JAGUAR MANIFESTATION IN MESOAMERICA AND PERU

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Anthropology

by

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San Francisco, California

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read *Jaguar Manifestation in Mesoamerica and Peru* by Amandine Dorian Castex and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts in Anthropology with an emphasis in Archaeology at San Francisco State University.

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JAGUAR MANIFESTATION IN MESOAMERICA AND PERU

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2014

This paper examines the different manifestations of the jaguar and its relationship with four different cultures: Olmec, Teotihuacan, Maya and Chavín de Huántar. This study explores the different functions that were given to this feline using artifacts and scholarly works. Looking at each group individually allows one to see that, even if they are temporarily or geography separated, these four groups have a lot in common with respect to the jaguar. The jaguar manifests in all four of these cultures as a deity. The Olmec and Chavín also transformed their shaman into a jaguar while the Maya used the jaguar in their mythology. Teotihuacan represents this feline as a military symbol and the Olmec's and the Maya's rulers get their divine right from it. This paper concludes that the jaguar is not only an important part of the religious power in all four groups, but also part of their political power.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.

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Chair Committee Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis has been a long process and would have not been complete without the help of several people. I would like to thank my reading committee Mark Griffin and Cynthia Wilczak for their help and support. I am very lucky that you believed in me and were always supportive. I also want to thank my original supervisor Gary Pahl who unfortunately retired before seeing the end of this thesis but who listened to my crazy theories and guided me toward the jaguar.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between a single animal, the jaguar and four different cultures. Living amidst the rain forest between 1200 B.C and 1520 A.D., the ancient populations of the Olmec of the Gulf Coast of Mexico, the Teotihuacanos of the Basin of Mexico, the Maya of the Southeastern Mesoamerica and the inhabitants of the city of Chavín de Huántar on the coastal highland of Peru created a dynamic and direct relationship with their surroundings. Animals and plants are fully incorporated into the arts and the myths of these cultures and one of the most important and frequently represented animals is the jaguar. Archeological evidence suggests that peoples of these cultures used their own observations to attribute special characteristics to this animal. For example, the ease that the jaguar exhibits on land and on water, normally two opposite worlds, might explain to some extent why the artifacts of these cultures depict the jaguar as going between the living and the dead, two opposing worlds. Interestingly, some attributes of the jaguar in Mesoamerica are the same as the ones given by the people of Chavín.

It is of interest to compare these two areas (Mesoamerica and Chavín) and their interpretation of the jaguar because, despite the temporal and geographic separation, they found a common interpretation of the jaguar. This comparison is done by describing each area and trying to interpret the representation of the jaguar in the cultures mentioned

above, namely the Olmec (1200 B.C-400 B.C), Teotihuacan (100 B.C-650 A.D.), the Maya (1000 B.C- 1520 A.D.) and Chavín de Huántar (1200B.C-300 B.C).

Background:

Although the Olmec are considered to be one of the most ancient complex civilizations living in Mesoamerica, archeologists do not have many written records to examine with the exception of a few hieroglyphic marks that are often difficult to decipher. Fortunately, the Olmec have left behind an enormous number of art pieces ranging from miniature sculptures to immense heads weighing up to fourteen tons. The frequency of the jaguar in their artworks supports the hypothesis that the Olmec developed a strong affinity for the jaguar. The well-known "were-jaguar" (a sculpture having both human and jaguar features) is a common representation of this animal (Coe2002). This composite representation characterizes the Olmec. Examining Olmec art will provide insight into their beliefs and the function of the jaguar in Olmec society.

The city of Teotihuacan is one of the most important and most mysterious Mesoamerican cities. Little is known about the people who lived in that city and what happened to them. The name itself "Teotihuacan" was given by the Aztec who discovered the city and believed that it was the place "where the men become gods" (Sabloff 2000). Archaeologists are still trying to decipher the mystery of the city by using every possible tool available from the literature left by the Spanish conquistadors to the interpretation of murals. Teotihuacan interests archaeologists because it is a well-

preserved city, and it is often considered the first Mesoamerican urban city (Millon 1981). Several murals and ceramics depict the jaguar in an entirely different way than anywhere else in Mesoamerica. Using the art of Teotihuacan will provide a new perspective on how the jaguar was used and its role in that society.

In contrast to the Olmec and the people from Teotihuacan, the Maya left behind considerable documentation explaining the life of their rulers and their belief system. This documentation indicates that the jaguar was believed to have the ability to cross between worlds, especially between the world of the living and the underworld (Coe 2011; McKillop 2004; Sharer 1996). The jaguar is an animal of the night, and night is associated with the dead and the spirit whereas the day is for the living. The jaguar being nocturnal was a perfect companion to cross and connect between these two worlds. The jaguar was so important for the Mayans that it is present in their creation myth: the *Popol Vuh* or book of council.

Chavín de Huántar was an important center of pilgrimage across Peru. Archaeologists found that Chavín iconography was spread as far as the lowland and the coast of Peru, an indication of its importance (Burger1992; Richardson 1994). Evidence suggests that Chavín developed a special cult for several animals such as birds, caimans and jaguars (Burer1995; Rowe1967). It appears that the jaguar was not only considered to be divine but also to be a companion to the shaman. The image of the jaguar is dominant in the city of Chavín de Huántar . For example, the well-known Lanzón figure

which is located at the center of a temple but hidden in a gallery includes several elements representing the jaguar (snarling mouth, claws and fangs). Artwork found across the city supports the idea that the shamans of Chavín were trying to transform themselves into the magnificent beast. In Chavín, the representations of the jaguar exhibit similar features to the ones from ancient civilization of Mesoamerica, making this city interesting to study and possibly determine if the role of the jaguar was the same.

Objective and Methods:

The overall goal of this thesis is to understand the relationship that Mesoamericans and Peruvians had with the jaguar not only from a political and economic perspective but also from a symbolic and ritual perspective. This goal is achieved by studying various artifacts.

In this thesis depictions of more than thirty artifacts representing the jaguar are examined. Analyzing the artwork and the iconography of the jaguar give us an insight into the ancient life of Mesoamerica and Chavín. The evidence obtained from the art objects leads to the conclusion that the art itself was used to convey political and religious statements. These statements were aimed at a broad audience ranging from the elite to commoners. Art was used to easily transmit information about identity, religion and history.

In April 2011, I had the opportunity to travel to Mexico. Visiting the sites of La Venta, Teotihuacan, Mexico City, and the Parque of Villahermosa allowed me to have a

better understanding of the Mesoamerican culture through the art pieces left by the Olmec, the Teotihuacanos and the Maya.

Thesis Organization:

Following this introduction (Chapter 1), this thesis is organized into five chapters.

In Chapter 2, the reader is introduced to the Olmec civilization. A brief presentation of two majors Olmec sites is followed by an explanation of certain jaguar motifs that could be viewed as the representation of a deity used as a means to gain legitimate political power and a way to travel between two different realms.

In Chapter 3, the city of Teotihuacan and its great ascension as a political and religious power in Mesoamerica are discussed. Several murals are described to show that the jaguar was not only a military symbol but also a symbol of a water deity. The representation of the Netted-Jaguar and its possible interpretation as a representation of a water deity or a hunter is examined.

Chapter 4 presents the Maya and their great accomplishments in astronomy, writing and mathematics. Before discussing the different manifestations of the jaguar, the four different Mayan cities from which artifacts are used as examples are presented. The intricate relationship between the jaguar and the ruler, the presence of the jaguar in the original myth and the representation of the jaguar as deities are examined.

In Chapter 5, the culture located in Peru called Chavín de Huántar is presented. A brief description of the city and its different monuments is followed by a discussion of the unique style of Chavín. An analysis of the shaman in transformation is followed by an examination of the jaguar as a deity.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of 1) how the jaguar linked to all the important functions of the Olmec, Teotihuacan, the Maya and Chavín de Huántar, 2) The jaguar as a deity or deities in all four cultures studied and 3) the jaguar as part of religious ritual (shaman transformation and blood-letting ceremonies) in the Olmec, the Maya and Chavín de Huántar cultures.

Chapter II: The Olmec

Introduction

Mesoamerica is a very large territory that encompasses several countries today, namely Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Jeremy Sabloff (2000) divides Mesoamerica into two regions: the lowlands and the highlands. The lowland is itself divided into two regions according to Sabloff (2000), the Tropical Lowlands of the Gulf Coast (Veracruz and Tabasco) and the Yucatan Peninsula. These two lowland regions are quite diverse and include zones of tropical rainforest, or jungle, with dense vegetation and high rainfall; numerous rivers in the Gulf Coast that flow down from the highlands to the Gulf of Mexico; "low scrub forests in Northern Yucatan with very distinct dry and rainy seasons; and the small volcanic Tuxtla Mountains of Veracruz" (Blanton 1991: 24). The highland region is also divided into two different parts: The Valley of Oaxaca and Central Mexico. The highland regions have a very different environment compared to the lowland ones. They are composed of mountains chains including volcanoes reaching 5,000 meters; they were rich in lakes; had intense volcanic activity and frequent earthquakes. The particular environments in Mesoamerica, which vary from extremely cold to excessively hot created interdependence between the two different regions.

The lowland region is the location of the Olmec heartland (Figure 1). The Olmec resided on the north side of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec amid the tropical rain forests, swamps and

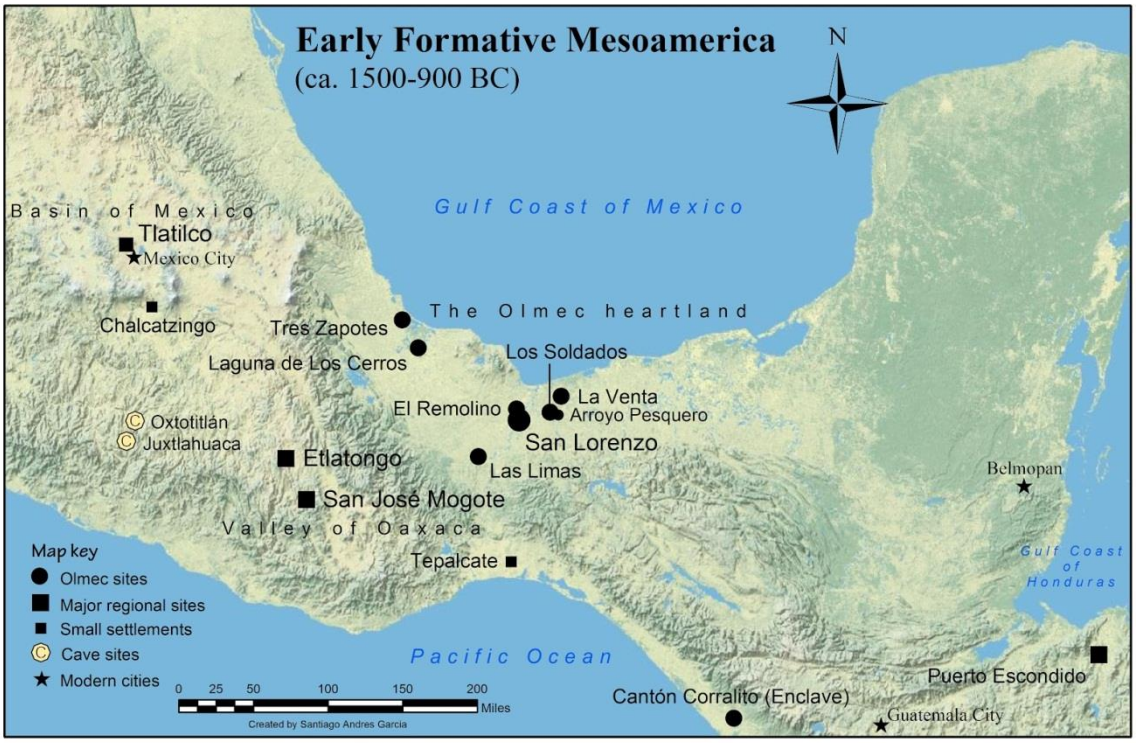

Figure 1: **Map Early and Middle Formative Mesoamerica (1500-400 B.C.) showing the Olmec Heartland. (Santiago A. Garcia 2009: 2 fig. 1).**

savannahs in the hot, humid, southern Gulf lowland of southern Veracruz and Western Tabasco. The heartland also had a "dry season" with little precipitation, but the name did not really apply because during the winter cold, wet air currents sweep down from the north, keeping the soil moist for year-round cultivation. Living in such a tropical area, the Olmec were in contact with many different animals including caimans, alligators and

jaguars. The term “Olmec” was first given to a specific art style which was composed of the “were-jaguar” face on green stone artifacts and gigantic heads carving. The name of the style was soon applied to the people who made them, but no one knows the name they used to identify themselves.

The Olmec are viewed as the oldest civilization in Mesoamerica and has been considered to be the mother of all cultures in the region for a very long time. However, we know today that this theory has been overstated and that the Olmec represents only one of the many groups present in the area. The influence of the Olmec; however, is undeniable. Michael D. Coe even states that “there is no little doubt that all later civilization in Mesoamerica, whether Mexican or Maya, ultimately rest on an Olmec base” (Coe 2008: 62). The Olmec settled in the Gulf Coast of Mexico between 1200 and 400 BC as a farming community in what are today the states of Veracruz and Tabasco. This area is considered to be the Olmec “heartland.” In this heartland, they built colossal monuments and perfected a particular iconography which mostly encompasses the representation of the jaguar. The fascination for this animal is not surprising as Coe says, “To the Indian peoples of the tropical forest who live mainly by hunting, it is very clear that jaguar and man are extraordinarily alike: they both hunt the same animals (Coe 1972:3).” Peter Furst (1968) has also demonstrated that among the people of the New World there was a widespread belief that a supernatural jaguar was the master of the forest and the ancestor of some social groups. In this chapter, after a brief description of

two important archeological sites, San Lorenzo and La Venta, a review of the importance of the jaguar in the Olmec society is presented.

San Lorenzo:

Matthew Stirling was actually the first one to carry out systematical archaeological investigation of the Olmec civilization in the 1930s and 1940s and he explored the Tres Zapotes, La Venta and San Lorenzo. Stirling and his wife were led to San Lorenzo by a "report of a stone eye looking up from a trail" (Coe 2008:66). They soon realized that it was one of the colossal head typical of the Olmec culture and decided to excavate the site.

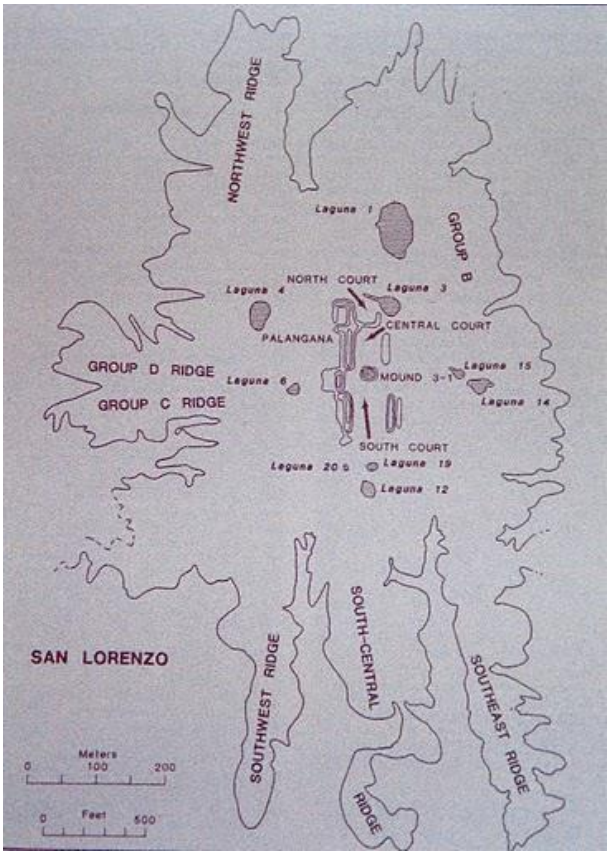

Figure 2: Map of San Lorenzo (Sabloff 2000:37 fig.16)

Michael D. Coe, twenty years later, saw San Lorenzo as the key origin for the Olmec and conducted further research. Coe's mapping of the site showed one of the most important discoveries: it was artificially constructed (Figure 2). Coe wrote, "It turned out to be a kind of plateau rising about 150 ft. above the surrounding lowlands; about three-quarters of a mile long in a north-south direction, excavation proved it to be artificial down to a depth of 23 ft., with long ridges jutting out on its northwest, west, and south sides" (Coe 2008:66).

The site of San Lorenzo probably developed around 1700BC by a group called the Mixe-Zoqueans, who were from Soconusco. In 1500 BC, the site became a permanent settlement and by that date San Lorenzo was considered to be inhabited by Olmec. Coe found that within a hundred years after the site was established the first indication of the beginning of public works and architecture appeared, including the artificial buildup of the plateau. Over the next few centuries the city gained power and importance and became one of the largest settlements in Mesoamerica. It was most likely a political and religious center with an estimated population of several thousands. According to Christopher Pool (2007), the Olmec from San Lorenzo had an economy based on the mixture of agriculture, fishing, gathering and hunting. He adds that the surpluses generated probably fed the elites and the artists who carved the colossal heads. The making of these giant heads had most likely required the involvement of a large population because the Olmec had no wheels, no beast of burden and only stone tools.

The presence of the colossal heads shows that the Olmec society cannot be considered egalitarian. According to Coe (2008), the elite lived in palatial structure at the summit of the site while much more humble homes were found on the terraced sides of the plateau. For unknown reasons the site slowly declined around 800BC and was not reoccupied until AD 900, but San Lorenzo never regained its position as capital of the Olmec Heartland.

La Venta:

Once the city of San Lorenzo fell, its power transferred to La Venta. La Venta is located in a sea level coastal swamp near the Tonalá River, about 18 miles inland from the Gulf. The island has slightly more than 2 square miles of dry land. According to Sabloff, "the main part of the site itself is in the northern half and is linear complex of clay construction stretched out for 1.3 miles in a north-south direction" (Sabloff 2000:72). La Venta has an impressive pyramid made of clay which measures 110 feet high. For a long time the pyramid was thought to be an echo of the forms of the volcanoes nearby, but Rebecca González-Lauck has in fact shown that it was "a rectangular pyramid, with stepped sides and inset corner" (González-Lauck 1996:75).

The organization of the site suggests that La Venta was an important ceremonial center more than a political one. According to Susan Evans (2008), the site of La Venta shows the first monumental expression of a site orientation which is 8˚ west of north. The same orientation was found at San Jose de Mogote. Freidel (1993) connects this orientation with the "north-south orientation of the Milky Way on 13 August, the second zenith of the sun in the tropic" (Freidel 1993).

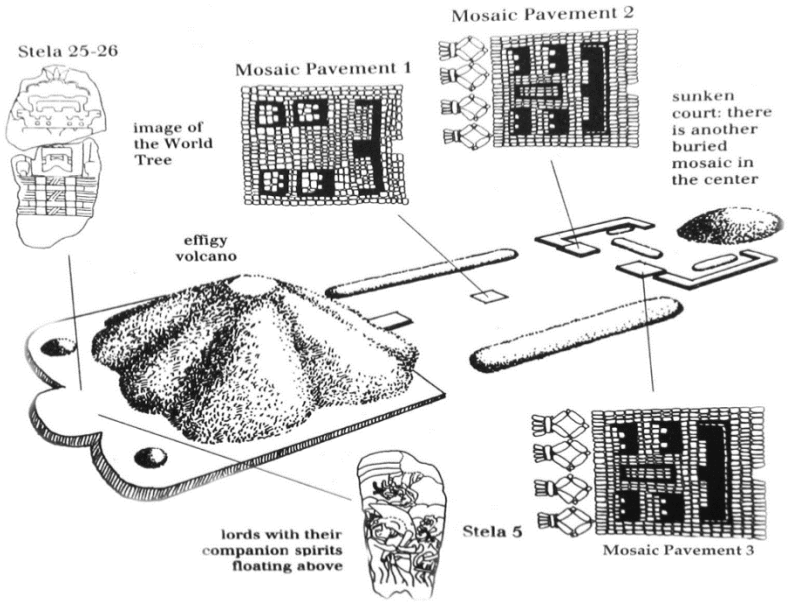

Figure 3: Reconstruction of the Site of La Venta (Coe and Koontz 2008:72 fig.46)

The site layout shows a pattern found in later Mesoamerican culture: a pyramid facing a plaza whose sides are demarcated with a lower structure (Figure 3). The site includes some unusual kinds of offerings: massive mosaics and more than 50 other offerings from vessels to ceremonial stone celts. Archeologists believe that these offerings were the dedication of a rare material to deities.

The site of La Venta was home to a large population. Robert Heizer calculated that its elite center must have been supported by a population of at least 18,000 people and that the main pyramid alone probably took around 800,000 people to construct (Coe

2008:74). The site of La Venta was deliberately destroyed around 400 BC and 24 out of 40 monuments were mutilated.

The Jaguar as a Deity

Coe and Koontz wrote that it was highly possible that "The Olmec might have believed that at some distant time in a past, a woman had cohabited with a jaguar" (Coe and Koontz 2008: 62). This union would have given birth to the well-known "Were-Jaguar," which combines human and feline elements that are characteristics of Olmec art. Stirling also believes that the Olmec original myth comports with a human and a jaguar copulating (Stirling 1955:19-20). Marshall Saville (1900) was the first scholar to note that the most common motif in Olmec art was this anthropomorphic figure, apparently that of a child with varying degrees of feline facial features. According to Carson N. Murdy, "in its extreme form the Were-Jaguar motif consists of a round baby like face, often with a cleft forehead" (Murdy 1981:862). It is also characterized by an open mouth with fleshy lip turned down at the corners and canine teeth which sometimes have been interpreted as protruding fangs. The eyes are almond-shaped and often have "flaming" arising eyebrows. Michael D. Coe adds that the cleft at the tops of the head perhaps represents some "congenital abnormality, but certainly symbolizing the place where corn emerges" (Coe 2008:62).

One of the best representation of the Olmec Were-Jaguar motifs is the "Kunz" axe, which is a jade effigy discovered by George Kunz in 1890 (Figure 4). This ceremonial axe incorporates all the characteristics of the Olmec style with its almond-shape eyes, a snarling mouth, fangs and the showing of its gums.

Figure 4: The Kunz Axe, Oaxaca, Middle Formative. (Coe and Koontz 2008: 60 fig. 33).

The axe is considered to be ceremonial because of its size (11 inches long), the choice of the material (jade was as important as diamonds for the Olmec) and its intricate decoration. Jade is an extremely difficult material to engrave, especially with stone tools, and it probably took tremendous time and high skills to engrave this piece. This axe shows that Olmec had the capability of creating small, delicate objects as well as massive sculptures. The Were-Jaguar style of this axe suggests that the animal gives this human being a special and important status.

The jaguar is not always represented as a mix of human and feline. In El Azuzul, located a few kilometers south of the city of San Lorenzo, the jaguar is realistically shown and portrayed as a god by having twins kneeling in front of him. Discovered by a farmer named Atanacio Vasconselos in 1987, the sculptures are on a culturally modified hill at the south point of Loma del Zapote ridge where they overlook the juncture of two rivers. It was probably a strategic location to control who was coming up or down the rivers. Visitors would have been greeted by the sight of the majestic stones tableau created by the Olmec of San Lorenzo.

Figure 5: Twins in front of Feline (Miller1996:29 fig. 16).

Figure 6: The Feline (Hijonosa 2011- Consejo Nacional para la cultura y las Artes- Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia- Mexico).

The sculpture represents two life-sized, almost identical twins in a ceremonial posture facing a statue of a jaguar (Figure 5). The feline sits on its haunches, an unusual posture in real life. Although there is evidence that this figure was carved from an earlier

monument, it projects a sense of power. Guillen and Botas (1994) explain that the jaguar must have been symbolically important to the Olmec for the feline to be carved from the previous piece. This scene can reasonably be interpreted either as a ceremonial transformation or as a depiction of respect and admiration devoted toward this feline, a feline that may be considered as a god. Archeologists realized that the sculptures might have been moved in order to reenact different stories. Their setting on a very high point would have told everyone entering the land of San Lorenzo that this place housed humans with extremely powerful alter ego. Dhiel explains that "the tableau was visible from the river, suggesting it served to remind visitors of the power and sanctity of San Lorenzo's rulers, presumed descendants of the Hero Twin" (Dhiel 2001:33). It might also show the devotion that the Olmec dedicated to jaguars and the special rank that twins could have. Pool concurs and writes "As a whole, the juxtaposition of the El Azuzul sculptures amplifies their individual meanings, evoking associations between twins and jaguars , as well as between jaguars and human authority, known from later Mesoamerica cultures" (Pool 2007:122). The relationship between the jaguar and the Olmec is undeniable in this representation. Archaeologists have been trying to connect this scene with the Mayan Hero Twin from the *Popol Vuh*, but there is unfortunately no written record that the Olmec believed in the same myth.

Peter Furst (1978) has shown that animal representations found within a given culture are most often those whose ecological niches are associated with specific cosmic realm. The jaguar being a nocturnal animal living in caves probably the feline is naturally

by the Olmec with night, darkness and the interior of the earth. Caves for the Olmec were likely viewed as a connection with the origin and the underworld. The jaguar's ability to hunt on land and in water also led to the association of the jaguar's ability to go from the living world to the underworld.

Figure 7: Altar 4 from La Venta (Miller 1996: 33 fig.19).

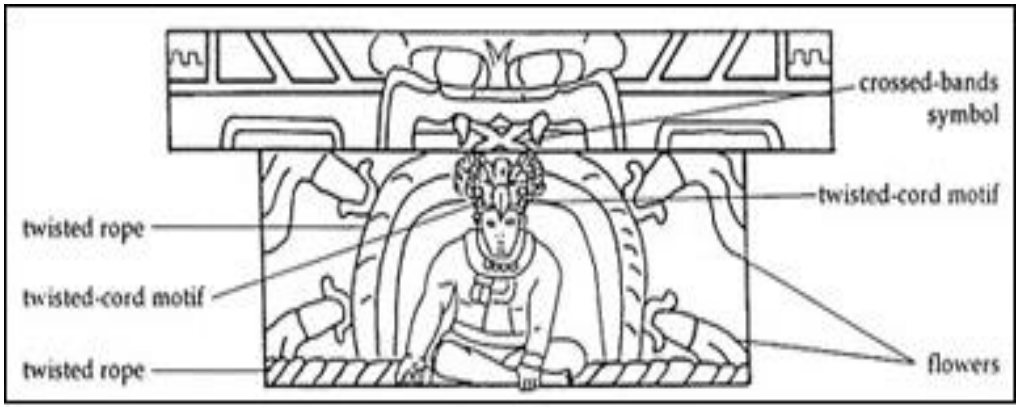

Figure 8: Drawing by F. Kent Reilly III for Altar 4(Reilly 1994: 165 fig 15.7).

The Olmec combined the image of the jaguar and the cave in several pieces of art to show the connection between the animal and the underworld. A perfect example is Altar 4 from La Venta (Figure 7 and Figure 8). Soustelle reminds us that "there is actually no indication that any sort of rite was performed around these above ground monoliths" (Soustelle 1984:40). This piece was probably more a throne than our idea of an altar; however without any record it is only a supposition. Luckily, Altar 4 is well preserved. It weighs around 40 tons and is considered to be one of the greatest Olmec masterpieces. It shows a ruler sitting in a niche and wearing a bird headdress. He holds in his hands a rope that goes around the altar to a figure whose hands are attached by the rope. The side figure has been interpreted by several archeologists such as David Grove (1981) to be a captive or a lineal relative. Another rope goes from under his left knee to the other side of the altar which unfortunately was completely erased. Above the ruler, an enormous mouth of a jaguar can be seen with its fangs and its showing gum line. Around the niche several sprouts of vegetation are carved, representing a connection with the earth and fertility. Stirling explains that there is a small portion on the flat top of the Altar 4 that gives "the impression of a jaguar skin thrown across" (Stirling 1943:54). Pool says that the figure actually "appears to emerge from a portal to the underworld" (Pool 2007:116). The open jaguar mouth might be the entrance of the underworld with the ruler being a guardian or the one able to connect the two worlds.

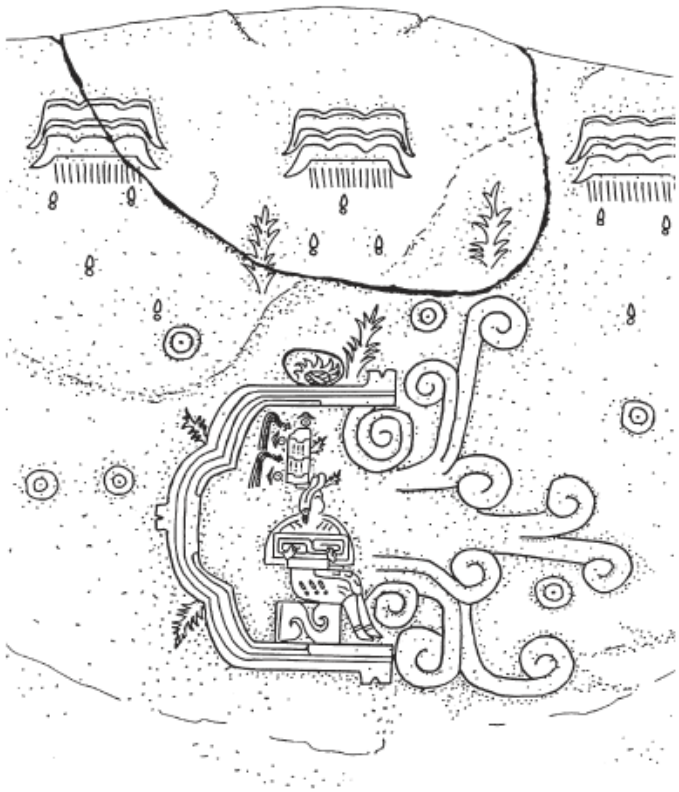

Figure 9: Drawing by David Grove of Monument 1 or "El Rey" from Chalcatzingo (Miller 1996: 40 fig.29).

The jaguar as an opening to the underworld is also found on the bas relief 1 called "El Rey" from Chalcatzingo. Chalcatzingo is the most important highland Olmec site and is situated in the Amatzinac Valley of eastern Morelos. It is best known for its thirty stone carvings executed on free standing monuments, boulders and the rock face of Cerro Chalcatzingo. The El Rey monument is 3.2 meters high and depicts a life-sized figure inside a cave with an opening 1.5 meter high. The person, who is probably a woman, holds a ceremonial bar and is seated on a rectangular "Lazy S." Speech scroll come out of

the cave and are a possible representation for prayers for the rain and fertility based on stylized raindrops coming down from three wavy clouds and growth of vegetation everywhere. The cave appears to be a set of gaping jaws with the eyes represented on the upper edge of the arch by an oval in which the "St. Andrew cross" is inscribed. Mary Miller and David Grove interpreted this bas relief as an Olmec ruler seated on a throne within a cave mouth, in a schematic landscape where maize flourishes (Miller 1996; Groove 2000). Christopher A. Pool (2007) interpreted the mouth as a serpent; however, the resemblance between Altar 4, the were-jaguar and this bas relief clearly show that the cave is in fact a jaguar. Coe and Koontz (2008) explain that the main themes of this scene are power and fertility. They even hypothesize that the woman might have been a ruler from Chalcatzingo. Susan Toby Evans explains that whoever this person is, it is the "locus from which life-giving water is dispersed" (Evans 2008:167). The jaguar has also been associated as a rain deity.

Monument 52 from San Lorenzo clearly comprises signs of the Were-Jaguar with the gnarling mouth, the cleft and the flaming eyebrows (see Figure 10). Covarrubias (1957) also suggested continuity between Olmec and later deities, arguing that the Olmec Were-Jaguars inspired all later images of rain gods in Mesoamerica. The monument has also triple drop element which clearly identify it as water related deity. It demonstrates that jaguar and water have been associated in the past. I believe that it reinforces the iconography of the power of the jaguar/cave as this person had to be placed there in it in order to obtain his/her special power. By consequence both El Rey and Monument 52

portray the jaguar not only as a magical animal, a rain deity, but also as the door to enter the underworld.

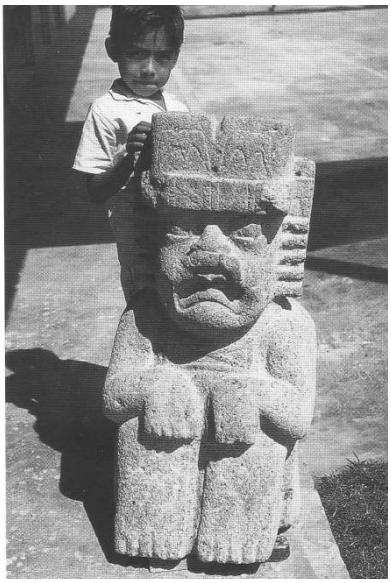

Figure 10: Monument 52, San Lorenzo, Olmec Rain God (Dhiel 2001: 40 fig. 19).

Another important representation of the jaguar is at La Venta (see Figure 3) for the organization of the site). There are three mosaics (Figure 11). The mosaic pavement is composed of 485 blocks of serpentines in which some details were left open and filled up with colored sand and clays. They measure around 15 feet by 20 feet and represent a highly abstract jaguar mask. According to Michael Coe, the offerings were "covered up with a layer of mottled pink clay and a platform of adobe bricks soon after construction" (Coe 2008: 76). These offerings required a lot of work and were intended to be observed only for a short period of time. The interpretation of the abstract jaguar mask has varied

over the years. Joralemon and Christopher Pool offer two different interpretations other than an abstract jaguar mask. Joralemon (1976) says that it is in fact a representation of the Olmec-Dragon while more recent interpretation such as Christopher Pool (2007) sees these mosaics as the representation of the multi-layered world.

Figure 11: Possible Stylized Jaguar Mask from La Venta (Miller1996: 31 fig. 18).

Soustelle writes that these offerings were likely made to earth gods, "a protector of agriculture and the masters of plant food" (Soustelle 1984:37). The jaguar god was definitively an earth divinity as well as a water deity and there is a high possibility that these offerings were not only a representation of the god himself but for him. However, it is difficult to interpret these mosaics without any written record or past finding. The representations are very abstract and could represent anything from a four-eyed jaguar to the cosmos.

Jaguar and Rulers

It is difficult to differentiate between the representation of a ruler and that of a priest in the Olmec era as there is very little documentation. However, the repetition of certain iconography helps archaeologists to know, most of the time, if the person is a ruler or a religious person. Kent F. Reilly (1989) explains that an Olmec ruler would often embody a religious person and that this representation would allow the common Olmec to see a doorway into the religious world. Reilly emphasizes that an Olmec ruler and priest were two different people in the Olmec society as the priest would practice shamanism and medicine whereas the ruler would be the chief shaman in contact with the underworld. For example, Altar 4 is most likely the representation of a ruler not only because of the way that he is represented (headdress, jewelry) but also because the Altar was most likely a throne. Examining Altar 4 (Figure 7), we can see that the ruler establishes a connection with the underworld by coming out of the jaguar mouth displaying his special power to everyone. Grove explains that "secular rulers often utilize religious means to verify their right to rule" (Grove 1970: 31). By sitting inside the jaguar mouth, the ruler of Altar 4 confirms its right of ruling but also his special relationship with the underworld.

The jaguar as a right to rule is better illustrated with the Painting 1-d from the cave of Oxtotitlán (Figure 12). This black painting shows a man wearing a four piece headband connected to a spotted jaguar by his testes. The man appears to be in a

powerful position as he is standing and raising his right hand. Jimenez Garcia *et al.* say that the connection of the jaguar tail with the man's testes might convey the idea that "human semen possesses a vital feline power and potency, sharing with it the life force" (Garcia et al. 1998:45). Coe (1972) pushes the connection further and explains that the painting is most likely a representation of the Olmec lineage where the association between rulers and jaguars is undeniable.

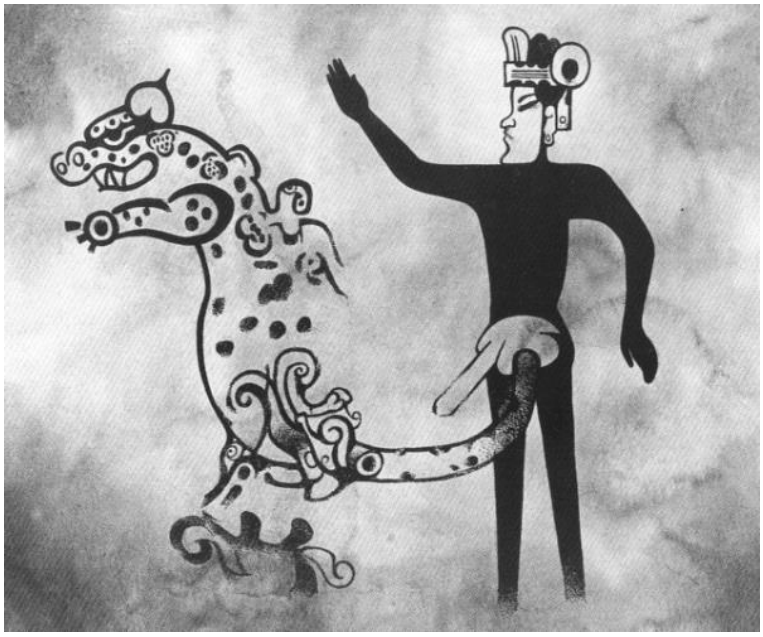

Figure 12: Painting 1-d from Oxtotitlán (Evans 2008 6.8: 164).

Grove believes that the painting definitively involves a theme of mythical origins, and that the jaguar, being a symbol of sovereignty, shows that "the Olmec rulers who are the jaguar's children, were born of an underworld union between man and jaguar "(Grove 1970:32). Susan Evans agrees with both Coe and Grove, saying that this painting might

be “the conjunction of the sacred jaguar’s special relationship with ruler” (Evans 2004:164). Painting 1d demonstrates how intertwined the jaguar was with the people in power. It clearly gives the Olmec ruler a godly connection and establishes that his authority comes from a divine and higher being- the jaguar.

Jaguar and Shamanism

The transformation of a shaman into a jaguar is a recurrent theme in Olmec art. In order to avoid any confusion, Vitebsky’s definition for shamanism and Pool’s distinction between priest and shaman is used here. Vitebsky describes shamanism as “a belief system focusing on spiritual mediation by gifted individual who are capable to move between the profane everyday world of human life, and the spirit world” (Vitebsky 1995: 65). Pool’s distinction between shamans and priests states that the shaman is a “specialist who acquires their spiritual power from personal experience,” whereas a priest “is a full-time, fully trained specialist who acquires his spiritual power from his office (Pool 2007, 174). Dhiel reminds us that “the distinction between shamans and priests is difficult to identify in the archaeological record” (Dhiel 2001:100). But it is very likely that the Olmec society had both priest and shaman. In 1968, Furst was one of the first to argue that Were-Jaguars in Olmec art represented the transformation of human shamans into jaguars or vice-versa. Michael Coe (2008) explains that shaman-jaguar transformation played a large part not only in the religion, but also in the confirmation of “royal power.” In fact because the Were-Jaguar transformation figures come from both the Olmec

heartland and the highland regions, Reilly says that "the rituals they record must have been of central importance to the elites who participated" (Reilly 1989:15-16). The "transformation" of a shaman into a sacred animal would give the shaman different attributes such as communicating with the underworld and taking on the animal's special powers. Viveiros de Castros (1998) relates the shamans' transformation with the concept of perspectivism which is the principle by which animals see themselves as human may play a role in these depictions. Viveiros says, "they see their food as human food (jaguars see blood as manioc beer), they see their bodily attributes (fur, feathers,etc.) as body decorations or cultural instruments, they see their social system as organized in the same way as human institutions are (chief, shaman, etc.) (1998:470). Viveiros goes further by explaining that the shamans are given a vital role because they are able to take the animal point of view and "return to tell the tale"(1998:472). Using the fiercest animal of their forest, Olmec's shamans were able to see the world through the eyes of the jaguar and that the transformation figures were just a visual representation of this perspective.

The kneeling transformation figure (Figure 13 and Figure 14) is a great example of the transformation of a shaman into a jaguar. It is the depiction of a person whose transformation process into a magical creature is so advanced that only his torso, legs and ears are human. The figurine measures 19 cm high and is made of serpentine. Some red pigments that are still visible on the surface have been associated with a mark of higher stature (De Morales and Grove 1987:95). According to Karl Taube, this sculpture uses "a marvelously strange blend of human and jaguar physiognomy where the open mouth is

almost emitting a powerful roar" (Taube 1995:59). The nostrils are solidified and resemble a snout.

Figure 13: Front view of kneeling Were-Jaguar. (Reilly 1989: 12 fig. 13).

Figure 14: Side view (Evans 2008: 65 fig. 2.9).

Two fangs descend from a toothless mouth. Instead of eyebrows the forehead has an incised motif resembling the "flaming eye-brows" common to the Olmec Were-Jaguar and probably the representation of the supernatural. We can also observe the mark of a faint cleft or head furrow. Closed to the shoulder, there is a small tear of the skin which has been interpreted by Elizabeth Benson "as an opening of the enclosing human skin, releasing the jaguar hidden inside" (Benson 1998:5). The hands are closed very tightly almost like a fist. Taube explains that they may be depicted in that way because they are

becoming jaguar paws. This figure with its mix of human and feline features is a clear representation of a human being transforming into a jaguar giving a new status to the animal.

The Standing jaguar figure (Figure 15) gives us a glimpse of what a fully transformed shaman might look like. This figurine is 8cm high and made of serpentine.

Figure 15: Standing jaguar figure (Reilly 1989: 15 fig. 16c).

The figurine has barely any human features except for the upper torso and the standing position. Reilly says that this figurine represents the completion of the transformation and that "with its switching tail, [it is] truly a Were-Jaguar" (Reilly

1989:14). Pool says that if we look at these two figures as a set it evokes the transformation of a shaman into a jaguar spirit or, as Furst called them, into their *naualli*, their animal spirit companion (Pool 2007: 174 and Furst 1968: 151). Dhiel says that this sequence appears to recapitulate the transformation shamans experienced after ingesting hallucinogens (Dhiel 2001:107). For the Olmec, the jaguar is more than just a guiding spiritual companion of the shaman: it is an alter-ego. Augustin Delgado (1965) emphasizes that by taking on jaguar characteristics the shaman was able to possess the power to dominate the jaguar and therefore to control the situations that had previously been beyond his control.

Summary

Based on the artifacts available, we have seen that the Olmec civilization celebrated the jaguar not only for its supernatural power but also as a mean to gain political power. The jaguar was most likely part of the Olmec original myth and was venerated for it. It gave the ruler the right to reign as being a rightful descendent of a human's union with a beast. Finally the jaguar gave the Olmec shaman the opportunity to travel between our world and the underworld. Even if some of the pieces are too abstract to be interpreted as a jaguar figure such as the stylized mask from La Venta, the Olmec left enough behind for us to have a glimpse into how intertwined their life was with this majestic animal. A common claim in academic literature is that the first interpretation of the jaguar and the Were-Jaguar are inaccurate and that it was instead a representation of

an Earth dragon or a serpent (Pool 2007); however, the frequency of the jaguar motif seems to be too high to be arbitrary. Looking at the archaeological record this animal appears to be fully incorporated into the Olmec life

Chapter III: The Great City of Teotihuacan

Introduction

The city of Teotihuacan was one of the most important Mesoamerican cities, but it is also the one of most mysterious. Little is known about the people who lived in that city or what happened to them after the city's decline. The name "Teotihuacan" was given by the Aztec who discovered the city and believed that it was the place "where the men become gods." The city is located in the middle of the Teotihuacan Valley, forty-five kilometers northeast of modern Mexico City, and started to develop right after the fall of the Olmec Empire. Teotihuacan grew at a fast pace. The community went from 30,000 residents inhabiting six square kilometers in 100 B.C. to 60,000 residents covering 20 square kilometers around 1 A.D. (Kurtz 1987). From about A.D. 200 to 600, an estimated 125,000 inhabitants occupied the city making it by far "the largest Pre-classic period center in Middle America and larger than most Middle American center at any time in the pre-Hispanic past" (Millon R. 1979:223). A summary of the chronology and a map of Teotihuacan are presented in Table 1 and Figure 16 respectively. Jeremy Sabloff (2000) explains that the rapid growth of the city of Teotihuacan might have been helped by a natural phenomenon. The neighboring city of Cuicuilco was growing at the same time as Teotihuacan and becoming very influential; however, around 100 B.C. a

volcanic eruption destroyed the entire city, compelling the survivors to move to Teotihuacan (Sabloff 2000; Evan and Berlo 1992). Cowgill emphasizes that "no other Mesoamerican city had such a large and dense urban concentration before Aztec Tenochtitlan, in the late 1400s" (Cowgill 1997:130).

100 BC-1 AD.	Patlachique Phase	Two small villages in northern pocket of valley of Mexico. pop: 5,000.
A.D 1- 150	Tzacualli Phase	Establishment of the Avenue of the Dead, and the Pyramid of the Sun
A.D.150- 200	Miccaotli Phase	Enlargement Pyramid of the Sun. Extension of the Avenue of the Dead. Construction of the Pyramid of the Moon, Ciudadela and the Great Compound. Around A.D. 200: construction of the Temple of the Feathered Serpent.
A.D. 200- 400	Tlamimilolpa Phase	Grid pattern established. Construction of Apartment building. Apparition of "foreigner" neighborhood.
A.D. 400- 600	Xolalpan Phase	Pinnacle of Development. Great influence outside of the city. Population btw 85,000 and 200,000. Elaborated mural painting.
A.D 600- 650	Metepec Phase	Decline and Fall of the city for unknown reason.

Table 1: Chronology of Teotihuacan established by Millon R. (1973) and Cowgill (1996) using ceramic typology and stratigraphic data.

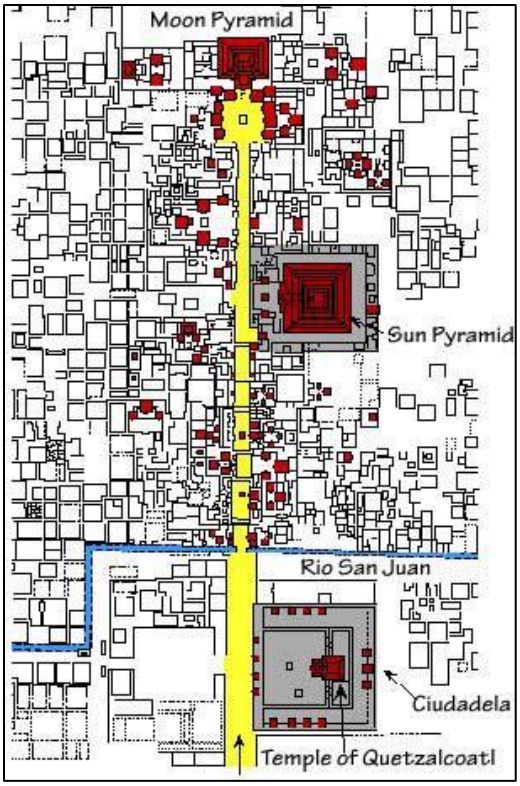

Figure 16: Reconstruction of Teotihuacan, Drawing by Mike Ritchie and Kumiko Sugiyama (Millon R. 19731973 in Berlot 1988: 342 fig. 1).

The location of the city was not an accident. Teotihuacan is situated in the Basin of Mexico where rainfall in spring provides a permanent source of water, allowing farmers to cultivate fertile soils and to easily transport the crops across the lake. The exportation of resources was extremely important for the city of Teotihuacan. The city had access to a source of obsidian, which was one of the most utilized stones in Mesoamerica. David L. Webster et al. (1993) explain that being able to trade and control a source of obsidian might actually be the reason for the construction of the city. Jeremy A. Sabloff (2000) adds that the city is also placed on a natural trade route from the Basin of Mexico to the East and to the South. Rene Millon (1964), an archeologist from the

University of Rochester, did one of the largest surveys at Teotihuacan, which helped construct a comprehensive map of the whole city showing not only its great extent (20 square km at its apogee) but also its great complexity. Looking at the survey, archeologists realized that the city was sectioned into specialized commercial sectors with shops for obsidian, textiles or pot-making. However, control over obsidian was not the only reason for the growth of the city of Teotihuacan. It was also a major center of pilgrimage. The layout of the city itself is actually a demonstration of how the people of Teotihuacan saw themselves compared to their environment. The 2.5 km, Avenue of the Dead leads to the Pyramid of the Moon, which is a clear replica of the Mountain behind it, called the Cerro Gordo. On the left, the Pyramid of the Sun is more massive and hides a secret inside. In 1971, during an excavation on the side of the pyramid, archaeologists found a cave with a tunnel leading to four chambers shaped like a four-leafed clover. As we saw in Chapter 2, for people of the ancient world, caves are a direct connection with the underworld. It is not surprising that proof of ritual activities and several artifacts including two mirror disks and several pieces of ceramic vessel have been found in these chambers (Miller 1973; Heyden 1975).

The amazing preservation of the city allows archaeologists to study and see how life was organized in the 2,200 apartment compounds on site (Millon R. 1976). The city has not only impressive architecture but also well-preserved murals mainly in the apartment compounds. Arthur Miller shows that the paintings of Teotihuacan have a specific meaning that does not refer to the real world but to a symbolic world. He says,

"It is a presentation whose meaning is *in the image* and not anywhere else" (Miller 1973:26). Esther Pasztory (1993) explains that the art of the city of Teotihuacan is unique because in its content it rejects the common themes of rulers or captives while the rest of Mesoamerica painted or sculpted them. In this chapter, the colorful murals painted by the Teotihuacanos are used to show that in this city the jaguar not only represented a Rain deity but was also associated with the military.

Jaguar and Military

The representation of the jaguar in Teotihuacan is not as clear as the Olmec representation. Much of the animal imagery at Teotihuacan is not directly related with themes of warfare and sacrifice (Sugiyama, 1988). In fact, at first glance it appears that the animals, especially the jaguars, are depicted performing a variety of tricks almost like trained animals in a circus. However, a number of scholars have noted the close link between predatory animals and militarism in art (Cabrera 1995a, 2002; Millon C. 1988; Sugiyama, 1992, 2002; Taube 1992a, 2000). Many animals were feared in Mesoamerica such as large felines (jaguars and pumas), large canids (wolves and coyotes) and poisonous snakes (rattlesnakes). All these fierce animals are in one way or another featured prominently in Teotihuacan.

The richness of the murals of Teotihuacan and their order has been studied first by Laurette Séjourné in 1959. Séjourné explains that the murals are actually organized in a special order connecting one room to the next. Kubler explains,

> "This ordering strongly suggests liturgical sequence. Within each mural composition, a principal theme or figure is evident, enriched by associated figures and by meaningful frames suggesting a recital of the powers of the deity, together with petitions to be granted by the god" (Kubler 1967).

Even though the meaning of the murals can be difficult to interpret there is a connection between each mural and that they all carry a message. They were also a way for the elite to spread their messages of strength and power to commoners by using strong metaphorical images that would be understood by all. The murals are by consequence a narrative that can help us understand the beliefs of the Teotihuacanos and their views of the world.

The idea of nagualism, as we saw in Chapter 2 or the fact that a person could take on animal characteristics does not appear to be limited to shamanism. The people of Teotihuacan believe that a soldier could also become a sacred animal. There are several murals representing warriors as coyotes, birds, jaguars and even as a combination of several animals. Before describing the fragment of mural shown in Figure 17, it is important to understand the general composition of Teotihuacan apartment compounds. An apartment compounds consisted of several rooms which were arranged around open space such as a courtyards or refuse areas. These open spaces were the center of rituals and provided rainwater collection and light (Manzanilla 1996). It thought that the compounds were occupied by groups who shared kinship and occupation. During their extensive survey of the city, Rene Millon (1967) and Spence (1967) established that each compound was manufacturing different goods. Compounds varied in sizes and in

decoration so some compounds, based on the extent of ornamentation, were believed to be for people of higher status.

Figure 17: Tetitla. Mural showing jaguar-man approaching a temple (Pedro Cuevas 1992 in Beatriz de la Fuente 1995: 300fig. 65).

The mural found in the apartment compound of Tetitla is considered to be a large compound at 3,600m^2 (Séjourné 1959) (Figure 17). The mural shows a warrior-jaguar fully dressed to go to war. In this particular mural, the soldier is fully transformed into a jaguar and the only indications of his humanity are his defense shield, his back mirror and his standing position. This mural is interesting because, instead of the usual fur, he has a pelt which appears to be netted. Clara Millon (1988) contends that the animal representation is not related to nagualism and that instead the people of Teotihuacan had a military order similar to the Aztec. According to Millon, the costumes gave a collective

identity to the military warriors who shared the same title, costume and heraldic symbols. Brunn (2002) explains that the presence of iconography in public spaces demonstrates the significance of symbol in maintaining cultural identities. Rubén Cabrera also proposed this idea in 1987 when he suggested that there was evidence of hierarchical fluctuation throughout Teotihuacan history. It is highly possible, based on the murals, that the warrior-jaguars were in power at one time and were then replaced by another group or that they were in charge of a certain type of military the same way that our military forces are divided into army, navy and air force. It is possible that the soldiers of Teotihuacan belonged to different military branches and that the warrior-jaguar represented the infantry.

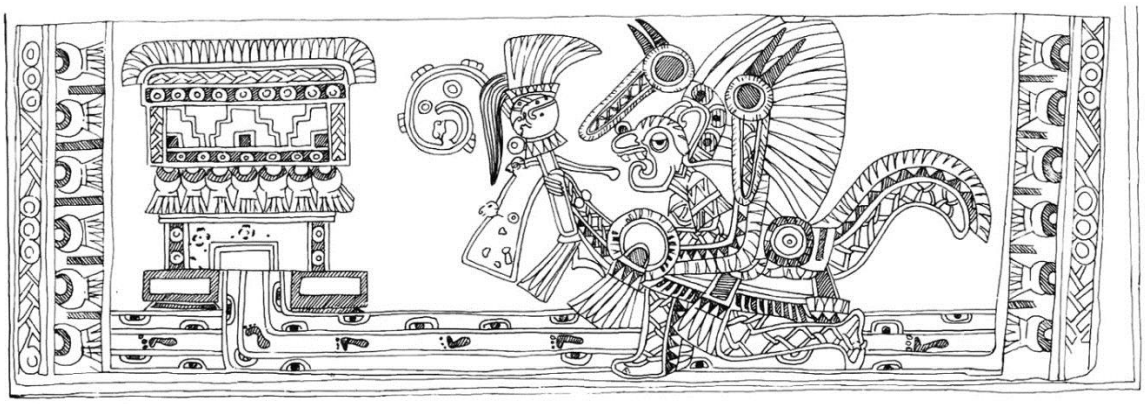

Figure 18: Drawing of the mural of the kneeling jaguar man from Tetitla (reproduced by Laurette Séjourné, Arquitectura y Pintura en Teotihuacan 1966:50-51 fig. 13).

The theme of the Netted-Jaguar can be found in another mural at Tetitla (Figure 18). The mural is in better condition than the one studied above (Figure 17). The jaguar

warrior is once again in a full Netted-Jaguar costume from head to tail. George Kubler explains that "the wearer's human identity is given by his holding a shield and a staff in his hand" (Kubler 1972: 25). In addition to the staff and the shield, the jaguar warrior is also wearing a large headdress and a back mirror. The warrior is kneeling on a pathway with directional footprint leading to a heavily decorated temple. This mural is a remarkable representation of narration where the jaguar warrior is on his way to the temple and shows his devotion by kneeling. Susan Toby Evans explains that this mural is actually the representation of a costumed jaguar who "walk[s] along a causeway-aqueduct that emerges from a sacred building" (Evans 2008: 260). Séjourné (1966) believes that the jaguar and personage murals are representing the realization of a spiritual journey. The jaguars, according to her, would be evoking the itinerary that allows a person to enter to a spiritual state. This warrior representation is similar to the one presented in Figure 17. It is highly possible that they were both part of the same scene. Pasztory (1990) explains that mural paintings were usually placed on walls of veranda which were quite large and that the artist used repetition in order to fill in the vast space. It is not surprising by consequence that the two look a lot alike.

Another representation of a Netted-Jaguar soldier was found in the apartment compound of Zacuala which is one of the largest compounds of Teotihuacan (Figure 19).

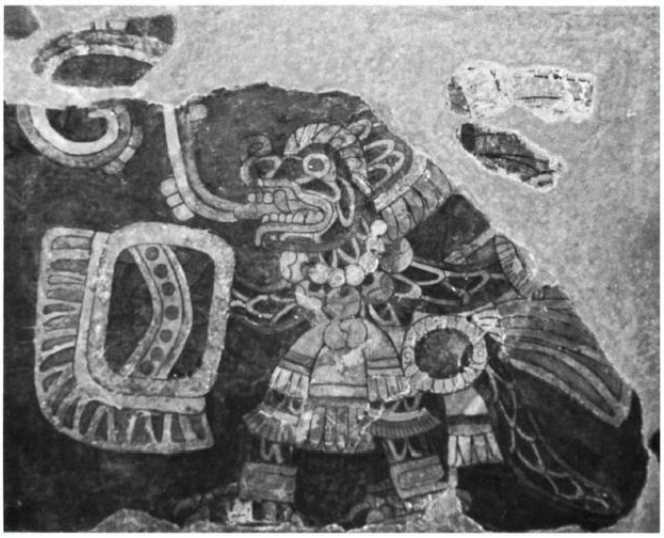

Figure 19: Zacuala. Mural showing a jaguar-man bearing shields (Arthur G. Miller in Kubler 1967: 26 fig. 18). Height 1.06m

Because of its symmetrical layouts and its sole entrance, Zacuala has been considered to have been reserved for the elites (Millon R. 1981; Robb. 2007). The warrior represented at Zacuala looks very similar to the one of Tetitla. It is a Netted-Jaguar who once again gives away his human identity by holding a defense shield, having a back mirror and his standing position. The image of the Netted-Jaguar has been identified by Hasso von Winning in 1968 and no interpretation was given for a long time. Archaeologists could not find any sign in Mesoamerican iconography of a Netted-Jaguar before or after Teotihuacan. The fact that this warrior is represented in Tetitla and also in Zacuala shows the importance of this jaguar warrior. Annabeth Headrick (1999) plays with the idea that the netted drawing might be the representation of how the Teotihuacanos used to capture their prey such as the jaguar. She explains that the hunter

would have used the net to capture their prey by consequence the Netted-Jaguar could be the representation of a hunter.

Figure 20: Atetelco North Patio: Mural showing a red warrior with jaguar features (Drawing by Jose Francisco Villasenor in Rubén Cabreras 2006: 242 fig. 54).

The fragment presented in Figure 20 was found in the apartment compound of Atetelco and was discovered by Séjourné during the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) excavation of 1980-1982. Exposure to the weather practically destroyed most of the mural, and Jose Francisco Villasenor reconstructed the murals using infrared photography.

This fragment, however, once again shows a Netted-Jaguar warrior carrying his darts and his shield. He is in an upward position and, even though the head is missing, one can imagine that it will be similar to the Zacuala or Tetitla jaguar warrior. While the feet look like paws, the visible hand is a combination of human hand and jaguar paw. As the hands are hidden by a shield or damaged in the two previous murals of the Netted-

Jaguar, we do not know if this representation is unique to this mural or if it was the common way to represent a Netted jaguar warrior.

It is very difficult to interpret this partial mural and determine if the character represented is a soldier or a hunter; however, this character was important enough and powerful enough to be represented several times in at least three different compounds.

Jaguar as a Rain/Water Deity

Tlaloc is considered to be the reigning deity of rain and lightning in Mesoamerica; however, in the city of Teotihuacan, Tlaloc is represented in several variations. Pasztory describes Tlaloc's representation as "eyes surrounded by rings and by a mustache like upper lip with long fangs" (Pasztory 1974: 3) (Figure 21).The art of the city of Teotihuacan is heavily dedicated to water and indicates, according to Hasso Von Wining, that "the cult of the rain god [in this city] was supreme" (Von Winning 1976: 150). Kubler highlights the fact that the representation of Tlaloc is more complex as "the rain-god cluster is most common, with five or six variants in the representation of the deity, under reptile, jaguar, starfish, flower, and warrior aspects" (Kubler 1967: 9). Even though the city of Teotihuacan has what could be considered the usual representation of the deity Tlaloc, Teotihuacan appears to use the jaguar to also represent the water deity.

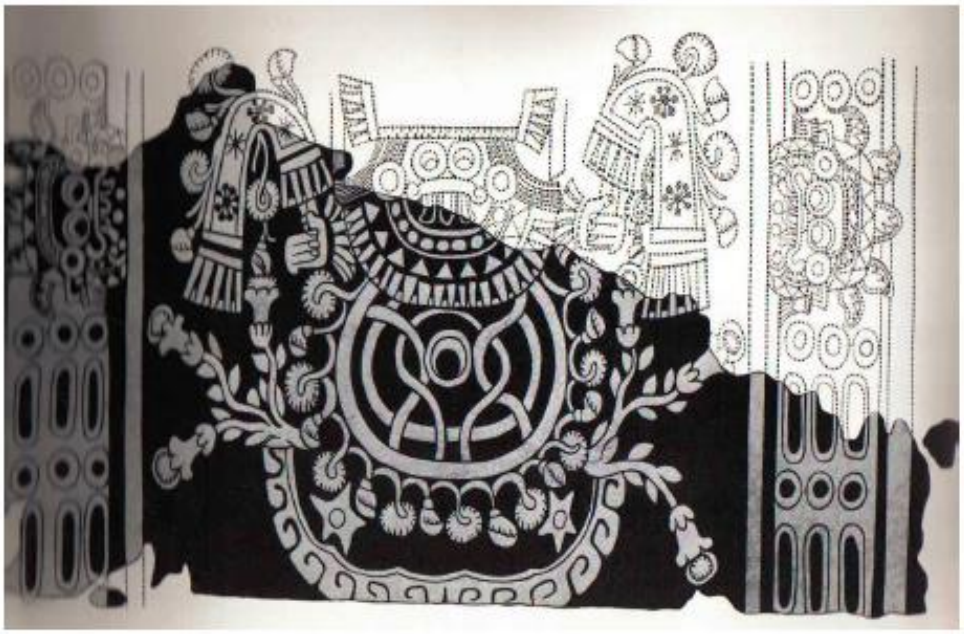

Figure 21: Mural from Teotihuacan representing Tlacloc with all its common attributes (goggled eyes, fangs, and mustache) (Felipe Davalos in A. Miller1973:68).

Figure 22: Details of mural located at The Palacio de los Jaguares (A. Miller in Pasztory 1997:223 fig. 14.2)

Located on the west of the Quetzalpapalotl Palace, the Palacio de los Jaguares is considered to be one of the upper status compounds because of the large area it

encompasses and its rich murals with multiple themes. The name of the compound was adopted from the murals. One of the most interesting murals is one that appears to be a procession of jaguars and human figures (Cowgill 2003; Aguilera and Cabrera Castro 1999). The mural represents a detail of one of the jaguars in procession which appears to be blowing from a conch shell from which speech scrolls emerge (Figure 22). This exact drawing is repeated on all four walls of the Palacio. The frame around it is a mix of serpents and rain god-starfish which reinforce the theme of water. The jaguar is wearing a feathered headdress and its body and tail are outlined by what had been identified as pecten shells. Kubler (1967) says that this scene might be an allusion to a "liturgical prayer for water in a directional context" (Kubler 1967: 8). The fact that the jaguars are wearing a headdress is consistent with the proposal that it is the representation of somebody of higher status and not just the animal. The repetitive motif of the ocean with the shells, starfish and serpent make it highly likely that it is relating to water. The repetition of the animal on all four walls might be a request for water to all four cardinal directions as water was vital for the well-being of the city. This mural might not only be a prayer but also a reminder of this fragile and vital resource.

The mural presented in Figure 23 and Figure 24 is from the residential compound of Atetelco, which was first excavated in 1945 by Pedro Armillas. The mural is located on the lower level of the wall and is reproduced on the four walls of the temple. The murals do not have any colors other than four different shades of red. It is a

representation of a jaguar and a coyote in procession. They both wear headdress and have speech scrolls coming out of their mouths.

Figure 23: Atetelco East structure Portico 2: Mural showing a Netted Jaguar and a coyote. (Photo from Pedro Cuevas 1991 in Rubén Cabrera 2006: 209 fig. 18.6).

Rubén Cabrera (1995b) explains that the main differences between the two animals are the shape of the nose, the eyes and the lips. The jaguar is netted from head to toes and has a bifurcated tongue. The frame around the procession appears to be the body of a snake going around the two animals. In front of each animal appears a tri-lobed figure with three little teardrops falling from it. This symbol has been identified as a bleeding heart. Pasztory explains that the animals represented might be a surrogate of the gods because

"they could be "feeding" on the hearts like gods. […] and that the animals are sacrificers, like the human priests" (Pasztory 1997:224).

Figure 24: Detail of the mural showing the jaguar (from Rubén Cabrera 2006: 220 fig. 11).

The jaguar will by consequence take the role of a deity but not any deity: the rain deity. According to Conides the presence of the net might be the representation of "moving water combined with reflected light and translated into an abstracted pattern" (Conides 2003:15). The presence of the speech scrolls might be once again the representation of prayers (Kubler 1967; Cabreras 2006). This mural shows that the jaguar was possibly a representation of the rain god at Teotihuacan.

Figure 25: Teopancaxco, Casa de los barrios. Replica of a mural depicting a cult-emblem with two priests. (from Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia in Kubler 1967:38 fig.45).

The mural from la Casa de los Barrios (Figure 25) shows two priests who look very symmetrical gathered around a netted disk on top of a pedestal. Both priests wear "jaguar-head helmet with feathered bird eyes and starfish incrustation" (Kubler 1972:26). The speech scroll coming out of their mouths shows some kind of prayers toward the disks. These speech scrolls are very different from the "usual" Mesoamerica speech scrolls because on top of them appear some flowers that could be water lilies. Pasztory explains that "the portrayal of Tlaloc in many Mesoamerican cultures often includes a water lily in his mouth" (Pasztory 1974:4). The fact that the water lily is on top of the speech roll might show that the prayer is actually directed to the rain god. The priests appear to be carrying small bags that could contain incense. On the priests' clothes and the headdress the drawing of starfish is repeated over and over. The rim of the disk makes it look like it is radiating and shinning like the sun. Kubler (1967) explains that in view of the mural of Tetitla and Zacuala, the netted disk might be a sign of a cult to the netted warriors. However ,Alfonso Caso (1956) goes further and interpreted the net represented

on the disk as a glyphic equivalent for jaguar. If we follow Caso's or even Kubler's interpretation, one can see that these jaguar priests might be devoted to the cult of a jaguar deity that could represent water or a warrior.

The representation of the Netted Jaguar makes Teotihuacan iconography unique and difficult to decipher. Von Winning (1968) best summarized the Netted-Jaguar interpretation by saying that without a doubt this group of "net-jaguar is associated both with weapons and war and with water and fertility" (Von Winning 1968:36). The Netted-Jaguar does not emphasize one over the other and Paztory confirms that the "Net Jaguar is clearly equally related to both" (Pasztory 1974:9). The city of Teotihuacan probably had a deity that is unique to its pantheon and was never taken over by any other social group.

Summary

The jaguar at Teotihuacan is not a simple representation of the animal but a representation of an animal that takes not only human characteristic when it represents a warrior but also god-like characteristic when it represents water. It is interesting to see that the warrior-jaguar is bipedal giving it his humanness, while the rain deity jaguar is in a quadruped position making it more animal but with godlike power. The presence of the net puzzles archeologists because its meaning remains obscure. Could it be a hunting tool or the representation of water? The absence of information in archeological records and

the fact that no other known cultural group took over this jaguar representation make the Netted-Jaguar a particular deity found only in Teotihuacan. Reviewing the few representations of the jaguar found in the city of Teotihuacan allows us to add new aspects of how the jaguar was involved in the life of the people of Mesoamerica and to realize that war and water were associated with the fierce animal.

Chapter IV: The Maya

Introduction

After the fall of the city of Teotihuacan, there was no more unifying power in Mesoamerica. Individual settlements started to grow in importance and form a society that we know today as the Maya. Jeremy Sabloff explains, "The Maya began to live in small settled villages, supported by the cultivation of maize and other crops as early as 1000 BC" (Sabloff 2000:76). The Mayan empire extended from the lowlands of Mexico, an area that encompasses the Yucatan Peninsula, to the western part of Honduras and El Salvador (Figure 26). Temporally, the Mayan civilization has been divided into three different eras. The Preclassic is the earliest phase and is dated from 2000 BC to AD 250. The Classic is considered to be the Golden Age of the Maya and is itself divided into three periods: the Early Classic (AD 250-600), the Late Classic (AD 600-800) and the Terminal Classic (AD 800-900). The final era of the Maya, called the Postclassic, started in AD 900 and lasted until the Spanish conquest in 1520.

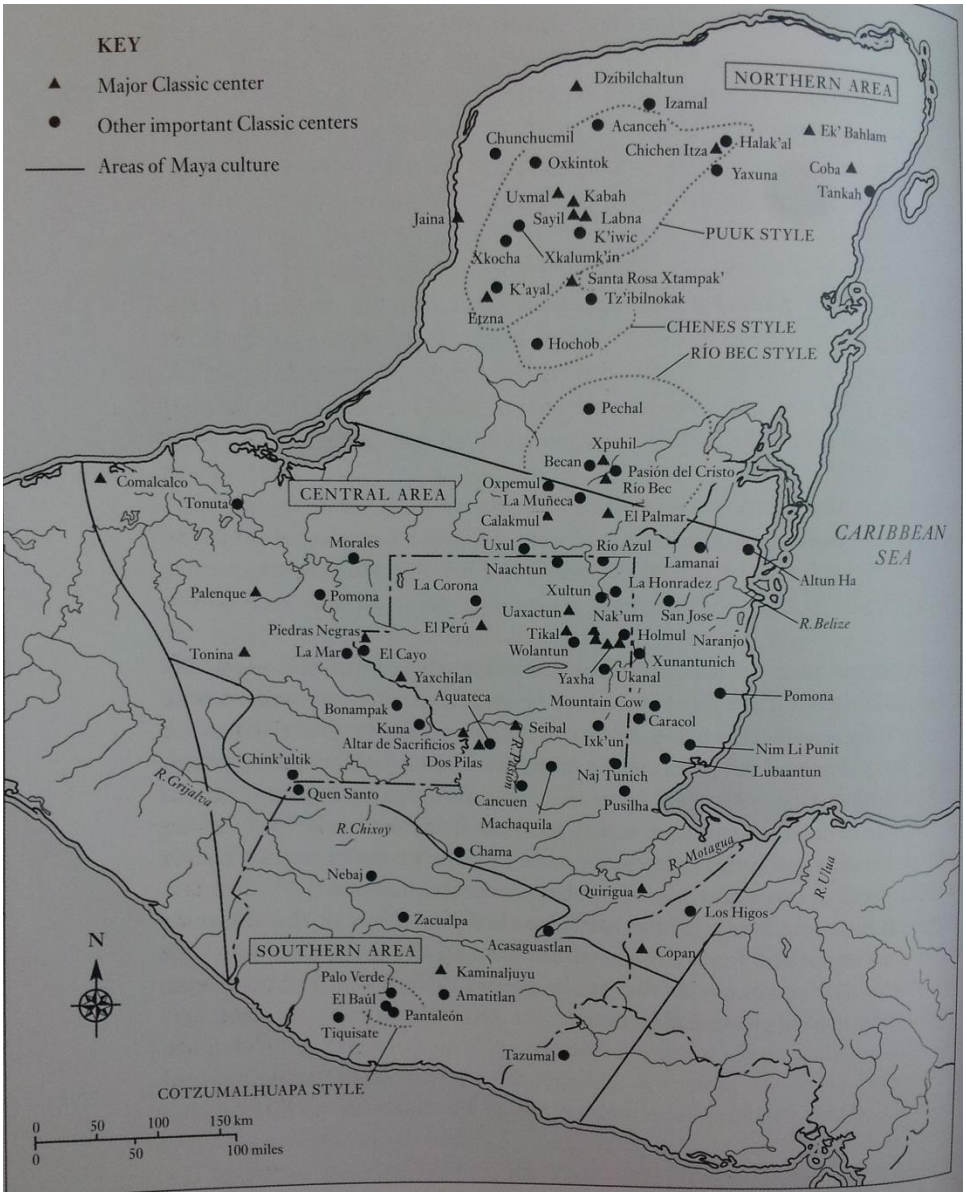

Figure 26: Map of Mesoamerica showing the large Mayan Empire (Coe 2011: 90. fig 38)

The Maya are considered to have been very advanced in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, arts and writing. They were able to predict the rise and set of the planet Venus, something that Europeans did not even fathom until the Renaissance. The

Maya also grasped the concept of the number zero prior to the Europeans. Using their comprehension of the seasons and their knowledge in astronomy and mathematics, the Maya created two complex calendar systems: one that recorded the solar year with 365 days called *Haab* and a sacred calendar called *Tzolkin* with only 260 days. Both calendars were used in conjunction with each other and their combination resulted in a 52-year cycle called a calendar round (M.E Miller 1999; Sabloff 2000; Coe and Koontz 2008). These calendars were vital for the Maya as they were used to predict war, to schedule planting and harvesting of crops, and to indicate when to make religious sacrifices to the Gods.

The Maya writing system is made of complex hieroglyphs that describe stories about their kings, their wars, their alliances and their belief systems. The Maya kept incredibly detailed records in Codices, many of which were unfortunately destroyed with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1562. Friar Diogo de Landa, a Catholic Missionary, is famous for burning "dozens of hieroglyphic books in bonfires in a 1562 autoda-fé" (Foster 2002: 297). These codices were long sheets of bark cloth paper coated with lime plaster upon which the Mayan wrote hieroglyphs. Three of these codices survived and were sent to Europe. They are named after the cities where they were rediscovered: Dresden, Madrid and Paris. A fourth is named after the Grolier Club in New York City where it was first publicly displayed; it is now held in Mexico City (Drew, 2000). Fortunately the Maya did not limit their records to paper and today archaeologists also

use the writing left on their architecture such as stelae in order to understand more about the Mayan Culture.

The Maya cities were surrounded by a dense and rich tropical forest that was their hunting ground but also the place where they could become hunted. The jaguar was at the top of the food chain and was both feared and worshiped by the Maya. Miller and Taube write that "the Maya had more jaguar deities with jaguar association than any other Mesoamerican people" (Miller and Taube 1993: 104). It is not surprising that the jaguar was not only part of the Maya mythology but also of the Maya royalty. Before explaining how the jaguar was part of the Maya culture, a brief description of the four majors cities in which the jaguars were found is presented below.

Mayan Cities:

The Maya built many different cities in their vast territory that extended from Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Mexico (Figure 26). But it is only during the Late Classic and Terminal Classic periods (AD 650-900) that the most important Maya centers flourished and reached their zenith. Four of these cities—Tikal, Copán, Palenque and Yaxchilán are of special interest because of their representations of the jaguar.

Tikal:

The city of Tikal is located in the lowland jungle of the Peten region in northern Guatemala. It is considered to be a "colossus of Maya centers" (Coe and Koontz 2008:

119). Tikal is one of the largest Classic sites in the Maya area and "one of the greatest in the New World" (Coe 2011: 129). The city became a world heritage site in 1979.

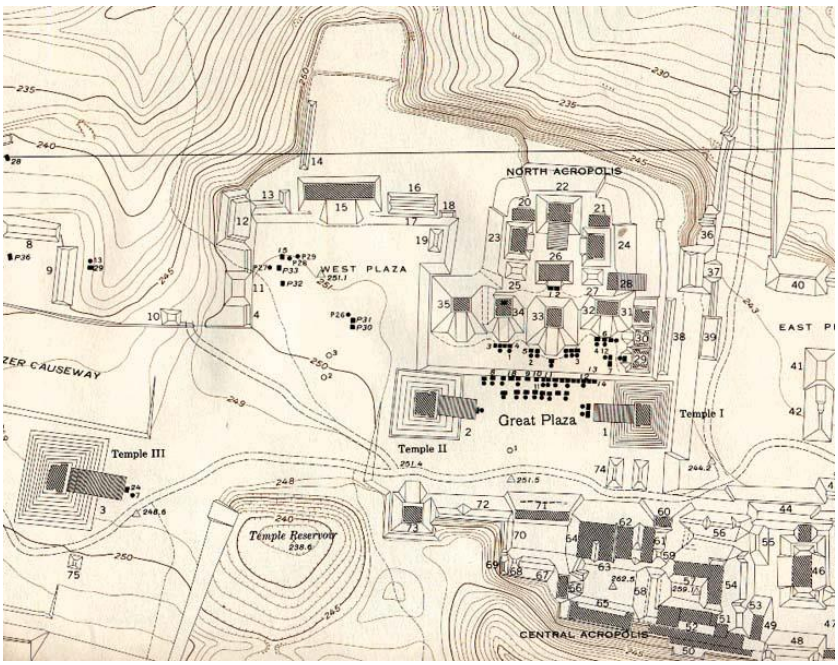

Figure 27: Center of Tikal showing the Great Plaza (Evans: 2008: 320 fig. 12.2).

William Coe (2002) says that the city itself occupied 6 square miles and had more than 3,000 structures from temples to palaces to residences as well as plazas and ball courts. Tikal has six gigantic temples. One of them, temple IV is the tallest of all other Mesoamerican temples with an impressive height of 229 ft. (70 m) (Coe 1999: 129). Tikal was inhabited by 900 BCE, but its earliest monument, Stela 29, appeared to be from the Preclassic period (Foster 2002). Stela 29 is believed to represent one of the first rulers of the city of Tikal: Foliated Jaguar. The city had a dynasty of more than 33 rulers over a

period of 800 years. The city was constantly built from 800 BC to 900 AD. Its heart is the Great Plaza which contained the Temple of the Giant Jaguar (also known as Temple I, 145 ft. tall), Temple of Masks (Temple II, 125 ft. tall) and more than 70 stelae and altars (

Figure 27 27). Lynn Foster estimated the population of Tikal at approximately 70,000, but when its rural residents are included its population was estimated to be close to 125,000 inhabitants. (Foster 2002: 114).

Copán:

Situated above a tributary of the Rio Motagua in western Honduras, the city of Copán prospered in a temperate valley. The city ruins show that Copán was one of the most remarkable cultural achievements of Maya antiquity. Copán was declared a world heritage by UNESCO as in 1982 and Sylvanus Morley called the Copán was declared a world heritage by UNESCO as in 1982 and Sylvanus Morley called the city "the Athens of the New World" (Fash 2001:16). The city is best known for the circular shape of its stelae, its altars and its hieroglyphics stairway. Copán has the longest hieroglyph text of the pre-Columbian World on the famous hieroglyphic stairway (Figure 28). The stairway is composed of sixty-three steps containing more than 2,500 glyphs. Archaeologists think that the construction of the stairway started under the thirteenth ruler, Eighteen Rabbit, and was finished by the fifteenth ruler, Smoke Shell.

Figure 28: Copán hieroglyph stairway (W.L. Fash 1996)

Scholars believe that the Hieroglyphic Stairway tells the story of the first fifteen rulers of Copán. Altar Q, another famous monument, describes the dynastic ruler of Copán from the first ruler, Yax K'uk' Mo, to the sixteenth ruler, Yax Pac. Altar Q shows that Yax K'uk' Mo's line was unbroken until the death of the sixteenth ruler in AD 820 (Coe 1999). The city encompasses over 60 acres and had five plazas, two staircases, a ball court, an acropolis and around 3,400 buildings (Fash 2001). It had an estimated population of 25,000 inhabitants, making it the Maya city with the highest population density.

Palenque:

Located in the northern Chiapas highlands of Mexico, the ruins of the city of Palenque are the only remnants of the great power that was once embodied by this center. It was a major Maya capital from AD 250 to AD 900 and declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1987. Palenque occupied 9 square miles and had over 1,000 structures which make it one of the most densely occupied of Classic Mayan cities (Coe 2011). The city is famous because of its extensive hieroglyphs which have been deciphered by archaeologists more than any other Mayan texts. The temple of the Inscriptions rests on a 65 feet (19.8 m) high stepped pyramid. On the wall of its portico and central chamber are three panels containing 620 hieroglyphs. It is the second largest Mayan text after Copán's hieroglyphic staircase.

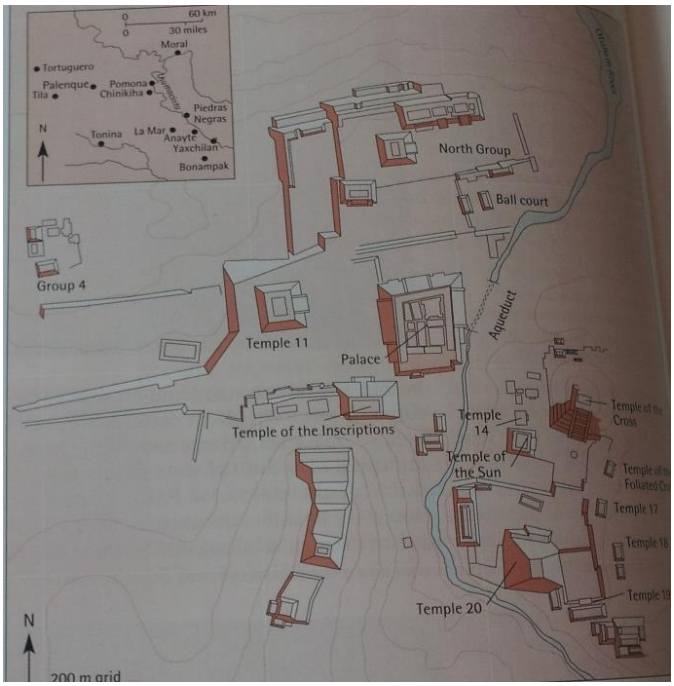

Figure 29: Map of Palenque Temple and palace (Evans 2008: 332 fig 12.19).

The tomb of the seventh century king Lord Pakal was found within the temple and is also covered with hieroglyphs telling the story of his 80 years of life. Lord Pakal ascended the throne when he was only twelve years old and died in AD 683. Coe (2011) explains that the temple of Inscription was not only built during the lifetime of Lord Pakal but probably originally intended as his own funerary monument. The city contains more than 20 temples, a ball court and a palace which covers 54,000 square feet and had three large houses with long rooms and courtyards (Figure 29). Palenque had an extensive water system including canals, drains and underground aqueducts. The city was abandoned between AD 850 and 900 under Janaab Pakal III who is considered to be Palenque's last ruler.

Yaxchilán:

The city of Yaxchilán is located on the Usumacinta River in Chiapas, Mexico. The city was constructed between 450 and 808 AD on a hill from which the residents could observe the sun, the planets and the stars. Tate explains that "…planning at Yaxchilán is astronomical, specifically solar, in orientation" (Tate 2011: 115). It is famous for its 60 carved stone lintels that depict conquest and ceremonial life. It is also one of the rare sites where women are shown during ceremonial ritual and are given important roles (Tate 2011). Yaxchilán was a very powerful city and was the capital of the Usumacinta, dominating sites such as Piedras Negras and Bonampak (Foster 2002). The founder of the dynasty of Yaxchilán was Yopaat Bahlam (Penis Jaguar) and was followed by about 10 generations of the Skull and Jaguar (Bahlam) lineages. Two influential rulers are heavily represented in the art of Yaxchilán: Bird-Jaguar III (the thirteenth ruler) and his son Shield Jaguar II. Together they reigned from 629 to 742 AD and constructed the Yaxchilán that we know today (Evans 2008). In order to maintain peace in his neighborhood, Yaxchilán entered into many marital alliances, such as the city of Bonampak, El Perú and one with the city of Motul de San José in the Petén (Arden 2001; Foster 2002).

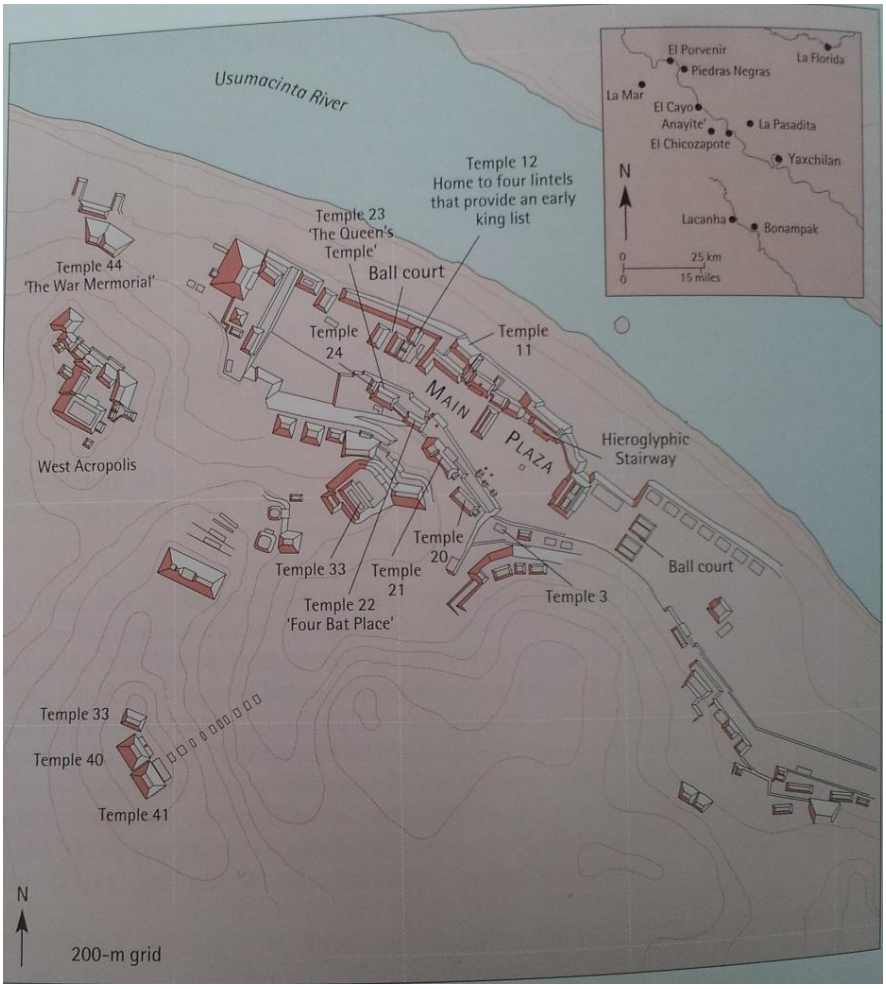

Figure 30: Map of Yaxchilán (Evans 2008: 302 fig. 11.12).

Jaguar in Mayan Mythology

The *Popol Vuh* or the Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya is considered to be the Maya book of Creation and to contain key Mayan beliefs. It is the equivalent of the Catholic Bible. The *Popol Vuh* describes important beliefs for the Maya that can be seen in the art. The translation of the *Popol Vuh* by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley

divides the book into three sections. First, the book explains how the world began and how the gods created the human race from corn and grease. Then the *Popol Vuh* narrates the exploit of the Hero Twins and how they survived the Lords of the Underworld. Finally the book talks about the first forefathers and the creation of the different Mayan dynasties.

The story of the Hero twins is one of the most well-known stories of the *Popol Vuh*. The story starts with Hun Hunahpu and his twin brother Vucub Hunahpu who were playing ball in a ball court. However, the noise they made exasperated the Lords of Xibalba (the Underworld) who ordered them to come to the Underworlds and go to the Dark House to relax. They were given cigars and pine sticks before entering the house, but they were told not to use them. Hun Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu used the pine sticks and were sacrificed. The head of Hun Hunahpu was hung in a tree to set an example to everybody who would go against the Lords of the Underworld. Xquie, a daughter of one of the Underworld Lords, was passing by the tree when the head spoke to her. When she touched the tree, she became pregnant and gave birth to the Hero Twins: Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Hunahpu and Xbalanque were skilled ballplayers like their father and uncle, but they were also tricksters. They were seeking revenge for their father and uncle's deaths and ended up going to Xibalba. The Lords made them go through a series of tests and trials. The Hero Twins went through five different houses: Dark House, Razor House, Cold House, Jaguar House and Bat House. This is an early mention of the jaguar in a religious text. The twins survived all the houses, defeated the Lords of the

Xibalba and revived their father. At the end, Hunahpu rose into the sky to become the sun while Xbalanque became the moon.

Figure 31: Hun Hunahpu emerging from the earth (turtle carapace) between the two Hero Twin Hunahpu (left) and Xbalanque (right). (Coe 2011: 207 fig 141).

The jaguar is present in the *Popol Vuh* not only in the form of a House but also in the name of a Hero Twin. A common representation of the Hero Twin is presented in Figure 31. This plate from Guatemala is considered to be in typical codex style. The plate shows the resurrection of Hun Hunahpu from the earth, represented by the turtle, between his two sons Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Xbalanque is holding a jar of water as his father is the Maize god and needs water to keep growing and survive. As can be seen on this

plate, Hunahpu and Xbalanque have distinctive signs that differentiated them from ordinary people. Hunahpu has black spots as his god marking while Xbalanque is marked with patches of jaguar skins (Coe 2011). McKillop says that Xbalanque "has jaguar skin on his body, arms, and legs and around his mouth, denoting his affinity with the jaguar, itself associated with dynastic power" (McKillop 2004:211).

Even the name Xbalanque has been translated as "Jaguar-Sun" or "Jaguar Deer." In classic text, the name of Xbalanque is actually Yax Bahlam or "Young Jaguar." Robert J. Sharer (1996) translated the name of Xbalanque as "Sacred Jaguar" and explains that it is associated with the jaguar sun and death in the underworld.

The representation of the jaguar in the *Popol Vuh* does not end there. During their adventure in the underworld, the Hero Twins have to survive one night in the House of Jaguars. It is written, "And the third is named Jaguar House, with jaguars alone inside, jostling one another, crowding together, with gnashing teeth. They're scratching around these jaguars are shut inside the house" (Tedlock 1996: 97). The Hero twins survived the House of Jaguars by giving them bones in order to avoid to be eaten. This vivid description shows the ferocity and the power of the animal.

The jaguar is not only present in the *Popol Vuh* it is also heavily represented in the Maya cosmos. An important jaguar God is called Kinich Ahau also known as God G or as K'inich Ajax (Coe 2011, McKillop 2004). It is often connected with Xbalanque because they both represent a phase of the sun's journey across the sky. Sharer (1996) and McKillop (2004) write that at night the God transforms into a jaguar as he travels in

the underworld. In the morning, victorious, he becomes the reborn sun. Lynn V. Foster emphasizes that as the "Jaguar God of the Underworld, Kinich Ahau functioned as the patron of war" (Foster 2002: 166). Kinich Ahau is represented with crossed eyes and a distinctive curl on the corner of his mouth like a jaguar fang. The best representation of the God is a jade head found at the Maya site Altun Ha in Belize in 1968 by Dr David Pendergast (Figure 32). The head weighting 4.4 kg (9.75 pounds) and measuring 14.88 cm (5.86 inches) high was found in a tomb in a temple with forty eight other artifacts (McKilllop 2004). Altun Ha is located near the coast of Belize, north of what is today the city of Belize. There is no evidence that Altun Ha had any political power and nothing explains the amount of wealth present at the site (Pendergast 1990, 1969). The head is carved in one solid piece of jade and to date remains the biggest piece of carved jade found in the Mayan kingdom.

Figure 32: Different Views of Kinich Ahau head Jade found in Altun Ha Belize. (Belize.com 2010).

Another important jaguar god in the Mayan pantheon is the Old Jaguar Paddler. The Paddler gods are thought to transport the people who passed away to the underworld in their canoes. However, this theory has been challenged and Lynn V. Foster explains that the Paddler Gods would be better understood "as journeying across the celestial world until they arrive to the constellation that Westerners call Orion, where creation took place" (Foster 2002: 170). Coe highlights the fact that for the Maya "The Milky Way is the road of dead souls into the Underworld" (Coe 2011: 222). Their most famous representation is on four incised bones that were found in Hasaw Chan K'awil's burial in the temple of Tikal (Figure 33 and Figure 34).

Figure 33: Detail of Tikal Bones from Burial 116 representing the Old Jaguar Paddler (Schele 2005 in FAMSI Schele # 77013).

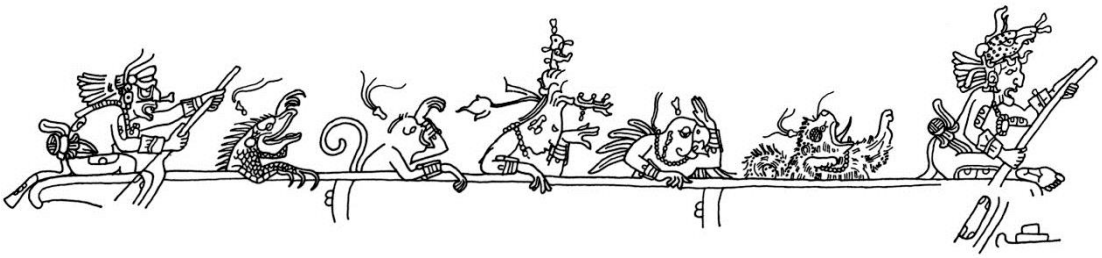

Figure 34: Tikal Bones from Burial 116 drawing by Linda Schele (Schele and Miller 1986: 270 fig. VII. 1).

In the bones found in Tikal, the Old Paddlers are transporting the Maize God (center), an iguana, a monkey, a parrot and a dog. The Old Jaguar Paddler God and the Old Stingray Paddler God are always on opposite side with the jaguar usually in the front. They personify opposition of darkness (night) in which the hieroglyph *akbal* is associated with the Old Jaguar Paddler and light (day) where the hieroglyph *k'in is* associated with the Old Stingray Paddler (Foster 2002).

The Old Jaguar Paddler is often represented wearing a headdress in the shape of a jaguar head. He also has jaguar skin on his cheek and a jaguar ear (McKillop 2004, Foster 2002). His counterpart is often represented with a stingray piercing in the septum of his nose and a fish helmet (McKillop 2004). Because they represent elderly gods, the Paddlers do not have teeth.

The Water Lily Jaguar is another important god for the Maya that it is very difficult to interpret. It is often represented as a full body jaguar with a water lily on his forehead. The Water Lily Jaguar also has a collar made of bulging eyeballs. Coe (1982) says that the necklace indicates sacrifices, and Benson goes further by saying that it

would be a sacrifice by decapitation. The Water Lily Jaguar is associated with rulership and is often represented as a throne (McKillop 2004, Miller and Taube 1993). When it is not shown as a throne, it is often represented as the protector of the ruler (McKillop 2004). Kubler (1977) uses the presence of the Water Lily Jaguar in the headdress of a character painted on a vase to identify him as the ruler. He continues by saying that the Water Lily Jaguar "also marks this ruler's clan or lineage relationship" (Kubler 1977: 20). Taube (1992b) attributes other characteristics to the Water Lily Jaguar. He writes that it could also be identified with "fire and the lineage through the male line" (Taube 1992b: 54) (Figure 35). Milbrath (1999) thinks that the Water Lily Jaguar should be associated with the seasons, specifically with the rains because it is at this time that the water lily blooms. In fact the Water Lily Jaguar could also be associated with fertility and vegetation because of the plant growing on its forehead. The Water Lily Jaguar was very important for the Maya and even though its full meaning is difficult to understand, it is definitively connected to the Mayan royalty. One of the richest representations of the Water Lily Jaguar has been found in Tomb 196 at Tikal. The tomb contained a jade sculpture of six and half inches long and weighing three and half pounds (Coggins 1976) (Figure 36). Archaeologists disagree about to whom the tomb belongs. Robert J. Sharer (1996) writes that it could belong to the twenty-eight king in the line of the founder while William Coe (2002) believes that it could be the tomb of the great king Yik'in Chan K'awiil, and Jones (1977) believes that it contains the remains of the youngest son of Ruler A.

Figure 35: Water Lily Jaguar with fire breath (drawing by L. Schele, Schele and Miller 1986 in Taube 1992b:55 fig. 24e).

Figure 36: Water Lily Jaguar jade sculpture from Tomb 196 at Tikal (Quirao.com 2010).

Even though the remains in the tomb 196 are still a mystery, the jade Water Lily jaguar sculpture suggests that this god is of great importance to be placed in burial so connected to royalty. The Mayan gave the jaguar a tremendous part in their pantheon and took features of the animal to give their gods some of the jaguar characteristics. It is interesting to see that when the jaguar god is combined with other symbols its meaning changes and it is no longer the hunter but instead a link to fertility.

Jaguar and Royalty

The Maya elite used the jaguar to emphasize their power and status. Miller and Taube write that “Like humankind, the jaguar occupies the top level of the food chain, and people sought to identify themselves with the big cat” (Miller and Taube 1993: 102). It is not surprising that the elite wanted to be represented on thrones shaped like a jaguar while wearing jaguar pelts and necklaces made of jaguar teeth. Among their many functions, the Mayan rulers had to be capable of communicating directly with the ancestors and deities, giving them the role of shaman. The possession of supernatural power is important for the Maya ruler because their “political power rest on their ability to act as a priestly bridge between the ancestor, the underworld and the living world (Schele and Freidel 1990, Foster 2002).

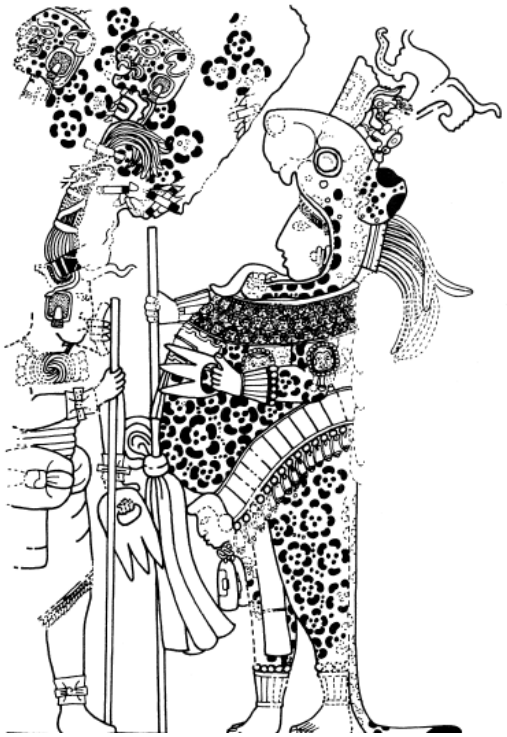

Figure 37: Classic Maya ruler from Temple III, Tikal. The figure is wearing a jaguar head helmet and an elaborate jaguar skin (William Coe 2002 in Saunders 1994:111 fig. 3).

The jaguar represents this fearsome beast capable of traveling between the different worlds while having a great physical strength, qualities that Maya kings strived to impersonate (Saunders 1989; Hassig 1985). The Maya rulers used the jaguar in their name to reinforce not only their right to rule as descendant of the gods, but also to represent their great power. Drew emphasizes that Maya rulers were "people who were considered to have particularly strong blood or k'ulel, used animal images and associations, notably that of the jaguar as symbols of their own superhuman capacities

and dominant position in society" (Drew 2000: 291-292). Mayan kings wanted to differentiate themselves from the commoners by changing their name into something godlike. It was a way to establish the legitimacy of their position and to be sure to obtain the respects that they deserved from their subjects.

Rulers performed many different rituals to show their power; however, the bloodletting ceremony appears to be one of the most personal (Figure 38 and Figure 39). Instead of being public, it was done in private chambers (Schele and Freidel 1990). Rulers and their families had to draw blood from their tongues, ears or foreskin using pieces of ropes, bones or obsidian and collect it on a piece of bark paper. The paper would then be placed in a bowl to be burnt. The smoke would then reach the gods and/or the ancestors (Freidel and al. 1993). Bradley (2001) hypothesizes that this ritual might be a symbolic reenactment of the sacrifice that the god themselves made while creating the world. By consequence the bloodletting ritual could be a symbolic death yet a source of life. This rite was so sacred that the instruments used were deified ritual objects (Foster 2002). Once used the equipment was wrapped in a jaguar skin (Saunders 2011).This offering is very important because it was associated with vision quest and supernatural communication with a god or a deified ancestor (Drew 2000).

Figure 38: Lintel 24 Lady Xoc and Shield Jaguar during a bloodletting ceremony (Graham1977: 53).

Schele and Mathews (1998) say that in this type of auto-sacrifice, the ruler does not only offer blood but his soul. This ritual has been associated with the jaguar because they suck a little bit of blood from their victims before their meal (Perry 1970, Saunders 2011). The Old Paddler Gods (Coe 2011, Drew 2000, Schele and Miller 1986), the Palenque Triad of deities (Berlin 1963) and God K (Robiseck 1979, Schele and Miller 1983, Stuart 1984) have all been associated with the bloodletting ritual. By doing these rituals, Maya rulers demonstrated that they were able to give birth to and to nurture the gods who had been

their ancestors. It was important to legitimize and justify the role of the elite (Joyce et al. 1991). Figure 38 is a lintel, dated AD 724, from Yaxchilán showing Lady Xoc and her husband Shield Jaguar during a bloodletting ceremony. Lady Xoc has a rope passing through her tongue and under it some pieces of bark paper waiting to collect the dripping blood. Shield Jaguar is holding a torch above her head. This lintel is from Temple 23 and part of series of three. The first located on the left shows Lady Xoc perforating her tongue, the central panel shows a serpent materializing from the smoke of the bark paper, and the right lintel show Lady Xoc helping the king Shield Jaguar dress for battle (Lintel 26, Figure 39). Shield Jaguar is wearing most of his war outfit and holds a knife in his hand. Lady Xoc is holding his helmet and a shield. The jaguar head that she is holding appears to be a "water-lily jaguar headdress" as a sprout of vegetation seems to be coming out from the forehead of the animal (Schele and Miller 1986). This jaguar headdress shows that Shield Jaguar wanted to demonstrate his strength and kingship before going to battle.

Figure 39: Lintel 26 from Yaxchilán drawing by Ian Graham (Tate 2011:207).

The veneration of the jaguar pushed the Maya to use it in honor of their great kings. In the great city of Copán for the dedication of Altar Q, which tells the dynasty of the Great Ruler of Copán, the Sixteen Ruler, Yax Pac, sacrificed fifteen jaguars and buried them in a small crypt next to Altar Q (Figure 40). It is evident that the sacrificed jaguars are a symbolization of the fifteen powerful predecessors of Yax Pac (Drew 2000; Sharer 1996). However, this number might have been idealized. In a study of the remains of the cache found next to Altar Q, Ballinger and Stomper estimated the Minimum Number of Individual at fourteen for jaguars and nine for birds, including two macaws, based on the tail fans. The bones of the jaguars were similar in size, which means that the animals were similar in sex and age.

Figure 40: Copán Altar Q (D. Stuart 2012:1 fig. 2).

They were also healthy animals and had no mark of osteoporosis; a common bone disease in cats held in captivity. There were no marks on the bones, indicating that the pelts were removed after death. Ballinger and Stomper give another theory to the heavy sacrifice made by Yax Pac. During his reign the ruler faced several crises from deforestation to a shrinking population reducing his power (Fash 1994). Ballinger and Stomper say "His impressive sacrifice and building program may have been an attempt to restore Copán to its previous place in the hierarchy of major sites" (Ballinger and Stomper 2000: 231). Getting fifteen jaguars in an urban area was already an impressive show of power as the Copán Valley would have not been able to support fifteen adult jaguars. Pohl (1994) considers the presence of the cache with jaguar bones in it in the city of Copán as a measure of the high position of the city in the Maya hierarchy. Drew (2000) thinks that, just as the jaguar was equated with the sun, the Copán dynasty was

proclaiming itself as born from the Sun to reinforce Yax Pax's right to rein. The jaguars were clearly sacrificed in a ritual context probably to strengthen the connection between Yax Pac, the ancestors and the jaguar's supernatural power.

Rulers showed their right to the throne by sitting on a jaguar sculpture or jaguar skins. Scenes on Late Classic period painted pots show the royal throne draped in jaguar skins (McKillop 2004). In Palenque, a group of three temples called the Cross Group contain three important tablets. Located on a large elevated plaza the Cross Group is composed of the Temples of the Sun, The Cross and the Foliated Cross. The tablet at the Temple of the Cross records creations events and the history of Palenque's King (Foster 2002). The tablet located at the Temple of the Foliated Cross represents Kan Balam (ruler of Palenque from 572 to 583) and celebrates the emergence of Maize. The tablet at the Temple of the Sun shows a central jaguar shield of the Underworld with crossed spears behind a shield and a throne with a central jaguar head surrounded by two snakes and carried by two Xibalba Lords (Figure 41). Kan Balam located to the left is on top of another figure, identified as a slave by Linda Schele, and is facing another figure which archaeologists have had difficulty identifying. Some believe that it was Lord Pakal who is Kan Balam's father (Schele and Freidel 1990); other scholars believe that it could be a figure of young Kan Balam before his succession (Martin and Grube 2000, Milbrath 1999). The older Kan Balam offers a figure of God K, which has been identified with royal lineage (Miller and Taube 1993) and blood sacrificing (Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993).

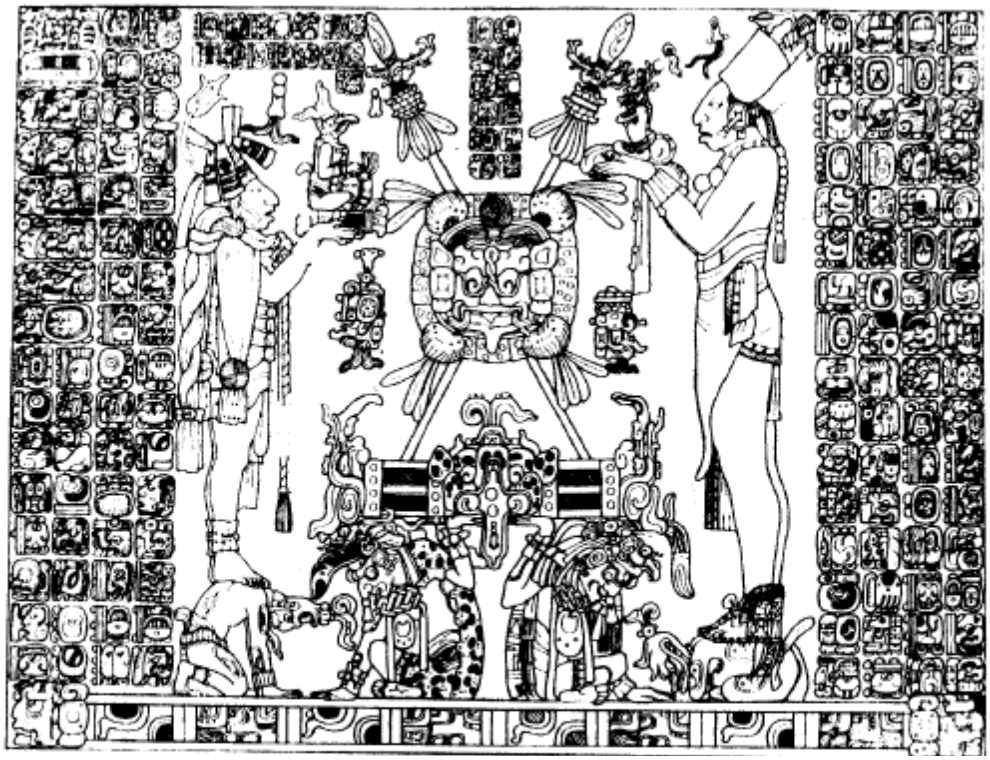

Figure 41: Tablet of the Sun from Palenque. Drawing by Linda Schele (Schele and Freidel 1990: 234 fig. 6.13).

The other figure is a "personified eccentric flint with flayed shield," which is a symbol of royal status but also of warrior status (Clancy 1976). Schele (1976) says that the cloth kilt worn is the one that new rulers of Palenque wore to the accession ceremony. The ceremonial bar, shield and spear are also known as the "regalia of leadership" for the Maya (Clancy 1976: 26).These symbols, according to David Drew, are emblems of war and sacrifice (Drew 2000). Mendez et al. (2005) explain that while the shield above the platform may represent the sun on the horizon, it may also symbolize the ruler sitting on the throne. Foster (2002) goes further and explains that this tablet not only connects

warfare with ruler accession, but it also commemorates the Underworld jaguar patron, proving that, as his name indicates, Kan Balam ("Snake Jaguar") has a legitimate right of access to the throne because of his power over the Underworld. In this representation the jaguar is not only the representation of the Underworld, but is also used to legitimize the ruler's right to ascend to the throne. It shows Kan Balam has great power.

Summary:

The Maya admired the jaguar as the most powerful and sacred animal of the rainforest for its strength, its capability to travel between the different realm (earth and water) and its hunting skills. The jaguar is part of the Mayan origin myth and its name is very prominent in the Mayan pantheon. Rulers used the jaguar to show their legitimate right to reign by associating themselves with the gods and connecting to the origin myth. In the Mayan world, the jaguar represents mythology, divine kingship, sacrifice, royal ancestry, warfare and the Underworld.

Chapter V: Chavín De Huántar

Introduction:

Far away from Mesoamerica, in Peru an important ceremonial center develops: Chavín de Huántar. The site is located in a fertile valley on the northeastern slope of the Peruvian Andes at an altitude of 3,200 meters (10,500 ft.). The site is at the junction of the Mosna and Wascheqsa Rivers. In 1930s Julio C. Tello, a Peruvian archaeologist, proposed that Chavín was the oldest of Peru's civilization, and presented it as the South American counterpart of the Olmec civilization in Mesoamerica (Tello 1942, 1943, 1960). However, Moseley proved in 1985 that Chavín was not the "Andean Mother Culture" that Tello believed it to be, but that Chavín had been preceded by a long succession of coastal and highland monumental centers. The site develops around what is considered the Middle formative period from 1200 B.C until 300 B.C.

The meaning of the word *Chavín* is unknown, but Chavín de Huántar is only one of several towns named so. Tello thought the term could be from the Carib word *Chavi* for feline or tiger while Luis Lumbreras suggested that it derived from the Quechua term *Chawpin* meaning "in the center"(Burger 1992:128). Luis Guillermo Lumbreras explains that the name Chavín refers "more to a culture than to a site; in reality, it refers to an artistic style" (Lumbreras 1971:8). John Rowe agrees and points out that the stone

sculptures located in the city of Chavín attracted the attention of the explorers and that these sculptures became the "basis for defining the Chavín style" (Rowe 1962: 5).

Years	Kaulicke (1998)	Rowe (1967)	Chavín Chronology (Burger 1984)
3000-2100		Preceramic (3000-2100 B.C)	
2000-1500 B.C.	Arcaico Final (1800-1500 B.C.)	Initial Period (2100-1400 B.C)	
1500-400 B.C.	Formativo Temprano (1500-1000 B.C.)	Early Horizon (1400-400 B.C.)	Urabarriu Phase (900-500 B.C) Construction of the Old Temple
	Formativo Medio (1000- 600 B.C)		Chakinani Phase (500-400 B.C)
	Formativo Tardio (600-400 B.C.)		
400-200 B.C.	Formativo Final (400-200 B.C.)	Early Intermediate Period (400B.C-A.D. 550)	Janabarriu Phase (400-100 B.C) Construction of the New Temple
200 B.C- A.D 550	Epiformativo (200 B.C. - 100/200 A.D.)		
A.D 550-900		Middle Horizon (A.D 550-900)	
A.D. 900-1476		Late Initial Period (A.D. 900-1476)	
A.D. 1476-1532		Late Horizon (A.D. 1476-1532)	

Table 2: Two Andeans chronology commonly used in Peru and Chavín's chronology Kaulicke (1998), Rowe (1967) and Burger (1984).

In the 1960s, John Rowe defined Andean chronology using ceramic stylistic changes (Table 2). Rowe explains,

> "If, for example, we note a frequent correlation of pottery with evidence for farming, animal husbandry, and loom weaving in the area we are studying, we may be tempted to use all four of these features together as criteria for a single cultural stage." (Rowe 1967:2)

The difference in dates between Kaulicke's and Rowe's chronologies is due to the fact that Kaulicke's text was written at a later time when more radiocarbon dates were published. Due to its great importance, Chavín is granted its own place in Andean history. The Early Horizon is actually known as the Chavín Horizon.

In contrast to the civilizations living in Mesoamerica, the people of Chavín were autonomous because they could grow lowland crop such as maize and highland crops such as corn. Burger explains that the terrain surrounding the site is "well suited to a mix of high-altitude farming and camelid herding (Burger 1992: 128)". Even with seasonal frost, the natural grassland at the site of Chavin provided a rich habitat for wild game such as deers and camelids. The regular rainfall allowed farming with no need for an irrigation system and native Andean crops such as potatoes, oca, quinoa and beans could easily grow (Burger 1984). Chavín de Huántar amazing geography allowed a farmer to walk to the irrigated valley floor (*quechua*) through his potato fields on the upper floor (*suni*) to his llamas in the pastureland (*puna*) in two or three hours (Burger 1984; Richardson III 1994) (Figure 42). These amazing varieties in climate allowed Chavín's population to be self-sufficient.

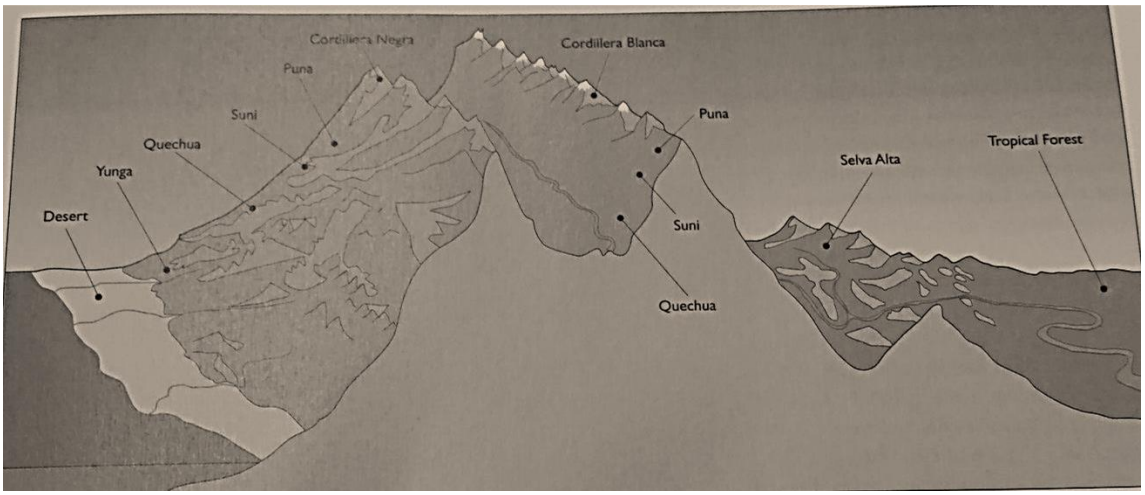

Figure 42: Map showing the different topography and the diverse climates of Peru (Richardson III 1994: 13 fig. 4).

The site was first seen by a European when Pedro Cieza de León traveled across the Inca Empire as part of his duty as a soldier of the Spanish army. In his Crónica Del Peru in 1553, Cieza de León describes,

"among the old rooms, a big fortress can be seen, which is like a block and had 140 steps and was even wider, and in many places of them are faces and human sculptures, everything beautifully made […]" (Cieza de Leon, 1553:271).

Several other missionaries and archaeologists saw the majesty of Chavín in the late 1800 and early 1900s, but it was not until 1919 that the first excavation was conducted by Julio C. Tello.

The site of Chavín is divided into a large ceremonial center and an area for inhabitants to live (Figure 43). The large size of the earliest public construction of Chavín implies the existence of a sizable population (Burger 1992). Chavín might have first been

constructed as a public center by and for the surrounding population before becoming an important center of pilgrimage. The ceremonial center is built in a U shape which encompasses two main temples: the Old Temple and the New Temple (the latter being an extension of the former), a small sunken circular plaza and a large rectangular plaza surrounded by lateral buildings. The temple area was terraced to create five hectares of level land on the valley floor (Burger 1984). A truncated pyramid 10 meters high on the uppermost terrace dominates the valley. A maze of passageways and rooms is hidden inside this pyramid. More than 200 stones artifacts have been recovered from the temple area, but only one was left intact at the conjunction of four galleries: The Lanzón figure, a 4.53 m tall stone carved with the image of a fanged anthropomorphic deity. It was named Lanzón by Julio C. Tello because of its lance-like shape (Burger 1992). Its location indicates that it was the central cult image of the Old Temple. Interestingly at Chavín, it appears that in their cult there were images seen by the public and others seen only by the priests and probably the elite. The size of the passageways could not allow the entire population of Chavín to see the Lanzón figure. However, on the outside of the Old Temple there is a bas-relief plaque which is the "public" version of the Lanzón figure. The outside bas-relief is called the Smiling God. Burger points out that the galleries could have been used as a surprise effect by priests. He writes, "The sight of religious functionaries emerging from the unseen galleries at the summit shrine of the ostensibly impenetrable pyramid must have had a powerful impact on the viewers" (Burger

1992:144). The U shape courtyard (21 meters in diameter) could have held up to 550 worshippers waiting for the apparition of the priests (Richardson 1994).

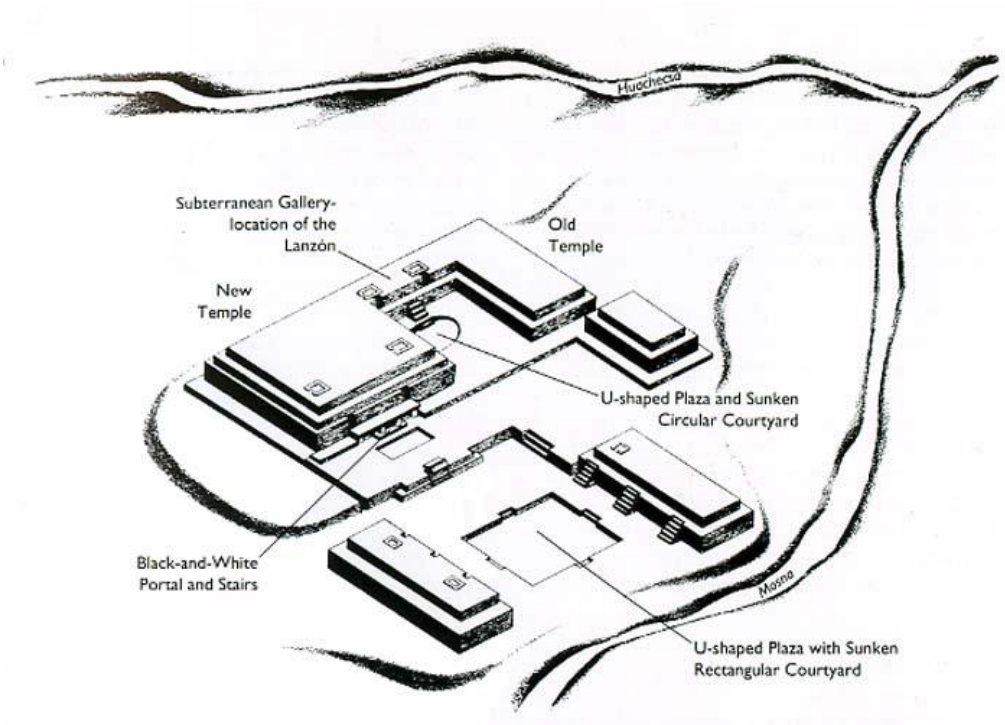

Figure 43: Plan of the Temple area of Chavín (Townsend 1992: 9 fig. 8)

The end of the dominance of Chavín is difficult to understand. The population started decreasing slowly. Rowe (1962) tentatively explains that the fall of Chavín might have happened because a new religious movement was created or because Chavín became associated with military conquest and its central power collapsed. Lumbreras (1989) explores the idea that a series of earthquakes occured around 200 BC during the Janabarriu phase. At that time, the population of Chavín de Huántar was smaller with approximately 2,000 individuals. A severe earthquake damaged some of the buildings

especially the white-and-black portal which is an important part of the Chavín cult. Lumbreras says, "This catastrophic event may have shaken the confidence of the worshippers in the power held by the priests over the deities, for soon thereafter the Chavín cult disappears as a practicing religion in the Central Andes" (Lumbreras 1989: 96). Even though Lumbreras theories about the end of the Chavín's world might be accurate, no one knows with certainty what happened.

Chavín is often refered to as the center of cult of the jaguar; however, this animal is not a native of the region. It is possible that the first people of Chavín originated from the eastern tropical forest where the jaguar is present and that the idea of the jaguar and its cult were transported and developed in Chavín. In this chapter, I will first describe the particular style of Chavín art before discussing the jaguar and the Shaman and finally the jaguar as a god.

Chavín Art

The art in Chavín is very distinctive from any other Peruvian or Mesoamerican cultures. It is actually composed of a very complex iconography and motif. John Rowe created a seriation in 1962 and a chronology of the Chavín art style. Their evolving style is divided into four different phases: AB (1200 BC), C (750 BC), D and EF (390-200 BC). The best examples of the earliest phase (AB) are the Lanzón figure and the cornices blocks of the New Temple. Phase C is identified with the Tello obelisk. The Black and

White Portal is an example of Phase D Style and Rowe uses the Raimondi stone as an example of the last phase, Phase EF (Lumbreras 1970; Roe 1974; Rowe 2007).

Chavín art can appear very simplistic in its lines and designs; however, Rowe points out that Chavín art uses a many different conventions such as "symmetry, repetition, modular width and the reduction of figure to straight lines, simple curves and scrolls" (Rowe 1977:77). Roe (1974) emphasized that Chavín art is rigidly conceptualized and executed. Roe explains, "The design element themselves are often so nearly alike as if they were copied" (Roe 1974:7). With artistic rules so defined and strict, an artist who has never seen a jaguar or a parrot would be able to draw one and pass on his knowledge to the next artist who in turn would reproduce the drawing without ever varying from the original design.

One of the main characteristics of Chavín iconography is the recurrence of zoomorphic images that are used as metaphors for anthropomorphic parts (Rowe 1962). Tello describes this as elimination and substitution. For example, snakes were used in place of whiskers or eyebrows for the jaguar or interlocking canines were used in place of the vertebral column of the caiman (Burger 1984; Tello 1960). Rowe illustrates this idea by giving literary example. He writes,

> "If we say of a woman that her hair is like snakes," we are making a direct comparison (simile) If we speak of "her snaky hair," we are making an implied comparison (metaphor). We can go further, however, and simply refer to "her nest of snakes," without using the word hair at all, in this case we are making a comparison by substitution" (Rowe 1967 313-314).

This is exactly what happened in Chavín's art, the artist made a direct substitution of the hair, the eyebrow or the spine of a central animal with something else. John Rowe calls this "visual metaphor" a "kenning" (Rowe 1962). This term was used for the first time in the thirteenth century by Snorri Sturluson to describe the comparison by substitution that was used in Old Norse court poetry (Rowe 1967, Urton 2008).

The designs in Chavín perhaps used simplistic lines, but they are far from simplistic designs. The addition of the kenning makes them visually quite complex and very intricate. At first it is extremely difficult to comprehend what one sees because it is so overwhelming. Urton summarized this idea by writing, "we are often simultaneously repelled and attracted by the absence of a clearly identifiable focal point" (Urton 2008: 215). The lines carved on the monuments create interlocking forms with no clearly defined figures. Rowe (1962) emphasizes that one should pay attention to the small details because they often turn out to be minor figures which appear at first to have no relationship with the main one. The Tello obelisk is a great example of what appears at first to be a stylized jigsaw puzzle (Figure 44 and Figure 45). The Tello obelisk is a vertical, rectangular shaft of granite carved on all four sides. It was discovered by Tello in 1908, in the southwest corner of the large open, rectangular plaza. The complex carvings make it difficult to interpret. The obelisk depicts two zoomorphic deities with different crops plants and animals. Julio C. Tello (1960) identifies the zoomorphic deities as "cat dragons", while Rowe (1962) and Lathrap (1977) identify them as caimans, and Urton (2008) sees two *amarus* ("dragon, giant serpent"). Burger agrees with

Rowe and Lathrap but expands their ideas further by writing that the Tello obelisk is in fact the story of the creation myth "in which a pair of flying caimans are shown as the donors of a series of domesticated lowland plants, including manioc, none of which could be cultivated in the highland environment" (Burger 1992:268).

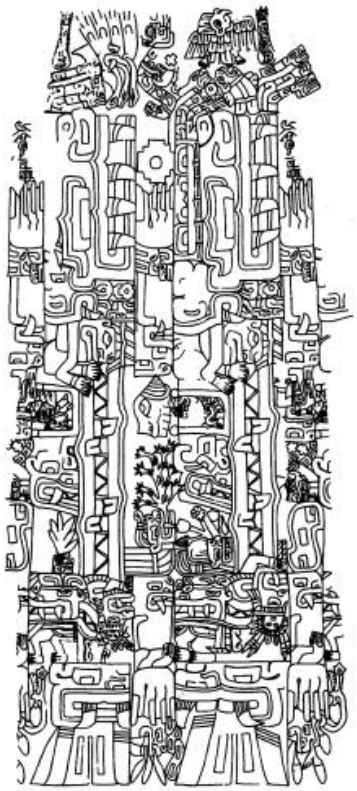

Figure 44: Rollout of the reliefs on the Tello (Urton 2008: 217 fig 8.2)

Figure 45: Tello obelisk (Rowe 1977: 328 fig 6)

The design of Chavín allows one to be able to separate and identify the several parts that are composing one single animal. For example, the mouth of the jaguar is represented in two different modes: a frontal view and profile view. Frontal feline mouth

typically belongs to the Chavín AB phase with the Lanzón and the tenon heads. This style features a large mouth with corner turned up and upper canine only (Kano 1979: 29) (Figure 46). The jaguar mouth also features a crossed incision to represent the fangs at the corner of the mouth. A typical profile feline mouth has a long and narrow upper part with rounded corner and crossed fangs (Kan 1972:70). The eye of the jaguar in Chavín is shown into two different forms: rectangular and circular. The circular eye is often seen in realistic feline figures and is a circle and dot pattern (Figure 47). The eyebrow above it can have a snake or an S-shaped or even a spiral. The rectangular eye is not seen often on realistic feline but is more common as an extremely stylized, independent geometric design, one of the U-shaped designs, or as the basis for a horizontal sequence which is repeated several times over. The spotted pelt of the jaguar varied greatly from a circle-and-dot design to an L-shape to spiral and cloud shape (Figure 48). Rowe (1962) explains that the spotted markings of jaguars are represented as quatrefoils or cinquefoils and crosses and that these figures are close to the shape of jaguar marking in nature.

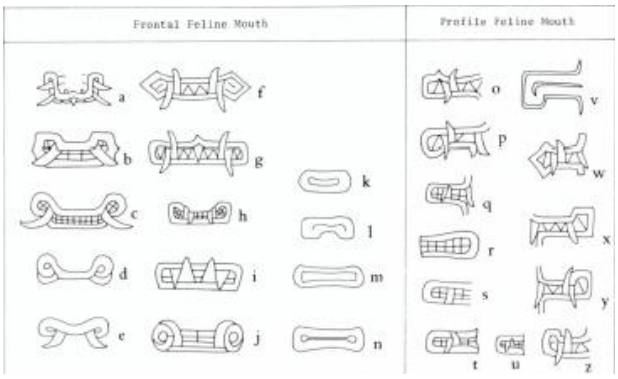

Figure 46: The different type of mouth of the jaguar in Chavín (Kano 1979: 83 fig 13)

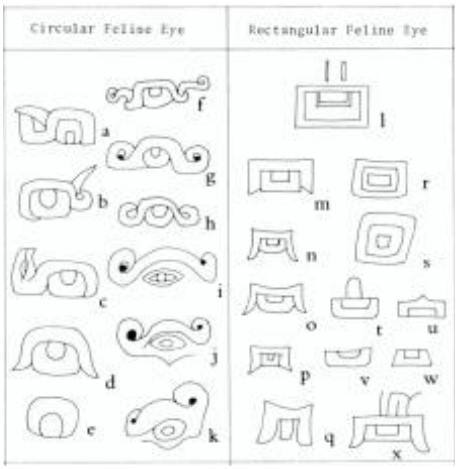

Figure 47: The different representation of the jaguar eyes (Kano 1979: 84 fig 14)

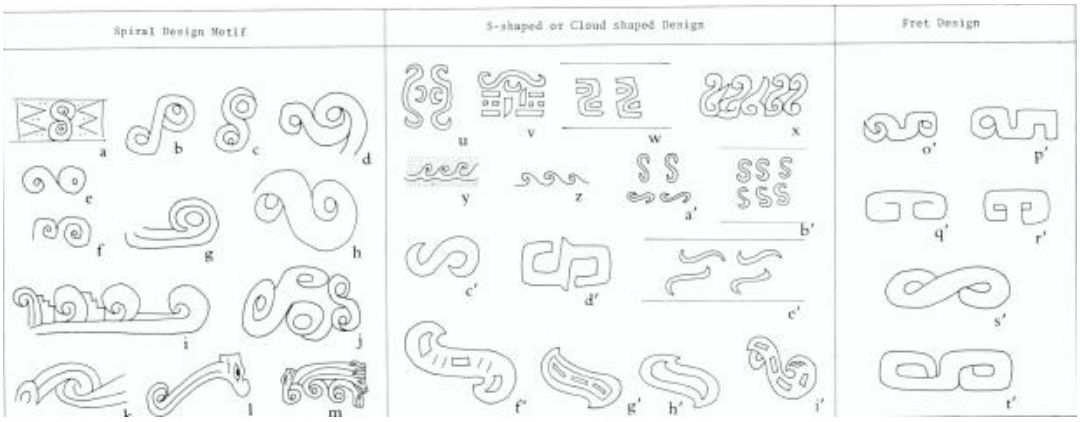

Figure 48: Examples of the representation of the jaguar pelage (Kano 1979: 85 fig 15)

What is interesting in the zoomorphic animals represented at Chavín is that their iconographies are mostly composed of wild carnivorous animals from the tropical forest

(Miller and Burger 1995). The people of Chavín did not only represent them heavily; they veneered them too. Among all these tropical animals, the jaguar is the animal that is the most strongly represented at Chavín.

Jaguar and Shamanism

The art in Chavín is not only composed of zoomorphic animals combined with aspects of other animals but also of human beings. However, very much like the animals, these human beings have some aspects of their bodies that have been replaced by the parts of another animal. For example, it is very common to see a human being with a jaguar's mouth and/or snake hair at Chavín. These special representations appear to give the persons depicted in these works as possessing special powers. Roe (1974) explains that the feline mouth used in the human representations differentiates them between a mythical and non-mythical persons,, giving the mythical persons special power. Rowe (1962) emphasizes that the feline mouth is used to distinguish divine and mythological beings from ordinary creatures. Saunders (1989) explains that the designation incorporation of visual aspect characteristics of the jaguar to in a human figure gives this the person depicted special and supernatural attributes derived from the animal. A jaguar will help communicate with the world of the dead and protect from evil spirits. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, shamans were often represented in transformation with their *nagual* (animal companion) in Olmec culture. It would be fair to assume that the people of Chavín did the same. However, Kano (1979) expresses that in fact the

shaman of Chavín did not transform into their animal companion but actually became the jaguar deity. A theory exists concerning shamanism in Chavín de Huántar that does not seem to have been suggested from analysis of the Olmec artifacts. Moore (2005) proposes that the presence of formal temples suggests the presence of priests and not shamans. Shamans are ritual practitioners with some social power who act at special events while priests are ritual practitioners with a societal position based on their knowledge of the religion. Moore (2005) believes that the religion at Chavín probably originated from shamanism beliefs, but then transformed into a canonical religion overseen by priests. Several authors such as Kano (1979) talk write about shamans and priests at Chavín while referring to the same person. For both the improving clarity of this chapter and also due to a lack of further evidence, a person practicing the religion at Chavín de Huántar will be referred to as a shaman.

The Chavín shaman in transformation is represented very similarly to the Olmec one, as a human with animal characteristics. The best examples at Chavín de Huántar are tenon heads that were located at 10 meters high on the outside wall of the temple. Burger (1992) explains that the sculptures were located at 3 meter intervals in a horizontal row. Only one of them is still standing on the west wall of the temple. Some of the heads were found by Tello in nearby towns while others were recovered during excavations (Doyon-Bernard 1997). There are two series of heads from the Chavín AB phase style. One shows a shaman evolving from human to jaguar whereas the other tenon heads, located on the opposite wall, shows a shaman transforming from a human into a crested eagle.

The two lines of tenon heads encircled the entire Old Temple. They are richly engraved with incised details that would have not been visible to the viewers on the ground. They appear to be projecting from the wall almost as if they were floating in the air.

The heads are an example of mastery in masonry. They had a tenon about 70 cm long that projected in the back and fit into a mortise inside the wall. They were a claim to everyone of the power of the shaman to be able to transform himself. However, Furst explains that the shaman does not change into a jaguar but "through an ecstatic the shaman unleashes the supernatural power of the animal which resides in him" (Furst 1968). The heads are a narration of what is happening to the shaman written in such a way that all the inhabitants of Chavín and its numerous visiting pilgrims could understand. It describes to the worshipper the internal transformation that the shaman is experiencing. It was also a good way to differentiate between the chosen ones and the commoners. These heads can be divided into three groups, according to Burger (1995), representing different stages of the transformation. The heads from the first group have few animal traits and appear to be entirely human. The ones from the second group show human features and feline features mixed together, while the ones in the last group have more feline than human characteristics. This transformation was not just a phase for the shaman. Rick (2005) emphasizes that the tenon heads reinforced the idea that the incorporation of natural power was an ongoing, even a constant and permanent condition for the shaman who actually retained the powers of animals.

Figure 49: Tenon Heads found on New Temple. Chavín. Early Horizon (Stone-Miller 2002: 16 fig.6)

The tenon heads are not only a great example of the metamorphosis of a shaman, but they also show something that was not represented in Olmec art: the use of hallucinogens. Archaeological evidence suggests that the transformation was facilitated by the nasal ingestion of a psychotropic substance (Cordy-Collins 1977, 1980; Cane 1983; Burger 1992, 1995). Many researchers hypothesize that the shamans were using the San Pedro cactus due to its frequent appearance in Chavín's art, and because it contains mescaline-bearing alkaloid that can cause hallucinogenic visions (Burger 2012; Cordy Collins 1977; Sharon 1978, 2000). Furthermore the cactus is still in used in Peru today as a hallucinogenic substance by indigenous groups (Sharon 1978, Klein et Al.2002). Burger (2012) argues that the San Pedro cactus was just a small part of the ceremony and that Chavín's shamans were also snuffing seeds of *Anadenanthera* sp (vilca). Some of the tenon heads, such as the middle photograph in Figure 49, have lines coming down from their noses which have been interpreted to be mucus coming down due to an irritation of

nasal membrane from narcotic usage (Urton 2008; Cordy Collins 1980; Burger 2012). Rick writes that "graphic depiction of the drug effect and transitions […] were seen as attention grabbing, unusual and exotic" (Rick 2005: 79). It was done not only to impress, but also to set the city apart from any other city and to create a powerful ceremonial center.

The drug was linked to the work of the shaman and not surprisingly his drug paraphernalia such as mortars, snuff tablets and snuff spoons are richly engraved, often with a representation of the jaguar (Figure 51). Burger (1992) describes that the mortar was probably used to grind psychotropic substance because of its ornate design and because it was too small to grind food staples such as maize or potatoes. The jaguar on the mortar is extremely complex. Its pelt comports several types of markings from crosses to "S" shapes. This mortar and tablet were likely part of a kit that the shaman used during ceremonies. The fact that they are in the shape of a jaguar establishes the sacred role of this animal. The drug helped the shaman to achieve perfect harmony with nature, creating a special relationship between the animal and the shaman.

Figure 50: Mortar jaguar (Burger 1992:157 fig. 145)

Figure 51: Snuff tablet on sea mammal bone (Lombards Museum)

Figure 52: Upper register of the circular plaza (Burger 1992: 135 fig. 125).

Figure 53: Lower register of the circular plaza (Burger 1992: 135 fig. 125).

Another example of the shaman is located in the circular plaza where once again jaguar and human meet. The circular plaza is composed of a gigantic frieze that goes all

the way around the walls. Lumbreras (1993), who excavated the circular plaza, believes that this frieze dates to phase C from the Rowe seriation. The lower register of the wall is composed of small rectangular slabs with fourteen realistic jaguars which appear to be in a procession toward a central staircase. These realistic jaguars each have an identical figure walking with them. Above the jaguars, another row of larger and vertical slabs are visible. On them appear anthropomorphic figures which like the jaguars, are in matching pairs. The people represented in the top row could be transformed shamans making their way to the temple. One of them is a fanged individual holding a staff in one of his hand. The staff, the principal emblem of authority (Burger 1992), is actually the San Pedro cactus known for his hallucinogenic power. The shaman is fully transformed except for its humanoid stance. The shaman has clawed hands, his mouth has prominent canines and his eyes are very round with what appear to be a dilated pupil (probably due to the drugs). The hairs and his belt are composed of a multitude of serpents. Due to the particular style of Chavín, it is not surprising that the transformed jaguar has elements of another powerful animal like the snake. It might be a way for him to combine the special powers of two animals into one body proving his strength and his supernatural power. Another shaman wears a crown-like headdress with a jaguar tail hanging from it. The shaman also has a shield and grasps a *Strombus* shell trumpet which was, according to Burger (1992), part of the beginning and the end of ceremonies. Burger (1996) emphasizes that the *Strombus* shell is so important that it was associated with deities. The presence of the staff, the shell trumpet, the San Pedro cactus and the hybridization of human and feline

reinforce the fact that the persons represented are shamans transformed into jaguars. The bottom row of slabs in the circular plaza has a bas-relief of jaguar in a realistic form repeated over and over again. This could mean that the shaman has a basic feline nature which shows itself only during the ecstasy (Cordy Collin 1980). These processions are guiding the viewer toward something even more sacred, the galleries where the Lanzón figure is located.

Jaguar and Deity

The complexity of the art style in Chavín makes it difficult to identify any one animal as one deity. However, some animals appear to be more dominant in certain sculptures or bas-reliefs, which could mean that they were the main origin of the cult. One of these animals is the jaguar, which is depicted frequently in Chavín art. In the earliest phase of Chavín, the jaguar appears to be more naturalistic, but soon after the feline is instead depicted as a magical anthropomorphic magical animal. Kano explains that this change "reflects a change in the god concept" (Kano 1979:36). Kano developed a theory that shamans actually transformed into gods and served as a visual, corporeal representation of the divine. It is why, according to Kano(1979), Chavín's deities have so many human characteristics.

The best representation of the jaguar as a deity is the Lanzón figure. It is considered to be of the oldest stylistic type of Chavín and belongs in the AB phase. It is

also believed to represent the supreme deity of Chavín and to be the reason for the pilgrimages to the city (Burger 1992: Kano 1979).

Figure 54: Rollout of the Lanzón (Burger 1992:149 fig. 140)

The 4.53 meter granite shaft formed into the shape of a spear and is located at the only cruciform galleries of Chavín. The Lanzón figure passes through both the ceiling and floor of the chamber and can be seen as an *axis mundi* connecting earth with the heavens and the underworld. Its central location makes the Lanzón the primary image in the cult of the Old Temple. The galleries where the Lanzón is located have shown evidence of water manipulation which would have created a frightening acoustic effect

(Lumbreras et Al. 1976). The head of the Lanzón is a feline monster while its body appears to be human (Figure 54).

The deity has human arms, ears, legs and five-digits hands. It is wearing earrings, bracelets and a short skirt. His hair and eyebrows are composed of snakes. Kano says that the snakes are "probably lesser gods, attendants of the Jaguar God" (Kano 1979: 37). Its mouth appears to be that of a jaguar which is very important because Urton (2008) demonstrated that the mouth was a portal of entry and exit, and he emphasized that the marked canines show the boundary into and out of the body. Due to its humanization, the Lanzón could be the representation of a jaguar deity showing itself through a shaman (Urton 2008; Kano 1979). The Lanzón headdress is made of a column of fanged feline heads, reinforcing the figure's power bestowed onto him through association with the jaguar. All the non-human elements represent the deity's supernatural power. Lothrop (1951) says that the Lanzón must have been an idol of immense importance throughout the Chavín world because it influenced art forms long after it was completed. Burger (1992) adds that the restricted access to it makes it a dangerous and powerful god as only a select few would have had the opportunity to view it.

The Smiling God is another figure visible outside in the rectangular court at the base of the New Temple (Figure 55). It is from the D phase and was found in December 1956 in the upper terrace close to the Black and White portal (Rowe 1962). It is dressed similarly to the Lanzón image and appears to be a less complex representation of the

same main deity. It has large upper canines and hair made of snakes while the ears, torso and hands appear to be human. It also wears bracelets, anklets and earring pendants. Unlike the Lanzón, it does not have a headdress. In his right hand, the Smiling God is holding a *Strombus* shell, a male symbol, while in his right hand he is holding a *Spondylus* shell, a female symbol, conveying a message of harmony (Burger 1992).

Figure 55: Rollout of the Smiling God (Rowe 1962:12 fig. 11)

Druc (2004) says that the Spondylus shells are from the warm waters of coastal Ecuador which indicates the influence of Chavín and the existence of long-distance trade. Rowe (1996) emphasizes that the shells were a common offering and this image was probably meant to show what was expected from the worshipper. The Smiling God appears to be the "public representation" of the Lanzón figure (Rowe 1996; Burger 1992). It is simplified and visible to everybody, reinforcing the idea of sacredness and privilege that accompanied seeing the original image of the deity inside the gallery. It is

possible that the Lanzón figure was once visible to all in the Old Temple but due to an increase in population and visiting pilgrims they built the New Temple. They might have restricted viewing of the Lanzón after the end of the construction of the New Temple and then placed the image of the Smiling God for everybody to see. By restricting the view of the Lanzón, the shamans gained more power by controlling who was able to see it.

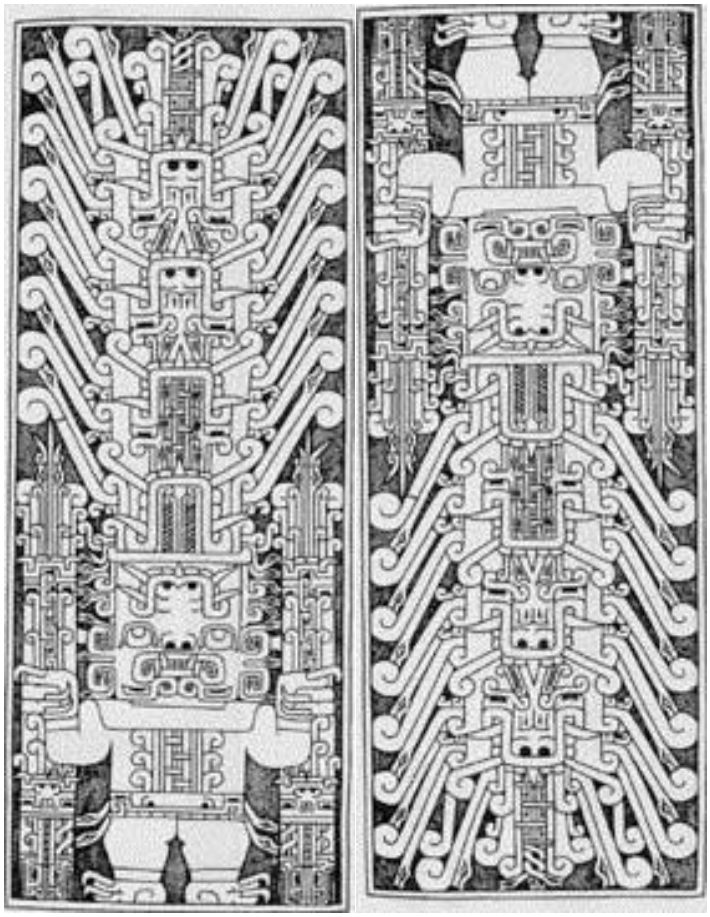

Figure 56: Rollout of the Raimondi Stela (Burger 1992:175 fig.176).

The Raimondi stela appears to also be a representation of the same feline deity, as depicted in the Lanzón figure, but it is highly stylized (Figure 56). It is an EF style carved stone, which measures 1.98 meters in height. The stela was discovered by archaeologist Antonio Raimondi in the house of a peasant who lived near Chavín and who used it as a table (Vecco 2006). Richardson (1994) hypothesizes that the stela may have been taken from the New Temple outer wall. The stela was transported to Lima in 1873 and was identified as a deity by Rowe in 1962, who renamed it the Staff God. The deity is shown full face in a symmetrical pose, but it occupies only the lower part of the figure. The upper two-third of the carving represents an elaborated headdress. Unlike the Lanzón and the Smiling God, the Staff God's jaguar's mouth has turned down corners. It has clawed hands and feet, a feline nostril, round eyes and its belt and hairs are made out of snakes. The deity holds two elaborated staffs in each hand, which convey a message of balance and authority (Burger 1992). The Raimondi stone might be a mixture of the Lanzón figure and of the Smiling God. The repetition of the headdress might have been a way for the artist to fill up the space without violating any artistic convention (Roe 1974). However even if the headdress was designed to fill up the space, it was carved with extreme care as the image can be rotated upside-down and show several felines coming out of each other's mouths surrounded by snakes and tongues can be seen. This technique wherein the image is carved to have meaning right-side up or upside-down is known as contour rivalry meaning that an image can be read in multiple ways. The Raimondi stela

shows the complexity in carving that the people of Chavín were capable of and also how they were able to modernize as a way to adapt to change in belief over time.

Summary:

The jaguar is undeniably important to the people of Chavín. The complexity of the art makes it difficult to identify it as a sole deity; however important characteristics of this feline appear in three of the most important deities of the city: the deity represented in the Lanzón figure, the Smiling God, and the Staff God. The transformation of the shaman uses the feline as a companion or a personification of the deity itself. The jaguar gave the shaman supernatural powers and authority in society by differentiating him from the commoner. Even though the jaguar was not a native animal of the area of Peru where Chavín de Huantar was located, the power and strength of the animal, its power and its strengthof the animal, made it part of the Andean pantheon. The archaeological record does not provide us with many clues about the true role of the jaguar at Chavín, but its recurrence in part (mouth, claws) or in full body shows that it was significant to the beliefs of the inhabitants of Chavín.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to assess the different manifestations of the jaguar in the Olmec, Teotihuacan, the Maya and Chavín de Huántar using artifacts and scholarly work. I used well-known artifacts in each culture to show how the jaguar was enshrined in the art of these cultures. The evidence from these artifacts demonstrates that the jaguar was an object of fascination for all of these different groups based on their perception of its strength, its courage and its power. Because the Olmec and Chavín de Huántar are the major early archaeological sites known in their regions and extensively studied I believe that these populations were most likely responsible for spreading the attraction and understanding of this feline to other cultures. The people of Teotihuacan left a beautiful but empty city with many unanswered questions while the Maya left us numerous writings and exquisite art work. In the art of both cultures, the jaguar was a frequent subject.

The Olmec and the people of Chavín de Huántar both associated the jaguar with a shaman in transformation. In both cultures, the shaman became the animal and took on its special powers. Due to its ability to easily travel between earth and water, the jaguar became the perfect companion to travel between the world of the dead and the world of the living. The shaman took the jaguar's power and became a physical representation of it. The shaman in transformation raises the question of who the artist was who created the artifact. Was it a shaman himself or somebody else? The artifacts in both cultures are

representing a clear depiction of the shaman's power. I strongly believe that the art available to us with respect to the shaman or the religion was probably done or dictated by the shaman himself. It was a means to secure his position, demonstrate his power to everybody and control the religion. With the Olmec and Chavín, I attempted to separate priest and shaman; however, our current differentiation of these two people and functions may not apply to the Olmec and Chavin. Priests are liturgical officiants, have a formal position in their society due to their knowledge of religion and practice of rituals. Priests are fully trained and gained their power from their position. In contrast, the traditional view is that shamans gained their power from their personal experience with the deity and the supernatural. It is highly possible that such a difference between these roles was less defined at that time. The same person was, it appears, not only in charge of the religion, but also acted as an intermediary between the common Olmec people and the gods. That is, he acted both as priest and shaman. I believe that a better term to use should probably be "religious leader."

There are also proofs in the Maya and the culture of Chavín that the jaguar was represented in artifacts connected to religious rituals such as the bloodletting ceremony and drug snuffing. Both cultures left several highly decorated artifacts that were used during these important ceremonies. The Olmec, for instance, used ceremonial axes showing a were-jaguar. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient evidence to establish how they were used or in what type of ceremony. However, because of their size, the use of jade and the intricate decoration archaeologists are convinced that these axes were used

only for religious rituals. It is plausible, if not probable that these people marked their ceremonial tools with this feline to endow them with sacred meaning. In the city of Teotihuacan, however, it is not possible to ascertain if the jaguar was used for ceremonial purposes as no ceremonial artifacts representing a jaguar has been found.

All four cultures used the jaguar as a means to secure power in a political, religious or military way. The Olmec's rulers, showed their right to the throne by demonstrating their connection to the jaguar. In addition the Olmec used a myth of a human and a jaguar giving birth to the line of rulers. The Maya also used mythology to connect their rulers to the jaguar and even took the name of the feline to assert their divine status. It is not surprising because this feline is at the top of the food chain; therefore, the ruler being at the top of the hierarchy should and indeed was represented with the mighty animal, a means of showing to all that he was the one with higher, if not absolute power. The ruler was holding a difficult position, trying to balance the supernatural and the living, and the jaguar reinforced his authority. The people of Teotihuacan used the image of the jaguar to represent their military. The warrior was given the same power as the transforming shaman and was able to become the jaguar. The people of Chavín appeared to have given their shaman considerable power and control. Chavín was primarily a ceremonial center, and to this day archaeologists have not found any sign of military or political conflict. The fact that aside from other deities the shaman was the most represented figure indicates that he was the person exercising the most power in the society. Whether they were rulers, shamans, or members of the

military, they all differentiated themselves from the commoner and publicly claimed their greater power through associating themselves with representations of the jaguar.

Through my research I discovered that the jaguar was a deity in all four of these cultures. First, the Maya have an impressive pantheon of divinities which are represented by the jaguar but given different roles, ranging from transporting people to the underworld with the Old Jaguar Paddler to fertility with the Water Lily Jaguar. The people of Teotihuacan viewed the jaguar as a water deity while the Olmec viewed it as an earth deity. They both once again showed that the proficiency of the jaguar on water and land fascinated the people and gave the feline these special roles in their religions. In a way the Mayan Water Lily Jaguar is a combination of earth and water which has resulted in the deity of fertility. The people of the city of Chavín decided to multiply the power of the jaguar by mixing its aptitudes with other animals to create this monumental anthropomorphic deity (the Lanzón). These cultures observed the jaguar and gave him religious power adapted to their observations of the jaguar's abilities in the wild.

The jaguar was used to show great power, and it is because of that that the feared and venerated animal was so heavily represented. Based on all the archeological sites and within them the artifacts discovered and analyzed, and all the published literature, I strongly believe that the jaguar was part of the daily life of these four cultures through religion, politics and/or military. They venerated this animal in different ways because of

the duality that it represents. Studying the art of these different cultures gave us a glimpse of their fascination for the jaguar and their beliefs. However, future research in iconography might help achieve a better understanding of these four cultures' views of the physical world and the sacred one.

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