



Ecumene Time, Anecumene Time

Proposal of a Paradigm

ALFREDO LÓPEZ AUSTIN

Worldview as System

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE CONCEPT OF linear time is one of the cornerstones of Judeo-Christian thought. Its importance lies beyond its continuity: the concept of linear time generates relationships that penetrate and mold all areas of thought and action. In short, linear time in the Judeo-Christian tradition is not only an enduring concept, but also one that shapes and structures. In the theoretical framework of Fernand Braudel (1958:727, 1974:64, 1980:27), this concept corresponds to the rhythm of the longest time span of the *longue durée*, a rhythm that seems to be static. In what follows, I propose a paradigm for the Mesoamerican concept of time, which, like Judeo-Christian linear time, also shapes and structures. It forms part of the enduring nucleus of the Mesoamerican tradition (López Austin 2001) and is equivalent to what J. Eric S. Thompson (1954:137, 1992:196), though referring only to the Maya, called “the philosophy of time.”

It is possible to formulate such a paradigm because time pertains to worldview, and worldview can be characterized as a collective, historical, rational, and systematic creation. Its collective character implies that it is a product of the aggregate, day-to-day activity of all members of a human group, who, communicating among themselves, gradually elevated their thought to various levels of abstraction. It is historical because it is subject to social transformations, thus it is in perpetual creation, always mutable, never definitive. It is rational, though not necessarily the result of deliberate reflection, as it derives from the thought and action of human beings, which are communicated by way of expression rooted in logic and subject to continuous processes of abstraction. And finally, it is systematic because increasing levels of abstraction necessitate consistency, although admittedly this consistency is relative and is affected by all sorts of social contradictions.

Based on these suppositions, a paradigm can be constructed (López Austin and López Luján

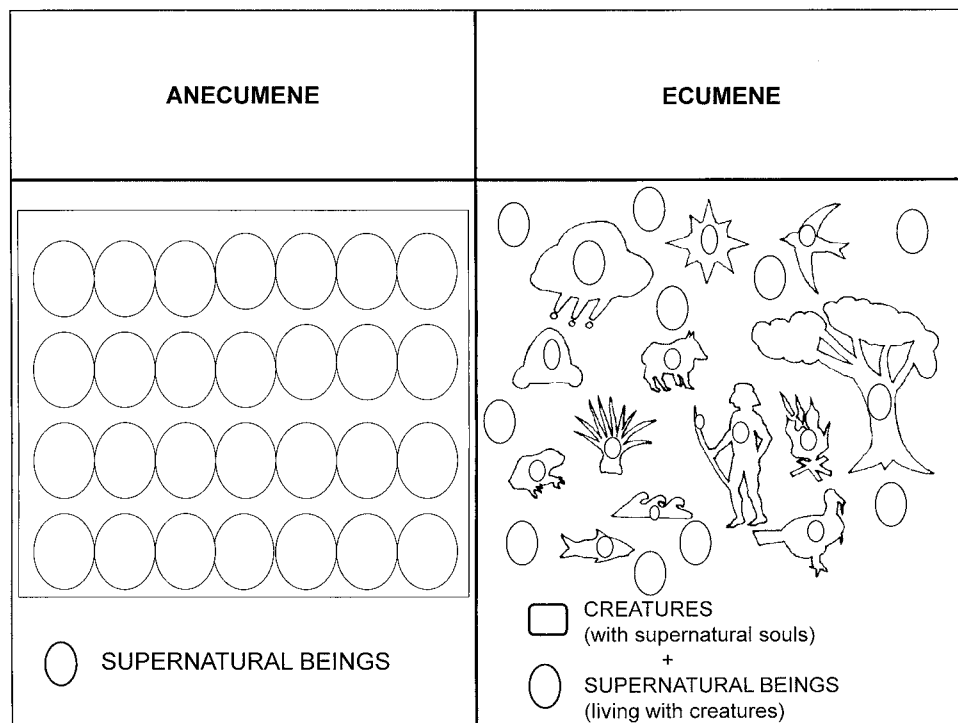
2009:33–36), in this case, for a concept of time in a tradition that goes back to the early days of agriculture (2500 BCE) in territory currently part of Mexico and that endures to this day within indigenous communities in Mexico and Central America. This paradigm is based on abundant documentary and ethnographic information; therefore, the citations offered here are merely examples for consideration. This study seeks to synthesize the central concepts of the enduring nucleus and to link them consistently for heuristic purposes, in the hope that this paradigm will serve as a source of hypothetical orientation for researching particular issues and will be continuously perfected in the face of specific data.

Ecumene and Anecumene

One of the main concepts in the enduring nucleus of Mesoamerican tradition is the primary division between two kinds of space-time, which I am calling *ecumene* (of this world) and *anecumene* (not of this world). The immediate space-time of believers—that is, the constructor-users of this worldview—is

the ecumene, which is the space-time of creatures (human beings, animals, plants, minerals, elements, astral bodies, and so on), as opposed to the anecumene, which is the space-time of supernatural beings (deities and forces) and is forbidden to creatures. The ecumene has the following characteristics: (1) it houses these creatures, along with a multitude of supernatural beings that inhabit it either temporarily or permanently (Figure 3.1); (2) it is bounded by the world’s creation (the Maya 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku) and destruction (the Maya *butic*; Casas 1967:2:507), that is, its beginning and end are established by the gods; and (3) it is a dependent product of the anecumene, from which it receives elements that dynamize it, for everything that exists in the space-time of creatures was produced in the world of the gods, thus the ecumene’s movement and sustenance come from the space-time of supernatural beings. The anecumene, on the other hand, has the following characteristics: (1) it does not house or admit creatures, except for certain parts of them consisting only of subtle substance; (2) it created the ecumene; and (3) it has no marked beginning or end. Although the ecumene

figure 3.1
The domains of anecumene and ecumene. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)



and the anecumene are two very different dimensions, the circulation of deities, forces, and subtle substances between the two space-times is allowed through certain thresholds and portals. Transit through these thresholds and portals, however, is only permitted at precise times and under particular circumstances.

As the Greek philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon well noted, believers construct the supernatural from their intimate experience, projecting their reality when imagining the other world. For example, the Ixil of El Quiché, Guatemala, say the gods invented incense and candle offerings, and the people learned these rituals in order to communicate with them (Colby and Colby 1981:40–42, 1986:53–55). This projection, however, also implies contrasts that differentiate believers from the supernatural to explain their own condition. The gods, whether they are conceived in human form or not, are just like human beings; they are cognitive beings with volition, capable of acting on their thoughts. Moreover, the gods have social values: feelings of love, hate, or reciprocity and an inclination toward justice or vengeance. Even

Xenophanes’s god, without human form, was cognitive, morally perfect, and able to listen to mortals. Using Mesoamerican projections, I intend to contrast the concept of ecumene time with what believers attribute, with differentiating characteristics, to anecumene time. Ecumene temporal reality, therefore, is both a model and antimodel of anecumene temporal reality.

Mythic Processes of Creation

The anecumene space-time dimension is perceived to be divided further into two dimensions: one of divine leisure and one of myth. The mythic dimension has a preparatory processual zone and a liminal zone, as the latter is in contact with the ecumene space-time dimension (López Austin 1975:289, 1993:41–43, 1996:63–65; Figure 3.2). Nothing further can be said about the divine leisure space-time, for a state that is void of consequences is inconceivable. It is simply a point of reference in human reflection. The mythic dimension, however, corresponds to transformations, in which deities acquire the

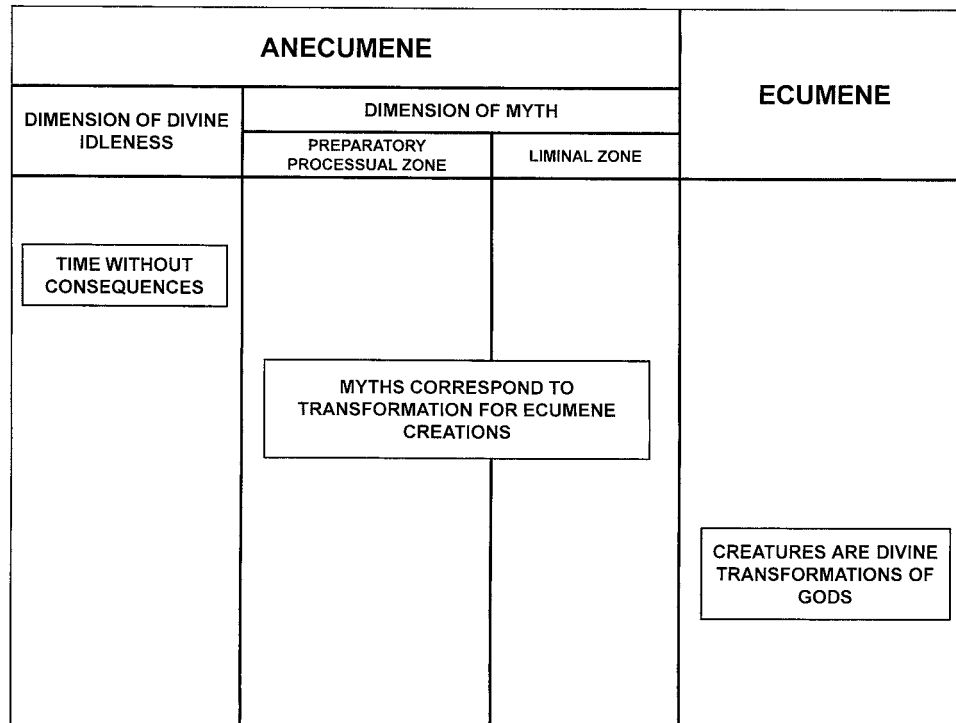


figure 3.2
Division of anecumene and ecumene. Subdivision of the domain of anecumene. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)

necessary traits for the moment of the ecumene's creation and the final installation of creatures in primogenial time. Accounts of these divine processes, which combine many diverse elements, are expressed in mythic narratives such as the adventures of gods. Their characters take on human, animal, mineral, and other forms and are heterogeneous beings with humanlike powers, able to communicate fully with each other and to change form up until the culminating moment when they obtain their definitive characteristics.

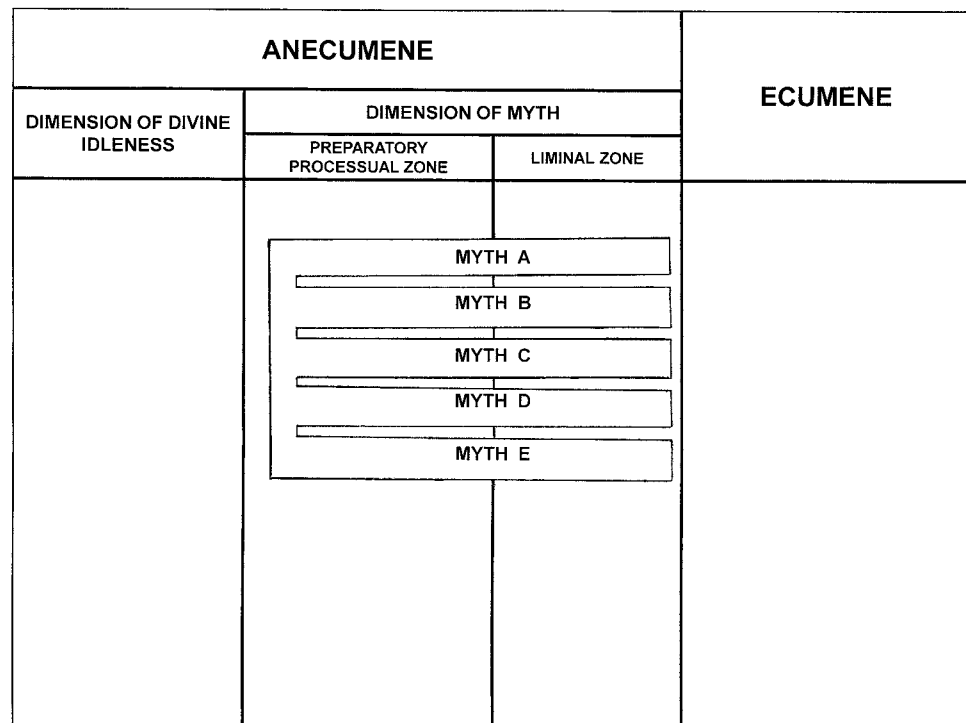
This dimension makes it necessary to distinguish between cosmic processes (nodal aspects of myth) and their narrative expression as the adventures of gods (heroic aspects of myth). It should be noted that each myth is independent of other myths, although all of them belong to a common myth complex. For example, two different myths about the Sun and Moon may coexist if one refers to their different temporal cycles and the other to their different degrees of brightness. Because of this mythic autonomy, it is not rare to find the same character playing different roles in different narratives: one being may have, and be represented by,

two or more mythic personalities; kin relationships between gods may vary in different myths; and so on. A linear interrelation, much less a historical succession, should not be sought in the corpus of mythic narratives (López Austin 1993:43, 1996:66). The mythic context is like the bar of a comb that holds many parallel teeth, each independent of the others (Figure 3.3)

Earlier I said that the Mesoamerican mythic dimension has a preparatory processual zone and a liminal zone. The former ends with the culmination of myths, which are followed, in the latter, by the first sunrise and the initiation of the Sun's course. From this moment on, the earth's muddy surface solidifies, the gods stop transforming, the mountains no longer move from place to place, the new types of beings lose their ability to communicate with each other, and so on.

The well-known ancient Nahuatl myth of the birth of the Sun at Teotihuacan from the immolation of Nanahuatzin (Sahagún 1950–1982:7:3–8, 2000:2:694–697) clearly describes the liminal zone. Nanahuatzin perishes in the fire and descends into the underworld. After his journey through the

figure 3.3
Each myth is independent of other myths. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)



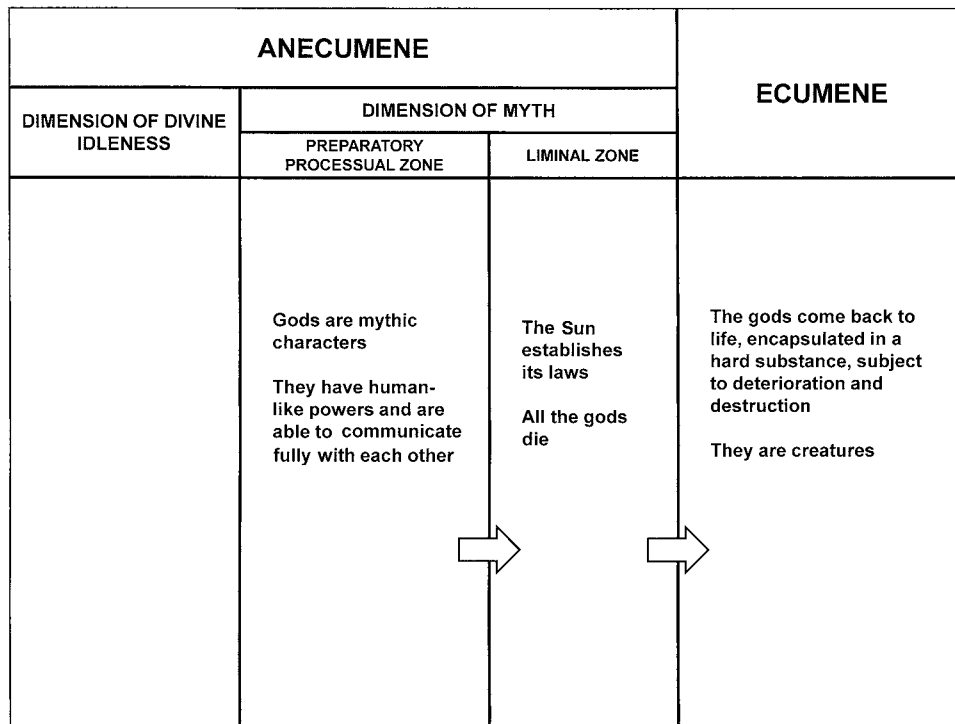


figure 3.4
The transformation of the gods.
(Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)

bowels of the earth, he emerges in the east and orders all the other gods to immolate themselves as he did. The last one to do so is Xolotl, whose concealment in the water after his sacrifice turns him into the animal called axolotl. In other words, the death of the gods in the liminal zone sends them to the underworld, where they acquire their worldly nature consisting of a hard and heavy substance that envelops the subtle substance of the deceased deities and converts them into creatures of this world. The god Yappan, for example, is transformed into a scorpion when he is decapitated by the god Yaotl, who becomes the species of locust called “head carrier” (Ruiz de Alarcón 1953:176–177, 1984:205–206). This process is the origin of ecumene beings, those who had a different nature in the time that Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón calls “aquel siglo” (“that century”; 1953:55–58), the anecumene space-time. Jacinto de la Serna (1953:231) says it was believed that trees had rational souls because of their “human” condition in the other century. In sum, the gods of myth are transformed by death in the liminal zone into creature-creators. The creatures are gods encapsulated in a heavy, hard, and perceptible corporeal

substance, subject to deterioration and destruction in a life-death cycle of existence (Figure 3.4) They are like the Sun, whose heat and fire constitute a cover that dies each day in the west, passes through the subterranean world of death, and comes back to life each morning. This transformation explains the belief in Mesoamerican tradition, still present today, that all creatures of this world possess a rational soul within them.

Laws of the Sun

In the preparatory processual zone, laws are not lacking. As an Ixil diviner asked, “How could the gods be without law?” (Colby and Colby 1981:140, 1986:155). In an ancient Nahuatl myth, child gods were expelled from the Tamoanchan anecumene for violating the orders of the Father and the Mother. The sentence itself was a mandate that established a tacit destiny: the punished children would go and populate the surface of the earth and the underworld (Codex Telleriano-Remensis 1995:13r; Codex Vaticanus A 1996:27v). The order implied the beginning of the

ecumene with the inclusion of the expelled deities in the life-death cycle. In Maya accounts, the delegation of creative action is more explicit. An ancient Guatemalan myth clearly states that the children received the mission of creating the things of this world (Casas 1967:2:505–506). Although laws were not lacking in the process of creation, violence escalated to the point that the situation was unbearable on the eve of the first sunrise. In that muddy and shadowy realm, the gods residing on earth—the creatures’ antecessors—practiced cannibalism and devoured their own children and siblings; they ate raw flesh and despicable things; they paired incestuously; they raped and killed each other; and so on. Today these proto-creatures are known as “gentiles,” demons, monkeys, jaguars, or Jews (Garza 2002:64): “Les decían *tsitsimimej*; eran los anteriores [They called them *tsitsimimej*; they were the anterior ones]” (Taller de tradición oral 2009:40). The rule of the Sun, light, and the establishment of suitable laws for the ecumene space-time that was born became indispensable.

When the gods’ characteristics were set with the Sun’s first rays, the cosmic apparatus that would serve to receive the orderly flow of cycles was complete. A green ceiba tree rose in the center as a symbol and memorial of the annihilation, a column that provided support between the earth and the sky (the plate and the cup), and the site where the *k’atuns* would govern (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:155). Four columns also rose, and these would sequence the periods of time to successively pour onto the earth (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:114), ruled by a calendar “composed of myriad overlays of cycles of differing lengths and portents” (Tedlock 1982:1). Many accounts refer to the establishment of cycles that would rule in the ecumene, among them the day-night mytheme of the “Musicians of the Sun” (Histoyre du Mechique 1905:32–33, 1965:111–112; Mendieta 1945:1:86), the myth of the “Birth of Huitzilopochtli” (Sahagún 1950–1982:3:1–5, 2000:1:300–302), and the figures found in the central lower portion of page 52 of the Codex Vindobonensis (1992).

The Sun established its laws. In order to differentiate between the previous time and the one now

legislated, a Nahuatl myth refers to the latter with the term *tlaneltoaca* (Dakin 1977:63), which can be translated as “[when] what was established [was] followed.” With the first dawn, the mortal destiny of the reborn gods was determined, for their hard shells deteriorated and were destroyed. One of the gods said: “Todos los que íbamos a amanecer teníamos que morir después [All of us who went out at dawn later had to die]” (Taller de tradición oral 2009:45). The ability of creatures to intercommunicate as the gods had in the preparatory processual zone, where all beings spoke, even cooking implements and reed mats, was suppressed (Fagetti 2003:71). Each creature exercised its function on earth, but their work wore them down and they had to be reinvigorated with food. Where the animals lived and which ones could be eaten was established (Popol Vuh 1950:85–86, 1964:26–27). Human beings merited special legislation: they were charged with worshiping and feeding the gods (Popol Vuh 1950:165, 1964:103). For human sustenance, a contract was struck with the Earth in which she provided food in return for human cadavers (Shaw 1972:58–59). Cannibalism was forbidden to humans, and prohibitions against incest were established. In sum, the Sun—illuminator, creator, and guardian (Colby and Colby 1981:38, 1986:52)—became “the initial and primary symbol of ethical, spatial, and temporal order” (Gossen 1972:136). For “cuando apareció el día, todo estuvo preparado para resolver, todo se preparó antes de que hubiera vida como ahora [when the day appeared, everything was prepared to settle, everything was prepared before there was life as today]” (Boege 1988:90). In this way, the concepts of creation and all processes in the liminal zone served as the archetypes that explained the daily transits of the gods in the cosmos and the prayers and offerings that humans delivered to them.

Cosmic Flows

The ecumene exists thanks to flows that emanate from the anecumene. It was said that many gods were transfigured during creation to give rise to creatures. Some, perhaps by hiding in rivers or mountains when the general immolation took place

(Colby and Colby 1981:167, 1986:183), remained as guardians. Others received the mission of traveling between the anecumene and the ecumene, causing transformations—some cyclical—and hierophanies. Upon crossing over to the ecumene, deities could enter a creature and occupy it until it died. In this sense, the heavy shell that covered each creature could accommodate multiple contents. Human beings, the prototypical creatures, contain in their bodies a multitude of heterogeneous animate entities (deities that give them life, new characteristics, thought, special abilities, and so on) that are subject to various dangers and, on top of that, do not always coexist harmoniously (López Austin and López Luján 2009:105, cuadro 2). One of these entities, which M. Esther Hermitte (1964:122, 1970:84) has described as a co-essence, is the *nahual* that a human shares with another being (see *nawal* in Brown, this volume). Another entity, which confers the ability to travel through portals, has received the name *way* among the Maya (Houston and Stuart 1989); Barbara Tedlock (1982:53, 110) has found a similar entity called *coyopa* among contemporary K'iche'. Ancient kings who were deified when they ascended to power could gain animate entities, as their souls acquired additional portions of the substance of one or more gods. Subsequently, when the king died, these divine parts returned to their sources of origin. Therefore, rulers do not become gods when they die, only while they are alive.

It should be noted that in both the liminal zone and the ecumene the laws of the Sun dictate that activity causes deterioration that must be counteracted with food. This law also affects the deities that travel from one realm to the other; therefore, humans must feed them with prayers, rites, offerings, and even their own bodies. In Guatemala, the Achi' say that Jesus Christ himself complains when they do not feed him: “Ya no me recuerdan con candelas y por eso estoy sufriendo mucha hambre (siendo que el humo de la candela es mi comida); ya no me dan de beber; ya no me dan de comer [They no longer remember me with candles and therefore I am suffering much hunger (the smoke from the candle being my food); they no longer give me

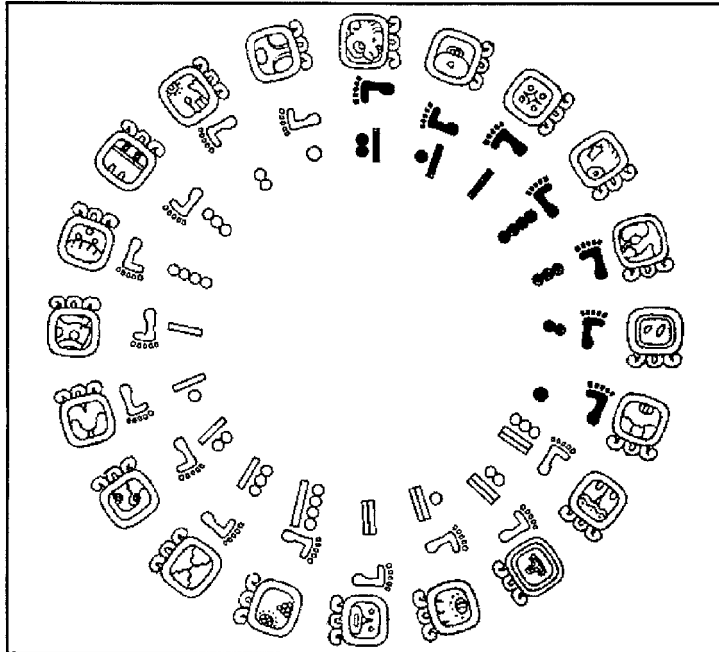
anything to drink; they no longer give me anything to eat]” (Shaw 1972:49).

Of course, the transit in either direction is not entirely free for gods, forces, the dead, creatures, offerings, or prayers. Portals are located at precise points, and passage occurs at precise times in the calendar (Albores 1997:429; Durán 1971:159–160, 1984:1:85; Neff Nuixa 2001:356), for the cycles are in force in both the ecumene and the liminal zone, where they were first created and installed. Therefore, some portals only open once a year. A large opening, such as at a large festival, can be dangerous because beings from the underworld could attempt an invasion (Knab 1991:54; Lupo 1995:162). The cyclicity of the opening also requires that offerings be delivered at precise dates and times (Villa Rojas 1990:751). They must be made on the day that the deity “comes back to life” (*resucita*; Reyes García 2001:167; Schultze Jena 1954:49, 75)—that is, the date when it crosses the barrier of the ecumene or when it reaches the liminal zone. If it is in the preparatory processual zone, it may be summoned to enter the liminal zone, as the K'iche' do with *kumpisición*, a call urging the sacred person to come the following day to receive the offering (Bunzel 1952:301–302). In order to confirm its efficacy, the K'iche' believer waits for the reply of divine acceptance (*rétal*) to know whether the place, time, quality, and quantity of the offering were adequate (Schultze Jena 1954:93, 95). Some transits are instantaneous; others are slow, like the crossing of the dead to the anecumene; and some are divided into segments, like the seven gates of the Sierra Norte Nahuas of Puebla (Lupo 1995:70).

Conformation of Temporal Units

Sylvanus G. Morley (1946:223–224, 1972:219, 221) proposes two fundamental characteristics of Maya divinities: the possibility of two or more fusing together to form one unit and the ability of one god to serve as patron for two or more temporal units. We are indebted to J. Eric S. Thompson (1954:138–139, 1970:199, 1975:248, 1978:96, 1992:197) for studying the divinization of time among the ancient Maya. The British researcher identified

figure 3.5
The birth of the month.
(Illustration by Alfredo
López Austin.)



the personality of the day-gods, the composition of the temporal unit of the day by two different deities, the divine character of other units, as well as how they were worshiped in antiquity. Moreover, based on works of Bishop Núñez de la Vega, Oliver La Farge, Douglas Byers, and J. S. Lincoln, he insisted on the historical continuity of these concepts in current beliefs and rituals dedicated to time in some highland Maya communities.

Although Thompson's proposals were sound, they did not all achieve general acceptance. A subsequent study has closely reviewed beliefs concerning the divine character of the various temporal units. Its author, María Eugenia Gutiérrez González (2008), approached the problem from iconographic, linguistic, historical, ethnographic, and epigraphic perspectives and concluded that Maya Initial Series temporal cycles were personified and deified in Classic-period religious thought. She acknowledged, however, that data for the *bak'tun* and longer periods were insufficient (Gutiérrez González 2008:105). It is also important to add that ethnographic information considerably enriches the panorama. Authors like Oliver La Farge and Douglas Byers (1931:172–173), Ruth Bunzel (1952:267), Leonhard Schultz Jena (1954:49), Mary Shaw (1972:104–105), Robert

Carmack (1979:381–382), Barbara Tedlock (1982:107), and Benjamin N. Colby and Lore M. Colby (1981:62–63, 65–66, 67, 289–290, 1986:76–77, 80, 81, 294–295) have provided material of great value.

Other researchers have continued to study the composition of the gods, considering them divine powers with abilities including fusion, fission, dividing their substance, and, thus, potentially occupying two or more places simultaneously, including the interior of their images (López Austin 1983, 1993:135–138, 1996:176–179). These divine faculties are also attributed to temporal units (León-Portilla 1968:88–90, 1973:82–83). We think, for example, that the numerical element in the composition of the days has a value as important as its figurative counterpart. This interpretation is clearly reflected in the Maya myth of the birth of the month, in which a divine personage steps in the footprints left by another unnamed personage (Figure 3.5). The union of each foot in each footprint forms a combination of thirteen numerals and twenty figurative signs. In this manner the twenty units are completed (Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel 1967:116–119, 1973:97–101). On the other hand, book 4 of the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950–1982, 2000:1:343–432) reiterates that the numeral 1 confers so much force to

its figurative counterpart that it becomes the head of the *trecena* and as such alters the action of the twelve days it commands.

When breaching the ecumene, the temporal units occupy and filter into all that exists as a great transforming force. This event has posed a dilemma among scholars as to whether this force exerts absolute fatality or simple influence. Some authors have leaned toward the former, saying, for example, that “people had no control over their fate” (Bricker 1981:7, 1993:27). Others, in contrast, have emphasized the power of humans to confront the determination of time (Garza 1975:105–106; León-Portilla 1963:119–121, 1974:198–199).

It should be noted here that effects of destiny and the deterministic force of temporal units may vary considerably. For example, the fatal character of k’atun 8 Ahau only held for the Itzá, and the years 1 and 7 Rabbit (*tochtli*) only held for the Toltec and the Mexica. Moreover, the force of the temporal units may differ: the fate of the day 1 Death (*miquiztli*) was almost ineludible (Sahagún 1950–1982:4:33–36, 2000:1:367–368), although destiny generally is avoidable and not a fatal force. As Bunzel (1952:275) has stated, destiny is “a vast concatenation of forces.” The array of units simultaneously arriving to the ecumene struggle with each other and confront other divine forces already there. Faced with this onslaught of forces, human beings defend themselves with knowledge, foresight, proper conduct, discretion, penance, prayers, and offerings, for the devout act also persuades invading powers (Sahagún 1950–1982:4:33, 2000:1:367; Schultze Jena 1954:65). Destiny, as one reads in the Books of Chilam Balam (1948:180), “como puede no suceder, puede suceder [just as well may not happen as happen].”

Glimpses of the Anecumene

Except for mythic references to the shadowy, humid, and soft ambience of the moment before the pristine sunrise, few ancient or contemporary texts provide detailed descriptions of the anecumene. Some accounts, however, are of great value. In the first place, and this is obvious, the basis for

imagining the anecumene is experience in this world (López Castro and Ruiz Medrano 2010:241), although it has been said that the former is an inverted duplicate of the latter (Lok 1987:219). This duplicate, however, is not exact in all respects, for the anecumene is imagined to differ considerably from the perceptible world. Human beings use this contrast to explain their worldly reality.

This difference between the anecumene and the ecumene is often measured by the effects of transit between them. Various animate entities in a human being travel to the anecumene, leaving the body’s heavy matter behind in this world. The most common means of travel is in dreams, through which gods and the dead may be visited. Those who ingest psychotropics, as well as those who possess abilities to manage the occult, also travel. Sometimes the threshold is crossed by order of the gods or merely by accident. Prayers and the aromas of offerings also travel, but the passage distorts the nature of things (López Austin 1993:70–71, 1996:97–98): smoke from this world turns into tortillas for thunderbolts (*rayos*) in the anecumene (Carrasco 1960:107), food from the anecumene becomes oak leaves or rotten sticks when it crosses into the ecumene (Davis 1963:202–203), and gold extracted in the anecumene turns into excrement here.

Interestingly, the most important transformations occurring during the passage involve space-time and what are clearly different dimensions. For example, Tim Knab (1991:35, 37, 40, 47), referring to Nahuas in the sierra of Puebla, describes an underworld space anchored by a center with four fixed boundary points, where differentiated portals may be used by the specialized traveler to precisely locate a desired site. Thus, traveling at will, in the shadows, from one place to another, does not require one to follow a fixed route.

In terms of time, the traveler who spends an extended period in the anecumene may find upon returning that only an instant has passed in the ecumene; or, conversely, after spending a very short time in the anecumene, one may return to find many years have transpired in the ecumene (Figuerola Pujol 2010:301; Schultze Jena 1977:30–31; Técnicos Bilingües 1985:33). A good example of

this phenomenon is the story of two traders who stop at a store to buy cigarettes. One of them goes in, but he and the store disappear before the eyes of his astonished companion. A year later, the companion returns to the same place and sees the store again. He goes in, finds his lost friend, and tells him to leave immediately. The friend, unaware of the passage of time outside, protests because he has not gotten his cigarettes yet (López Palacios 1998:21–24). Similarly, divine beings from the *anecumene* seem to have an erroneous perception of the passage of time in the *ecumene* (Durán 1984:2:220–221, 1994:218–219). The explanation is clear: *ecumene* and *anecumene* times and spaces have different qualities. For example, in the region of death a deceased Mixtec tells his widow: “Sé que me estás viendo como si fuera yo misma, como si estuviera viva, pero te pido que no me abrases, porque ya no soy parte de tu vida. Estoy en otra parte . . . es otra forma del tiempo [I know you are looking at me as if I were the same, as if I were alive, but I ask you not to embrace me, because I am no longer part of your life. I am in another land . . . ; it is another form of time]” (López Castro and Ruiz Medrano 2010:241). Generally, in the *anecumene* the traveler communes with the occult, with time past, and with time yet to come, which are likewise perceived by those who consume psychotropics. It was said that *ololiuhqui* revealed where to find a runaway wife (Serna 1953:236). Francisco Hernández (1959:1:105) recorded that Nahuas who used *poyomatli* could see the future, just as Mazatecs claim that those who consume mushrooms can, but they add that those transported to the remote past encounter Adam and Eve (Boege 1988:92). In this total presence, the traveler may observe inverse causal processes, like the regression of years in the mythical Aztlán recorded by Fray Diego Durán (1984:2:221–222, 1994:220).

An important characteristic of the other time can be found in therapeutic practice. According to Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón (1953:163, 1984:190), when a Nahuatl medic treated a fractured bone, he confronted the infirmity in both the somatic and supernatural realms. In addition to applying a splint to the patient, he would address the fracture in an incantation as “la codorniz señorial originaria del

lugar del alboroto que daña el hueso del Mictlan [the lordly quail from the place of the disturbance that damages the bone from Mictlan]” (Ruiz de Alarcón 1953:163, 1984:190). The context is obvious: the medic is situated in the myth where Quetzalcoatl descends to the region of the dead, asks the god Mictlantecuhtli to give him the bones necessary for creating human beings, and when returning with them is disturbed by quail. The startled Quetzalcoatl falls with the bones, and they break into pieces. The god gets back up and gathers the fragments, which he will use to form humans. The medic, in his therapeutic action, travels to the *anecumene* to access the myth located in the preparatory processual zone, but he reduces the context merely to the episode of the bone fracture. His precise action will have consequences for his patient (López Austin 1975:292–295, 1993:53, 1996:76). His presence occurs at the exact site in the *anecumene* of a particular mythic process. Likewise, an Ixil transported to the *anecumene* is unable to gather firewood because he arrives at a mythic moment when trees have not yet spread over the world (Colby and Colby 1981:184, 1986:200).

Sometimes the sources merely provide isolated phrases, brief flashes, that can be quite revealing. For example, a discourse for greeting a king speaks of “ca omino in topan, in mictlan [what was said in the sky, in the region of the dead]” as “ca omocuap[p]ano in tlatolli [the word (that) already crossed the bridge],” and Josefina García Quintana (1980:72–73, 87) interprets this text as the determination of the destiny of humans in the sky and in the underworld, which reaches the *ecumene* across the liminal space. This expression is in accordance with the Nahuatl text of Cristóbal del Castillo (1991:190–191), who wrote that the figurative sign of the day 1 Water (*atl*) is the word of the great Tlaloc (“in iquechol atl oncan tlatoa in huey Tlaloc”).

Time in the Preparatory Processual Zone

Time in the mythic dimension is usually called “the time of darkness,” “when there still was no light,” or “before the dawn.” Based on the aforementioned information, however, two types of

ANECUMENE: DIMENSION OF MYTH		ECUMENE
PREPARATORY PROCESSUAL ZONE	LIMINAL ZONE	
<p>Beginning of myths as adventures of gods</p> <p>Situation was unbearable</p>	<p>Pristine sunrise. Initiation of the Sun's course</p> <p>Transit to ecumene begins</p>	<p>Creatures are born</p> <p>Butic or ecumene's destruction</p>

figure 3.6
The limits between both mythic zones and between the liminal zone and ecumene. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)

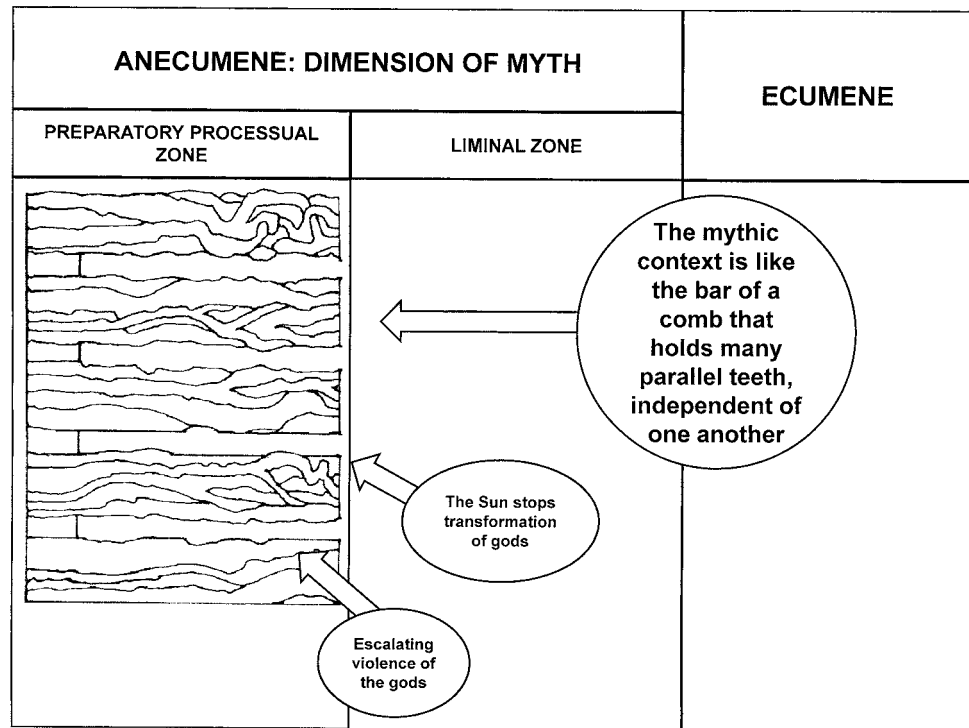
time may be distinguished in this dimension: one in the preparatory processual zone and the other in the liminal zone (Figure 3.6). The Chol, for example, say about the former: “Hubo un tiempo antiguo, ‘Tiempo sin tiempo’ . . . cuando el mundo fue formado en esta oscuridad líquida por el padre-madre, antes aún de que el Sol fuera a su vez concebido. En este tiempo ‘en el que las palabras carecían de significado y las cosas aún no tenían nombre’ [There was an ancient time, a ‘time without time’ . . . when the world was formed in this liquid darkness by the mother-father, even before the Sun eventually was conceived. In this time ‘words lacked meaning and things still had no name’]” (García de León 1988:35). Researchers have referred to this time in the preparatory processual zone in different ways—“tiempo estático primordial [primordial static time]” (Garza 2002:53), “the totality of time” (López Austin 1993:53, 1996:76)—or have compared it to eternity (López Austin 1993:61, 1996:87; Thompson 1954:138, 1992:199). Let us analyze these qualifiers.

Mythic time begins, according to Nahuas, with the sin that occasions the expulsion of the

gods from Tamoanchan to the surface of the earth and the region of the dead and, in Maya mythology, when the creator forms the k’atuns and gives them the task of creating the things of the world (Montoliu Villar 1989:29). Both myths specifically refer to the processes of creature formation. The characters of the myth (the creator deities) are the elements that will be transformed to produce the creatures of the ecumene. The product may be an individual being (e.g., a star), a kind of being (e.g., maize), part of the cosmic apparatus (e.g., the four trees), a worldly process, a temporal unit, a cycle, a rite, an institution, and so on.

The preparatory processual zone’s time is dynamic, for in it the deities acquire the forms and characteristics that the different creatures will possess. The elements in play (the characters in their adventures) fuse and divide. Each mythic process is autonomous (like the teeth of a comb), as the myths have no singular context of succession linking them together (Figure 3.7). Each myth is formed in stages that have a consecutive logical order; however, in this temporal dimension, all of the stages exist simultaneously: they are perennial, since they

figure 3.7
Five autonomous
myths up to the
pristine sunrise.
(Illustration by
Alfredo López
Austin.)



are free of the deterioration, death, and existential impermanence that the Sun prescribes as law in its dominions (López Austin and López Luján 2009:235–236). Myth complexes have an absolute presence; they include all possible processes. The preparatory processual zone includes all that was, is, and will be in the ecumene, but also processes never realized but possible. Thus, here, in an eternal present that may be surmised in an immense imaginable past or future, is found everything that transcends the limits of ecumene reality existing between the world’s creation and butic.

If cycles are created in these mythic processes in the preparatory processual zone, how can these same processes be measured calendrically? As we saw in the Maya myth of the birth of the month, creation is a strange game: the days are being created with footsteps upon footprints, but at the same time, things in the ecumene are being created in a calendrical cycle that is barely being born. “On 1 Chuen he raised himself to his divinity, after he had made heaven and earth. On 2 Eb he made the first stairway. It descended from the midst of the heavens, in the midst of the water, where there

were neither the earth, rocks nor trees” (Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel 1967:117, 1973:98). The creation occurred in a calendrical sequence that was itself being created (López Austin 1993:45–48, 1996:67–70). For this reason, creatures may have secret names of the day of their creation: trees and objects made of wood are called 1 Water (atl), deer are called 7 Flower (*xochitl*), and so on. And the gods have as their names the dates of myths in which they act—one or more names, according to the number of their participations. So why are some myths measured in years? How can the “Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas” (1965:25) say that six hundred years had passed before the ordering of the world? I believe this statement is merely an extrapolation rendering the immeasurable measurable. A few lines later, this source contradicts itself when declaring that “todo lo susodicho fue fecho y criado sin que en ello pongan cuenta de año, sino que fue junto y sin diferencia de tiempo [all of the above was made and created without them giving the year count there, but rather together without any difference in time]” (Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas 1965:27).

Other issues arise. Guilhem Olivier (2004) has wondered what to make of the gods appearing in myths and rites with different ages, as if they were subject to the effects of time, and why these ages vary. I think the answer is in the autonomy of processes in the anecumene: a god may play the role of a child in one mythic adventure and the role of a mature or older adult in others. Moreover, some myths, as they are processes, include the age progression of some deities, which can become reality in ecumene time. For example, Mazatecs believe that Chumaje, the mother who feeds the maize field with her milk, is a girl in the morning and becomes older as the day progresses (Boege 1988:151). Federico Navarrete Linares (2004:42) raises a second problem when stating that the gods of the ancient Nahuas are subject to the cycles. His opinion is sound but must be limited to the dominions of the Sun and its laws. In the preparatory processual zone—specifically in myth—the process of closing a temporal unit can occur, but the actual cyclical recurrence that traps the gods is established with the first appearance of the Sun in the sky.

Time in the Liminal Zone and Its Transit into the World

Although the preparatory processual zone and the liminal zone belong to the mythical dimension of the cosmos, and although in some myths it is difficult to perceive the boundaries between the two, their respective qualities of time greatly differ. In order to function, the world needs a cosmic apparatus with passageways and portals that permit the flow of forces and gods in both directions between the anecumene and ecumene space-time dimensions. The principal components of this apparatus are the *axis mundi* and the four cosmic trees. From bottom to top, the axis mundi is basically composed of the underworld or region of death, the sacred mountain, and the great central tree. This trilogy is projected toward the horizontal extremes of the cosmos, reproduced in the four directions (Figure 3.8). The most important transits from anecumene to ecumene and vice versa take place via this triple axis mundi and its four projections and are ruled by the calendrical sequence of the Sun's world.

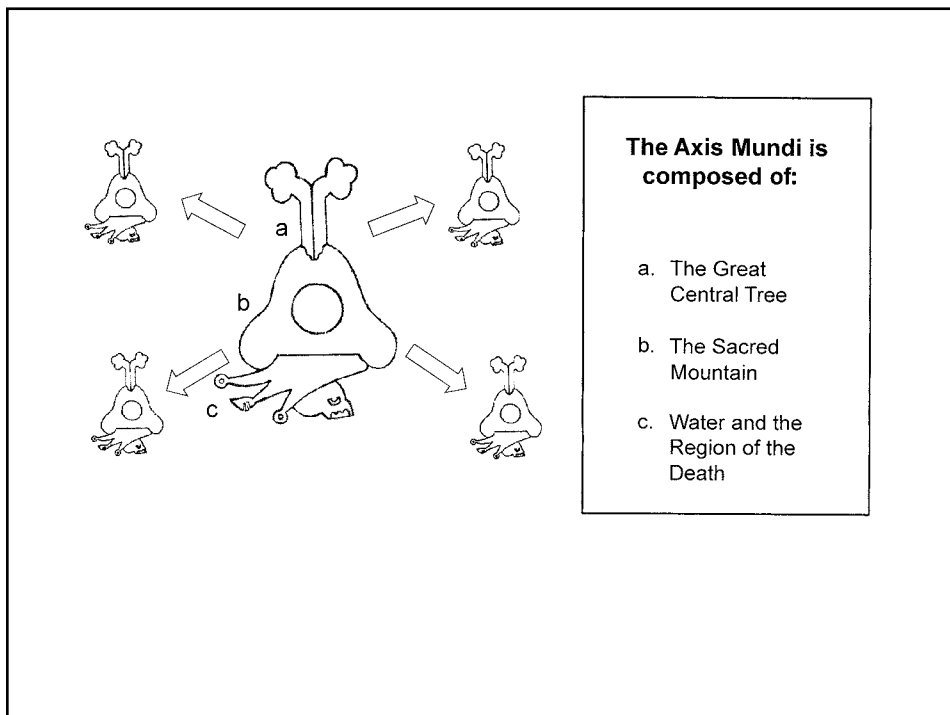


figure 3.8
The axis mundi projected toward the four corners of the world. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)

figure 3.9
Five autonomous
myths up to the
birth of creatures.
(Illustration by
Alfredo López
Austin.)

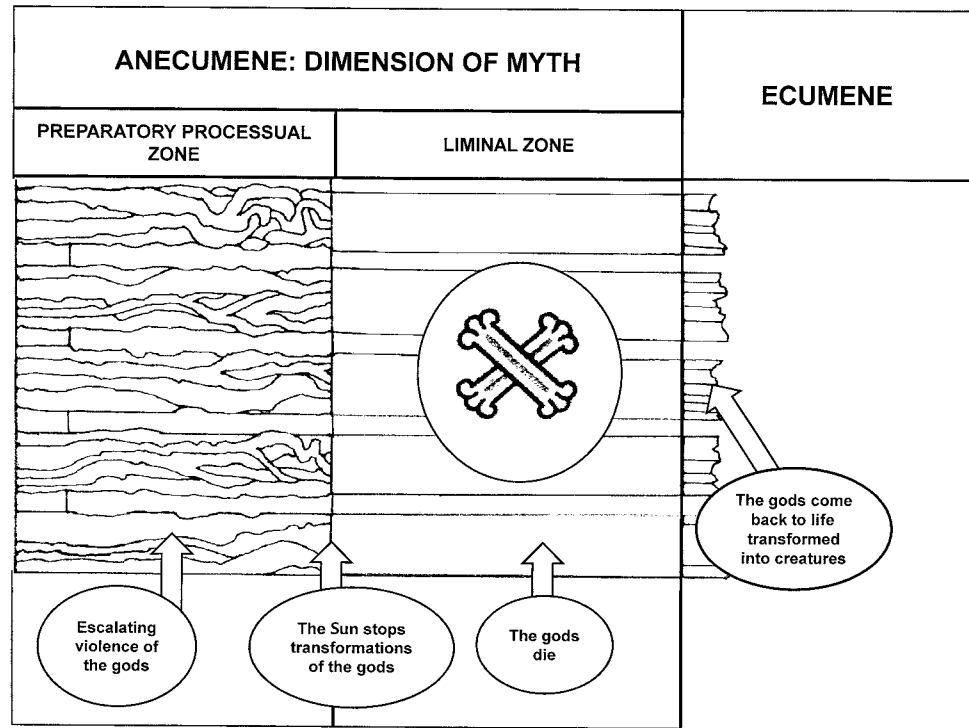
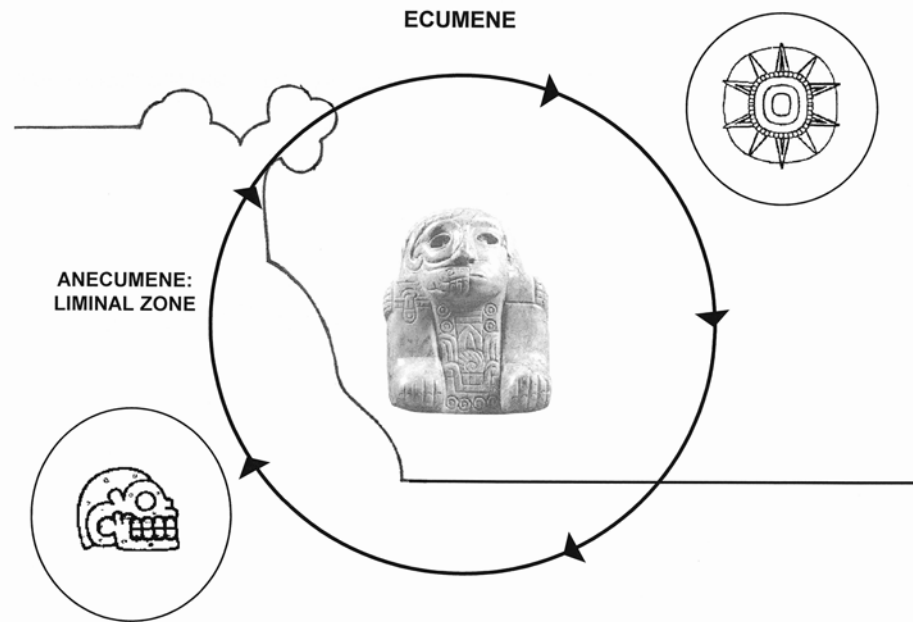


figure 3.10
The life-death cycle of
existence. (Illustration by
Alfredo López Austin.)



The liminal space-time begins with the pristine appearance of the Sun on the horizon and includes the end of the protean state of the gods: the death of the gods sent into the world, their resurrection, and their preparation for crossing into the ecumene, now trapped in a cycle. It concludes precisely with the transit between the two space-time dimensions

(Figure 3.9). We must also consider that not only are all of the cycles created and propelled in the liminal zone, but that half of each cycle occurs there, including the half of the life-death cycle that houses the dead during the time that transpires between what was a worldly life and what will be their return (Figure 3.10).

The processes of creation, as I have said, became the archetype that explains the daily transits in the liminal zone. Under this logic, forces and deities arrive at the liminal zone where they come together and acquire (1) their location in the great cosmic apparatus where the laws of the Sun rule, (2) their sequence, (3) their name, (4) their hierarchy, including (5) their cyclicity, and (6) a covering for crossing into the ecumene. This covering is indispensable for them to work in the world. It may be nearly imperceptible or quite noticeable.

Let us look at an example of the location of time gods in a cycle from the aforementioned Maya myth of the birth of the month, “when the world was not yet created”:

Then occurred the invention of the word of our Lord God, when there was no word in heaven, when there were neither rocks nor trees. Then they went to consider [what they were], and [the voice] spoke as follows: “Thirteen entities, seven entities, one.” So it spoke when the words came forth, at the time when there was no word. Then the reason was sought by the first ruling day (the first day Ahau) why the meaning of the word to them

was not revealed so that they could declare themselves. Then they went to the center of heaven and joined hands. Then the following names were set up in the middle of the land: the Burners, four of them: 4 Chicchan, the Burner; 4 Oc, the Burner; 4 Men, the Burner; 4 Ahau, the Burner. (Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel 1967:118, 1973:100)

The specificity (“thirteen entities, seven entities, one”) signifies that the month finished integrating its twenty days: the first thirteen were formed with the first series of thirteen numerical signs (the feet); to which were added the seven figurative signs that were missing (the footprints), with a second round of numbers, until arriving at seven. Before the first dawn, the days had not manifested their voice (“when there was no word”). Then they formed a ring in the center of the sky and joined hands to order their succession one by one. For their successive appearance four time gods were installed on the earth as burners, that is, passageways for the twenty days to come out one by one in levorotatory sequence. Their respective names were the tree of the east, the tree of the north, the tree of the west, and the tree of the south and they had

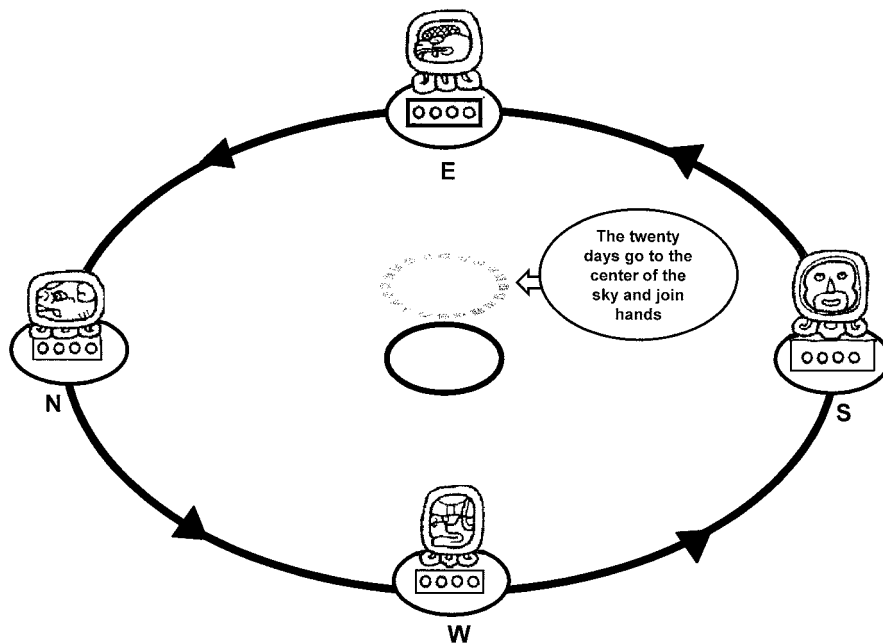


figure 3.11
Calendrical names of
the four cosmic trees.
(Illustration by Alfredo
López Austin.)

the same figurative signs as the four Nahua trees in the “Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas” (1965:32; Graulich 1983:579; López Austin 1993:256–257, 1996:328–329): Serpent, Dog, Eagle, and Flower or Lord (Figure 3.11).

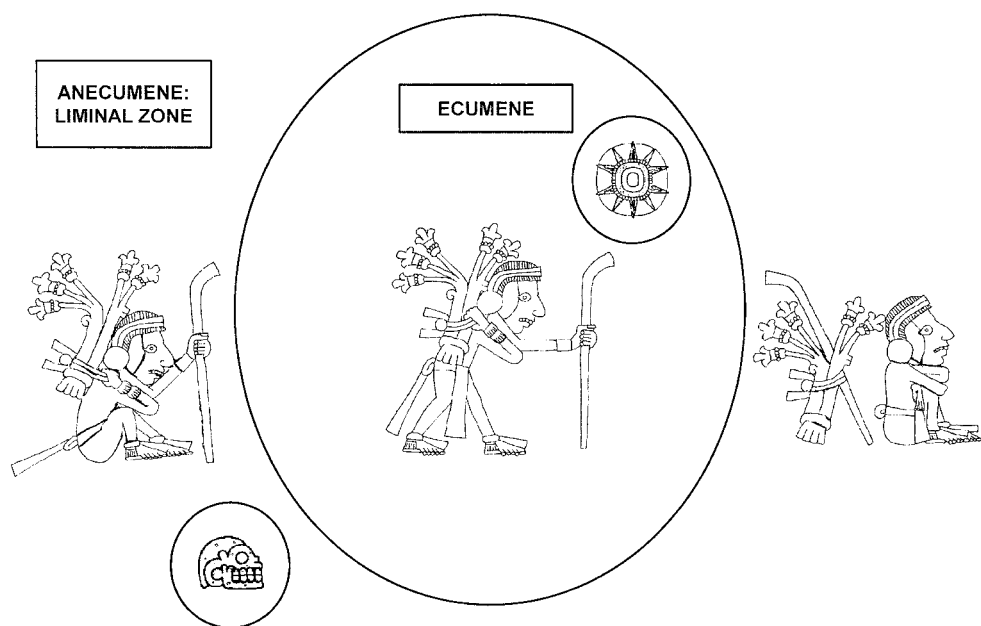
Another text refers to the place where the k’atuns were situated to operate in the world: “Se alzará también Yaax Imixché, Ceiba-verde, en el centro de la provincia como señal y memoria del aniquilamiento. Ella es la que sostiene el plato y el vaso; la estera y el trono de los katunes por ella viven [Yaax Imixché, Green Ceiba, will also rise in the center of the province as a symbol and memorial of the annihilation. It supports the plate and the cup; the mat and the throne of the katunes reside there]” (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:155). The text speaks of the most important tree, the central one, the green one, which is one of the elements of the axis mundi. The plate-cup *difrasismo*, or metaphoric couplet, refers to the underworld and the sky. The mat-throne *difrasismo* signifies “government,” equated with the period of influence of each k’atun on the ecumene.

In summary, the time deities are organized sequentially on the world axis to act upon the creatures. The formation of hierarchies includes

the temporal units under the rule of a larger unit, which conditions the action of its subordinates or servants. They will be its burden, its retinue (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:4, 226). In the same manner, other larger units are constituted, such as the cycle called *uudz katunob*, or doubling-back k’atuns (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:91). In the succession of governments, while one k’atun is on the throne, the next one resides inside the ruling house as a guest, lavished with attention by the reigning k’atun (Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel 1967:89, 1973:39; Books of Chilam Balam 1948:204). In this way cyclical orders of temporal action upon the ecumene are established—irruptions that, when not the product of a single time god, will not occasion identical repetitions, but rather a cyclicity of influences over a linear course. This is where a type of movement that some authors have compared to a spiral similar to thread around a spindle (Garza 2002:62; Read 1998:94–96, 106) is produced.

Situated on its throne, each temporal unit is named; it shows its face, “the face that dominates the sky,” and emits the “voice of dominion” it was given at the moment of its composition and placement in the cosmic apparatus. With its face

figure 3.12
The burden’s transit.
(Illustration by
Alfredo López
Austin.)



The *tonalli* is the “face” of a temporal unit that remains inside a human being

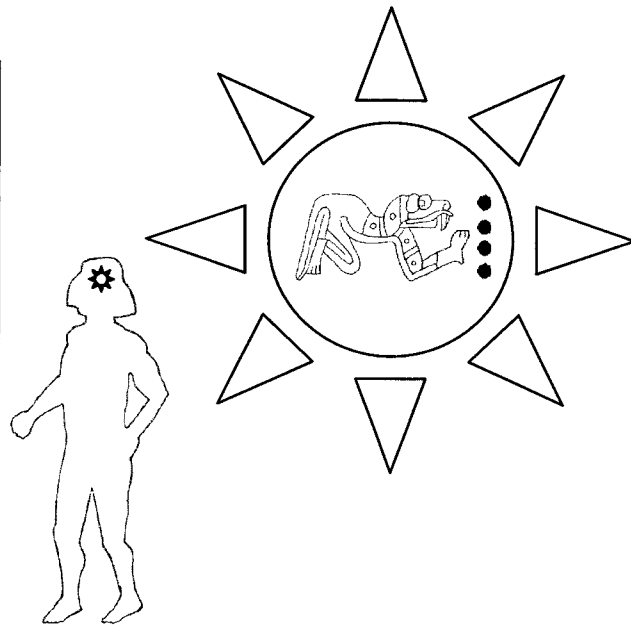


figure 3.13
The *tonalli* as an animate entity. (Illustration by Alfredo López Austin.)

“it becomes present”; this is the nature of its influence. Its voice “reveals the content of its burden” (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:69, 95–96). This voice mentioned in the Maya texts is the one in Nahua texts that was “said in the sky and in the region of death” so that “the word crosses the bridge.” Such expressions are repeated today in sacred texts. Bunzel (1952:287) has recorded them in a prayer by a diviner from Chichicasteñango who ritually confronts the time gods: “Let me invoke their name and faces, lords.” Tedlock (1982:110) says that among the K’iche’, the “face of his day” (*uwäch uk’ij*) is compared to a *nahual* (*nawal*) that penetrates the child born on the date of the time god’s rule and thus produces what should be understood as a co-essence.

In order to cross from *anecumene* to *ecumene* a ritual is necessary, as one observes in a study Bruce Love (1994:18–25) conducted of the *k’atuns* in the Codex Paris. Love was concerned with the nature of the process. Is it a bloody ritual? Is it necessary for the gods, and specifically the time gods, to die so that they may govern in the world? The mythic archetype of the transformation of deities destined for the *ecumene* says that they previously died. Must the gods be sacrificed in order to travel to the *ecumene*? The answer is still pending.

The crossing initiates the work of the gods in the *ecumene*. Ancient Nahua texts say that time rises (*moquetza*; Sahagún 1950–1982:bk. 4; 2000:1:342–432). Both in antiquity (Thompson 1954:138, 1992:197) and in our times (Bricker 1980), crossing into the *ecumene* is compared to the journey a carrier or bearer makes with a load on his back (Figure 3.12). The load or burden is destiny. Both bearer and burden fuse together to form a unit of time while performing their function. They are then one god, as is characteristic among Mesoamerican deities. The work is tiring, and humankind must contribute to divine recuperation with prayers, rites, and food. The worship must be opportune, whether in the time of arrival or the time of ruling in the *ecumene* (Books of Chilam Balam 1948:227). These are the resources that humankind possesses to influence this will of the gods and mitigate the force of their “words.” In the *anecumene*, the gods lay down their burden, recover their lost energy with food and rest, and are able to return to their dimension of origin.

The previously mentioned myth of the expulsion of the gods from Tamoanchan says: “And because of this some came to earth and others to hell, and these are the ones who terrify them” (Codex Telleriano-Remensis 1995:13r, 266). This myth may

figure 3.14
The three different
types of time.
(Illustration by
Alfredo López
Austin.)

ANECUMENE: DIMENSION OF MYTH		ECUMENE
PREPARATORY PROCESSUAL ZONE	LIMINAL ZONE	
TIME AS ABSOLUTE PRESENCE	TIME AS PROCESSES OF TRANSIT	TIME AS TRANSPIRING PRESENT

be interpreted as the capture of the gods within cycles, rotating between the ecumene and the liminal zone of the anecumene. Some of them, however, remain on earth and function as guardians and meteorological phenomena (Knab 1991:52). In the liminal zone—whether in the region of the dead, inside the sacred mountain, or in the passageways for leaving the world again via the cosmic tree—the creator deities are in their cyclical death phase of existence or are guardians and meteorological phenomena in repose. Accounts of journeys to the interior of the sacred mountain or to the region of death abound in which the aforementioned time distortion experienced by travelers is often found. The inversion of space that Rossana Lok (1987:219) mentions has its correspondence in time, for in the underworld day/night and wet/dry season relationships are the inverse of those that occur on the surface of the earth (Grigsby n.d.; Knab 1991:52). Spatial inversion is produced by the orbital course of the dead Sun, whereas temporal inversion is a product of an earlier cyclical stage in the anecumene and the predecessor of the stage that follows. As for the inhabitants of the liminal

zone, why were they “the ones who terrify them”? An idea existed in antiquity and persists in our day that the beings from the time before creation are savages, primitives, cannibals—that is, anterior to the laws of the Sun. They are the dangerous *tzitzimime* (Sahagún 1950–1982:6:37, 2000:2:507). They resent that they were displaced by the definitive creatures and await the right moment to bring an end to them and occupy the surface of the earth. They have been at the point of destroying human beings with the help of the Virgin of Mercy and Jesus Christ, but fortunately the good Saint Thomas intervened and impeded their attack (Villa Rojas 1990:748–749).

If the destiny of the deities expelled from Tamoanchan is to remain prisoners of the cycle, what happens to the temporal units? Recall the image of the bearers. When concluding their task in the ecumene, they are so fatigued that they must replenish their forces. Thompson (1954:138–139, 1992:197–198) observes how time deities, tired at the end of their journey, laid down their burden. Among the Ixil, the Sun concludes its work sweaty and tired and is received at the end of the day by

people on their knees (Colby and Colby 1981:38, 1986:51). This information suggests that leaving, as well as entering, the ecumene requires a ritual in the liminal zone.

But time does not entirely leave the ecumene. Some pieces of time remain in the world, accumulating inside humans as the years pass, warming the hearts of the elderly. Other pieces remain, also within people, as co-essences or animate entities, such as *tonalli* (Figure 3.13). Time imparts its nahual (nawal) to them, as Tedlock (1982:110) records. Even after a person dies, a piece of time remains in the form of a name, for we see that a vestige of its ancient identification survives in the K'iche' word *k'ix*, which means "sunlight," "day," and also "name" (Bunzel 1952:285–286). This name does not go away. Among ancient Nahuas, the deceased had an "earthly name" (*tlalticpactoca*) that could "be borne" (*quitocamama*) by a grandson to "enhance the tonalli" (*quitonaleoa*) of the grandfather (Sahagún 1950–1982:6:203–204, 1979:2:173r, 2000:2:646).

Conclusion

When we are comparing Mesoamerican concepts concerning time in the anecumene and in the ecumene, three different types can be distinguished. The preparatory processual zone of the anecumene has processes that, although divided logically into successive stages, do not expire in

the sense of one giving way to the next. They are all perennial. It is a dynamic in which stages remain, unaffected by the laws of the Sun, to mark the transition from existence. Anyone who willfully visits this zone is situated in the proper moment and stage of the desired myth. This type of time may be described as *absolute presence*.

In the liminal zone of the anecumene, the laws of the Sun establish the cycles and the order of the sequences. Transits to the ecumene are prepared, and gods concluding their stay in the ecumene are received and thus continue in the anecumene part of the cycle. The gods are perennial—they are not destroyed—but they are subject to existential changes in life and in death. This time may be described as *processes of transit*.

Finally, in the ecumene, time exists only sequentially. Its appearance is strictly determined by the laws of the Sun and lasts only for the interval established for its passage. Neither the past nor the future exists here. This type of time may be described as the *transpiring present* (Figure 13.14).

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank those who helped me in the preparation of this work, especially Leonardo López Luján, for his detailed, critical reading of the text, and Scott Sessions, translator of the original Spanish into English.

REFERENCES CITED

- Albores, Beatriz
1997 Los quicazcles y el árbol cósmico del Olotepc, estado de México. In *Graniceros: Cosmovisión y meteorología indígenas de Mesoamérica*, edited by Beatriz Albores and Johanna Broda, pp. 379–446. El Colegio de Mexiquense, Zinacantepec, and Instituto de Investigaciones, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Boege, Eckart
1988 *Los mazatecos ante la nación: Contradicciones de la identidad étnica en el México actual*. Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico City.
- Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel
1967 *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*. Translated and edited by Ralph L. Roys. New ed. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

- 1973 *Libro de Chilam Balam de Chumayel*. 3rd ed. Translated and edited by Antonio Mediz Bolio. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Books of Chilam Balam
- 1948 *El libro de los libros de Chilam Balam*. Translated and edited by Alfredo Barrera Vásquez and Silvia Rendón. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Braudel, Fernand
- 1958 Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée. *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 13(4):725–753.
- 1974 La larga duración. In *La historia y las ciencias sociales*, translated by Josefina Gómez Mendoza, pp. 60–106. 3rd ed. Alianza, Madrid.
- 1980 History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*. In *On History*, translated by Sarah Matthews, pp. 25–54. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Bricker, Victoria Reifler
- 1980 El hombre, la carga y el camino: Antiguos conceptos mayas sobre tiempo y espacio, y el sistema zinacanteco de cargos. In *Los zinacantecos: Un pueblo tzotzil de los altos de Chiapas*, edited by Evon Z. Vogt, pp. 355–370. Reprint of the 1st ed. Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Mexico City.
- 1981 *The Indian Christ, the Indian King: The Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 1993 *El Cristo indígena, el rey nativo: El sustrato histórico de la mitología del ritual de los mayas*. Translated by Cecilia Paschero. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Bunzel, Ruth Leah
- 1952 *Chichicastenango: A Guatemalan Village*. Publications of the American Ethnological Society 22. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Carmack, Robert M.
- 1979 *Historia social de los quichés*. Ministerio de Educación, Guatemala City.
- Carrasco, Pedro
- 1960 Pagan Rituals and Beliefs among the Chontal Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico. *Anthropological Records* 20(3):i–v, 87–115.
- Casas, Bartolomé de las
- 1967 *Apologética historia sumaria*. Edited by Edmundo O’Gorman. 2 vols. Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Castillo, Cristóbal del
- 1991 *Historia de la venida de los mexicanos y otros pueblos, e Historia de la conquista*. Translated and edited by Federico Navarrete Linares. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Proyecto Templo Mayor, GV, and Asociación de Amigos del Templo Mayor, Mexico City.
- Codex Telleriano-Remensis
- 1995 *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript*. Facsimile ed. and study by Eloise Quiñones Keber. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Codex Vaticanus A
- 1996 *Códice Vaticano A 3738*. Facsimile ed. by Ferdinand Anders, Maarten Jansen, and Luis Reyes García. Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz, and Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Codex Vindobonensis
- 1992 *Códice Vindobonensis Mexicanus I*. Facsimile ed. by Ferdinand Anders, Luis Reyes García, Maarten Jansen, and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez. Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario, Madrid; Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz; and Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Colby, Benjamin N., and Lore M. Colby
- 1981 *The Daykeeper: The Life and Discourse of an Ixil Diviner*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- 1986 *El contador de los días: Vida y discurso de un adivino ixil*. Translated by Juan José Utrilla. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Dakin, Karen
- 1977 Pedro Cuaresma and Other Nahuatl Stories. *Tlalocan* 7:47–66.
- Davis, Marjorie
- 1963 Cuicatec Tales about Witchcraft. *Tlalocan* 4(3):197–203.

- Durán, Diego
- 1971 *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*. Translated and edited by Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- 1984 *Historia de las indias de Nueva España e islas de tierra firme*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Porrúa, Mexico City.
- 1994 *The History of the Indies in New Spain*. Translated and edited by Doris Heyden. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Fagetti, Antonella
- 2003 *Los que saben: Testimonios de vida de médicos tradicionales de la región de Tehuacán*. Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, and Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, Puebla.
- Figuerola Pujol, Helios
- 2010 *Los dioses, los hombres y las palabras en la comunidad de San Juan Evangelista Cancuc en Chiapas*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mérida.
- García de León, Antonio
- 1988 *Resistencia y utopía: Memorial de agravios y crónica de revueltas y profecías acaecidas en la provincia de Chiapas durante los últimos quinientos años de su historia*. 2nd ed. Era, Mexico City.
- García Quintana, Josefina
- 1980 Salutación y súplica que hacía un principal al *tlatoni* recién electo. *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 14:65–94.
- Garza, Mercedes de la
- 1975 *La conciencia histórica de los antiguos mayas*. Centro de Estudios Mayas, Coordinación de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- 2002 Origen, estructura y temporalidad del cosmos. In *Religión maya*, edited by Mercedes de la Garza Camino and Martha Iliá Nájera Coronado, pp. 53–81. Trotta, Madrid.
- Gossen, Gary H.
- 1972 Temporal and Spatial Equivalents in Chamula Ritual Symbolism. In *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, edited by William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, pp. 135–149. Harper and Row, New York.
- Graulich, Michel
- 1983 Myths of Paradise Lost in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico. *Current Anthropology* 24(5):578–588.
- Grigsby, Thomas L.
- n.d. The Tepemaxtla as the Nagual of the Transfigured Christ. In press.
- Gutiérrez González, María Eugenia
- 2008 El paso del katún: La personificación del tiempo entre los mayas del Clásico. MA thesis, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Hermitte, M. Esther
- 1964 Supernatural Power and Social Control in a Modern Mayan Village. PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, Chicago.
- 1970 *Poder sobrenatural y control social en un pueblo maya contemporáneo*. Translated by Carmen Viqueira. Departamento de Antropología, Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, Mexico City.
- Hernández, Francisco
- 1959 *Historia natural de Nueva España*. 2 vols. Obras completas 2–3. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas
- 1965 In *Teogonía e historia de los mexicanos: Tres opúsculos del siglo XVI*, edited by Ángel M. Garibay K., pp. 21–90. Porrúa, Mexico City.
- Histoire du Mechiqúe
- 1905 Histoire du Mechiqúe, manuscrit française inédit du XVIe siècle. Edited by Édouard de Jonghe. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 2:1–41.
- 1965 Historia de México. In *Teogonía e historia de los mexicanos: Tres opúsculos del siglo XVI*, edited by Ángel M. Garibay K., pp. 91–120. Porrúa, Mexico City.

- Houston, Stephen D., and David Stuart
 1989 *The Way Glyph: Evidence for "Co-essences" among the Classic Maya*. Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing 30. Center for Maya Research, Washington, D.C.
- Knab, Tim J.
 1991 Geografía del Inframundo. *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 21:31–57.
- La Farge, Oliver, and Douglas S. Byers
 1931 *The Year Bearer's People*. Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.
- León-Portilla, Miguel
 1963 *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*. Translated by Jack Emory Davis. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
 1968 *Tiempo y realidad en el pensamiento maya: Ensayo de acercamiento*. Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
 1973 *Time and Reality in the Thought of the Maya*. Translated by Charles L. Boilès and Fernando Horcasitas. Beacon Press, Boston.
 1974 *La filosofía náhuatl estudiada en sus fuentes*. 4th ed. Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Lok, Rossana
 1987 The House as a Microcosm. In *The Leiden Tradition in Structural Anthropology: Essays in Honor of P. E. de Josselin de Jong*, edited by R. de Ridder and Jan A. J. Karremans, pp. 211–223. E. J. Brill, Leiden.
- López Austin, Alfredo
 1975 Algunas ideas acerca del tiempo mítico entre los antiguos nahuas. In *Historia, religión, escuelas: XIII Mesa Redonda*, edited by Jaime Litvak King, pp. 289–298. Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología, Mexico City.
 1983 Nota sobre la fusión y la fisión de los dioses en el panteón mexica. *Anales de antropología* 20(2):75–87.
- 1993 *The Myths of the Opossum: Pathways of Mesoamerican Mythology*. Translated by Bernard Ortiz de Montellano and Thelma Ortiz de Montellano. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
 1996 *Los mitos del tlacuache*. 3rd ed. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
 2001 El núcleo duro, la cosmovisión y la tradición mesoamericana. In *Cosmovisión, ritual e identidad de los pueblos indígenas de México*, edited by Johanna Broda and Félix Báez-Jorge, pp. 47–65. Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes and Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- López Austin, Alfredo, and Leonardo López Luján
 2009 *Monte sagrado—Templo Mayor: El cerro y la pirámide en la tradición religiosa mesoamericana*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.
- López Castro, Hermenegildo F., and Ethelia Ruiz Medrano
 2010 *Tutu Ñuu Oko: Libro del Pueblo Veinte; Relatos de la tradición oral mixteca de Pinotepa Nacional, Oaxaca*. Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social and Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, Mexico City.
- López Palacios, Juan
 1998 *Relatos de Xoxocotla*. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Love, Bruce
 1994 *The Paris Codex: Handbook for a Maya Priest*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Lupo, Alessandro
 1995 *La tierra nos escucha: La cosmología de los nahuas a través de las súplicas rituales*. Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes and Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Mexico City.
- Mendieta, Gerónimo de
 1945 *Historia eclesiástica indiana*. 4 vols. Salvador Chávez Hayhoe, Mexico City.

- Montoliu Villar, María
- 1989 *Cuando los dioses despertaron: Conceptos cosmológicos de los antiguos mayas de Yucatán estudiados en el Chilam Balam de Chumayel*. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Morley, Sylvanus G.
- 1946 *The Ancient Maya*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif.
- 1972 *La civilización maya*. Translated by Adrián Recinos. 2nd ed. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Navarrete Linares, Federico
- 2004 ¿Dónde queda el pasado?: Reflexiones sobre los cronotopos históricos. In *El historiador frente a la historia: El tiempo en Mesoamérica*, edited by Virginia Guedea, pp. 29–52. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Neff Nuixa, Françoise
- 2001 La Lucerna y el Volcán Negro. In *La montaña en el paisaje ritual*, edited by Johanna Broda, Stanislaw Iwaniszewski, and Arturo Montero, pp. 353–373. Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.
- Olivier, Guilhem
- 2004 También pasan los años por los dioses: Niñez, juventud y vejez en la cosmovisión mesoamericana. In *El historiador frente a la historia: El tiempo en Mesoamérica*, edited by Virginia Guedea, pp. 149–180. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City.
- Popol Vuh
- 1950 *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya*. Translated and edited by Delia Goetz, Sylvanus G. Morley, and Adrián Recinos. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- 1964 *Popol Vuh: La antiguas historias del quiché*. Translated and edited by Adrián Recinos. 7th ed. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Read, Kay Almere
- 1998 *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Reyes García, Luis
- 2001 *¿Cómo te confundes? ¿Acaso no somos conquistados?: Anales de Juan Bautista*. Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Biblioteca Lorenzo Boturini, Insigne, y Nacional Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico City.
- Ruiz de Alarcón, Hernando
- 1953 Manual de ministros de indios. In *Tratado de las idolatrías, supersticiones, dioses, ritos, hechicerías y otras costumbres gentílicas de las razas aborígenes de México*, by Jacinto de la Serna et al., edited by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, vol. 2, pp. 17–130. Fuente Cultural, Mexico City.
- 1984 *Treatise on the Heathen Indian Superstitions That Today Live among the Indians Native to This New Spain, 1629*. Translated and edited by J. Richard Andrews and Ross Hassig. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Sahagún, Bernardino de
- 1950–1982 *General History of the Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex*. Translated and edited by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. 13 vols. School of American Research and University of Utah, Santa Fe, N.Mex.
- 1979 *Códice Florentino: Manuscrito 218–20 de la Colección Palatina de la Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*. 3 vols. Archivo General de la Nación, Secretaría de Gobernación, Mexico City.
- 2000 *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. Edited by Alfredo López Austin and Josefina García Quintana. 3 vols. Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Mexico City.
- Schultze Jena, Leonhard
- 1954 *La vida y las creencias de los indígenas quichés de Guatemala*. Translated by Antonio Goubaud Carrera and Herbert D. Sapper. 2nd ed. Ministerio de Educación Pública, Guatemala City.

- 1977 *Mitos y leyendas de los pipiles de Izalco*. Translated by Gloria Menjivar Rieken and Armida Parada Fortin. Cuscatlán, San Salvador.
- Serna, Jacinto de la
- 1953 Tratado de las supersticiones y costumbres gentílicas que oy viuen entre los indios naturales de esta Nueva España. In *Tratado de las idolatrías, supersticiones, dioses, ritos, hechicerías y otras costumbres gentílicas de las razas aborígenes de México*, edited by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, vol. 1, pp. 47–368. Fuente Cultural, Mexico City.
- Shaw, Mary
- 1972 *Según nuestros antepasados . . . : Textos folklóricos de Guatemala y Honduras*. Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, Guatemala City.
- Taller de Tradición Oral
- 2009 *Tejuan tikintenkakiliaj in toueyitatan: Les oíamos contar a nuestros abuelos*. Taller de Tradición Oral de la Sociedad Agropecuaria del Centro de Estudios y Promoción Educativa para el Campo, Puebla, and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.
- Técnicos Bilingües
- 1985 *Agua, mundo, montaña: Narrativa nahua, mixe y popoluca del Sur de Veracruz*. Técnicos Bilingües de la Unidad Regional de Acayucan, Premiá, and Dirección General de Culturas Populares, Tlahuapan, Puebla.
- Tedlock, Barbara
- 1982 *Time and the Highland Maya*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- Thompson, J. Eric S.
- 1954 *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- 1970 *Maya History and Religion*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- 1975 *Historia y religión de los mayas*. Translated by Félix Blanco and Arturo Gómez. Siglo Veintiuno, Mexico City.
- 1978 *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- 1992 *Grandeza y decadencia de los mayas*. Translated by Lauro José Zavala. 3rd ed. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico City.
- Villa Rojas, Alfonso
- 1990 *Etnografía tzeltal de Chiapas: Modalidades de una cosmovisión prehispánica*. Consejo Estatal para el Fomento a la Investigación y Difusión de la Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez.