated tradition therefore underlies the impulse of the musicians to take the time to learn these instruments and the music played on them, fostering a bond between the musicians and the dancer-actors regarding the play that is stronger than that found for many other highland *bailes*.

The *Moros*, in contrast, is performed frequently throughout Guatemala, and musicians specializing in it are often contracted to play for productions outside their immediate area. This may mean they perform sometimes at a locale where the language or dialect spoken is not entirely familiar. It can also lead to instrumentalists being hired on short notice, creating conditions for both musicians and dancer-actors that are not conducive to as cohesive a performance as it would be if they worked together most or all of the time.

Summary and Conclusion

Spanish authorities probably considered it fortuitous that a dance-play tradition already existed in the Americas when they arrived, and began to calculate ways to turn the local spectacles to their advantage. Shortly they were introducing new dance-plays, or new themes into existing dance-plays that dramatized the superiority of the European-Christian worldview, thereby implying that Amerindians who submitted to this outlook would be accommodated in the now Spanish-controlled and Christianized America. Amerindians also found ways to utilize these hybridized performance events, as is attested by the longevity of the conquest *baile* tradition and the continued popularity of many such dance-plays throughout portions of the Americas. The *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* alone is currently performed in some fifty communities in Guatemala.

The *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* was chosen as a focus in this study for a variety of reasons. As an example of an introduced dance-play, it invites comparison of the history of the type as found in both Europe and America. And in Guatemala, it is presented annually in two Verapaz towns, Cobán and Rabinal, which allows for a comparison of different performances of the *baile* in the highlands to determine how standard its components are. Moreover, as the play exists in written texts, the comparison can extend to different versions of the scripts. Equally important, the dance-play's instrumentation links it to a Postclassic K'iche' ceremony, the warrior dance, indicating the possibility that an association of specific Maya instruments with dance-play themes led to the current instrumentation that has become standardized in performances of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* in highland Guatemala.

How the texts of the plays related to witnessed performances turned out to be difficult to assess based on the context of saint-day *ferias*, involving a cacophony of simultaneously occurring events (such as multiple dance-play performances, fireworks, and church services). Contributing to a possible misinterpretation of the content in the two witnessed versions was the fact that the *Moros* was not presented in its entirety at

either Cobán or Rabinal. As determined by Horspool twenty years earlier in Momostenango, it is common for only one scene from the story to be focused on per enactment, and for this then to be loosely interpreted. The two scripts examined displayed mostly medieval European perspectives, suggesting little indigenous influence, notwithstanding the *brujos* who make an appearance at the end of the Rabinal version. Underscoring the different sources contributing to the modern-day *baile* performance, the costumes of the actors appeared European in design, while the round dancing recalled styles shown in Mixtec-Puebla codices, and the use of swords as props suggested that some dance steps were borrowed from European traditions.

Concerning an indigenous precedent for *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* instrumentation, there is evidence that a flute-drum ensemble provided music for K'iche' warriors in Postclassic pre-war celebrations (perhaps called *tza xajil*, my name, or *tzala tun*, Carmack's name, although it is unclear how typical such an ensemble was or how structured the celebrations were at that time. The Maya writers who described these instruments as played before the advent of hostilities may have mentioned flutes and drums only as representative examples of many sound makers used to excite participants and observers in a manner expected on such occasions. Nonetheless, the passage in the *Rab'inal Achi* where the K'iche' warrior-prince asks for flute and drum music and subsequently dances without accompaniment suggests a performance tradition more prescribed than random. It also may be important that this specific instrumentation is not typical for Spanish versions of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, unless the pipe and tabor, sometimes used there, was amended to comprise a two-man group.

In conclusion, this chapter has offered further evidence of a highland Guatemalan Maya tradition of association between dance-play and instrumentation, with the relationship here possibly occurring in the pairing of K'iche' instrumentation with a Spanish-derived story. If this supposition is correct, Precolumbian music elements are

not merely confined to highland Guatemalan Maya dance-plays that originated in Precolumbian times.

Chapter 6

A Comparison of the Music of the Rab'inal Achi and Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

Introduction

We have learned that the two highland Guatemalan dance-plays *Rab'inal Achi* and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* are similar in that both are based on the dramatization of verifiable events; use pantomime, masks, and declamation; and are dependent on a script possessed by a proprietor (*maestro*), who typically acts as organizer, producer, director, and teacher for performances. Here our concerns are the similarities and differences in the music, which will be reviewed in terms of form, rhythm, and tonality.

We begin with an outline of the music as it occurs within the performance structures of the *Rab'inal Achi* and *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. The rhythmic and tonal aspects of their respective instrumental pieces are then analyzed through an examination of the parts played by each instrument specific to each dance-play, and in the process the structures of the compositions are detailed. Music examples featuring some of these elements comprise the CD in the back pocket of this document. Near the end of the chapter is an examination of additional sound-makers, such as bells and tinklers, and ultimately the instrumental music components of the two *bailes* are compared and an explanation is offered as to why *son* order, *son* structure, and rhythm are theorized as being survivals from Prehispanic times.

Composition Forms and Music Uses in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

The Rab'inal Achi Music Forms

In Chapter 3 the instrumental music used in accompaniment to the *Rab'inal Achi*, performed on a slit-drum and two valveless trumpets, was shown to consist of three compositions called *sones de bailes (sones)*, each one-to-over-two minutes in length, and usually repeated one or more times in the course of the play, interspersed between sections of dialogue (Figure 28, CD Index no. 1). In addition, a piece called *son alto (alto)*, ten-to-twenty seconds in length, functioned intermittently as a fanfare.

The form of the *sones* in the *Rab'inal Achi* consists of a section of relatively long length, here called the *son* body (detailed later) and a version of the *alto*, which acts as an introduction and conclusion to the longer *son* section. Figure 29 gives the form of the *alto* which is used to not only frame *son* bodies, but is played separately in its role as a fanfare (CD Index no. 2). Only the *sones* are accompanied by dancing.

Figure 28

The Son Form in the Rab'inal Achi

| Instruments and Voices | Alto-like Intro | Son Body | Alto-like Conclusion | |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------------|---|
| Alto Trumpet | X | X | X | X |
| Bajo Trumpet | L (S) L... | L & S... | L (S) L... | |
| Slit-Drum | AR ST AR | SBR... | AR ST AR | |
| Warriors | WC | | WC | |

Key: X=glissando line; L=note of long duration on the root or fifth; S=note of short duration on the root or fifth; L & S=patterns with both long and short durations; (S)= note of short duration occasionally included; AR=accelerating rolls; ST=single tones; SBR=son-body rhythms; WC=war cry; ...=continuation of pattern

Figure 29

The Alto Form in the Rab'inal Achi

Instruments and Voices

| | | | |
|--------------|------------|----|----|
| Alto Trumpet | X | | |
| Bajo Trumpet | L (S) L... | | |
| Slit-Drum | AR | ST | AR |

Warriors WC

Key: X=glissando line; L=note of long duration on the root or fifth; S=note of short duration on the root or fifth; (S)= note of short duration occasionally included; AR=accelerating rolls; ST=single tones; WC=war cry; ...=continuation of pattern

The Altos

In its fanfare role the *alto* separates the spoken parts of the play and cues the war cries of the warriors. The performances witnessed in January 2002 included thirteen *altos*, Tedlock (2003:25-124) documented fourteen in 1998, and there are eighteen on Mace's 1972 tape (discography and videography). I cannot account for the difference in number between the 1998 and 2002 versions, but the fact that Mace's recording was of a rehearsal may explain the larger number of *altos* found there. It is also worth noting that the numbers thirteen and eighteen are both considered sacred to the K'iche', as demonstrated by the thirteen numbers affixed to twenty day-names comprising their 260-day sacred year (*tzolkin*), and the eighteen months making up their 365-day solar year (*macewal k'ij*) (B. Tedlock 1992).

Altos are generally initiated by the second trumpeter, who plays the fundamental pitch or its fifth for a few seconds, cueing the slit-drummer to start his first drum roll. This roll accelerates for three or more seconds before the drummer pounds out a series of accented single tones, ranging from two to six, with the number apparently decided upon by the musician. The last single tone of the drum roll segues into a second accelerating roll.

During the drum rolls and single strokes the second trumpet continues playing long-held notes, sometimes interrupted by a few shorter ones, on the root or fifth, while the first trumpet plays a fanfare-like line. At the conclusion of the second drum roll a section of dialogue begins (Music Example 3, CD Index no. 2).

Music Example 3

The Template of the Rab'in al Achi Alto Performed on the Slit-Drum and Showing First and Second Trumpet Entrances, Ninth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002

Alto, 13 seconds (.13) in length

entrance of select parts indicated by timeline, relative durations of trumpet pitches indicated by use of filled-in or non filled-in ovals: filled-in ovals are shorter in duration than non filled-in ones

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Alto Trumpet, showing a series of notes with durations of :005, :015, and :09. The middle staff is for the Bajo Trumpet, showing notes with durations of :03 and :10. The bottom staff is for the Slit-Drum, showing an accelerating roll with durations of :04, :06, and :07, followed by another accelerating roll. The timeline is marked with vertical lines and ovals indicating the entrance and duration of specific parts.

From Howell, 2002--Minidisc Digital Recording, author's transcription

The Sones

In January 2002, all five performances witnessed in Rabinal over a two-day period began with three *sones* alternating with the first three speeches of the *baile*, all of which preceded the bulk of the enacted scenes. The performances ended with five *sones*, occurring near and alternating with the concluding narrative section (see Table 3, Chapter

3). These eight *sones* were repetitions of the three pieces that the play's *maestro*, Coloch, titled "Entrada" (*son* 1), "Son del K'iche'" (*son* 2), and "El Baile" (*son* 3), and they are numbered in this chapter (as in Chapter 3) according to their order of appearance on a 1995 tape of Coloch's (discography and videography) featuring excerpts of music and dialogue from a *Rab'inal Achi* performance.

Although eight was the number of *sones* in all of the observed January 2002 performances, the order and even the inclusion of particular ones differed from one performance to the next. In the enactments at the church and *calvaria* (on the morning and at noon of the twenty-third) *son* 2 was the first piece played, while at the performances at the two *cofradía* houses (on the night of the twenty-third and afternoon of the twenty-fourth) *son* 1 was performed first.¹²³

Due to the degree of inconsistency in *son* order, I subsequently reviewed Mace's recording of a 1972 (discography and videography) rehearsal for comparison. This recording, while incomplete, begins with *son* 1, *son* 2, and *son* 3, a *son* order matching that found on Coloch's tape; the initial sequence I theorize to be more common, primarily because of the consistency of the *son* names in this sequence with the introduction of similarly named characters or events in the script. In addition, this order matches that of the three performances witnessed at the *cofradía* houses. It merits mention, however, that those performances were presented under distracting conditions (very large crowds and accompanying noise), rendering claims about the music there less definitive than those made for the performances at the *calvaria* and the church.

The assumed inconsistency in the beginning order of *sones* at the *cofradía* and the church, both of which started with three successive performances of *son* 2, can best be attributed to the particular musicians involved, their skills on the instruments they played and doubled on, and the relative difficulty of the three music pieces. In both cases, the

¹²³ Performances of the *Rab'inal Achi* were given at the San Pablo and San Pedro *cofradía* houses on the night of January 23, 2001. During the afternoon of January 24 there was an additional performance at the San Pedro *cofradía* house.

ensemble was missing its slit-drummer at the beginning, and the first trumpeter (Sebastian Sarpec) switched to the slit-drum until the actual drummer arrived. In all likelihood, *son 2* was repeated simply because it was the easiest piece to play.

The order of the five *sones* played at the conclusion of the *Rab'inal Achi*—*son 2*, *son 2*, *son 1*, *son 3*, and *son 1*—I have found to be more consistent (Table 5). This was the standard ending order for every performance attended in 2002, and also duplicates the sequence on Mace's 1972 tape (before that tape ran out). Although not affecting *son* order, I should point out that *sones 2* and *3* on the 1995 Coloch tape fade out before they conclude.

Table 5

Son and Alto Order and Lengths in the Rab'inal Achi, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002

Son 2 (2:00)

Son 2 (1:45)

Son 2 (2:20)

Alto 1 (:17)

Alto 2 (:13)

Alto 3 (:14)

Alto 4 (:10)

Alto 5 (:15)

Alto 6 (:13)

Alto 7 (:12)

Alto 8 (:15)

Alto 9 (:15)

Alto 10 (:15)

Alto 11 (:16)

Alto 12 (:16)

Alto 13 (:11)

Son 2 (1:49)

Son 2 (1:47)

Son 1 (1:33)

Son 3 (2:00)

Son 1 (2:11)

In all personally witnessed *Rab'in al Achi* productions, the *sones* and *altos*, while distinct, were given rather free interpretations by the musicians, leading me to assume that the melodic and rhythmic structures of the pieces allow for latitude in interpretation. Included in this observation is the qualification that I have heard older performers complain that some of the younger musicians do not always play the music correctly. Therefore, what constitutes “an acceptable interpretation” may vary according to both performer and listener.

The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Music Forms

In the last chapter it was established that the highland Guatemalan *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* is understood locally as consisting of several scenes, each lasting approximately thirty minutes, but that the performance of one scene is considered to constitute an enactment of the *baile*. It is consequently assumed that the most significant variation in *Moros* productions is the particular scene presented, but that the form of the *baile* does not differ substantially according to that one chosen.

As a result, due to the similarity of the music of the dance-play heard at performances witnessed in Rabinal and Cobán, and the fact that the production at the latter town was easier to observe, it was decided that for analytical and comparative purposes the Cobán version would be used as representative. This latter performance was

some thirty-minutes long and included eighteen *sones* played on a duct flute and skin drum, varying in length from ten seconds to more than six minutes (Table 6).

Table 6

**Son Order and Lengths in the Scene of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán,
August 4, 2001**

Son 1 (Beginning-Ending Son: B-E S) (1:45)

Son 2 (6:03)

Son 3 (3:33)

Son 4 (3:34)

Son 5 (1:23)

Son 6 (1:01)

Son 7 (:30)

Son 8 (:27)

Son 9 (1:18)

Son 10 (:47)

Son 11 (:54)

Son 12 (:10)

Son 13 (1:27)

Son 14 (1:04)

Son 15 (B-E S) (1:06)

Son 16 (:34)

Son 17 (1:28)

Son 18 (B-E S) (:31)

One aspect of the Cobán performance proved problematic for comparative research. As described in the Chapter 5, the flute player stopped on a few occasions after

playing only a few notes and consulted with the actor-dancers before the *baile* resumed, either with a change in the music or a different dance. Hence, I am uncertain about how many of the partially played pieces were actually intended for the scene presented, and as a result, the number of *sones* in the performance analyzed here cannot be assessed as typical. Still, the structures of most *sones* were consistent and, like those of the *Rab'inal Achi*, included standardized introductory and concluding sections, which framed longer *son*-bodies made up of one or more melodic-rhythmic patterns, each generally two-to-five seconds in length (Figure 30, CD Index no. 3).¹²⁴

Figure 30

The Typical Son Form in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001

| | Introduction | Son Body | Conclusion |
|-------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Flute | MR, m... (1 pattern) | MR, m... (8 patterns in <i>son</i> 7) | MR, m... (1 pattern, outlines Db Maj.) |

Drum F... m...

Key: MR=melodic-rhythmic patterns; F=free time; m=metric time; ...=continuation of pattern

Rhythms in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

Terminology

Before detailing the durational components of the instrumental pieces in the two *bailes*, I will introduce some of the music terms used to describe them: (1) beat, a regular recurring pulse that is sometimes, but not always, sounded and underlies the melodic-rhythmic patterns of the *sones*; (2) tempo, the rate of speed of the beat, measured by the

¹²⁴ The *son*-body part played by the melodic instruments in both the *Rab'inal Achi* and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* was comprised of short phrases with melodic lines and rhythmic components that were generally the same each time the phrase was played. These are referred to as melodic-rhythmic patterns or motives.

number of beats per minute; (3) meter, an emphasis on regularly occurring accented beats in a repeating cycle; and (4) rhythm, a collection of notes of various durational values measurable according to their position relative to the beat. In describing these and other durational components Western music terms and symbols will be used.

The Rab'inal Achi: Slit-Drum

In both the *alto*-like introduction and conclusion sections of *Rab'inal Achi sones*, the slit-drum part begins and ends with similar-sounding accelerating rolls separated by a small number of single tones (see Figure 28). As a result, the only differences among the three *sones* are in the rhythms that characterize the section referred to as the *son* body. For analytical purposes I identify *son*-body rhythms as templates comprised of groupings labeled rhythmic segments. *Son* 1 and *son* 3 each contain three such segments, called A, B, and C (Music Examples 4 and 6), with the A and B segments the same in each of the two *sones*. The *son* 2 template is comprised of only one phrase and, as a result, is not divided into segments.

With a quarter note receiving one beat, segment A in *sones* 1 and 3 is represented as a repeating sixteenth and dotted-eighth note pair in the time of one beat. In performances, this pattern was initiated by a sixteenth note (pick-up) and then repeated 2-to-4 times (generally 3 or 4) before the drummer moved to the second segment (B). Segment B in *sones* 1 and 3 is an eighth-note-triplet pattern (in the time of one beat). In versions of both *sones* reviewed this triplet most often sounded as if it was comprised of two notes with the second of those twice as long as the first. In examples 4 and 6 this is shown by a tie connecting the second eighth to the third. On some occasions, however, the three eighth notes sounded as separate notes of equal time-value, which could be represented with the tie removed.

Segment C in *son* 1 is made up of a three-beat phrase represented as a pair of quarter notes and a dotted-eighth note that normally leads to a sixteenth note, the pick-up

to the segment A section (Music Examples 4 and 5, CD Index no. 4). However, in some versions the dotted eighth was followed by a sixteenth note that preceded one or more repeats of segment B before it led to a repeat of the entire template pattern, with its initiating sixteenth note pick-up. (The following transcriptions do not adequately show the alignment of parts, a topic that merits further attention.)

Music Example 4

Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 1 of the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum

low pitch

triplet pattern sometimes played with last two eighth notes untied

higher pitch high pitch

Beats: 1 2 3 4 5

Segment A
2-4 X (more often 3X)

Segment B

Segment C

From Howell, 2002--Minidisc Digital Recording

Music Example 5

Beginning Excerpt from the Body of Son 1 of the Rab'inal Achi, Nineteenth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002

beginning alto section preceding son body 15 seconds (0.15) in length
select entrances shown in timeline

$\text{♩} = 128$ variable

Alto Trumpet

Bajo Trumpet

Slit-Drum

:15 segments shown by letters

:18

:26
 A A A B C
 :25 A A A B C

:30
 :33
 :29 A A A B C
 :32 A A A B C

:35 A A A A B C
 :39 A A A B C

:44
 A A A A B C

:42 slit-drum pattern repeated 11 more times before the beginning of the ending alto section (:12 long)

Author's transcription

Segment C in *son 3* (Music Examples 6 and 7, CD Index no. 5) begins with a dotted-eighth note followed by a sixteenth-note rest and two eighth notes, and it concludes with a sixteenth-note rest. In some versions this segment occasionally comprised one or two quarter notes followed by a pause, which in the tempo of Music Example 7 would be the approximate length of a sixteenth-note rest.¹²⁵ As with *son 1*, segment C of *son 3* was sometimes followed by a sixteenth-note pick-up initiating its segment B before leading to the repeat of the template pattern, beginning with the pick-up to A.

Music Example 6

Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 3 of the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum

low pitch

triplet pattern sometimes played with last two eighths untied

high pitch

Beats: 1 2 3 4 (the 4th beat is an eighth longer than the other three)

Segment A Segment B Segment C

2-4 X

From Howell, 2002--Minidisc Digital Recording, author's transcription

¹²⁵ According to the way the dancers move to this *son*, its template could be conceived as comprising four-and-a-half beats, notated in examples 6 and 7 with a quarter note receiving a beat. The most conspicuous part of the half beat in example 6 is represented by the sixteenth-note rest at the end of segment C. The other half is the sixteenth-note rest preceding beat four.

Music Example 7

**Beginning Excerpt from the Body of Son 3 of the Rab'inal Achi, Twentieth Piece,
Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002**

beginning alto section preceding son body 16 seconds (.16) in length
select entrances shown in timeline

$\bullet = 120$ variable

Alto Trumpet

Bajo Trumpet

Slit-Drum

:16 segments shown by letters A A A B C :19

:22 A A A B A A B C

:23 :25

:27 A A A A B C :31 A A A A A B C :34

slit-drum pattern repeats 19 more times and into an A segment of the 20th pattern before the beginning of the ending alto (:12 long)

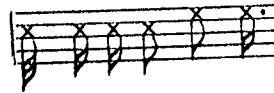
Author's transcription

The slit-drum rhythmic template in the body of *son 2* is much simpler, consisting of a thirty-second note, two sixteenth notes, two eighth notes, and a dotted-sixteenth note (Music Examples 8 and 9, CD Index no. 6).¹²⁶ For all three *sones*, the slit-drum part is flexible, allowing for repeats of rhythms by segments, or through the addition or subtraction of beats. But in contrast to the rhythmic variability somewhat common to *sones 1* and *3*, *son 2* almost always sounded as if it was in a repeating duple meter.

¹²⁶ I notate *son 2* with an eighth note receiving a beat, but it could be represented instead with a quarter note receiving the beat. In the latter case the visual impression of the transcriptions might lead one to mistakenly conclude that *son 2* was similar in speed to the other *sones*. Instead, the piece stands out due to its quicker tempo, and I sought to represent this difference in notation as well as in metronome markings.

Music Example 8

Rhythmic Template for the Body of Son 2 of the Rab'in al Achi, Performed on the Slit-Drum



From Howell, 2002--Minidisc Digital Recording, author's transcription

Music Example 9

Beginning Excerpt from the Body Son 2 of the Rab'in al Achi, Eighteenth Piece, Calvaria Enactment in Rabinal, January 23, 2002

beginning alto section preceding son body 14 seconds (.14) in length
select entrances shown in timeline

$\text{♩} = 172$ variable

Alto Trumpet

Bajo Trumpet

Slit-Drum

:14 :15 :16 :17 :18

:20 :21 :23 :24

The image displays a musical score for guitar, organized into four systems. Each system consists of three staves: a treble clef staff at the top, a melody staff in the middle, and a bass staff at the bottom. The bass staff contains chord diagrams and measure numbers. The melody staff shows the melodic line with various note values and rests. The treble staff is mostly empty, suggesting a capo or a specific tuning.

Measure numbers are indicated below the bass staff for each system:

- System 1: :26, :27, :29, :30
- System 2: :31, :32, :36
- System 3: :37, :38, :39, :41
- System 4: :42, :44, :45, :47

:48 :49 :50
 :52 :54 :55
 :56 :58 :60
 :61

Author's transcription

slit-drum pattern repeated 23 more times before
the beginning of the ending alto (:10 long)

Along with their differing rhythmic patterns, the *sones* of the *Rab'inal Achi* are distinguished by their tempos, largely established and maintained by the slit-drum. A comparison of the tempos of the *sones* as performed in three different years suggests that their speed has increased over time, an aspect that could be ascribed to better familiarity with the material due to the stability in production provided by Coloch's forty years of *Rab'inal Achi* supervision. Still, as the 1972 and 1995 recordings were made on magnetic tape, differences in tape-record versus tape-playback speed could account for some, or even all, of the difference. Another interesting find is that *son* 1 (MM 126) is now faster than *son* 3 (MM 118), reversing their earlier tempo relationship (Table 7).

Table 7

Approximate Tempos of Sones in Contemporary Performances of the Rab'inal Achi

| | 1972 (averaged) | 1995 | 2002 (averaged) |
|--------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|
| <i>Son</i> 1 | MM=88 | MM=98 | MM=126 |
| <i>Son</i> 2 | MM=135 | MM=141 | MM=166 |
| <i>Son</i> 3 | MM=94 | MM=100 | MM=118 |

Rab'inal Achi: Two Valveless Trumpets

The Bajo Trumpet

The role of the *bajo* (or second) trumpet is more significant in the maintenance of the tempos and rhythms of the *baile* than the *alto* (or first) trumpet, and therefore will be discussed first. This aerophone supports the pulses of the slit-drum by emphasizing rhythmic figures comprising notes of long and short duration played either on the fundamental or fifth. Phrase constructions, while partly characterized by free interpretation, remain recognizable as rhythmic signatures distinct to *son* bodies and *altos*. *Son* bodies usually feature repeating patterns of a single long tone and three or

more short pulses; the *alto* sections are characterized by two or more long tones, with some of those occasionally followed or preceded by shorter ones.

The 2002 live versions, as well as the 1972 and 1995 recorded ones, included variations of *bajo* trumpet long-short patterns in *son* body sections that differed slightly from the more common pattern described above, but these variations did not appear to be specific to particular *sones*. For instance, using L for long and S for short, the first ten notes of the beginning pattern of the body of the third rendition of *son 2*, played in the first half of the *baile* at the *calvaria* was S, L, L, S, S, S, S, L, L, S; while in the same *son* at the same location in the version performed at the church it was L, S, S, S, L, L, S, S, S, L; and in the same location in the same piece as documented by Mace in 1972 it was L, S, S, L, S, S, S, L, S, S. Consequently, I think it likely that any variation of the *son*-body pattern should be considered a result of interpretative leeway. An additional factor to consider is the perception of note lengths when music sounds are separated by periods of silence. Graphic examples of long and short patterns with rests are shown in Music Example 10.

Music Example 10

Rhythmic Patterns in the Rab'in al Achi, Performed on the Bajo Trumpet, 1995

Recording

(S=short duration; L=long duration)

From Son 1

The musical notation for Son 1 is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. Above the notes are labels: S, S, L, S, S, L, S, L, S, L. Below the staff, the beats are numbered: 1, 2-3, 4-6, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-6.

From Son 2

The musical notation for Son 2 is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. Above the notes are labels: S, S, L, L, S, S, S, S, L. Below the staff, the beats are numbered: 1, 2, 3-4, 5, 6-7, 8, 9, 10, 11-12.

From Son 3

From Alto (Fanfare)

From Coloch, 1995--Audiocassette Recording, author's transcription

The Alto Trumpet

The rhythmic function of the *alto* (or first) trumpet is less distinct, and while the patterns it plays are also interpreted loosely by the performer, they basically consist of anthem-like glissando lines usually repeated at specific points in each piece; patterns that seem somewhat disconnected from the ostinato-like rhythms played by the other two instruments.

The trumpet glissandos were found to have a rather consistent contour shape and in *sones* they generally occurred once in the *alto*-like intro, two times in the *son* body—the latter time near the end where they initiated the conclusion—and a fourth time (sometimes fifth) within this concluding *alto*-like section. In addition, similar lines were also usually played once in each *alto* (as fanfare) although on some occasions only a portion was sounded.

Music example 12 taken from the 1995 recording features a particularly graphic example of one of these patterns. For analytical purposes, I propose interpreting it as comprised of two phrases, an antecedent and a consequent. The antecedent phrase (beats

5-16, in the example) is composed of notes of relatively long duration and high pitch (approximations of E4, F4, E4, and D4), with all but the last D approached from below. The consequent phrase (beats 17-23, same example) begins with an ascending line followed by a rhythmic augmentation of the antecedent's earlier figure (the dotted-quarter F and the subsequent two tied eighth-note Fs that are roughly twice as long as each of the three Ds in the triplet figure that begins at beat 6) (Music Example 11). Music example 12 details two other instances of this contour shape.

Music Example 11

The Glissando-Line Contour in the Rab'inal Achi, Performed on the Alto Trumpet, 1995 Recording

From Son 1
♩ = 96 variable

Beats: 5 6 7-8 9-10 11-13 14-16

Antecedent Phrase

17 18-19 20 21 22 23

Consequent Phrase

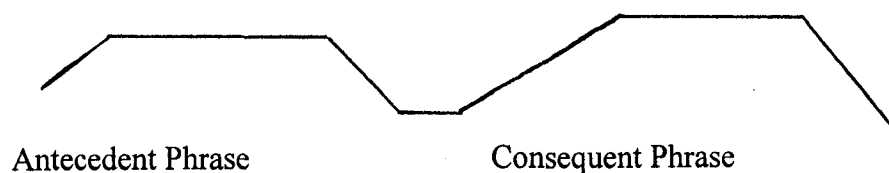
From Coloch, 1995--Audiocassette Recording

Music Example 12

**Additional Examples of Glissando Contours in the Rab'in al Achi,
Performed on the Alto Trumpet**

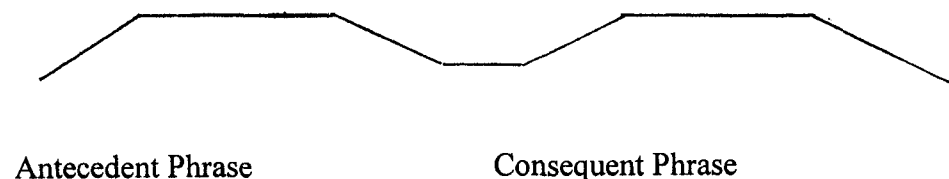
1972, Son 2 (third piece)

repeated 3X during this version of the *son*



2002, Son 2 (seventeenth piece)

repeated 2X during this version of the *son*



The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

The Beginning-Ending Son

As shown in Table 6, the witnessed enactment of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* at Cobán featured eighteen separate music-dance pieces. Due to the apparent function of one of these *sones*, which started and ended the dance-play, I label it the “beginning-ending *son*” (B-E S). Curiously, a version of the B-E S was played an additional (third) time near the end of the performance, generating some confusion among the dancers. As a result, one of the two last B-E S renditions may have been included by mistake. (I will have more to say shortly concerning this and other possible performance mistakes.)

Irrespective of the intended number of B-E S performances, the skin drum part in each was the same, comprising a series of accelerating rolls that recalled the *altos* and the introduction and conclusion sections of the *sones* played on the slit-drum of the *Rab'inal Achi* (Music Example 13). At Cobán there were twenty-three separate drum rolls played during the first execution of the B-E S (ranging in length from one to ten seconds), with each roll commencing at the following times relative the number of seconds from the start of the *son*: 4, 14, 16, 18, 27, 29, 31, 40, 42, 43, 51, 54, 55, 63, 65, 66, 74, 75, 84, 86, 95, 97, and 104.

Music Example 13

Beginning-Ending Son Pattern in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Performed on the Skin Drum in the Opening Piece, Cobán, August 4, 2001



accelerating roll

From Howell, 2001--Minidisc Digital Recording

Metrical Sones

Fifteen of the eighteen *Moros sones* I term “metrical *sones*” because of the duple or triple meters that appeared to underlie their rhythms, as well as to distinguish them from the B-E S in free time. They were further distinguished by being the only pieces to which the actors danced (or, in some cases, attempted to dance).

Son 7 performed at Cobán in 2002 was indicative of a metrical *son* in one of its more simple forms. It had three primary structural units, an introduction, a *son* body, and a conclusion, but its structure can also be shown organized according to further divisions, with two larger units, here called episodes (1 and 2, Music Example 14) separated by double-bar lines. I include the introduction in episode 1 and the conclusion in episode 2.

The flute initiated this *son*, playing a melodic-rhythmic phrase in free time that cued the drum to begin an accelerating roll. At the end of this introduction the flute began the *son* body section by playing a descending line of even beats (shown in Music Example 14 as four eighth notes following the first bar in 6/8), at which time the drum rolls gave way to rhythms based on repeating patterns of four basic durational combinations: (1) three eighth notes followed by a quarter and an eighth; (2) a quarter note eighth note pair; (3) an eighth note or quarter note preceding a dotted-quarter note; and (4) an eighth note followed by two quarters and an eighth. These drum rhythms were played at a steady tempo (an eighth note at approximately 216 beats a minute), but one not always matched by that of the flute. The drum repeated and alternated these patterns, until the conclusion section when at the end of the piece it roughly synched up with the flute in tempo and rhythm. The variability of durational elements in melodic phrases contributed not only to a sense of heterophony but to a perception of loosely interpretive performance style.

Music Example 14

Son 7 from the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001

Duct Flute $\text{♩} = 216$ variable introduction (I) A
 1 episodes shown by numbers :09
 Skin Drum accelerating roll melodic-rhythmic patterns shown by letters
 B C

From Howell, 2002--Minidisc Digital Recording, Howell Transcription

The flute part of the body of *son 7* is subdivided into melodic-rhythmic motives of nine or more beats, with the first three of these (A, B, C) occurring in episode 1, and the last five (D, E, F, C, C1) occurring in episode 2. These letters are used to signify different melodic-rhythmic motives, with the repeat of a letter (C) designating a repeat of that motive later in the *son*. The numeral 1 affixed to the second repeat of C indicates that this pattern is a variation of the original C motive. For the sake of clarity and consistency I also assign letters to the introduction and conclusion sections, with the former labeled "I" and the latter, "X." These respective letters will be used to designate introduction and conclusion sections in other *Moros sones* discussed later.

For both instruments the most complicated rhythms in *son 7* were found in its introduction, where the flute played a lyrical line of varied durational units over an

accelerating drum roll. In its body and conclusion sections; however, most of the rhythms played by the aerophone can be shown as repeating units of equal time (eighth notes, quarter notes, or dotted quarters) or alternating short-long units like the alternating eighth and quarter notes played by the drum detailed earlier. Unlike the drum, however, a flute is capable of sustaining pitches, and the *Moros* flautist in Cobán held notes at the following locations: the end of patterns A, C (second time), D, E, and F.

Some of the other metric *sones* were more complex in structure. *Son 2* is an example of this type (Music Example 15), and in its body the flute linked together melodic-rhythmic motives, including the one played in the introduction (I) and conclusion (X), with several other phrases. As with *son 7*, *son 2* motives are listed in the order they occur by consecutive letters of the alphabet. At one eighth note equaling approximately 208 beats a minute, the introduction, when first played, was six beats long, motive A was twelve, motive B was four, and motive C was twelve. Following their initial presentations, the introduction, A, B, and C motives were repeated, again in that order, but each played as a variation, primarily consisting of shortened or lengthened rhythmic patterns. These motives were reprised at various moments throughout the *son*, although not always in the sequence of their first occurrence and usually with melodic or rhythmic variations. (In fact, the variations were so prevalent that for the sake of clarity I decided not to further differentiate them according to subdivision by number.) Later, three other melodic-rhythmic motives, called D, E, and F, were introduced and treated in ways similar to that described for the introduction, A, B, and C. When first played, motives D, E, F, and the concluding motive were all eight beats in length. After six-or-so minutes the *son 2* flute part ended with an eight-beat formulaic melodic-rhythmic motive.

Music Example 15

The Structure of the Melodic-Rhythmic Flute Motives of Son 2 in the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001

Different letters represent separate *son*-body motives in the structure; their repeat indicates a repeat of that motive (usually in a varied form): I (introduction motive) A B C I A B C A A C D C E C A A I A E F E D D X (conclusion motive) D A D X A A I A D D A E E I A A B A A D A D E E A X

Introduction (I) A

Db's are sharp

B C

D E

F Conclusion (X)

From Howell, 2001--Minidisc Digital Recording

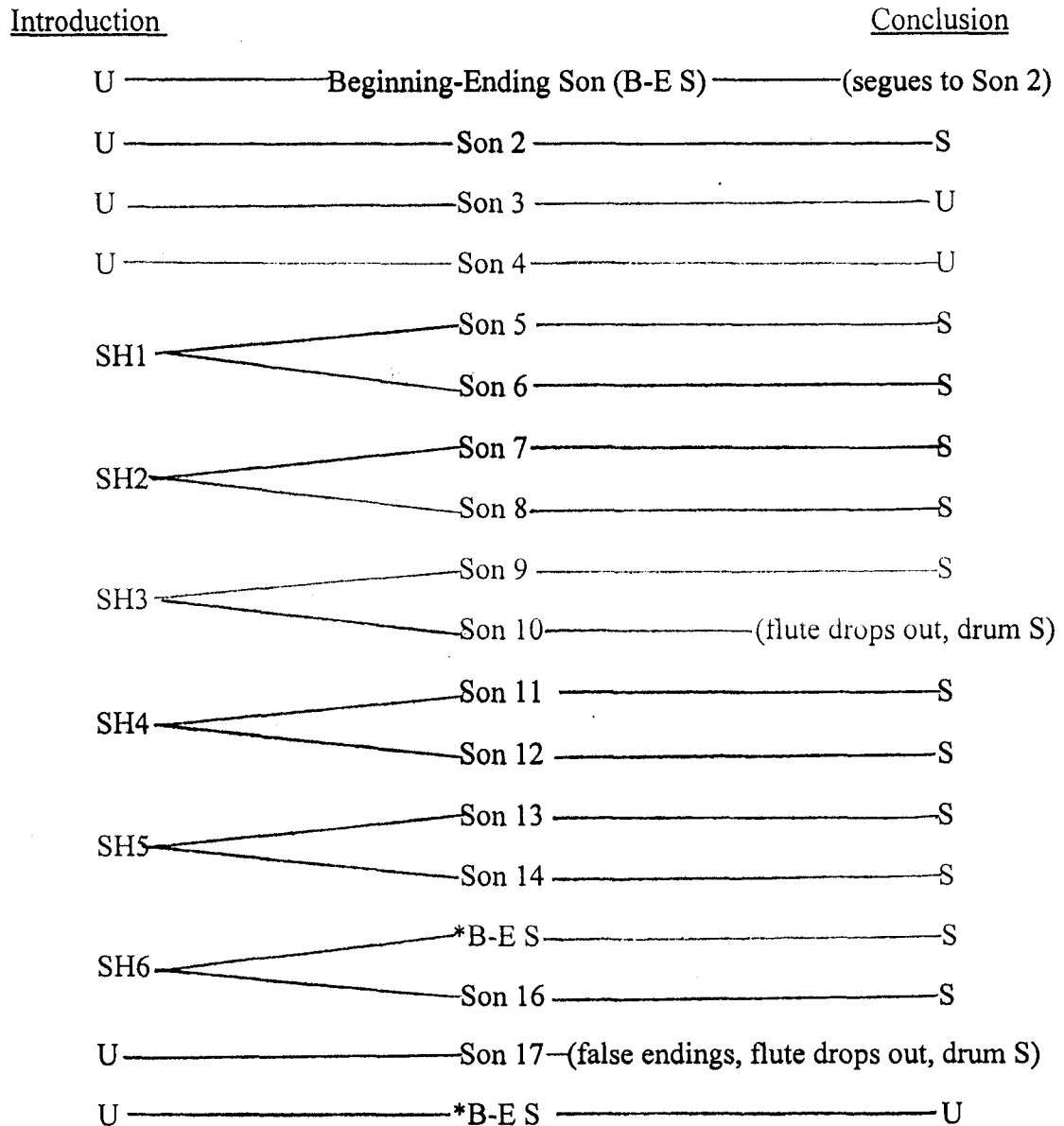
The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos Performance Structure Revisited

Returning to the performance structure of the *Moros* in Cobán, the short melodic-rhythmic statements used to introduce the first three *sones* were unique to each, but from *son* 5 to *son* 16, a similar introductory phrase was shared by pairs of consecutive *sones*

(shown in Table 8 as SH); although the phrase used for one pair always differed from that used by others (the difference is indicated through use of numerals, *i.e.* SH1, SH2, etc.).

Table 8

Introduction and Conclusion Sections of the Sones in the Scene of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2002



Key: SH=Shared Introduction, with different numbers used to indicate the different pairs; U=Unique Introduction or Conclusion; S=Same or Similar Conclusion

* The introduction to these *sones* is not the same as for other versions of the same *son*.

It is possible that the pairs of shared introductions indicate wrong *son* placements, or some other type of performance mistake. This possibility is suggested because the introductions for some of the pairs noted above was affixed to *sones* that were suspiciously short (see Table 6—*son* 7 and 8, *son* 12 of the 11-12 pair, and *son* 16 of the 15-16 pair). If indicative of mistakes, the intended number of *sones* for this enactment may have perhaps been fourteen, rather than the eighteen actually played. On the other hand, this explanation would make more sense if it were the first of the pair that was the shorter one. In that case, a second attempt at a piece that was not played satisfactorily the first time could explain the use of the same introduction for its second attempt. But in all of the cited examples, except *sones* 7 and 8, it was the second of the two pieces that was the shorter. *Sones* 7 and 8 were both short and roughly matched each other in length. Moreover, as all of the other *sones* with shared introductions (5, 6; 9, 10; and 13, 14) were each sufficiently long to cast doubt on their being misplaced in the *baile* order, the shared introductions on their own do not appear indicative of a performance mistake. The conclusion sections of all *Moros sones* were much more clearly formulaic. In all but *son* 3, *son* 4, and *son* 18, this section of each piece featured a very similar four-to-twelve beat pattern.

Tonality in the Rab'inal Achi and the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos

The Rab'inal Achi: Slit-Drum

The reader is reminded that the slit-drum of the *Rab'inal Achi* sounds three pitches, produced by striking the body and the two tongues. Yet surprisingly, the instrument presumably used in all performances since the 1960s (when Coloch took over

production) sounds different pitches according to the different recordings of the dance-play made since that time. I credit these variances to either a change in tape record versus playback speeds, difference in microphone placement during recordings, the aging of the instrument, or perhaps even the use at some point in time of another instrument. In 2002 three pitches were noted, which were approximations of those recognized in Western terminology as G1, D2 (drum body), and E2. Due to the inconsistency in pitch shown for this instrument over the years I chose to designate these sounds as: low, high, and higher, registered as if on a bass-clef staff as E, G, and D.¹²⁷

Whatever the specific pitches found in other versions of the *baile* (which in some cases were only two), one pitch was found to always dominate, here called the primary pitch. In witnessed performances, the low pitch was the primary one, and the high pitch was often used (more rarely the higher one) as a penultimate, preparation, tone before the repeat of a pattern or segment (see Music Examples 3, 5, 7, and 9). In versions from other years, if three pitches were used, one or both of the non-primary pitch(es) functioned as a penultimate note or pick-up before the repeat of a pattern or segment. When two pitches were used, the non-primary pitch usually served one or both of these functions.

In 2002 the accelerating drum-rolls were played simultaneously on both drum-slits, and the single tones were played on one slit or the body of the instrument. The accelerating roles in some versions from other years; however, were played on only one

¹²⁷ According to my analysis, the slit-drum pitches in the Mace recording from 1972 were C#2, F#2, and G#2; those from 1985 (Fidel 1996) were G1, C2, and E2; and those from 1995 (Coloch) were E2, G2, and A2. Overtones are a prevalent part of the slit-drum sound, a factor that may contribute to the confusion regarding fundamental tones. Also, because of the position of the slit-drum during performances (with its front hidden from my view) I was unsure which slit sounded G and which sounded E. On a related topic, it may be more than a coincidence that G (found for the 1985, 1995, and 2002 *Rab'inal Achi* slit-drum[s]) is a pitch common to the few examined museum versions of the instrument, as well as being common to examined Prehispanic Lowland-Maya whistles and ocarinas (see Castañeda and Mendoza 1933; Flores and Flores 1981).

of the slits or the body. In those instances that pitch was almost always the so-called primary one.

The Rab'inal Achi: Valveless Trumpets

Information from the various recordings and live performances indicates that the fundamental tone and its fifth (sometimes in inversion) were the pitches predominately played by the *bajo* trumpet, with the higher of the two normally stressed. In the 2002 performances these two pitches were G2 and D3.

In contrast to this clear tonal structure, the *alto* trumpet's pitches were difficult to determine because of the instrument's use of glissando lines. Nonetheless, the glissandos in witnessed performances centered on three primary pitches: C, E, and G; and the intervals that were discernible in those instances and in earlier recordings included major seconds, minor thirds, major thirds, and perfect fourths. The ambitus of the 2002 *alto* trumpet comprised one octave, G3-G4.

The Baile de los Moros y Cristianos: Duct Flute and Skin Drum

Unlike the idiophone of the *Rab'inal Achi*, the membranophone of the *Moros* sounded only indefinite pitches. Nevertheless, pitch differences were noticeable, and were most conspicuous when the drummer struck the membrane of the drum close to the rim edge, with the pitch produced higher than the one produced when the membrane was struck nearer its center. Not surprisingly, pitch differences on the drum were subtle and the tonal aspects of the *sones* of the *baile* were predominately, if not totally, the concern of the duct flute.

All of the eighteen *sones* in the August 2001 Cobán version of the *Moros* were confined to the same harmonic area (see Music Example 14, CD Index no. 3). In the following section I will describe in some detail the flute range in one of these, the first B-E S (Music Example 16). In this *son* the flute melody started with an Ab-F-Eb quarter-

note triplet phrase and its rhythmic diminution (the Ab to F sixteenth note pattern concluding on the E flat half note). Subsequent, beginning with the eighth note Gb and continuing to the end of the system, was a melodic-rhythmic pattern centered around Db, followed by a repeat of the opening Ab-F-Eb tonal compass, with this section of the piece ending on a quarter-note C. Not shown is the conclusion of the *son*, which outlined a Db major triad (Db, F, Ab). The introduction and conclusion sections from *son 4* and the *son*-body section from *son 8* are included below to show the prevalence of the Db tonal area in the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* as performed in Cobán.

Music Example 16

A Sample of Flute Phrases in Sones of the Baile de los Moros y Cristianos, Cobán, August 4, 2001

From "Begining-Ending" Son

♩ = 96 variable

Db's are sharp

From Son 4 flute cues introduction section Son 4 conclusion section

♩ = 104

Db's are sharp

From Son 8 son-body section

♩ = 100

Db's are sharp

Interval samples taken from the first B-E S and the first metrical *son*, *son 2*, were chosen for pitch-distance analysis because the former segued to the latter and together they comprised the single longest portion of uninterrupted music in the dance-play (7:47). For these two pieces, not counting level intervals as two pitches, 92 intervals were found. Forty-two (38%) of these were minor thirds and 39 (35%) were major seconds. Contrasting with the large percentage of major seconds and minor thirds were only five major thirds, three minor seconds, one tritone, one perfect fifth, and one minor sixth. Notwithstanding, I inform the reader that some of these intervals were apparently the result of failed attempts by the flute player to hit other pitches that would perhaps have been preferred. In fact, interval distances of a whole or a half step could not always be discerned, and accordingly, distinctions between major and minor tonalities were not as clear as this assessment might suggest. It is likewise stressed that this sample was taken from a solitary performance of the dance-play, and therefore may not be representative of interval (or pitch) preference for a majority of versions of this *baile* as performed in highland Guatemala.

Other Sounds: War Cries, Rattling Shields, and Sword Bells

In versions of the *Rab'inal Achi* from 1972, 1995, and 2002, war cries (“ee-oh”) were shouted in rough unison by all of the male characters (Rabinal warrior-prince, K'iche warrior-prince, Rabinal king, Eagle warrior, and Jaguar warrior). These cries were sometimes arbitrarily sounded, but they also occurred at specific moments during dance-play performances, typically the beginnings and endings of *altos* and the beginnings and endings of *alto*-like sections of *sones*. In the bodies of *sones* war cries were usually sounded at start and at end points, such as when the repeating rhythms of *son* bodies segued to the free time of the concluding *alto*-like sections. In some *baile*

versions the cries were uttered twice towards the end of these sections, perhaps the first time in the mistaken belief that the *son* was entering its conclusion.

As first cited in Chapter 3, the two princes and the king also had small round metal shields tied to their left wrists, with bell-like sound makers (tinklers) hooked by leather strands to their centers. Shield sounds were similar to those made by cymbals played with drumsticks, and were generated by a twisting movement of the wrist, causing the bell-like objects to strike against the surface of the shields. As with war cries, shields were rattled both at arbitrary and at designated times. One example of the latter was in punctuation to specific lines in the speeches of the actors. During music pieces, they were rattled at the conclusion of *altos*, and at locations that were *son* specific. In *son 1* shields were rattled primarily during the A and C segments, in *son 2* they were rattled at the beginning of patterns, and in *son 3* they were rattled in all of the segments (although not continuously).

Like the war cries and rattling shields in the *tun baile*, bells attached to the hilts of swords were a sound making component integral to the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*. In the two versions of the play witnessed (at Cobán and Rabinal), these bells were activated by the actor moving the swords up and down in quick strokes. The resultant sounds were used to help cue the beginnings and/or endings of speeches and dances. Sword bells were also sounded at locations specific to certain dances, but as not all of the music pieces matched their intended dances, an analysis of the relationship of bell-sounds to choreography is not attempted here.

Summary

Forms

The similarities and differences in the music of the *Rab'inal Achi* and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* based on the evidence presented can be summarized as follows. The five *Rab'inal Achi* performances witnessed at Rabinal each involved approximately twenty-five minutes of music, interspersed throughout a two-hour production otherwise featuring enactments of events in the script. The overall structure of the *baile* was fixed, although *sones* were sometimes substituted for one another, and there is evidence of a different number of *altos* in performances of other years. The *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* performance witnessed at Cobán featured eighteen music pieces alternating with enactments of events of the script that in a thirty-plus-minute scene included more music relative the total *baile* performance time than was found in the *Rab'inal Achi*. In addition, the number of music pieces in the *Moros* seemed more flexible than for the *Rab'inal Achi*, with the dance-play structure appearing to accommodate additions, even last-minute ones.

Rhythms

The *sones* of the *Rab'inal Achi* exhibited unity in a structure that emphasized the repetition of various slit-drum patterns, used to support the other music elements. This was due primarily to the distinct patterns played by the slit-drum that characterized each of the three *sones*. Yet though the *Rab'inal Achi* slit-drum patterns are organized in a unique manner, and could be indigenous—perhaps even Precolumbian—their rhythmic structures can be interpreted using the traditional Western-music notation system. *Son 2* (Music Example 8), for example, almost always sounded as if it was in duple time. (But in spite of this tendency, as heard on the CD and notated in its accompanying Music Example 9, there was one pattern in triple time, beginning at 32 seconds from the start of the *son*-body section.) Because of rhythmic variability in the other two *sones* (*son 1*, and

son 3, Music Examples 4 and 6), if meter were used, the time signatures would change frequently. Therefore, despite the applicability of meter, I suspect that the music is not conceived in this way. Adherence to strict metric organization might unnecessarily complicate the music, and perhaps more importantly, have a deleterious effect on the dances.

The rhythmic patterns of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, in contrast, were tied to duple and triple metrical organization, despite the fact that the two instruments sometimes seemed to be playing different meters and different tempos. Also, the drum part of the *Moros* drew from rhythmic patterns that resembled those in the *Rab'inal Achi*, including pairs of notes of long and short duration, and more conspicuously, the accelerating roll—a music phenomenon generally considered non-Western.

Tonalities

A difference in emphasis on the tonal aspects available to the aerophones and idiophone used for the two dance-plays constitutes the biggest difference in their musical accompaniments, with the *Rab'inal Achi* seemingly organized according to rhythm and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* ostensibly organized according to melody. In fact, in the music of the *Rab'inal Achi* the rhythms supplied by the slit-drum and the *bajo* trumpet seemed to exert influence on the chosen tonality. The slit-drum, for instance, emphasized rhythmic patterns of twos and threes, mirroring its three available pitches (derived from the two tongues and body), and the rhythm patterns of the second trumpet, comprising two durations, short and long, had similar tonal parallels; two of the most easily produced pitches on a valveless trumpet are its low-pitched fundamental and fifth. The presence of these complementing music elements and the apparent incorporation of numbers of sacred significance in the music (thirteen *altos*) also suggest the possibility of unifying associations between components that sound and those that do not. In fact, I would not be surprised to learn that other culturally important elements without audio

components are considered intrinsic to K'iche' dance-play music, including cardinal directions, planetary movements, and perhaps even fabric patterns, although I discovered no evidence of such. In a related vein, Dennis Tedlock (2003:233-38) concluded that the words and phrases in the play's spoken parts grouped sections of dialogue into two or three-part structures controlled by volume and pitch. These elements constitute structural elements he calls "suprasegmental features," which are integral to the play but unrealized if one merely reads the text.

I cannot easily compare the flute melodies of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* to the trumpet lines in the *Rab'inal Achi*, as the melodic aspects of the two instruments not only sounded differently, they were used differently. Moreover, one issue inadequately explored is the very meaning of melody and how differing native groups would conceive of this concept. A definition from the *Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music* (Apel and Daniel 1973) reads in part, "a succession of musical tones forming a line of individual significance and expressive value...(furthermore) melody cannot be separated from rhythm." Based on this definition, the *Rab'inal Achi alto* trumpet only vaguely suggested a melody in the Western sense, while the *Moros* flute played lyrical patterns that were not only melodic but seemed clearly derived from the tonal systems of that tradition. In fact, all of the *Moros sones* in Cobán emphasized a Db major tonal center (although this may have been a byproduct of the fingering pattern, or the end result of a process with a different goal than producing Western-style tonality).

But if maintaining a distinction among the *sones* is crucial to the performance of a dance-play, as seemed to be the case for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, its flute melodies best delineated this difference, and the instrument did this by setting the priority of melody over rhythm. To the extent that the *alto* trumpet takes on a comparable melodic role in the *Rab'inal Achi*, *son* distinctions seemed less important. As the so-called melodies of the *Rab'inal Achi* are largely indistinguishable in the three *sones* and the *altos* used in all versions, I hypothesize that the first trumpet plays a less prominent

role in this *baile*'s ensemble than the flute does in the *Moros* one. This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that when only two musicians were present for performances, the first trumpeter switched to slit-drum. I therefore suspect melody to be less crucial to the music of the *Rab'inal Achi* than rhythm. In considering all of these factors, the uniqueness of highland Guatemalan dance-drama *sones*, based on rhythmic patterns for the *Rab'inal Achi*, and melodic patterns for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, may signal the biggest difference between the two *bailes*.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this chapter was to identify the use of music in the structure, as well as to analyze the *son* forms, of the two highland Guatemalan *bailes* under consideration (The *Rab'inal Achi* and the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*). It was discovered that the European-introduced *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, used tonal and metric systems typically associated with Western music, and though the indigenous *Rab'inal Achi* also used Western-music elements, its dependence on characteristics such as accelerating slit-drum rolls, adjustable rhythms, and rhythm superseding melody suggests a weaker connection to that tradition. Nonetheless, both dance-dramas exhibit music characteristics that may be indigenous or that are shared by the New and Old World. These include: (1) music used in constructing the *baile* form; (2) durational components in music incorporated to supply rhythms and tempos for dances and to differentiate *sones*; (3) accelerating drum rolls; (4) *son* construction organized around repeating rhythmic patterns; and (5) heterophonic textures.

As many of these traits can be found in the music of many outside cultures that have influenced Guatemala, it is easy to dismiss claims of a Mesoamerican origin for any of them. Such assertions can be further undermined by variability in interpretation, the

very characteristic that presumably would have caused Prehispanic music elements to disappear once they were subjected to a strong counter-cultural Spanish tradition.

Concerning K'iche' conceptions of variability, Dennis Tedlock (p.c., 2003) has stated that in none of the versions of the *Rab'inal Achi* he witnessed were the words spoken exactly as written in the script(s). This interpretive approach could be due to nothing more traditional than the fatigue or even inebriation of the performers, as surmised by Akkeren (p.c., 2003), which would be understandable as the two-hour-plus *Rab'inal Achi* is performed several times a day during saint-day celebrations, and alcohol consumption by performers is common. But in spite of such interpretive variability and its implication for changes over time, it must be acknowledged that the *baile* has endured, with its basic structure and content assumed to have been preserved for more than five hundred years (part of that time during which it was likely passed on as oral literature). Moreover this looseness may, in fact, be a strategy that has contributed to its perpetuation. Because of the play's malleability, it has survived the impact of cultural circumstances like Spanish hegemony while retaining pre-Spanish traits. And if true for the script, it seems possible that malleable aspects within the accompanimental music, as seen in structural components like adjustable rhythmic patterns, flexible *son* order, and free interpretation, may also have contributed to the survival of another Prehispanic music element, the primacy of rhythm. But as intriguing as this possibility is, there are no auditory elements in the *Rab'inal Achi* that can be irrefutably attributed to the Postclassic or any other Precolumbian time period.

Afterword

A Review of the Methods and Results of Research

This investigation of Prehispanic music in the Guatemalan highlands has centered on the K'iche' performance events called *bailes* for two reasons: instruments known to exist in Precolumbian times provide the accompaniment to the ancient stories enacted in performance, and the pairing of certain dance-plays with specific instrument combinations can be traced back in some instances to at least the early-Colonial era. Four *bailes* and their accompanying instruments were chosen for study: the *Baile del Venado*—perhaps using a slit-drum and duct flute in Prehispanic times; the *Tz'unum*—currently using a slit-drum, valveless trumpet, and tortoise shell; the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*—currently using a skin drum and duct flute; and the *Rab'inal Achi*—currently using a slit-drum and valveless trumpet. The latter two dance-plays and their instruments were examined in more detail.

The best evidence for a continuation of Precolumbian dance-play traditions in performance is found in the *tun*, or sacrifice, type *baile*, exemplified by the *Rab'inal Achi*. Prehispanic Mesoamerican iconography suggests that the choice of the slit-drum and valveless trumpet over other instruments for this dance-play is due to a long association of these instruments with the practice of human sacrifice. Maya pictorial evidence of the valveless trumpet accompanying sacrificial acts dates back at least to AD 800 and similar evidence of the trumpet and slit-drum at ceremonies of a sacrificial nature dates to at least AD 1200. By the time European writers began describing K'iche'

customs during the mid-1500s these two instruments were listed as providing the music for several *bailes* with themes of sacrifice, including the *Lotzo Tun*, the *Quiché Uinac*, and eventually the *Rab'in al Achi*.

Concentration on the instruments identified with four dance-play types has raised a number of questions that have not previously received extensive coverage. One concerns the origins of the currently used K'iche' slit-drum and skin drum, for which evidence has been given that identifies the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico as the probable place of origin for the former, and Europe for the latter. Another, interest in the materials used in the construction of Prehispanic valveless trumpets, has led to the assessment that some were made of ceramic but most were constructed from an organic material—probably wood—and that various methods were employed to piece together sections of material in order to form culturally preferred long-tube horns. In addition, flutes of bone have been proposed for the K'iche' warrior dance of the Postclassic era, a suggestion based on the evidence in the written records, although ceramic flutes are the only ones that have been identified archaeologically in highland Guatemala.

In the Prehispanic past, as today, particular instruments or instrument combinations probably helped announce the commencement of specific dance-plays; cued certain events, such as war cries or speeches enacted within them; and provided the music for dancing in play performances. Such associations cannot be absolutely confirmed, but certain other information can, such as instrument placement in productions, postures of instrumentalists, and accouterments used with instruments. In the Postclassic document *Codex Becker I* the slit-drum is illustrated as resting on a small round object similar in appearance to the cushion used today to support the slit-drum in performances of the *Rab'in al Achi*. Similarly, in Precolumbian Maya paintings and sculptures, trumpeters are often shown holding their valveless trumpets at their back ends, perhaps because it allowed the musicians more ease in reaching the pitches or melodies needed for ancient Maya music, or perhaps because it was a visually impressive way to

perform. For whatever reason(s), it is a performance technique continued by certain Mexican and Central American trumpeters. In the case of the duct flute currently used for the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*, the framed aperture recognized in performances at Cobán is a characteristic of edgetone-instrument design also found on Prehispanic models from the region.

As noteworthy as the continued use of some instruments or the persistence of Prehispanic concepts in some instrument designs is the discontinuation of others. For instance, although there were at least two indigenous drum types in highland Guatemala (the *pax* and *kai yum*) that could have been used for Posthispanic conquest *bailes*, the ones now used are descended from European-introduced drum models. Perhaps these latter instruments displaced indigenous ones because they were the types played by the victors in the wars between the two cultures, or perhaps they were chosen simply because they were louder, or easier to make, or for any number of other reasons. At present there is no definitive answer to this question.

In fact, instrument artifacts themselves offer limited answers to most questions concerning the music practices of Prehispanic peoples. A more detailed understanding would have to include a Prehispanic musician in discussion—a performer aware of the performance techniques needed to make the sounds on the instruments in a way that would have met with the approval of his audience. Although this person is long gone, there are ways to bring back, at least partially, his music skills. The way proposed here is through informed awareness of the wide array of techniques available for producing sounds on a given instrument added to information concerning performance techniques and preferences based on a culture's writings and/or artworks. Such an approach in conjunction with a scientific method of comparison known as ethnographic analogy has proven effective in archaeological studies. Its application to the study of ancient music, called ethnoarchaeomusicology, can supplement music archaeology. But as ethnographic analogy is a comparison between archaeological material with contemporary materials, it

is a somewhat risky research method. Ultimately it relies on the assumption that time has not erased the memory of past music for the modern performer on instruments of the type used in the past; an assumption that is controversial and trusted only if crucial questions can be answered in the affirmative. In particular, is today's performer part of a society near in culture and time to the one in question? Does this culture have records that can corroborate the continuation of its ancient music traditions? Do witnesses who are outside the culture validate these records? For the K'iche' the answer is yes to all three questions. They still live in the highlands of their ancestors and many continue the customs of their predecessors; they had cultural custodians who recorded the stories of their past; and they tolerated European witnesses to their society, some of whom described K'iche' traditions.

In this dissertation, information derived from ethnographic analogy was combined with archaeological information on instruments and performance practices to unveil a more definitive view of Prehispanic Maya music than the instrument artifacts or their depictions in ancient art alone could give. As a result, conceivably of equal if not more value to scholars than an inventory of archaeologically recovered K'iche' instruments is the discovery that the predominant intervals between vibrating tongues of the slit-drums now used for the *Rab'inal Achi*, major or minor thirds, are the same as found for most presumed Prehispanic models analyzed, just as G and A are common pitches for those same instruments. It has also been discovered that the biggest difference in the music of the European-introduced *Moros* and the indigenous *Rab'inal Achi* was that the former emphasizes melody while the latter focuses on rhythm, music aspects that may be indicative of cultural preferences. It is relevant to this conclusion to note that the K'iche' word for skin drum, *k'ojom*, is also sometimes translated as music. Other ethnoarchaeomusicological evidence suggests a Postclassic K'iche' preference for a rather loud unchanging volume level, a wide range of timbres, a use of specific melodic contours, pitches derived from the harmonic series, and heterophonic textures.

Furthermore, music's use of numbers considered sacred by the K'iche' (thirteen fanfares in the *Rab'inal Achi*, and binary divisions found in instrument design, ensemble size, and tonal choices) suggests that this contemporary phenomenon had roots in the Prehispanic past. In addition, the 260 drum rolls played by the K'iche prince in the *Rab'inal Achi* may be representative of Precolumbian performance practice.

Ultimately, as is often the case in studies involving multi-disciplinary methods, additional avenues for study become evident only after the limits of the work have been established, when efforts outside those parameters are not feasible. I conclude this dissertation, therefore, with a few modest suggestions for future ethnoarchaeomusicological-related research in the Guatemalan highlands.

Suggestions for Future Research

Slit-Drums

Information about the *Rab'inal Achi* as performed over the last 150 years indicates the use of slit-drums producing various pitches. It is possible that this evidence indicates different instruments used over this time, but some of these differences may instead be due to recording or notation errors for only a few instruments. If possible, an accounting of all of the slit-drums used for the dance-play since Brasseur's time would be useful for ascertaining the persistence of tuning standards. If one or both tongues, as well as the body, of the idiophones documented for the *Rab'inal Achi* since the 1856 performance were ultimately found to favor certain pitches (as many presumably older ones analyzed by Castañeda and Mendoza did) this would imply a tendency to retain pitches. Whatever the results, information uncovered could be used to test a concern for pitches staying the same or changing over time, even over a relatively short period.

Valveless-Tube Trumpets

Most of the handful of Prehispanic ceramic trumpets known reveal no apparent tuning standards, but various trumpets depicted in illustrations are often shown to be somewhat similar in size—approximately the height of a Prehispanic Maya man. It is possible, therefore, that functioning trumpets from those times were also similar in size, and consequently, perhaps similar in key, and/or ambitus. As much Maya artwork is rather realistic, estimates of the dimensions of instruments based on the heights of the players using them may give us some tentative ideas about the general ambitus, if not the fundamental pitches of the instruments depicted.

Duct Flutes

Prehispanic ceramic duct flutes are in some measure common in highland Guatemalan archaeological contexts, and their abundance suggests that much about ancient Maya music may be learned from a systematic study of their acoustic characteristics. To my knowledge, comprehensive analysis of these instruments, as was done by Flores and Flores for northern Maya whistles and ocarinas, has not yet been attempted. Likewise, duct flutes used for contemporary performances of the *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos* have not been systematically analyzed. An acoustic analysis of both Prehispanic and currently used flutes would be valuable for future comparative research.

Skin Drums

There is some evidence in Mesoamerican iconography of double-headed skin drums played with mallets. A reexamination of Maya paintings and sculptures in order to locate these instruments may reveal more examples of this drum, or other types, than have been recorded thus far. Also, a reexamination of Maya artworks is needed to locate possible depictions of Maya slit-drums that may have been missed in earlier reviews.

Dance-Plays

The *Rab'in al Achi* is the most studied Prehispanic dance-play of Mexico and Central America. There are other purported Maya examples that have not been so scrutinized, such as the *Baile de las Canastas* and *Lo'hill K'in*; however, there is little doubt that the repertoire is small and likely getting smaller, and that few Precolumbian-ascribed Maya *bailes* remain. A thorough search for *bailes* performed in highland Guatemala, and adjoining areas, may turn up additional ones with Prehispanic roots, and should perhaps be done before the other research recommended, in order to document such Maya performance art forms that include music before they disappear.

Appendix

Table A1

Highland Guatemalan Maya Chronology Pertaining to Dance-Plays

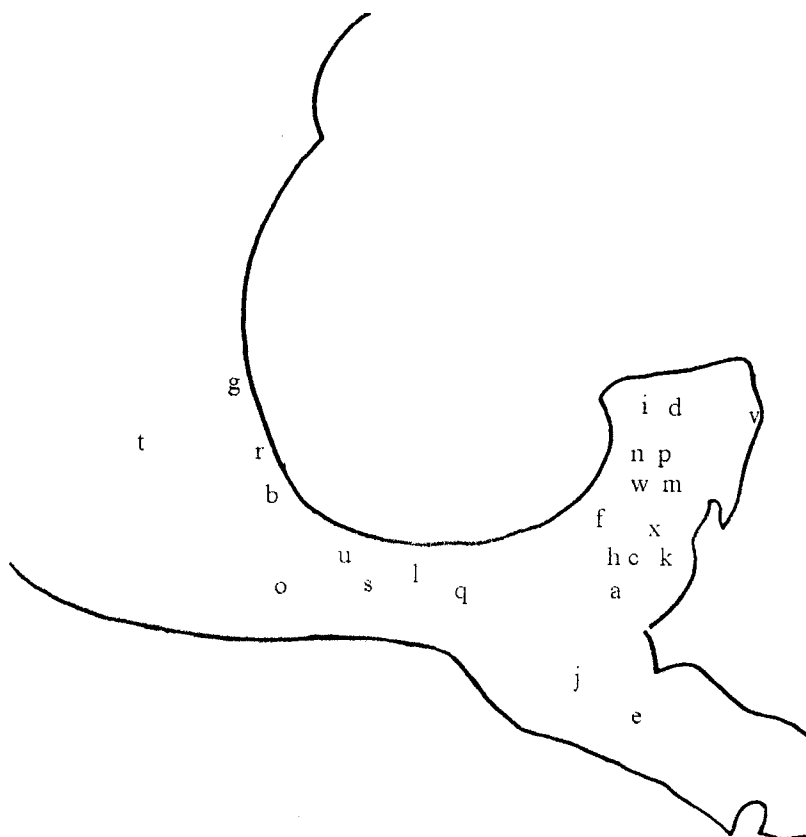
| <u>European Dates</u> | <u>Mesoamerican Periods and Important Events</u> |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1945 | Music for the <i>Rab'inal Achi</i> first recorded, by Yurchenco |
| 1862 | <i>Rab'inal Achi</i> script first published, by Bertrand |
| 1856 | The <i>Rab'inal Achi</i> performed and observed by Brasseur |
| 1701 | Ximénez discovers <i>Popol Vuh</i> |
| 1593 | <i>Tun bailes</i> documented in Baja Verapaz |
| 1500-1600 | Various Maya-authored texts using K'iche' and Spanish characters; the Spanish dance-plays, including <i>Baile de los Moros y Cristianos</i> , introduced to replace indigenous <i>bailes</i> |
| 1524 | Conquest of highland Guatemala by Alvarado |
| 1519 | Beginning of Spanish Conquest of Mexico by Cortés |
| 1500 | Aztecs invade Xoconosco (Pacific Coast Guatemala) |
| 1478 | <i>Rabinal Achí</i> possibly composed and first performed in Kaqyuq as a Great Shield Dance |
| 1400 | <u>Beginning of Terminal Postclassic; historical events as described in the <i>Rabinal Achí</i>; warrior dances are documented from this time; the <i>Codex Becker I</i> is painted</u> |
| 1200 | Archaeological evidence for the K'iche' in the Guatemalan highlands; Toltec civilization declines |
| 900 | <u>Beginning of the Postclassic; fall of Copan and the end of Lowland Maya dominance in the Guatemala region</u> |
| 600 | Decline of Teotihuacán; Maya valveless trumpets represented in accompaniment to sacrificial ceremonies |
| 400 | Teotihuacán influence at Kaminaljuyú; first verifiable evidence of slit-drum use |
| AD 250 | <u>Beginning of the Classic period; the Maya begin to dominate in lowland Southern Mesoamerica</u> |
| 300 | <u>Beginning of the Preclassic period; Izapa culture in Guatemala</u> |

| | |
|---------|---|
| 900 | Olmec presence in Guatemala; possible evidence of slit-drum use on the western Gulf of Mexico Coast |
| 1500 BC | Ocós culture on the Guatemalan Pacific coast |

Table A2

Mesoamerican Archaeological Sites Visited by Author

- a--Calakmul*
- b--Cempoala
- c--Chicanná*
- d--Chichén Itzá*
- e--Copán* (H)
- f--Edzna*
- g--El Tajín
- h--Hormiguero*
- i---Izamal*
- j---Kaquyq* (G)
- k--Kohunlich*
- l---La Venta
- m--Loltún*
- n--Mayapán*
- o--Monte Albán
- p--Oxkintok*
- q--Palenque*
- r--Quiahuiztlan
- s--San Lorenzo
- t--Teotihuacán
- u--Tres Zapotes
- v--Tulum*
- w-Uxmal*
- x-Xlapak*



* =Maya

All sites located in Mexico except:

G=Guatemala

H=Honduras

Glossary

select terms with their definitions most pertinent to this dissertation

Language Source Key: E=English; K=K'iche'an; N=Nahuatl; S=Spanish; Y=Yukatek

Achi (K) Man. The Maya ethnic group living in the Baja Verapaz region of the Guatemalan highlands from the Postclassic era to the present. They speak a version of K'iche' and share many aspects of K'iche' culture.

ajk'ij (K) a specialist who interprets various traditional Maya calendars (daykeeper in English).

ajk'jom (K) drummer.

alto (S) the abbreviated title for a short-instrumental fanfare used in the *Rab'inal Achi* (see *son alto*).

alto trumpet (S, E) the valveless trumpet that plays the glissando lines in the *Rab'inal Achi*. Also referred to as the first trumpet.

amaq (K) an alliance of two or more *chinamits* (see *capullis* and *chinamits*).

auxiliatura (S) a K'iche'an bureaucratic hierarchy comprised of religious and political leaders.

baile (S) highland Guatemalan dance-play.

Baile de la Conquista (S) Dance of the Conquest. In Guatemala a dance-play that dramatizes a military encounter between the Spanish and Maya in 1524. A *chirimía* and skin drum accompany it.

Baile de las Canastas (S) Dance of the Baskets. A dance-play of the *Tz'unum* type accompanied by a valveless trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise-shell idiophone.

Baile de los Moros y Cristianos (S) Dance of the Moors and Christians. A dance-play of the conquest type based on medieval encounters between the Spanish and the Moors. In Guatemala a duct flute and skin drum accompany it.

Baile del Venado (S) Deer Dance. A dance-play with themes of food transition and/or pursuit, the latter of which perhaps symbolizes marriage alliances. In Guatemala a marimba normally accompanies it.

bajo trumpet (S, E) the valveless trumpet that plays alternating notes on the root and fifth in the *Rab'inal Achi*. Also referred to as the second trumpet.

b'alam (K) jaguar.

B'alam Kej (K) Jaguar Deer. A possible Prehispanic version of the deer dance-play performed in Rabinal that is accompanied by duct flute and skin drum.

Bixa Subakiba (K) Song with Bone Flute. It may have been the name for the Postclassic K'iche' warrior dance.

brujo (S) wizard.

calpule (N) ward of a town.

calpulli (N) a K'iche' sociopolitical division based on residence in shared territory under the control of an elite family (see *chinamit*).

cham (K) long-tubular flute or flute-like instrument.

chinamit (N) a K'iche' sociopolitical division based on residence in shared territory under the control of an elite family (see *capulli*).

chirimía (S) a double-reed instrument sometimes referred to in Guatemala as *su*.

clarín (S) trumpet or bugle.

cofradía (S) a quasi-religious organization involved in the presentation of saint-day festivals.

encomiendo (S) a land grant in Latin America decreed during the Colonial period by European royalty.

feria (S) festival. In Guatemala it is most often associated with saint-day celebrations.

- holpop** (Y) a music director and instrument caretaker documented in Colonial-era Yucatan.
- huehuetl** (N) the waist-high skin drum (see *pax*).
- huipil** (K) a woman's blouse with fabric designs indicative of the Maya ethnicity with which it is associated.
- iloqatinimit** (K) a prophet of a town.
- Kaquyq** (K) Red Mountain. A Prehispanic hilltop citadel located three km north of Rabinal and possibly where the *Rab'in al Achi* was first performed.
- K'iche'** (K) the dominant ethnic group in highland Guatemala from the Postclassic era to the present. It is also the name of a language group comprised of several subgroups and dialects spoken throughout the Guatemalan highlands.
- kiq** (K) rubber.
- k'oyom** (K) a skin drum, sometimes also used as a term for music.
- kot** (K) eagle.
- Ladino** (S) a person of racially mixed European (normally Spanish) and Amerindian ancestry.
- Lotzo Tun** (K) a sacrifice dance-play documented in the Colonial era and described as accompanied by the valveless trumpet.
- maestro** (S) the producer-director of a traditional dance-play in Guatemala.
- Mesoamerica** (E) a geographical area stretching between modern-day Central Mexico and Nicaragua. Before the arrival of the Spanish this region was largely populated by peoples with a shared worldview.
- macewal k'ij** (K) the K'iche' 365-day calendar.
- Moros** (S) the abbreviated title of the conquest dance-play *Baile de los Moros y Cristianos*.
- nagual** (N) the animal spirit associated with an individual (see *uay*).

- Nahuatl** (N) the Uto-Aztecan language spoken by the Aztec and related Amerindian peoples in Central and North America.
- One Toj** (E, K) the Precolumbian patron deity of the Achi (Rabinal) peoples.
- pax** (Y) the waist-high skin drum (see *huehuetl*).
- pipe and tabor** (E) a flute and a drum played simultaneously by one musician.
- Popol Vuh** (K) a K'iche' creation, lineage, and migration story in manuscript form.
- Quiché Uinac** (K) a sacrifice dance-play documented in the Colonial era but which is probably older. A slit-drum and/or valveless trumpet(s) presumably accompanied it.
- Rab'inal Achi** (K) a sacrifice dance-play determined by scholars to have originated in Precolumbian times, which continues to be performed in the town of Rabinal. Two valveless trumpets and a slit-drum accompany it.
- son** (S) the shortened title for an instrumental song used in dance-plays (see *sones de bailes*).
- son alto** (k) a short instrumental fanfare used in the *Rab'inal Achi* (see *alto*).
- sones de bailes** (S) instrumental songs exclusive to dance-plays (see *son*).
- sound scroll** (E) a Mesoamerican glyph representing music or heightened speech.
- su** (K) a duct flute or *chirimía*.
- talud tablero** (S) a Teotihuacán architectural feature consisting of a sloping base attached to a rectangular panel often used as a diagnostic of that culture's influence on other Mesoamerican cultures.
- tambor** (S) a skin drum, generally of the European-military type.
- teponaztli** (N) slit-drum (see *tun* and *tunkul*).
- toncontin** (N) a Nahuatl name for the sacrifice (*tun*) dance-play.
- tun** (K) a valveless trumpet, a slit-drum (see *teponaztli* and *tunkul*), or a sacrifice dance-play type using one or both of these instruments. Various other meanings for this word exist in highland and lowland Maya languages.

tunkul (Y) slit-drum (see *teponaztli* and *tun*).

tzolkin (K) the K'iche' 260-day sacred calendar.

Tz'unum (K) bird (usually a hummingbird). A dance-play type dealing with themes of food procurement. Different *Tz'unum bailes* use(d) different instruments, including the marimba, valveless trumpet, slit-drum, and tortoise shell.

uay (K) the animal spirit associated with an individual (see *nagual*).

villancico (S) a secular Baroque-period polyphonic song form comprising stanzas set to the same music with a repeated refrain.

voladores (S) a Precolumbian Mesoamerican performance-spectacle featuring four acrobatic dancers spiraling down from a tall pole in thirteen revolutions. The pipe and tabor, or marimba and rattles accompany it.

winaq (K) people. It is also a sociopolitical entity comprising an ethnic group.

xajoj tun (K) sacrifice dance-play.

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