

Univ. of Texas-Austin



Homanno, *Regni Mexicani* . . . , ca. 1763 (detail)

The Mayan Account of the Spanish Conquest (1540-1546) in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel

EXCERPTS

The Chilam Balam are sacred texts of the Yucatan Maya that record history, myth, religion, prophecies, medicine, and calendars. Each town compiled its own texts; the excerpts here are from the town of Chumayel.

La ix u katunil

Yax hulci ob *español*essob

Uay

Tac lumil lae

T u uuc pis tun

Buluc ahau

U katunil

Ti ix hop'i *xpnoil* lae

T u habil *quinientos dies y nueve*

años D° 1519. . . .

T u kin y an sulim chan

T u kin y an chikin putun

Uiilnom che

Uiilnom tunich

Ah satal uiil

Ychil ah buluuc ahau katun

Buluuc ahau u hop'ol u xocol

Y oklal lay katun y an ca uli tz'ulob

Ti u talel ob

Ti likin ca uli ob e

Ti ix hop'i *christianoil* xan i

Ti lakin u tz'oc than

Ych can si hoo

U hetz' katun

He u kahlay uchc i

Bal t u mentah ob . . .

Ca oci num ya

Ca oci *christianoil*

T u men lay hach *christianoob*

That then was the *katun* period¹

When the Spaniards first arrived

Here

In these lands.

On the seventh measured *tun*

Of 11 Ahau

Was also the *katun* period that began

Christianity,

In the year or our lord fifteen nineteen,

1519 V [1546 M].² . . .

At that time there was Zulim Chan;

At that time there were western Chontal.³

Hungering were the trees;

Hungering were the rocks.⁴

The destroyer hunger

Was during the *katun* of the lord of 11 Ahau.

11 Ahau was the beginning of the count

Because this was the *katun* when the foreigners arrived.

When they came,

They arrived from the east.

When Christianity began also,

In the east was its word completed.

Heaven Born Merida

Was the seat of the *katun*.⁵

This is the account of what occurred,

Of what they did. . . .

When misery came,

When Christianity came

From these many Christians

Excerpted by the National Humanities Center, 2006: www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/pds.htm. From Munro S. Edmonson, ed., trans., *Heaven Born Merida and Its Destiny: The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 63, 108, 109-111. Reproduced by permission. Complete image credits at www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/pds/amerbegin/imagecredits.htm.

¹ *katun*: a period of 7200 days, app. twenty years. *Tun*: 360 days. 11 Ahau: Mayan calendar cycle beginning in 1539.

² V/M: different Mayan calendars. Edmonson notes that the Franciscan missionaries reached the Yucatan in 1546, and Merida in 1549.

³ *Zulim Chan*: the rain god. *Chontal*: the Maya of Itzá, the last to be conquered by the Spanish in the late 1600s.

⁴ A serious drought afflicted the northern Yucatan during this period.

⁵ *Merida*: Mayan city captured and named by the Spanish in 1541. Most of the Yucatan Maya were defeated by the end of the decade.

Ti ul i
 Y etel hahal ku
 Hahal *D^s*
 He uac u chun num ya
 T oon
 U chun patan
 U chun *limosna*
 U chun hoc mucuuc tza
 U chun tz'on bacal tza
 U chun cumtan tza
 U chun tocluksah
 U chun tz'al pach p'ax
 U chun pak pach p'ax
 U chun caca tza
 U chun numzah ya
 U chun tocluksah
 U chun u meyahtabal *españolesob*
 Y etel ah kinob
 U meyahtabal ba tabob
 U meyahtabal camsahob
 U meyahtabal *fiscalob*
 T u men mehen palalob
 U palil cahob
 Ta muk uchac numzabal ti ya
 Ah num yaob
 Lay hach otzilob e
 Lay hach otzilob ma likul ob i
 Ti lic u mentic
 Cij u tz'aal pach
 Lay u *antachristoil*
 Y okol cabob lae
 Uh cab cohil cahob
 U chamacil cahob
 Uh picil cahob
 Y ah tz'utz'il otzil *maseualob* lae
 He uac bini to kuchuc
 T u kin u kuchul
 Y alil u u ichob
 Y icnal ca
 Ca yumil
 Ti *D^s*.
 Emon u *justisia* ca yumil
 Ti *D^s*.
 Hun yuk
 Ti bal cah
 Hach likul Ti *D^s*.
 Bin tal bal
 Ah kan tenal
 Yx puc y ol a
 U tz'utannilob
 Y okol cab lae.



Who arrived
 With the true divinity,
 The True God.
 For this indeed was the beginning of misery
 For us,
 The beginning of tribute,
 The beginning of tithes,
 The beginning of strife over purse snatching,
 The beginning of strife with blowguns,
 The beginning of strife over promotions,
 The beginning of the creation of many factions,
 The beginning of forced seizure for debts,
 The beginning of forced imprisonment for debts,
 The beginning of village strife,
 The beginning of misery and affliction,
 The beginning of forcible separation,
 The beginning of forced labor for the Spaniards
 And the sun priests,
 Forced labor for the town chiefs,
 Forced labor for the teachers,
 Forced labor for the public prosecutors,
 By the boys,
 The youths of the towns,
 While the force of great suffering
 Afflicted the suffering people.
 These were the very poor,
 These were the very poor who did not rebel
 At the oppression
 That was inflicted on them.
 This was the Antichrist
 Here on earth,
 The Earth Lions of the towns,
 The Foxes of the towns,
 The Bedbugs of the towns
 Are the bloodsuckers of the poor peasants here.
 For indeed the time is coming soon
 Of the day of the coming
 Of tears to the eyes
 And the presence
 Of our Lord
 Who is God.
 The justice of our Lord
 God will descend
 Everywhere
 In the world.
 God will be very angry
 And something will come
 From Yellow Death
 And the Destroying Spirit,
 The oppressors
 On the face of this earth.