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Chapter 7: Linking Cantel and *Dioses* Lineage Texts to Changing Historical Circumstances

7.1. Introduction: Shared Characteristics of Cantel and *Dioses* Lineage Texts

The four modified text lineages discussed in the previous chapter fall into two groups. The first group, comprised of the Cunén and Tecpán lineages, involves minor modifications that preserve the character of the early style texts. They differ in that Cunén lineage texts reveal very little innovation that is not borrowed from other lineages, while Tecpán lineage texts involve two short added scenes, and some shorter additions to speeches, as well as the concluding dedications. Added sections reveal in incipient form several traits that become much more prominent in the second group. Foremost among these are the more haphazard use of poetic forms, and the development of text that “catches up” with pantomime, as well the addition of several geographic locations and a greater emphasis on Tekum’s heroism.

The second group, comprising the Cantel and *Dioses* lineages, involves the use of greatly expanded texts. Texts of both lineages seek documentary truth concerning the war, with further battle locations listed and additional information on other Spanish conquests and their strategies and use of armaments. The exaggerated size of K’iche’ forces arraigned against the invaders derives from Fuentes y Guzmán’s late 17th century chronicle of Guatemala, the *Recordación Florida*, as does the use of “Umán” as a surname for Tekum. In the coda section both lineages substitute *despedida* speeches by the two *gracejos* for the *loa*-derived dedications that appear in some early style and Tecpán lineage texts. In combination these changes lend greater weight to the *Baile de la Conquista* as a story of invasion and less as a story of conversion.

An example concerns the *despedidas* to the audience recited at the conclusion of the drama by Ajitz and Quirijol. The Cunén, Cantel and *Dioses* texts all use the *gracejo* speeches to send off the audience. Tecpán lineage texts, argued to be the earliest in origin of the post-1870 lineages, are the only ones to consistently lack the paired *despedida* speeches at the end. Instead, some Tecpán lineage texts rely on the earlier conclusion of alternating dedications, which are addressed to the Virgin and sometimes also the patron saint.

Despite their differences the common themes in these *gracejo* speeches include baptism by Alvarado, Ajitz’s views on his native religion versus Christianity, and Quirijol’s interest in marrying Native women. It is evident that Ajitz’s views are not consistent among the three varieties and even among texts using the same variety. The *despedidas* of the Cunén lineage are the most conservative in content, and in these Ajitz is clearest about his embrace of Christianity. The Cantel and *Dioses* group texts were modified frequently through the middle of the 20th century, so it is no surprise that they can be contradictory on this subject, even between the statements of Quirijol and Ajitz in the same text. Nevertheless, both varieties include texts in which Ajitz’s

choice is ambiguous. Of these three lineages, only the *Dioses* texts maintain poetic form for the *despedida* speeches, suggesting that they might have been part of its original composition. The *despedidas* lack poetic form in the Cunén and Cantel lineage texts, so they might have been added later to adopt this *Dioses* text innovation.

In more general terms, both Cantel and *Dioses* texts alter the relationship between character and narrative structure of the Franciscan drama. All important information is revealed early in the play, rather than letting it unfold. Barbara and Dennis Tedlock (1985: 134–35) offer an explanation. They assert that announcing future events at the beginning of a narrative constitutes a distinctive Maya rhetorical device which they call “telegraphing.” They cite two examples: a story from Joyabaj about Tekum in which the first paragraph announces that he will be defeated by the Spaniards; and a sentence from the *Popol Vuj* in which the death of Sipacna is announced before it is recounted. However, there may be a simpler explanation. Both of these examples involve the retelling of familiar stories for which the audience is expected to know the outcome as soon as the topic is announced. Similarly, because the *Baile de la Conquista* has been performed annually for centuries in K'iche' communities, the events it enacts are well known. Such familiarity with the story and its outcome, leading to reconceptualization of the narrative, also explains the comment by Ernesto Ixcayauh Alvarado of Momostenango that the opening dance represents a gathering of forces to confront the invaders.¹

Not only is the same information available throughout the Cantel and *Dioses* texts, but also character traits are maintained throughout, rather than evolving through a character arc. Rey K'iche's internal struggles are muted and, as will be seen, do not impact on performance. More importantly, Tekum's character remains consistent throughout, and because he is also given knowledge of all future events from his first appearance, Tekum is transformed from tragic hero to simply hero. This shift from character arc to consistent character conforms to Edmonson's (1997: 86) characterization of Maya style drama as the playing out of one's fate rather than the consequence of one's choices, an approach that relates to influence over a person's life of the day of birth in the divinatory calendar (Hutcheson 2009: 891). This would suggest that the change from character arc to consistent character might represent a means of adapting the *Conquista* script to Maya understandings of theatre as well as responding to the audience's familiarity with the events of conquest after centuries of performance.

The added *desafíos* and scenes perform a related task that may be understood as a logical extension of the focus on consistent character. Since the drama does not unfold through choices and character arc, it must unfold and gain depth through the consequences of bringing contrasting characters together. The *desafíos* allow Tekum and Alvarado to interact verbally, which they never do in the early style text. From this exchange the audience can see that the two leaders are evenly matched, though Alvarado shows his ambition for conquest and his view of the K'iche' as inferior, while Tekum speaks with the sense of honour that arises from defense against unjust aggression. The Ajitz prologue developed in Cantel likewise serves to examine

¹ Personal communication, 2010.

differences in character through bringing Tekum and Ajitz into extended dialogue. Through this exchange the audience learns that Ajitz is wise but passive and defeatist, while Tekum, though positive, active and courageous, is prone to quick anger. Thus the result of their interaction is that Tekum reacts angrily to Ajitz's despondency and becomes unable to see or trust in Ajitz's wisdom.

Characterization of Tekum is not only consistent but also elaborated in the *Dioses* and Cantel texts, but particularly in the latter. The Cantel texts are the most radically altered of the four late lineages, with insertions of multiple monologues as well as *desafíos* and whole scenes, reaching twice the length of the early style texts. Along with the *desafíos*, most of the added monologues further construct Tekum's defiant and selfless heroism, downplaying any moments of indecision, a characterization that will be shown to be even more developed through the current manner of performance. Tekum's enhanced heroism in the Cantel texts has proven attractive to Maya dance teams that traditionally used texts from other lineages. For example the *autor* at Nebaj offered to sell me a fine early-style text (Cunén lineage) because his dance team found it lacking in sufficient speeches for Tekum. The text they were used to, but was unavailable after the recent death of a *maestro*, was apparently a copy of the Cantel-style Chichicastenango text (see Bode 1961: 240). Ajitz also benefits from extended and additional monologues in the Cantel texts, expanding evidence of his spiritual knowledge and powers but also greatly accentuating his devotion to Tekum.

Tekum is directly tied to other additions that characterize the *Dioses* and Cantel texts to varying degrees. First, are the several references to "*la patria*" (fatherland). In the early style texts this word appears only twice, when Tzunun declares that Tekum deserves burial with great pomp since he died for the fatherland, and when the Malinches encourage Rey K'iche' that his sovereignty will return. In the *Dioses* texts the term is more frequent, generally concerning the need to defend the fatherland or love for the fatherland, as well as Tekum's farewell to the fatherland in his death speech. The diverse Cantel lineage texts expand this usage, with from 8 to 15 repetitions of the term used in reference both to the K'iche' and Spanish nations. In addition to these repetitions, the Cantel texts include Tekum's call for the fatherland to awaken, delivered twice in the same speech before the battle.

Dioses and Cantel texts also directly tie Tekum to the quetzal. In the early style texts, the only mention of the quetzal is when Ajitz says he will take the form of this bird to harass the Spaniards. Also, when Tekum relates that he has flown three times over the head of Alvarado, he does not specify in what bird form. In *Dioses* texts, the quetzal is specifically mentioned in reference to the insignia on Tekum's crown. And in the Cantel texts the quetzal is several times predicted to die on the same day or to leave Tekum's body as he dies.

Thirdly, use of the word *libertad* (liberty) greatly increases in the *Dioses* and Cantel texts. Again usage in the Cantel texts is more specific, referring to the threat the Spanish invasion poses to K'iche' autonomy, and in one passage remarking that those who die fighting for liberty will have their forehead adorned with a laurel wreath. Further, in the prologue the quetzal is tied to a prediction of Tekum's death and loss of liberty.

These references to *patria*, *libertad* and the quetzal are significant because they may be tied historically to nationalistic ideological productions of the liberal dictatorships that governed Guatemala from 1871 to 1944, the period in which Bode's documentation indicates these additions were made. Therefore in order to understand these connections, and why Maya *maestros* would take up such concepts, it is necessary to present some historical background on the liberal regime and its construction of Tekum, including his link to the quetzal.

7.2. Coffee state repression

David McCreery (1990: 104–05) characterizes the liberal dictatorship period as “the most fundamental change in Guatemala’s economic social and political structures since the Spanish conquest.” McCreery explains that planters began investing heavily in coffee plantations in the decade of the 1860s due to plummeting demand for cochineal, formerly the major export, as aniline dyes became widely available. Finding the conservative government unresponsive to their needs for expansion, coffee planters of western Guatemala instigated the revolution that overthrew the conservative government in 1871. For seventy-three years the despotic liberal regime overwhelmingly supported coffee planters and their demand for intensive, short term labour. This requirement replaced a period of relative Indigenous autonomy under the conservatives with an unprecedented level of state intrusion (Carmack 1983: 222–24). Greg Grandin (2000: 127) writes that “coffee production parasitically attached itself to Indigenous communities, slowly draining pueblos of their subsistence autonomy. Indian towns were obvious sources of labor, and at times whole communities, either through the *mandamiento* or peonage, became the captive workforce of specific planters.” Safeguards against unsupportable exploitation of and violence against Indigenous populations, in place since the New Laws of 1542, were virtually eliminated in the regulation of labour on an unprecedented scale to secure the coffee harvest, with inevitable dissent brutally quelled by an enormously repressive state apparatus. The government thereby transformed the Indigenous population from wards of the state to enemies of the state, subject to constant surveillance and brutal discipline in order to ensure the productivity of coffee plantations. This 19th century liberal construction of Indigenous peoples as enemies of the state laid the groundwork for the genocidal counter-insurgency violence of the 1980s.

Administrative intrusions needed to appropriate Indigenous labour depended on a population intrusion of non-Maya into Maya communities. Intrusive ladinos managed labour drafts, took over civic administration and the militia, and appropriated community lands at the time an increase in land for cultivation was needed by an expanding Indigenous population. Grandin (1997: 213) writes that the liberal regime “legislated primitive capital accumulation that made Mayan land, labour and revenue available to the rapacious needs of the new coffee economy and a burgeoning bureaucracy.” He (Grandin 1997: 221) characterizes this legislation as “land and labour reforms intended to promote coffee production and export, along with a host of lesser decrees and laws designed to raise revenue and effect control.” The Catholic church which, despite its repression of *Costumbre*, had nevertheless enjoyed considerable loyalty from *Costumbristas*, especially under the church-allied conservative regime (1838–1871) that had protected Indigenous populations, was also decimated by

liberalism, with the archbishop exiled, monasteries closed, church lands appropriated and monastery libraries disbanded.

However, the liberal regime was not uniform. McCreery (1994: 172–76) explains further that in this period Guatemalans recognized two brands of liberals. Justo Rufino Barrios represented the new radical liberalism of the coffee planters mobilizing military force to control indigenous land and labour in support of an export economy. Though José María Reina Barrios was a nephew of Justo Rufino Barrios and fought with him in the liberal revolution, Reina Barrios represented longer-standing moderate, intellectual liberals, concerned more with the internal economy and with assimilating Indigenous people through education freed from church control. He temporarily ended the forced labour law or *mandamiento* and funded Indigenous education. Thus, in 1894, the K'iche' *Sociedad el Adelanto* of Quetzaltenango commissioned a monument in his honour (Grandin 2000: 149). However, in 1897, when Reina Barrios attempted to prolong his government past his term and suspended congress, another Barrios relative raised a revolutionary army against him in the Quetzaltenango region and was defeated. In 1898, in revenge for his execution of the Quetzaltenango Mayor, Reina Barrios was assassinated. The succeeding despotic rule of Manuel José Estrada Cabrera, from 1898–1920, returned to and intensified repressive liberal policies of Justo Rufino Barrios. This oscillation between radical and moderate liberals exacerbated the pace of change for Maya communities.

Robert Carmack demonstrates the impact such rapid changes had on the Maya community of Momostenango (1979; 1983; 1995). While he was an ally of Reina Barrios, the most prominent ladino civic and military leader, the *caudillo* Teodoro Cifuentes, won the loyalty of the K'iche' population with paternalistic means recalling those of conservative Carrera, bringing Indigenous *Costumbrista* rituals into civic administration and the military, and facilitating the training of Indigenous men in new trades Carmack 1995: 196). Thereafter, as he rose to the position of *jefe político* (governor) for the department of Totonicapán, Cifuentes chose to ally instead with the repressive Estrada Cabrera (Carmack 1979: 279–88; 1995: 207–08). It was in 1894, during Cifuentes' alliance with Reina Barrios, leadership of Momostenango's militia, and patronage of Maya ceremony, the year before Cifuentes became Momostenango's *alcalde* (mayor), that Juan Zárate appears to have introduced the radical *Dioses Inmortales* variant to Momostenango (Bode 1961: 249).

7.3. Literary and Visual Constructions of the K'iche', Tekum, and the Quetzal

The relation of Indigenous Guatemalans to the state also figured into liberal ideology, especially as it concerned notions of progress and nationalism. A group of primarily literary but also visual productions emanating from, expounding and shaping liberal ideology involved the K'iche' people, the quetzal, Tekum's resistance to Spanish invaders and, in a few cases, the *Baile de la Conquista*. I present some of this literary material in order to subsequently demonstrate that many of the important changes to the *Conquista* text during the liberal period involved transcultural exchange with *Ladino* ideology and literary works. This evolution thus explains how the K'iche', and eventually Tekum, became national—and nationalist—symbols.

7.3.1. The Quetzal and the K'iche' in the Regional Los Altos Movement

Though our concern here is with changes in the Conquista text contemporary with the Liberal dictatorships that began in 1871, Arturo Taracena Arriola (1999) has demonstrated that the ideology of this liberal period was part of an evolution that began in the early 19th century in the western highlands of Guatemala, a region known at the time as Los Altos. Taracena traces this symbolic production in relation to political changes that saw a regional coalition transform through the 1871 revolution into a national government.

In its regional phase, with its political centre in Quetzaltenango, symbolism of the pre-Hispanic K'iche' nation was crucial to the promotion of its ideology. Taracena (1999: 191–95) illustrates an 1808 document through which Los Altos leaders demonstrated their allegiance to King Fernando VII of Spain. The text for this document constructs the Spanish royal house as the legitimate successor to the line of “primitive” K'iche' kings. By extension the text also constructs the Los Altos liberals as successors to the K'iche' nation.

In her 2007 study of ideological constructions involving Indigenous Latin Americans Rebecca Earle demonstrates that such constructions represented a frequent and widespread approach in the independence era, characterized by disavowal of contemporary Indigenous peoples in favour of identification with pre-Hispanic nations. The dominant image on this document, a woman holding a chain with portraits of K'iche' monarchs, furthered this identification, since she represents the sovereign pre-Hispanic K'iche' nation.

This female figure wears a feathered headband, and is shown as well with a quiver and holding a bow and arrow. As Earle (2007: 50–60) explains, such images were commonly used throughout colonial and early independence Latin America as personifications of Indigenous America in general as well as of specific peoples. Earle (2007: 60) writes that: “this imagery placed indigenosity firmly in the past; the designers of these symbols did not believe that contemporary indigenous peoples wore feather crowns or carried macanas. These emblems were instead the markers of the preconquest Indian.” By appropriating these formerly sovereign Indigenous nations, at the same time repudiating contemporary Indigenous populations, these pre-independence *criollo* leaders could claim their own sovereignty as nations.

But whereas such assertions were usually intended to foment independence from Spain, this 1808 Los Altos document instead proclaims loyalty to the empire. Adoption of pre-Hispanic nations as forebears could thus work both ways, and it did so in Guatemala. This is likely because the major concern of Los Altos liberals at the end of the colonial period was independence from the central government of Guatemala, more than independence from Spain. Assertion of loyalty to Ferdinand VII is also an assertion of disloyalty to the “Kingdom of Guatemala.” In this light, celebration of the K'iche' nation and assertion of continuity with its monarchs takes on another layer of meaning concerning regional autonomy.

All three successive capitals of the colonial Kingdom of Guatemala are located in territory of the Maya Kaqchikel. Independence leaders in the capital region therefore identified with the pre-Hispanic Kaqchikel

nation rather than the K'iche'. An example of this identification is the "*Canto a la Independencia de Guatemala*," (Song to the Independence of Guatemala), published in 1827. As Earle shows (2007: 38), when poet José Vicente García Granados writes that the Kaqchikel have suffered three centuries of slavery,² he is referring not to the Indigenous population but instead to freedom-hungry *criollos* oppressed by an administrative system that gives preference to *peninsulares*.

Antagonism between K'iche' and Kaqchikel dates at least from the 15th century, when the Kaqchikel achieved independence from the K'iche' and constructed their own national capital at Pa Tinamit (Iximche). After the fall of Tenochtitlan to Cortés, both K'iche' and Kaqchikel offered alliance with the Spanish, but the K'iche' reneged and encroached on the Spanish colony of Soconusco, giving Alvarado an excuse to invade the K'iche' nation. The Kaqchikel remained allies of the Spanish and, after Alvarado burned Q'umarcaaj, helped round up K'iche' refugees for branding as slaves. Although K'iche' and Kaqchikel leaders soon joined in rebellion against Alvarado, and together were defeated, some members of each ethno-linguistic group have retained hard feelings against the other to the present day. More importantly for our purposes, that ancient antagonism has been and continues to be employed metaphorically to represent the antagonism between the central Guatemalan government and the leaders of the Los Altos region. Therefore I would argue that a subtext of this 1808 Los Altos identification with the K'iche', as opposed to the other major western highland ethnic group, the Maya Mam, is a repudiation of the central government and an assertion of Los Altos difference and autonomy.

Another component of the K'iche' identification in the image on this 1808 document is a tree, supposedly the revered ceiba, on which is perched a quetzal. At this time the quetzal was likely another means of identifying with the K'iche' nation, considering that the bird is native to K'iche' territory.

After independence, the quetzal image was retained as a symbol of identification for Los Altos liberals. The liberal government of the Federal Republic of Central America crumbled in the late 1830s from the revolution led by conservative Rafael Carrera Turcios. Los Altos liberals saw the new conservative government as having reintroduced the church-dominated character of Guatemala's centuries as a colony of the Spanish empire, so they decided to demand autonomy from the national government. They drew up a shield in 1836 that represented their regional state through a depiction of Quetzaltenango. Above the city's name and the date they drew an image of the Samalá Valley with the quetzal perched on one of a cluster of volcanoes overlooking fields. The sheep, pitchfork and sickle on the field represent the industriousness of European-derived farming practices (Taracena 1999: 196-97).

The quetzal image acquired another level of meaning for *Altense* liberals during their attempts to secede from the Guatemalan nation. For the attempt in 1838, they founded a periodical named *El Quezal*, explaining the name choice in its inaugural issue by the notion that because the quetzal cannot survive in captivity, it represents a preference for death over enslavement. A new variation on the Los Altos/ Quetzaltenango shield

² *De esclavitud tres siglos espantosa / Hubieran ya por Kachiquel pasado.*

was drawn up in the same year, and revised again for another attempt at secession in 1848. This later shield repeats the Quetzaltenango label and depiction of regional topography and ethnicity. The Santa María volcano overlooks a field on which the K'iche' association is represented by a bow, arrow and quiver (Taracena 1999: 336) . Also present is the motif of a quetzal perched on the ceiba, now carrying the triple association of the K'iche' nation, Quetzaltenango, and the desire to be liberated from the Guatemalan state.

Despite the national conservative government support of the Catholic church, and in contrast to the previous liberal government's persecution of the church, the Los Altos liberals found a way to include the Catholic church within its liberal politics. As Taracena (1999: 137, 181–90) reports, the Totonicapán priest José Matías Quiñones Manzanares was a leader of the Los Altos secessionist movement. In 1838 Quiñones gave the inaugural speech for the constituent congress of the secessionist Los Altos state, arguing for a sacred alliance of Christianity and democracy. With his support, an independent Los Altos was declared on Christmas day 1838, equating the birth of a new nation with the birth of Christ while at the same time indicating that the Los Altos church would be independent of the Archbishop of Guatemala. In his inaugural speech Quiñones also constructed the birth of the Los Altos state as a vindication of the Spanish humiliation of the K'iche', thus identifying Los Altos as the successor to the K'iche' nation. Taracena explains that this incorporation of the Indigenous K'iche' past was really a way of creating and circumscribing a regional identity (1999: 181–82, 189–90, 195) .

However, Taracena (1999: 189–90) also notes that despite this identification with the pre-Hispanic K'iche' nation, the Los Altos liberals were antagonistic towards the Indigenous population of their secessionist state. Rebecca Earle (2007) has shown that in the early 19th century, liberal leaders of the independence movements in Latin America generally identified with pre-Hispanic populations as heroic if unsuccessful defenders of national sovereignty, while disdaining current Indigenous populations for not joining in the battle to free their lands from Spain. Because of this contrast of behaviors, and more importantly the contrast between living conditions of pre-Hispanic and current Indigenous populations, liberals refused to consider pre-Hispanic and contemporary Indigenous populations as belonging to the same race. This disparagement and exploitation of the Indigenous population of Los Altos undermined the region's attempts at independence because the Indigenous peoples sided with the national conservative government under the *mestizo* Carrera and supported the national army in combat with the secessionist liberals (Taracena 1999: 256, 280, 288).

Taracena argues that when the Los Altos liberals took over the national government in 1871 through a successful revolution, they adapted this regional Los Altos symbology to a national sphere. The quetzal was immediately made the national bird and incorporated with other symbols of liberty (weapons and laurel wreaths) into the national flag. Taracena (1999: 337) explains that the national liberal government included the quetzal as a symbol of liberty in the new Guatemalan shield while leaving out the volcano's and fields of the Samalá Valley in order to transform the image from regional to national significance.³ The new liberal government constructed their revolution, and the modernizing policies they subsequently put into practice, as

³ Quetzaltenango's own shield has retained the regional motif as seen in 1848.

having liberated Guatemala from the backwardness of the conservatives and the Catholic church. As a national emblem, the quetzal thus retained its pre-revolution meaning of liberal freedom in opposition to conservative captivity. The association of the quetzal with liberalism would also have carried the meaning of progress, in the modernist sense, which helps explain why the national currency was renamed the “quetzal” in 1925.

7.3.2. The Quetzal as Tekum’s Nawal

Long before the Los Altos liberals adopted the quetzal as a symbol of their desire to be liberated from conservatism and the church, the quetzal had been loosely associated with Tekum in his duel with Alvarado. This strand of the quetzal’s meaning is worth pursuing due to the significance of the linkage between these two threads under the liberal regime, in writings by liberal supporters as well as in the Cantel lineage texts for the *Baile de la Conquista*.

That Tekum’s *nawal* was a quetzal and that it either accompanied him in the duel with Alvarado or that Tekum took the *nawal*’s form for this duel is so commonly repeated that it is accepted as a core Maya understanding of the Spanish invasion and victory over the K’iche’ in 1524. It should therefore surprise many to learn that the identification of Tekum’s *nawal* as a quetzal appears to be a non-Maya or at least a late invention.

The earliest and primary sources on Tekum’s duel with Alvarado are the 16th century K’iche’ *títulos* written in Quetzaltenango and the surrounding region, discussed previously. All three of the presently known *títulos* that narrate this duel report that Tekum took the form of a bird and rose into the air to attack Alvarado, who stabbed him with his lance. The *Título Nihaib’ I* specifies three times that Tekum flew as an eagle (Recinos 2001: 87–90) whereas the other two do not specify the type of bird.⁴ All three mention that the bird wore a triple crown encrusted with jewels, which describes the papal crown or *triregnum* as it existed at the time, and was likely seen in paintings or prints circulated to Guatemala. As the most extensive of the three accounts, the *Título Nihaib’ I* also states that Tekum wore quetzal feathers, which would have been standard for high ranking male members of leading families, as it had been since the pre-Hispanic classic period. In this account Alvarado is impressed by the splendour of Tekum’s regalia and prevents dogs from attacking the corpse, at the same time learning that the town from which Tekum had emerged is called Quetzaltenango.

While K’iche’ continued expressing their understandings of Tekum’s role and importance through performing the *Baile de la Conquista*, retelling the story of Tekum’s death was taken over by non-Maya to form part of Guatemalan official culture. As Otzoy (1999: 78) deftly encapsulates this process:

⁴ The short *Título de los Caciques* from San Miguel Totonicapán notes that the Spaniards killed an Indian who had a *nawal* in the form of an eagle. It is assumed that this refers to Tekum though he is not named in this account. Another short Totonicapán document called the *Título de Cristóbal Ramírez* does refer to the death of Tekum but does not mention a *nawal*.

The creation of an official story about Tekum Umam has turned into a conflictual game between what is 'historical' and what is 'mythological.' The story is grounded in a Spanish document [Alvarado's letter] but cannot be sustained by itself since it is incomplete. Therefore, in order to make it complete, it has become necessary to resort to a series of Maya documents [the *títulos*]. But the Maya document is considered to be mythological. The final result has been a story of a character which is unclear, confusing, but official.

The ambiguity of an official story resulting from attempts to combine Alvarado's letter and the K'iche' *títulos* into a single narrative is exemplified in the earliest example. In his late 17th century chronicle entitled *Recordación Florida*, Fuentes y Guzmán combined Alvarado's account of the defeat of the K'iche' army with the story of this duel from several *títulos* to construct a synthetic version which he treats four times. In the first instance, Fuentes describes the *nawal* as a huge eagle, in the second a quetzal, in the third an eagle or quetzal, and in the fourth a quetzal (Fuentes y Guzman 1969–72: I, 84–85; II, 291; II, 295; III, 95–96). Apparently Fuentes was confused by the wearing of quetzal feathers.

Fuentes is also inconsistent as to whether the bird was a transformation of Tekum or a separate body linked to Tekum by a common destiny, so that when the bird is speared, Tekum also dies of the same wound. Such a distinction is required by European ontology and the resulting understanding of the term *nawal*, but likely not by Maya understandings. The interpretation of Tekum and the bird as separate bodies of linked destiny is included in Fuentes' first and most detailed account. This point is not made in the three available *títulos* treating the duel but likely appeared in one or more of the *títulos* consulted by Fuentes that have not been located. The evidence for this is that early style *Conquista* texts clearly allude to this notion of Tekum dying when the bird is speared: when Tekum announces that he is dying, Tzunun reacts with incredulity because he saw no one strike Tekum.

Fuentes' account was reused by later chroniclers including the anonymous early 18th century author of the *Isagoge Histórico Apologético* who is also ambivalent about whether the *nawal* was a quetzal or an eagle with quetzal feathers. Some chroniclers like Juarros eliminated mention of a *nawal*, while others acknowledged the story but with disbelief in its veracity. Writing in the early 18th century, the Dominican friar and translator of the *Popol Vuj*, Francisco Ximenez (1929–31: I, 120) acknowledges a difference of opinion as to whether Tekum's *nawal* was an eagle or a quetzal, but notes that people who claim to be descendants of Tekum specify that he took the form of an eagle. The Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg (1859: 641) identified the *nawal* as an eagle and also chose to repeat the version in which Tekum and the bird are killed by the same thrust of Alvarado's spear. Writing under the liberal regime in 1879, José Milla (1976: 100) disbelieves the story while acknowledging the lack of consensus on whether the *nawal* was an eagle or a quetzal. Thus while the only identification of Tekum's *nawal* produced by K'iche' people (the *títulos* and Tekum's descendants) is an eagle, Fuentes y Guzmán introduced the possibility that it may have been a quetzal, and this doubt as to the proper identification persisted for two centuries until the 1880s. So powerful became the need to identify Tekum with the small, fruit-eating quetzal rather than the large, predatory eagle, that its lack of aggressiveness had to be

ignored or to be overcome either by a claim of monstrous size or by focusing on the quetzal's red breast as evidence of the wound caused by Alvarado's lance.

7.3.3. José Martí and Tekum's Entrance into Liberal Ideology

Considering that the writings of Fuentes and his followers were well known during the 19th century, it might be expected that those liberal leaders of the regional Los Altos movement who selected the quetzal as a symbol of their desire for liberty from the conservative regime and the Catholic church would also take up the image of Tekum and his *nawal*. Yet I have found no evidence for this, and note that Tekum is not mentioned in Taracena's extensive analysis of the Los Altos movement. Nor did Otzoy find references for this period. Apparently, liberal interest in Tekum and connection with their previous use of the quetzal did not occur until they took over the national government in 1871. At least some of the credit for liberals putting Tekum and the quetzal together goes to Cuban literary figure and activist for Cuban independence, José Martí Pérez.

Martí lived and taught in Guatemala for about a year, in 1877–78. His writings about Guatemala position him securely within the ideological framework of the ruling liberals. Like them he saw the Catholic church as a major impediment to progress. He argued that the pre-Hispanic Maya were advanced in science and other forms of knowledge, but that the Catholic church has kept Indigenous populations ignorant, backwards, and poor. The solution for Martí and other liberals was public education that would ensure progress and equal citizenship for all Guatemalans (Martí 1953: 86–87). Following an extensive tour of the nation, Martí wrote a book, called *Guatemala*, in which he expressed these ideas while praising the nation for its recent progress in agricultural production for export, particularly of coffee, cacao, and cane sugar. Martí also cited several Guatemalans working in European modes of literary, visual and musical composition who he believed had the potential for international recognition.

Martí's engagement with Guatemala's Indigenous populations in this volume is contrastingly superficial, yet consistently modernist, remarking on what he considered their recent transformation from being capricious to becoming picturesque (Martí 1953: 30). Martí was referring specifically to the Indigenous population of Cobán, in a region that had shifted to coffee export agriculture even before Liberals took over the national government (McCreery 1994: 161–72). Such a construction of local Maya Q'eqchi' populations as pre-modern exotica was likely lurking in this community for some time. Recall that the earliest known surviving text for the *Baile de la Conquista* is the copy that was made in 1872 by Rafael Villacorta of Cobán, a painter, sculptor, architect and one-time mayor of Cobán. Thus the earliest known copy of the text for the Conquest Dance is directly tied to liberalism with its tight control of Indigenous populations and commitment to economic progress focusing on coffee plantations. Typical of modernism, exploitation of Indigenous labour was closely tied to nostalgic consumption of Indigeneity as an exotic remnant of the premodern. According to Bode (1961: 242), Villacorta spoke K'iche' and Q'eqchi'. This copy was made to fulfill Villacorta's antiquarian interest, rather than for performance. Indeed his copy remained dormant, and when the *Conquista* was

performed for the first time at Cobán, in 1904 or 1908, it was with a different copy of the text purchased by Tiburcio Cáal in 1897 (Bode 1961: 243–44).⁵

Martí also repeats the liberal view that Indigenous lands would be more productive, and thus add more to Guatemala's progress as an exporter of agricultural products, if they were privatized. A decade later, Guatemalan Poet Juan Fermín de Aycinena made similar points in poems about K'iche' people, such as *El Indio* and *El Pensativo*. In these poems and others (Uriarte 1888, III: 23–45), Aycinena laments what he considers to be the decline of K'iche' people from their pre-Hispanic glories to their present poverty. He takes the softer liberal position that only by properly developing their fertile lands (i.e. privatizing and planting commercial crops) might the K'iche' people progress toward recapturing their past greatness.

Another literary product of Martí's sojourn in Guatemala was the short 1878 essay entitled *Poesía Dramática Americana*, in which Martí calls for a more inspired nationalist Guatemalan theatre. This essay was published in *El Porvenir*, the periodical of a society with the same name that was active from 1877 to 1882. Aycinena was also a leading member of the society. As Regina Fuentes Oliva (2009) explains, the objective of this society to create a national literature was as much political as aesthetic, designed to increase patriotism within the nation of Guatemala and to introduce Guatemala to outsiders. According to Fuentes Oliva, the periodical was also designed to contribute to a national policy of universal education intended to create proper citizens through exposure to the aesthetic products of western civilization, a subject that Martí covered extensively in his book on Guatemala. Further, Martí's essay for *El Porvenir* was published during the time that he served as vice president of the society.

Previously, in 1877, Martí himself had written a play celebrating Guatemala. The play was commissioned by the Barrios Government for a celebration of the anniversary of Guatemalan independence and was written in five days. Called *Patria y Libertad (Drama Indio)*, the play's dual titles encapsulate both what was expected and what was unique about the work. *Patria* references liberal views of nationalism, while *Libertad* calls up the liberal view that their revolution of 1871 and subsequent liberal government brought liberty to Guatemala. *Drama Indio* underscores the unique aspect of the work that credits Indigenous Guatemalans with helping to bring independence. Martí re-imagines the struggle for independence from Spain that took place a half century earlier as a collaboration between *mestizo* and Indigenous populations against the wealthy colonists and particularly the Catholic church that had enslaved them. In this play, the Indigenous ally (Pedro) mainly complains about centuries of exploitation, while the *mestizo* man (Martino) actively defies and overcomes the colonial authorities to achieve independence. None of the characters in the play are historical, and no reference is made to Tekum. However the symbolism of the quetzal is brought into the story. Martino is likened to the quetzal as a man who cannot live under the oppressive yoke of the Empire, and later when he achieves his goals he proclaims to his people that they are now as free as the quetzal. Martí's use of the

⁵ Cáal's history also brings up the issue of continued non-Maya approach to the *Conquista* as consumption of the exotic: in 1909 he was imprisoned for refusing to have his production of *La Conquista* performed in a political boss's house (Bode 1961: 244).

quetzal, especially in relation to the *mestizo* Martino, shows that while the story is ostensibly about Guatemala winning freedom from the Spanish empire, it actually concerns the liberal revolution of 1871 constructed as winning freedom from the conservative government, a war which indeed saw many Indigenous groups fighting for the liberals.

In contrast to his own theatrical subject matter, in his 1878 essay Martí advised Guatemalan playwrights to instead dramatize the heroism of Indigenous resistance against the Spanish conquest as conforming to understandings of patriotism and nationalism. Martí lists peoples, places and historical (or presumed historical) figures who might make proper dramatic subjects. Among these are three men to whom Fuentes y Guzmán attributes the origin of K'iche', Kaqchikel and Tzutujil kingdoms, Indigenous communities that resisted the conquest, and rebels against Spanish rule. The only individual mentioned that resisted the initial Spanish invasion is "Tecún Umán," cited by using the pseudo-surname established by Fuentes y Guzmán. Martí concludes by citing authors from outside Guatemala who have already produced literature with Indigenous heroes of resistance as examples for Guatemalan authors to follow.

A decade later Guatemala authors began to take up Martí's challenge, focusing in particular on Tekum. Felipe Silva Leal wrote several theatrical works on the subject of Tekum's resistance to the Spanish invasion of the K'iche' nation. Silva's 1887 play, *Tecún Umán, Escenas Preliminares de la Conquista del Imperio de Uatlán en el Año de 1524* is a story of courtly intrigue, a love triangle and vengeance against which the Spanish invasion looms. Tekum is accused of treason by a disgruntled servant, while the princess he loves is accused of sorcery by her jilted lover. The princess is condemned to death but rescued by Tekum who obtains her pardon. Only then can Tekum lead the resistance against the Spanish invaders. After Tekum dies in the duel with Alvarado the princess turns a poisoned arrow on herself to avoid being taken by a Spaniard.⁶

Silva's undated *La Conquista de Uatlán* also narrates Tekum's resistance and death. The first act of this play loosely follows the structure of the *Baile de la Conquista* and Silva even incorporates some of the text of the dance, beginning the Rey K'iche's monologue with "*Valedme, Tohil, Valedme en tan triste situación,*" a passage only one word different from the *Conquista* text. Ajitz makes an appearance as a diviner and then Tekum arrives to be given command. Further similarities appear in the second act, in which Ajitz blindfolds two Spanish ambassadors before their interview with Tekum. After this point Silva's text deviates starkly from the dance text precedent. The battle and death of Tekum take place offstage, narrated after the fact by another character. Tzunun and a Prince are taken to Alvarado who offers to leave the K'iche' in peace if they will provide sufficient treasure as ransom. Here Silva inverts Alvarado's fabricated story of K'iche' treachery into a story of Spanish treachery. After Tzunun and the Prince depart to collect such a ransom (recalling the story of Inka emperor Atahualpa), Alvarado sneers at their stupidity for believing the Spanish would ever leave. When Tzunun and the Prince return with treasure in gold, Alvarado has them bound as slaves for the march to Uatlán (Q'umarcaaj).

⁶ Silva dedicated this play to Juan Fermín de Aycinena, specifically as author of the poems *El Indio* and *El Pensativo*, mentioned above.

Both of Silva's stories adopt the form of a mid-nineteenth century European opera libretto and use many of its romanticized dramatic conventions. In both stories, Silva uses romantic nationalist tropes to similar those noted for the Cantel and *Dioses* lineage texts, such as references to saving or defending *la Patria*. Silva reworked Tekum's story according to liberal-nationalist views then current in Guatemala, idealizing Tekum and the K'iche' to represent Guatemala as a sovereign nation, defending itself against Spanish greed and violence abetted by the church.

While Silva never introduces the quetzal, either as a symbol of liberty or as Tekum's *nawal*, a quarter century after Martí published his exhortation to Guatemalan authors, Alberto Mencos Martínez incorporated both themes into his 1903 epic poem on the Spanish invasion entitled *Uatlán: Ensayo épico*. Mencos even more carefully followed Martí's suggestions, incorporating material drawn from the *Popol Vuj* and inserting a section on resistance involving various other Maya groups as well as K'iche'. In contrast to Silva's condemnation of Alvarado, Mencos accepts and dramatizes Alvarado's story that the invitation to Q'umarcaaj was a trap, thus justifying the torture and execution of the K'iche' kings. Putting a unique spin on this story, Mencos credits Kaibil [Balam], ruler of the Maya Mam, for concocting this deceit. Like Silva, Mencos includes the character Ahzumanche and adopts "Umán" as a surname for Tekum, both elements fabricated by Fuentes y Guzmán. The quetzal looms large in Mencos' tale, several times mentioned for its love of liberty and defense of the "*patria*" and also as Tekum's *nawal* who died with him.⁷

Salvadorian poet Joaquín Aragón, likewise working in a liberal idiom, in 1888 published a poem entitled *Tekum Umam* in the same volume as the two above-mentioned poems by Aycinena (Uriarte 1888, III: 523-31). Aragón's poetic interpretation of Tekum's duel with Alvarado attempts to treat the relationship between Tekum and his *nawal* with more realism. As Tekum tires from battle, the huge quetzal descends to defend him by attacking Alvarado. When Alvarado spears the quetzal, Tekum rushes to its aid, and Alvarado spears him as well. By the late 1880s then, the standard version of the duel involved definitive selection of the quetzal as Tekum's *nawal*, and the death of both by Alvarado's lance, a version repeated as well by Mencos in 1903.

William Tufts Brigham also connects Tekum and the quetzal in his 1887 book, *Guatemala, The Land of the Quetzal*. Because Brigham gathered material for this book while co-owner of a plantation in Guatemala from 1883 to 1887,⁸ it may be assumed that he sympathized with the pro-planter liberal government, a sympathy also evident in his book's subtitle. Brigham (1887: 97-98) first refers to the quetzal as Guatemala's national emblem and as a bird of freedom due to inability to survive in captivity, as well as source of feathers for regalia. Much later in the text, Brigham (1887: 267) treats the quetzal as Tekum's *nawal* and repeats the story of their simultaneous death. Brigham's exposure to post-revolution Guatemalan liberalism leads him to ignore

⁷ Mencos at times uses the word quetzal and at other times refers to it as a bird who dies in captivity or a bird with emerald green feathers. The latter example is used in the event of Tekum's death.

⁸ Wikipedia page: William Tufts Brigham. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Tufts_Brigham

previous uncertainty and identify Tekum's *nawal* securely as the quetzal, though one as colossal and ferocious as an eagle.

In his 1888 review of Brigham's book,⁹ Martí (1953: 95–96), also cites the quetzal both as the liberty-loving bird and as Tekum's simultaneously-dying *nawal*, but there is a small difference in Martí's presentation of these topics that suggests an important new ideological intent. Martí first recounts the death of Tekum and his quetzal *nawal* and then in the next sentence refers to the quetzal's character of dying when deprived of liberty. These two threads of the quetzal story had not been juxtaposed in any earlier writing of which I am aware, and they are certainly distant in Brigham's book. Martí's juxtaposition and reordering thus, perhaps for the first time, draws together the two strands of meaning for the quetzal. In this way Tekum also comes to carry the meaning of his *nawal*'s love of liberty, a logical extension since Tekum lost his life in an attempt to preserve K'iche' freedom. Further, under the liberal brand of nationalism that also made the quetzal the national bird, Tekum is transformed from a regional K'iche' hero to a national Guatemalan hero. This transformation of Tekum into the ideal Guatemalan patriot sets the stage for a mid the 20th century construction by the military government of Tekum as the ideal Guatemalan soldier, leading to the 1960 decree proclaiming February 20 as a holiday celebrating Tekum as a national hero on the presumed day of his death.

It will be noted then that the construction of Tekum as a national hero and his connection with the quetzal as lover of liberty first appears in a cluster of publications (Silva Leal, Aragón, Brigham, Martí) dated 1887–1888, which is more than a decade and a half after the liberals took over the Guatemalan government and also a decade after Martí tried to inspire such a trend in his stay during 1877–1878. I suspect that this decade delay was due in part to the presidency of Justo Rufino Barrios from 1873 to 1885, and his lack of connection to Guatemala's Indigenous communities.

While The construction of Tekum as a national hero of resistance in relation to Guatemalan nationalism under the liberal regime was long-standing and represented in a wide variety of media, it is worth noting that for Martí and other liberals of his time the connection he made might have another, more particular meaning. Considering Martí's earlier (1877) play in which he subtly identifies the quetzal's love of liberty with the liberals' claim to have liberated Guatemala, we can also read this link as a means of declaring Tekum's resistance to Alvarado as analogous to the liberals' resistance to the conservatives. Indeed, like the liberals, Tekum was refusing not only submission and captivity but also the Catholic religion. I am not arguing that Martí initiated this construction, though he might have. It is perhaps more likely that it had recently been a point of discussion among liberals in the government and among the planter elite. The result is the same: Martí and the Guatemalan liberals accorded Tekum the status of a revolutionary liberal.

A further connection between Tekum and liberal ideals was made a decade later through the first published description and commentary on the *Baile de la Conquista*. In their 1897 book on San Miguel Totonicapán entitled *Un Pueblo de Los Altos*, Jesús Carranza and Jacinto Amézquita commented separately on the absurdity

⁹ This review has been republished together with Martí's book *Guatemala* (Martí 1953).

of the dance's story as understood through the frame of Guatemalan liberalism and nationalism. Both authors interpreted Tekum's resistance to Spanish invasion in romantic-nationalist terms as a defense of liberty and *la patria*. Amézquita calls Tekum the "apostle of autonomy" while Carranza speaks of Tekum as "he who died in the unforgettable battle of El Pinar to defend Central America's sovereignty, independence and liberty"¹⁰ (Carranza 1897 57, 232). Hence both found the conclusion of the *Baile de la Conquista* to be ridiculous, claiming that the heroic K'iche' would never meekly submit to the Spanish crown and offer friendship to their conquerors (Carranza 1897: 38–39, 57, 231–32). For Carranza, this dramatization erased the dark history of Alvarado's cruelty towards the two K'iche' rulers, so he attributed its authorship to a descendant of the *conquistadores*. Amézquita applied liberal ideology more pointedly, accusing the church of perpetuating the *Baile de la Conquista* as a means to maintain Indigenous populations ignorant and submissive. He articulated the liberal view that Indigenous people must be saved from the conservative education provided by the church and instead receive a strong liberal education that will help them to assimilate into ladino society. These arguments, developed through consideration of the *Baile de la Conquista*, may have been designed to engage in conflicts between moderate and radical liberals, since the book was published in 1897, the year of the uprising against moderate liberal Reina Barrios in the same region.

7.4. Text Modifications and Transcultural Exchange

The history of liberalism in Guatemala and that of the Conquest dance became intimately entwined in the late 19th century. At the same moment in which *Ladino* elites like Carranza and Amézquita were drawing on Tekum and the Conquest Dance to reject the Catholic church and to support and disseminate liberal ideology concerning education, Maya *maestros* modifying dance texts were drawing on nationalist ideology to re-imagine their history through the dance, while *moreros* and *mascareros* may have begun incorporating quetzal images into Tekum's headdress and mask. Nationalizing a regional liberal ideology through the revolution of 1871 and selection of Tekum as a patriotic hero of the nation in the late 1880s appears concurrent with the dissemination of *Conquista* texts far outside of the dance's western K'iche' homeland, made possible in part by the habit of *maestros* traveling to teach in communities that had not yet acquired a copy of the text. Thus both *Ladino* and Maya were engaging in a transcultural dialogue, each adapting from the other what would be useful for their own purposes. Each stood to benefit, though in different ways, from the construction of Tekum as heroic defender of liberty and the nation.

One can not be sure which of the changes in late 19th century society, particularly in the relation of Indigenous peoples to the state, opened up the possibility for radical alterations to the text of the *Baile de la Conquista*. Liberal education policy may have been one such catalyst. Previously education for young Indigenous Guatemalans was largely in the hands of the Catholic church. In the early and middle colonial periods, these church schools and their religion-oriented education produced the *fiscales*, literate men who maintained the

¹⁰ ...quien murió en la inolvidable batalla del Pinar con heroísmo por defender la soberanía, la independencia y la libertad centro-americanas.

Conquista text over centuries with only minor unintentional copying errors. With secularization and termination of the *fiscal* position, literate Maya took over the keeping and transmission of the text as *maestros*. But when the liberal government instituted public secular education to replace church schools, broadening literacy, it would have inspired Indigenous men with different viewpoints on the sanctity of a festival dance text. Youths educated in liberal schools were undoubtedly encouraged to reject church teachings and dogma, which some might then have understood as license to re-write the *Conquista* text. It was likely these men whose secularizing and modernizing education led them to consider the benefits of intentional modifications designed to “update” the *Conquista* text both by catching up with established pantomimes and by incorporating current ideology concerning Tekum, liberty and the fatherland. Perhaps also the liberals’ appropriation of the story of Tekum’s resistance for nationalist purposes, and its popularization through *Ladino* plays and poems, opened up the story for *Costumbristas* as well, freeing them from fear that changes to the text would dismay the ancestors. Maya *maestros* would have been inspired to adjust the *Conquista* text to current performance practices and social needs, including the addition of quetzals to Tekum’s mask and headdress. Once the text was freed from control and within the context of Guatemala’s modernization, it began to evolve with increasing rapidity. The four new lineages identified here were likely well established before 1900, but after that time innovations tended to be freely exchanged, surfacing in texts of different lineages than those from which they originated. Audiences may have particularly appreciated such innovations. Bode (1961: 244) reports that at the time of her fieldwork in 1957, people in Cobán still remembered with admiration a performance in 1909 for which *maestro* Tiburcio Cál designed new costumes and masks, composed new music, and added a new part for a priest to perform the baptisms.

In the previous section literary examples of Guatemalan liberal ideology have been explored to facilitate comparison with changes to the *Baile de la Conquista* text as represented by increasing use of the key terms quetzal, *patria*, and *libertad*. Earlier a relative chronology for three of the newly formed text lineages was proposed, and this chronology accords well with their incorporation of the three liberal–nationalist terms; Tecpán lineage texts do not increase these at all from the early style texts; *Dioses* lineage texts show a moderate increase in the use of these terms; and Cantel lineage texts show dramatic increase. Furthermore, subsequent modifications to the *Dioses* text at Momostenango and the Cantel texts at Cantel and Joyabaj each show that the incidence of these terms increased from earlier versions within the same lineage. Liberal concepts thus increasingly permeate the two lineages of *Conquista* text that were designed to be revisionary and modernizing, in contrast to the conservative Tecpán and Cunén lineage texts and the early style texts also still in use.

Particular connections may also be made between the linkage of Tekum and the quetzal in the liberal literature discussed above and alterations found in particular in the Cantel lineage texts. A telling example occurs in the prologue when Ajitz predicts Tekum’s death:

Caerá tu hermoso quetzal
Sin libertad y sin acción,

Your beautiful quetzal will fall
Without liberty and without movement,

*Y huyendo a obscuro rincón
Su plumaje irá a manchar.*

And fleeing to an obscure corner
Its plumage will be stained.

The text thus recalls the dual association of the quetzal as Tekum's nawal and as a symbol of liberty. Even more intriguing are the references to both versions of the quetzal's fate. It is first said to fall, which refers to its wounding by Alvarado and death simultaneous with Tekum's. Then it is said to flee to an obscure locale where it can hide. This refers to an interpretation more popular with Maya peoples than with the liberal elite, that the quetzal did not die, but escaped from Tekum's body to flee into the forest and keep his spirit alive. This notion was dramatized in a spectacle version of the conquest story performed around 1900 in Rabinal and recorded by father Celso Narciso Teletor (1955: 176). The last line refers to the quetzal's red breast, which can be explained by either story. It can be the blood spilled by Alvarado's spear piercing the quetzal's chest, as it did also to Tekum. Or in the later story, the quetzal became smeared with Tekum's blood as it left his chest to fly off. This juxtaposition of Tekum, quetzal, and liberty may have chronological significance. It was noted that Tekum was introduced to liberal literature and became definitively connected with the quetzal in 1887–88, with the writings of Silva, Aragón, Brigham and Martí.

That this connection continued to evolve is evident from very late changes to the Uspantán (Cunén lineage) text collected in 1974. Here Ajitz explains: "It is said that during the battle a quetzal flew over the head of the valiant *cacique* and that, upon his death, the quetzal also fell dead, as if wanting to say that with the death of Tecún Umán the liberty of the K'iche' people had ended..."¹¹ A story of Tekum's death collected in Joyabaj and published in 1971 exemplifies the point made earlier that the quetzal's docility had to be overcome in order to link the bird and its connotations of liberty with Tekum's heroism. In the Joyabaj account, when Tekum tires, the quetzal begins savagely attacking the Spaniards in his place. When Tekum died, people realized the quetzal was his soul (Shaw 1971: 223–24).

This Joyabaj story of Tekum's death appears to be largely a way to make sense of the action of the *Baile de la Conquista*, and while it parallels additions to Cantel lineage texts, it goes beyond any visible action related to the quetzal that Tekum wears in his crown (headdress). The quetzal as a costume element in Tekum's headdress and mask, though potentially prompting in the audience whatever are the current understandings of the connection between Tekum and the quetzal, must be acknowledged as having its own history, though the two histories may be parallel. For example, by the time of the dramatization of the quetzal's escape in Rabinal circa 1900, the quetzal was also being incorporated into Tekum's costume. Teletor described a quetzal in Tekum's headdress from the masked and scripted form of Conquest Dance which he also saw performed in Rabinal around 1900. A portrait photograph taken around 1900 by Tomasso Zanotti of Quetzaltenango shows a man wearing the headdress with a quetzal and next to him the Tekum mask with carved confronting quetzals (Akkeren 2007: 94). The *Dioses* text from Rabinal also dated around 1900 refers

¹¹ *Se dice que durante la batalla voló un quetzal sobre la cabeza del valiente cacique que al morir, también cayó abatido el quetzal como queriendo decir que con la muerte de Tecún Umán acabó la libertad del pueblo quiché...."*

to the quetzal as the headdress insignia. But the fact that now-standard quetzal insignia on Tekum's mask and headdress are first documented around 1900 can not indicate when these traits developed unless a useful sample of Tekum masks and headdresses dated before the 1880s can be shown to lack them. Furthermore, whereas the liberal-inspired romantic-nationalist additions remain largely restricted to the two text groups highly modified in the liberal period, these costume additions have become universal for Tekum. It is therefore possible that K'iche' in the Quetzaltenango region responded to Los Altos liberal's valorization of the quetzal by attaching it to Tekum and modifying his costume accordingly even before the liberals took over the national government. But so far no evidence exists to support such a possibility, and the lack of any connection between Tekum and the quetzal in the Cobán 1872 text may argue against it.

Considering on the one hand that before 1870 the Conquest dance was the major instrument for keeping the story of Tekum current, and on the other hand this argument that Cantel lineage texts borrowed linked concepts of *libertad*, *patria* and the quetzal from liberal literature beginning in the late 1880s, a good case is made for another intensive phase of transcultural innovation paralleling the 16th century situation when the *Baile de la Conquista* was first written and performed through collaboration between friars and *cacique* families.

While both non-Maya liberals and Maya populations might celebrate Tekum's resistance to the Spanish invasion, they might do so with different meanings attached to his heroism and in order to fulfill different agendas. When liberals transformed Tekum from a K'iche' hero to a hero of the Guatemalan nation, it is likely that Maya communities involved in the Conquest Dance to some extent appreciated national interest in Tekum but nevertheless considered him a symbol of Maya resistance against outside oppression. This would at times include resisting the liberal government and its policies of land and labour appropriation.

As Greg Grandin (2000) demonstrates, Maya viewpoints on Tekum and liberalism also differed in ways that depended on variables such as class and urban versus rural context. Grandin (2000: 144, 168) analyzes activities of the *Sociedad el Adelanto*, founded in 1894 by Indigenous leaders in Quetzaltenango in part to promote education. While liberals intended their secular public education program to result in assimilation of Indigenous populations into a more homogeneous Guatemalan community, the *Adelanto* founders instead saw education as a means of Indigenous empowerment, bringing prosperity to the Indigenous community while maintaining a separate identity (Grandin 2000: 140-44, 167-68). In 1911, when the *Sociedad* achieved a victory concerning funding of teachers' salaries for their schools, they wrote to thank president Estrada Cabrera for this concession. In this letter they argued for inclusion in the "Patria de Tecún" and equal participation in the nation's progress (Grandin 2000: 169). Thus while employing liberal rhetoric involving Tekum's recent elevation to the status of national hero, they were also reclaiming Tekum as their own champion and recalling his struggle for the sake of K'iche' people.

An example of differing interpretations of Tekum's importance that is more pertinent to this discussion concerns the 1934 publication of the Cantel text accompanying a performance of the *Baile de la Conquista* in

the fairgrounds of Quetzaltenango. Proceeds from the sale of the publication were to be directed towards funding a proposed monument to Tekum on Cerro El Baul, a foothill of Cerro Quemado that overlooks Quetzaltenango. The plan for this monument was supported by the ladino Quetzaltenango elite. The monument they chose was one proposed earlier by Rafael Yela Günther fulfilling a request from the governor (*jefe político*) of Sacatepéquez, the department in which the old capital called Antigua lies, as well as the short-lived preceding capital destroyed by a landslide in 1541. Salvador Falla, director of the *Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* wrote an article about this commission that



Yela Günther model for Tekum monument on Cerro El Baul (Díaz 1933: 5)

was published in serialized form in the Quetzaltenango newspaper *Ideas y Noticias* in July and August, 1933. In response, an anonymous writer published an editorial in *Ideas y Noticias* on August 23 of that year, entitled *La glorificación de Tecún Umán*. The writer expressed regret that officials in the capital area were considering raising a monument to a Quetzaltenango hero, and suggested that the municipal corporation of Quetzaltenango should instead act on the Yela Günther proposal. The writer pointed to the lack of a monument on Cerro El Baul, recently renamed Cerro Tecún Umán because it was rumoured to hold Tekum's burial. The project was not pursued in Zacatepéquez, whereas Quetzaltenango did act, raising funds for a monument by Yela Günther and holding a dedication in 1934. This dedication was concurrent with the Quetzaltenango fair and the performance therein by the Cantel dance team, along with the sale of the Cantel script intended to raise money for the monument, the model for which was pictured on the booklet's cover. Yela Günther's model for the proposed monument had been brought to Quetzaltenango, and may still be seen in the municipal museum. However the

project was altered, and the monument erected on Cerro Baul was carved by Rodolfo Galeotti Torres. This monument, which depicts an Indigenous fighter likely originally designed to be Tekum, but referred to as the "*Cacique Tigre*" or, in celebration of the liberal revolution, the "*Cacique de la Victoria de 1871*." was instead dedicated in 1935 to Justo Rufino Barrios as the reformer of Guatemala.

More will be said of these events in the following chapter because of their implications for dating the origin of the *Baile de la Conquista*, but for now my point is that the *Ladino* authorities of Quetzaltenango and the *maestro* and dancers of Cantel's *Baile de la Conquista* dance team likely collaborated for quite different reasons. The Quetzaltenango leaders were celebrating Tekum as part of their engagement in a long-standing competition with the political centre of Guatemala, a competition that had given rise to the Los Altos separatist movement, whereas the Cantel *maestro* and dancers were likely celebrating Tekum as a symbol of K'iche' resistance against state or foreign oppression. Francisco Javier García and Abraham Colop Robles, in their introduction to the 1934 publication of the Cantel text of the *Baile de la Conquista*, wrote that: "without knowing since when, in our annual fiestas we represent the conquest of the K'iche' kingdom as a merited tribute to the resistance our ancestors made to the invader and as a demonstration of the full and elevated

concept they had of the nation's autonomy."¹² I would argue that these authors referred to the K'iche' nation not as a metaphor for the Guatemalan nation, as non-Maya liberals would do, but rather as a reference to current K'iche' as well as other Guatemalan Maya peoples. However they did so within the framework of liberal ideology likely in order to gain respect for K'iche' society in the eyes of the *Ladino* population and thereby to reach a better position from which to negotiate political and economic matters. This approach also applies to revisions of the *Conquista* text for this booklet, which dramatically increase references to the liberal quetzal-liberty-fatherland triad, and in which Tekum argues that the K'iche' had a law code and public state schools before the Spanish arrival. These authors thereby produced a double message of both compliance and resistance, what James Scott (1990) has called a *hidden transcript*, a concept explored in detail in chapter 15.

Selection of a Cantel team to dance the *Baile de la Conquista* for the Quetzaltenango fair of 1934 and their publication of a revised text for that event are not surprising considering this community's close relationship to this particular festival dance. Other indications include San Cristóbal's reliance on the Cantel team to perform the *Conquista* for their *feria* until 1915, and the presence of competing *maestros* in Cantel producing increasingly radical modifications of the *Conquista* text. Considering the potential of the Conquest dance for expression of resistance, it seems appropriate that Cantel would have such a noteworthy connection to this dance, since as Greg Grandin (1997) shows, this community had long distinguished itself as a powerful force of resistance against *Ladino* appropriations of land and labour. Grandin (1997: 225) writes that: "Cantelenses often used the divergence of local and national interests to press their own demands. Community leaders would appeal legally and emotionally to higher authorities seeking judicial redress and protection, while at the local level they would engage in open acts of defiance, such as land invasion, livestock slaughter, and ambush." Grandin notes that the Cantel *municipio* had considerable political leverage in the region because it supplied grain, lumber, and firewood to Quetzaltenango and other *municipios* in the region. Thus Cantel was able to delay the 1877 imposition of the *mandamiento* forced-labour law on its community. Grandin (1997: 241) also notes that despite this close economic integration with the regional *Ladino* community and political relation with the liberal regime, Cantel nevertheless fiercely maintained its identity as a K'iche' community. Those Cantel *maestros* who freely composed and repeatedly recomposed texts for the Conquest Dance may be understood to have been operating within similar conditions of limited empowerment permitting them to engage in reproduction of a K'iche' identity of resistance in ways that resonated with their current conditions.

Coincidentally, the issues of the *Baile de la Conquista* and Cantel resistance come together in an 1880 event that Grandin examined in order to detail the complex relation between Cantel's K'iche' and *Ladino* populations and between the community, region, and state. This event focuses on Antonio Colop Estrada, a well educated K'iche', fluent in speaking, writing, and reading Spanish, who also married into a family that by K'iche' standards was wealthy. On this basis he achieved considerable political influence in the community, increased by his success in dealing with the liberal government (Grandin 1997: 228-37).

¹² "Y sin saberse desde cuando, anualmente, en nuestras fiestas, se representa la conquista del Reyno Quiché, como un merecido tributo a la resistencia que los antepasados hicieron al invasor y como una demostración del concepto cabal y elevado que tenían de la autonomía de la Nación."

Colop Estrada led a dramatic statement of political resistance during the Cantel *fiesta patronal* in August, 1880. A Cantelense man named José Yxcot¹³ was stabbed by a ladino soldier from whom he attempted to buy liquor, and his body was taken to the municipal hall. When Colop Estrada learned of the murder, he was dancing the role of a Spaniard in the *Baile de la Conquista*.¹⁴ Still in costume, Colop Estrada led a crowd to the municipal hall and demanded that the soldier be turned over to the community rather than protected by the state. When his demand was refused by Indigenous municipal authorities, Colop Estrada threw a rock that knocked the soldier unconscious. Others in the crowd then launched rocks at the municipal authorities (Grandin 1997: 229).

In 1884, an issue that had animated many in Cantel to resist state authority was the establishment of a large cotton textile production factory in Cantel, owned by a ladino family of Quetzaltenango, which also involved the use of community lands. In this circumstance, Colop Estrada found his interests best served by alliance with the factory owners and the national government against those community members who sought to preserve communal lands. According to Grandin, Colop Estrada profited from liberal support to obtain land and then sold some that he had not been awarded, defending his shady dealings by spouting liberal doctrine that communal land is unproductive and must be privatized for Guatemala to advance. When Colop Estrada's land dealings deepened factionalism in the community, he took advantage of a widespread western highland movement of resistance to the national government to denounce several Cantel community leaders, leading to the execution of six of them and subsequent dispersal of their land (Grandin 1997: 231–37).

Grandin's account thus complicates the issue of resistance because Colop Estrada could find his interests served on one occasion by leading a community in resistance to state authority, and on other occasions by alliance with the state against retention of community lands, with both positions empowered by his wealth and education. Considering that the Cantel lineage of *Conquista* texts originated around the time that Colop Estrada was so politically and economically influential in Cantel, Grandin's analysis of his complicated and shifting alliances is instructive concerning intentions of Cantel *maestros* who inserted into the *Conquista* text the liberal-inspired triad quetzal–liberty–fatherland in relation to Tekum. This example shows how such transculturative adaptations are likely to be strategic in complicated ways and to potentially convey multiple meanings.

¹³ Yxcot (or Ixcot) is also one of the names of the *Caciques* in the *Baile de la Conquista*, all of which are historically accurate.

¹⁴ One of the early 20th century *maestros* of the *Baile de la Conquista* in Cantel was Antonio Jesús Colop Soloniq, who may have added the Ajitz prologue and adapted the Tecpán Malinche scene. Bode also notes that he later added the Ahzumanche scene (Bode 1961: 225). He may have been related to Abraham Colop Robles, who co-wrote the introduction to the Cantel text published in the 1934 pamphlet. Though I have no evidence to support it, given the prominence of the Colop connection to the Conquest Dance in Cantel, and Colop Estrada's fluency in Spanish, it is possible that Colop Soloniq's role as *Conquista maestro* was inherited from Antonio Colop Estrada. This possibility deserves further investigation.