
Establishing and Translating Maya Spaces at Tonina and Ocosingo
How Indigenous Portraits Were Moved, Mutilated, and Made Christian in New Spain

LINNEA WREN, TRAVIS NYGARD, AND KAYLEE SPENCER

Two portrait sculptures of kings from the ancient Maya site Tonina, in central Chiapas, Mexico, were modified during the colonial era in New Spain (figures 6.1 and 6.2). The heads, arms, and in one case the torso were broken off, leaving the pelvis, legs, and base remaining. Then, a basin mounted on the top of each truncated stela transformed the sculptures into Christian baptismal fonts. Instigating such a radical transformation of artworks is shocking to twenty-first-century people in the Western world, who see sculptures from previous millennia as part of our collective human heritage that deserves to be preserved and studied. Our worldview could not be more different than that of the Spaniards who conquered Chiapas beginning in 1524 CE, sometimes obliterating, other times countenancing, and in this case altering the material culture of the indigenous Maya peoples. To come to terms with this history requires us to ponder the power of sacred spaces and the roles within those spaces that sculptures played.

When the Spanish entered the Ocosingo Valley, they found the architecture and sculpture of Tonina existing in a shadow of its former glory, but still important and familiar to local people. Indeed, the mountains surrounding the colonial town endowed it with ancient character as pre-contact builders had modified the hills into the shape of a terraced pyramid (Blom and La Farge 1927: 252; Palka 2014: 180, 269). The interest that newly arrived Europeans took in the ancient site is only cursorily recorded in the historical record, but the fact that they selected, transported, recarved, and displayed Tonina's royal sculpture makes it clear that the

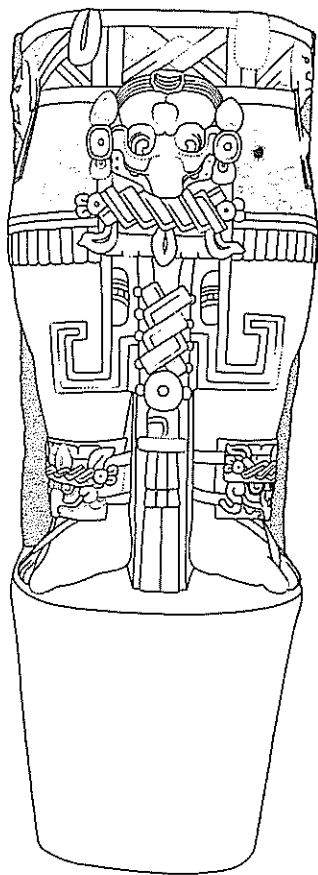


FIGURE 6.1. Tonina Monument 28, originally carved between 615 and 668 CE as a portrait of K'inich Bahlam Chapaat. It was repurposed, likely during the seventeenth century, as the pedestal for a Christian baptismal font for the church San Jacinto de Polonia in Ocosingo, Chiapas. Now in the Regional Museum of Anthropology and History of Chiapas in the state's largest city, Tuxtla Gutiérrez (drawing by Peter Mathews, courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University).

Spanish ruminated about the ancient kingdom's significance. But what did they conclude? Why did Europeans in the New World perceive the sculpture to be important enough to move and rework? How did the Spanish do so? And how did these actions change audiences' understanding of space, both at Tonina and in the fast-growing town of Ocosingo, 13 km away, where a Christian church was founded in 1545 CE (Martin and Grube 2008: 189)? These are the types of questions that we will investigate in this chapter, arguing that to understand the portraits that became baptismal fonts requires us to reconstruct how the Maya viewed Spanish spaces, and vice versa. We suggest that the disambiguation of the meaning of the Christianized

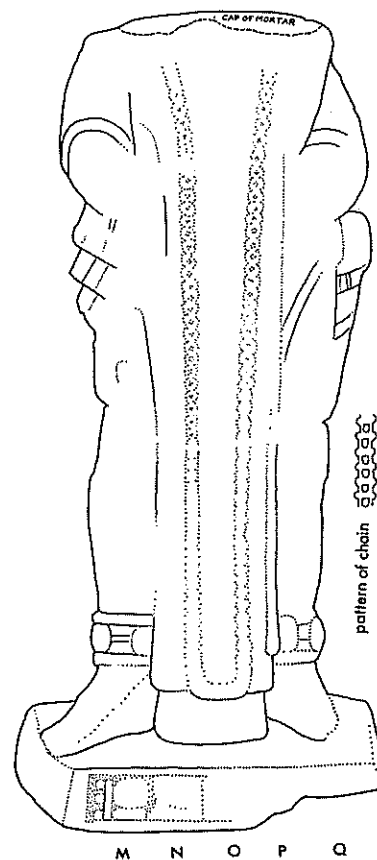


FIGURE 6.2. Tonina Monument 166, originally carved ca. 708–721 CE as a portrait of Ruler 4. It was repurposed, likely during the seventeenth century, as the pedestal for a Christian baptismal font, possibly for the church San Jacinto de Polonia in Ocosingo, Chiapas (drawing by Ian Graham, courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University).

Tonina sculptures necessitates the consideration of deeply rooted conventions of material culture in both medieval European and preconquest Maya traditions as well as the evaluation of their confluence in colonial Chiapas (figure 6.2).

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF TWO PORTRAITS

When originally fashioned, the two sculptures considered here were almost certainly displayed in one of the great plazas of Tonina, or situated by one of the site's many staircases.¹ Perhaps they appeared similar to the sculpture of Tonina's ruler

Jaguar Bird Tapir, who ruled from about 563 to 577 CE.² His portrait sculpture—as a modern replica—continues to watch over the site today, from the top of a grand stairway (figure 6.3). Nestled atop a series of dramatic terraces that were engineered into the foothills, the site of Tonina thrived during the Late Classic period (450–900 CE). Hieroglyphic texts inscribed on monuments reveal a rich history spanning 515 to 909 CE (Martin and Grube 2008: 177–189). This textual corpus celebrates Tonina’s kings, records ritual performances, and recounts their military prowess—frequently highlighting successful conquests of enemy kingdoms and the capture of prisoners. Monumental architecture and sculpture, which can be seen as material expressions of rulers’ power, punctuated the ancient landscape and endowed it with overt displays of a sovereign’s authority. While Tonina’s literate elite undoubtedly would have read the detailed texts that outlined the king’s participation in important ritual events, the inclusive nature of Mesoamerican writing—a system that exploits the rich communicative potential of icons, images, and other formal qualities of an artwork—offered layers of messages and meanings, which would have resonated with indigenous audiences from other time periods and places.³ Although the hieroglyphic record ceases in 909 CE, the ceramic record indicates that the site remained a center of commerce for a century or more after Tonina’s textual history ends, suggesting that the center’s monuments continued to speak long after the death of the rulers portrayed on its stelae.⁴

Long after Tonina was abandoned, the inhabitants of the Ocosingo Valley still encountered vestiges of their ancient past on a regular basis. Peter Mathews has observed that the route connecting Ocosingo to lands in the east traversed Tonina’s main plaza, suggesting that at least some people regularly experienced an environment that was rich with artifacts of the past (Mathews 1983: 10). Furthermore, perusals of colonial sources and the accounts of early scholars indicate that people saw artifacts from Tonina in houses, government buildings, and other places in and near Ocosingo.⁵ Ancient artworks, and the messages they encoded, therefore, continued to participate in the visual worlds of the colonial era. Such is the beginning of the complex “social life” that these sculptures have had—to use Arjun Appadurai’s (1986) phrase for describing objects. The two portraits of Tonina’s kings would eventually be carved, venerated, neglected, discovered, moved, mutilated, recarved, reinterpreted, moved again, and then ensconced in a new setting. Some of these steps are well documented; others are implied by historical circumstances.

The monuments of Tonina today are identified by numbers rather than names. Like most of the royal portrait sculptures at the site, the Tonina sculptures hybridized as baptismal fonts were carved in the round with hieroglyphic texts running down their spines. The majority of the figurative monuments are less than two meters in height. Carved from brown sandstone, Monument 28 in the first phase

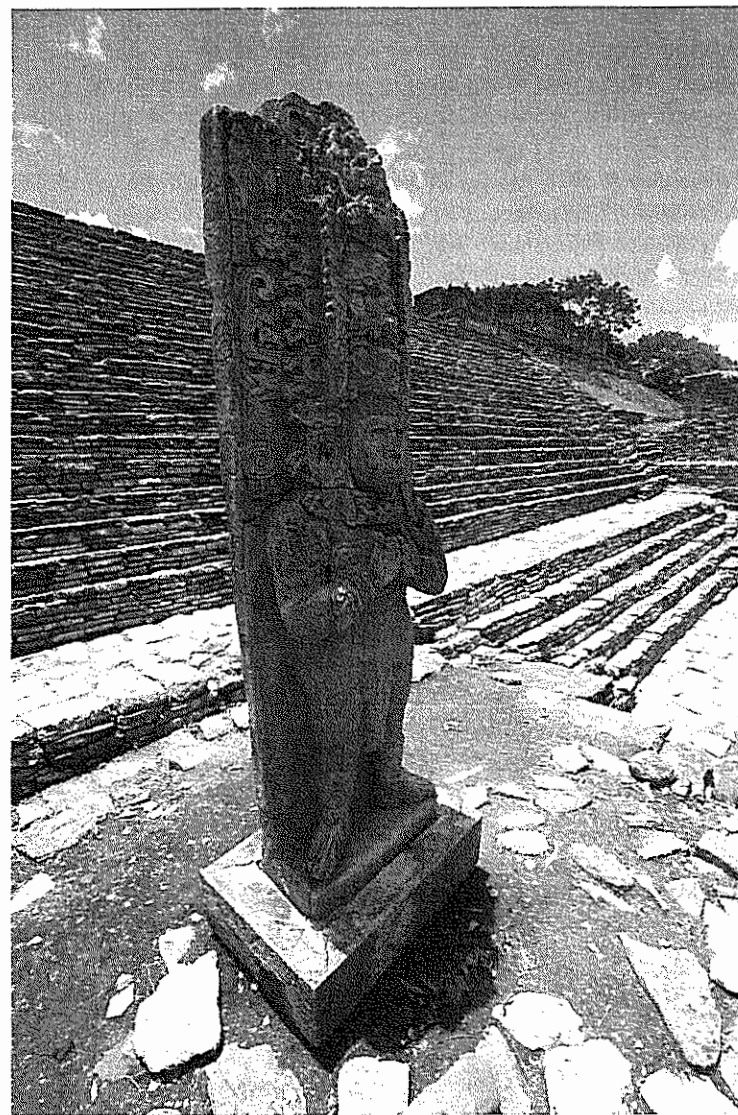


FIGURE 6.3. Modern replica of Tonina Monument 168, a portrait of Tonina’s ruler Jaguar Bird Tapir, the original of which was carved during his reign, ca. 563–577 CE. It is positioned on a stairway, overlooking his kingdom (photo by Amanda Hankerson, for the Maya Portrait Project. Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic License).

of its social life most likely served as a portrait of the king K'inich Bahlam Chapaat (Martin and Grube 2008: 179; Mathews 2001: 4, table 2).⁶ This ruler, whose name translates as "Radiant Jaguar Centipede," assumed the Tonina throne in 615 CE (Mathews 2001: 4; Martin and Grube 2008: 179).⁷ The king's costume consists of a skirt, a broad belt adorned with two human faces at the sides, and elaborate shoes that include masks that span the ankles. The most conspicuous feature of K'inich Bahlam Chapaat's attire, however, is the centrally positioned anthropomorphic skull, from which a long apron hangs. Resembling twisted or folded cords, the Maya mat motif (oftentimes described in the literature as the Pop or *pohp* icon) marks this ruler's belt, the vertical segment of the apron, and the horizontal element directly below the skull's nose and jaw (Ayala 1995: 156–157). This sign denotes finely woven textiles, reeds, or mats, and it evokes the sumptuous textiles that wealthy kings received as tribute. As such, the sign serves as a symbol of royal authority (Stone and Zender 2011: 81). Another sign of rulership, which overlaps with the iconography of the sun god, can be seen in the central skull's squinty eyes.

Along with these attributes, the king wears other trappings of rulership that simultaneously refer to his name. Because of the jaguar's (*Panthera onca*) cunning and impressive hunting abilities, Maya kings adopted an iconographic complex based on the cat's physical appearance (Stone and Zender 2011: 195; Miller and Martin 2004: 292). On Monument 28, the subject wears a jaguar-pelt skirt, complete with its distinctive spots (Ayala 1995: 155). The anthropomorphic head dangling from the belt includes jaguar ears. These costume attributes likely refer both to K'inich Bahlam Chapaat's royal identity as well as to his name, which incorporates the word for jaguar, *bahlam*. The central head also includes attributes of a centipede—primarily identifiable by the skeletal face and lower jaw, distinctive hook-shaped snout, and beard-like shanks of hair that extend below the mat sign (Taube 2003). Marking the face as "bony," two prominent circular shapes appear on the bottom of the jaw sockets, while smaller dots oriented in a line delineate the bottoms of the eye sockets. The basic forms of the centipede's face are echoed below, on the masks decorating the ruler's ankles. In Classic-period art, centipedes such as the one featured on Monument 28 are closely associated with the sun, fire, death, and the underworld (Taube 2003: 410; Stone and Zender 2011: 179). In Maya systems of visual communication, the centipede (*Scolopendra gigantea*) also carried meanings related to the creature's venomous and aggressive nature (Martin and Grube 2008: 179; Stone and Zender 2011: 179). Possessing these fearsome qualities, they became appropriate symbols to embody many desirable virtues of kings. In this case, the centipede metaphorically comments on the subject's success in events of war, while also alluding to his name—a name that was undoubtedly adopted because of these virtues.⁸

Despite the colonial-era despoilment of K'inich Bahlam Chapaat's portrait, a vestige of the Classic-period king's identity and power remains discernible on the sculpture. Standing in its original placement in a public plaza of Tonina, it would have documented the ruler's performance of rituals, thereby reinforcing the king's power during his lifetime. Equally important, ancient spectators would have perceived the sculpture to assert the identity of the subject in his absence. In Classic Maya thought portrait sculptures of kings not only represented a sovereign's image, but also embodied the essence and identity of the subject (Houston and Stuart 1998; Spencer 2015: 230–232, 240). As such, ritual interaction with sculptures such as Monument 28 could have revived the subject's presence long after his death.

After a reign of approximately 50 years, K'inich Bahlam Chapaat died sometime between 665 and 668 CE (Martin and Grube 2008: 179–180). As a celebration of a long-lived and successful ruler, Monument 28 presumably continued to be a prominent feature in the political landscape of Tonina. As well as adding to the grandeur of the site and its existing sculptural program of royal sculptures, it linked K'inich Bahlam Chapaat and the illustrious dynasty of rulers preceding him to the reigns of successive rulers—eight of whom are known from hieroglyphic texts. Six hundred years separated the end of the monarchy, which presumably occurred concurrently with the cessation of the hieroglyphic records about 909 CE, and the Spanish conquest of Chiapas. During this time span, the continuing visibility of the sculpture on Tonina's monumental plaza likely marked the site as a place of importance to the Maya peoples who continued to pass by.

A second phase of the social life of Monument 28 began when it was removed from Tonina proper, to be a symbolic part of the Christian mission in the Americas. In the sixteenth century, Ocosingo was a locus of demographic and cultural change. Ch'olti'-Lacondon traders (whom Dominican friars described as having "warlike reputations[s]") from Lowland Chiapas made frequent visits to indigenous communities in Ocosingo in order to exchange achiote, cacao, and tobacco for salt, silver coins, and metal tools (Caso Barerra and Aliphat Fernández 2006; Palka 2014: 24; Vos 1988: 132). Many of the lowland Mayas inhabiting Ocosingo had only recently arrived themselves, as they had been subjected to Spanish resettlement campaigns that required them to take up residence in the new town. Some Maya communities maintained strong ties with their homelands, while others fled, returned home, or banded with other unconquered Maya groups in the forest (Bacquelin Monod and Breton 2003; Palka 2014: 24; Vos 1988: 87). In short, Ocosingo was not a bastion of peaceful stability. Instead, its inhabitants negotiated multiple points of cultural contact with Christian and indigenous communities.

We posit that the relocation of Monument 28 occurred during the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, as part of an effort of the Spanish to convert and baptize



FIGURE 6.4. The church San Jacinto de Polonia, in Ocosingo, Chiapas, owned Monument 28 and possibly Monument 166 when they were used as pedestals for baptismal fonts (photo by Claudia Garcia-Des Lauriers, used with permission).

the native population. Thirteen kilometers west of Tonina, Dominicans erected a church building in Ocosingo in 1545 CE (Martin and Grube 2008: 189). In 1569, following resettlements of Maya populations to Ocosingo five years earlier, Fray Pedro Lorenzo supervised the construction of the church of San Jacinto de Polonia (figure 6.4). We can imagine that it was the clergy of this church who, in need of a place to baptize congregants, adapted Monument 28 into a baptismal font by breaking off the torso of the king, flattening the stone at the waistline, carving a drainage channel down the back, and mounting a basin on the top for holy water. The life-size statue of the king, whose stony eyes would once have met the viewer's gaze, was thus reduced to his legs and pelvis, rising to a modest 1.06 m in height. As was conventional for churches at the time, the clergy probably placed the newly made font in the western end of the church interior, or in an atrium—a quadrangular open court between the vestibule and the body of the church. These were locations most commonly used in Christian churches for baptismal fonts and ceremonies. Their distance from the altar signaled that they were transitional sacred spaces appropriate for use during encounters between friars and people who were not fully catechized.

Our reconstruction of the postconquest history of Monument 28 is necessarily speculative until 1904, when the archaeologist Alfred Tozzer photographed it in Ocosingo (Graham and Mathews 1996: 72; Ayala 1995: 17). By this time we assume that, as part of ongoing church renovations, the baptismal font had been replaced, but it was still kept in town. No longer needed for liturgical use, Monument 28 was perhaps displayed for decorative purposes in front of the curate's house—which is where the epigrapher Ian Graham believes Tozzer saw it. Later still, the sculpture was moved to San Cristóbal de las Casas, where it was installed in front of the Bishop's Palace. There it was seen in 1925 by the archaeologists Frans Blom and Oliver La Farge (Blom and La Farge 1927: 299). Between its sighting by Blom and La Farge, and the earlier sighting by Tozzer, a chunk of the sculpture was broken off at the waistline—perhaps the result of accidental damage during transportation. One last move brought Monument 28 to its permanent home—to the Regional Museum of Anthropology and History of Chiapas in the state's largest city, Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Graham and Mathews 1996: 72).

A similar story can be told about Monument 166, which likely began as a portrait of one of Tonina's most significant kings—a ruler whose exact name is not deciphered. His name incorporates a "fiery jaguar god," according to the epigraphers Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube (2008: 183), who have tentatively linked together the monument and king. Because his name is untranslated, this king is referred to as Ruler 4. A significant amount of information about the life of Ruler 4 can be reconstructed from textual references to him in the inscriptions on eight different monuments. Ruler 4 inherited the crown at the age of two, in 708 CE. Because he was still a child, other members of elite society would have ruled on his behalf, and evidently pursued policies that had dramatic repercussions for the region. In 711 CE, at a time when Ruler 4 was still only five years old, these elites led an attack on Tonina's great rival, Palenque, and captured the king of that polity, K'an Joy Chitam II. A portrait of the 66-year-old sovereign as a bound captive (figure 6.5; Tonina Monument 122) suggests that the Palenque king was stripped nearly nude, bound, and publicly humiliated (Schele and Mathews 1991). Nonetheless, under circumstances that remain unclear, K'an Joy Chitam II returned to rule Palenque—perhaps in a state of official subordination to Tonina (Martin and Grube 2008: 183–184; Stuart 2003; Stuart and Stuart 2008: 217). We can thus imagine that when Monument 166 was erected its royal depiction of K'an Joy Chitam II not only reinforced his exercise of power within his city, but also bolstered Tonina's political reputation within the Usumacinta region.

The colonial history of Monument 166 is even more uncertain than that of Monument 28. It was first documented by scholars in approximately 1980, when Ian Graham (2006: 108) found it in a one-room schoolhouse in the village of Guaquitepec, a town 22 km northwest of Ocosingo. Close inspection reveals that



FIGURE 6.5. Tonina Monument 122. This portrait of Palenque's ruler K'an Joy Chitam II, carved by his rivals at Tonina, shows the sovereign humiliated—stripped nearly nude and bound. It testifies to the power of Tonina, as ruled by the young Ruler 4 (drawing by Linda Schele, © David Schele, courtesy of Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., www.famsi.org [Schele # 149]).

Monument 166 was broken at the shoulders, a layer of mortar was added to the top to level the surface for a basin, and a channel for drainage was bored down the back. The resulting height of the sculpture was reduced to 1.2 m. The monument was also broken in two at the height of the hips, possibly to make it easier to move, and it was later consolidated (Graham 2006: 108). Because of the similar treatment, we propose that both Monuments 28 and 166 were converted to baptismal fonts during the Christianization of the sixteenth century—most probably by the same colonial artist. We should thus ask ourselves why colonial-era Spanish friars would use existing indigenous sculptures of former Maya rulers to make baptismal fonts for the new liturgical needs of Christian ritual. To answer this question requires us to delve into the history of how reusing sculpture can transform spaces.

SPOLIA ALTERS SPACES

When a colonial artist transformed Tonina's stone portraits into baptismal fonts, in art-historical terms the art became spolia. The word *spolia* is derived from the Latin

spolium, meaning “removed from the hide of an animal,” and in a more general sense, “a soldier's booty” or “spoils of war” (Brenk 1987: 103). The implication, of course, is that someone took the sculpture—likely without permission—and then used it for new purposes. Such spoliation transformed the space at both Tonina and Ocosingo. On an obvious level, the removal of sculptures from the terraced courtyards of Tonina made the indigenous ruins less visually splendid. More important, the Dominican clergy would only have installed the sculptures in Christian churches if they believed that the ancient sculptures would strengthen people's attachment to the space within the building, or to some activity performed therein. Pushing further, we should ask if it is possible to more robustly understand how the use of spolia changed these places or the ways in which the indigenous populations understood the liturgical actions performed by the clergy.

Scholars have interrogated spolia specifically and monument recarving generally within the Maya area—particularly in pre-Columbian times (Satterthwaite 1958; Baker 1962; Adams 1968; Just 2005; Guillén and Botas 1994; O'Neil 2011, 2012)—and it is our goal to extend and complicate this dialog by bringing it to the colonial era. Scholars of the colonial era have also long been interested in the ways that Mesoamerican and European religions collided in the New World, including how that encounter was reflected in new forms of art-making. Key entry points to this scholarship have been published by George Kubler (1985), Jeanette Peterson (1993, 2005), Fernando Cervantes (1997), Jaime Lara (2005, 2008), Kelly Donahue-Wallace (2008), Thomas Cummins (2011), Diana Magaloni-Kerpel (2011), and Logan Wagner, Hal Box, and Susan Kline Morehead (Wagner, Box, and Morehead 2013). Bringing together creative traditions is often theorized with nuanced terms including “hybrid,” “creole,” “mestizo,” “syncretic,” “confluent,” “pastiche” and “composite”—terms that have been lucidly differentiated by Carolyn Dean and Dana Liebsohn. As assemblages of two sculpted components that are distinct yet conjoined to create objects unique to their colonial context, it is the term, *composite*, that best describes the baptismal fonts. Dean and Liebsohn (2003) note that with most of these terms:

the processes that produce cultural mixing, with their concomitant political and economic negotiations, emerge as incidental. The implication is that mixing simply happens. Suppressed are the ways in which particular mixtures are created, imposed, and resisted, as are the accounts of the human acts responsible for shaping both the conditions and forms of specific mixtures. (2003: 8)

In our study, however, we specifically forefront power relationships, the agency of the artists who created the stelae and fonts, and the royals and clergy who commissioned them.

Because recent scholars of ancient Near Eastern, classical, and Western medieval art have proposed increasingly sophisticated understandings of the concept of spolia, we turn to their work for methodological and theoretical insights that can enhance the dialog occurring among Mesoamericanists. As in the Maya area, carved-stone sculpture, including portraits, was common in the ancient Western world, and it is sometimes found in modified condition. Indeed, the practice of reuse, often resulting from pillage and booty, was frequent in late antiquity and the Middle Ages (Alcherms 1994: 167). Artists and art historians in the West have often described the practice in strictly negative terms. Such characterizations can be traced from Raphael (Elsner 2000: 149) to Giorgio Vasari (1878: 224–225) to Edward Gibbon (1994: 428) to Bernard Berenson (1954: 13–14) to F. W. Deichmann (1975: 95) who variously attributed the practice to economic weakness, lack of artistic imagination, paucity of trained artists, haste, and stylistic decadence. Spolia has often been interpreted as indiscriminate scavenging of conveniently situated architecture and sculpture followed by random incorporation into newer monuments. Could the baptismal fonts made from sculptures at Tonina be summarily dismissed as thoughtless examples of slapdash art-making? Perhaps. While we acknowledge this possibility, we argue that it is more probable that Monuments 28 and 166 were painstakingly created to meet thoughtful goals.

Since the late twentieth century, scholars of Western art have noted that while the recycling of materials may have been motivated at times by pragmatism, spolia was not usually a cheap or convenient tactic for architects and fabricators of new monuments. While the transportation of spolia over long distances was not impossible, as evidenced by well-attested examples including Theodoric's removal of marble slabs from Pincian Hill in Rome to his palace in Ravenna (Brenk 1987: 107) and Constantine's importation of six spiral columns to adorn Old St. Peter's Basilica (Elsner 2000: 154), it could be exceedingly difficult. Further impracticalities in the use of spolia consisted of the incorporation of preexisting materials of varying sizes into new structures, as was required to incorporate the columns, capitals, and architraves from multiple Roman buildings into the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Such transferences, according to Beat Brenk (1987: 106), would have required adjustments and leveling that might well have been more expensive than the use of newly made, homogenous, materials. The additional costs required to reuse large-scale monuments, including paying to transport and modify them, suggests that deliberate, conscious, strategies underlie the practice of spolia.

SCULPTURES AS SPACES FOR SPIRITS

Returning to the case of the portraits from Tonina that became baptismal fonts, we can ask why it would be worth investing the extra effort required to reuse sculpture.

To answer this question, it is germane to note that the spoliated baptismal fonts installed at Ocosingo fall within a broader category of pagan sculpture reinterpreted with Christian meanings and integrated into Christian religious practices. This is a tradition that the Spanish friars were no doubt aware of, as it had been an integral part of European religious practice for centuries. To understand this trajectory it is useful to begin with ancient Rome, where statuary was sometimes viewed spatially as a literal container for the spirits of deities.

Early Christians had ridiculed the Roman religious practice of worshiping emperors as gods, as well as the concept that a mortal individual could become a god (Furstenberg 2010: 351–353). They believed, furthermore, that it was important to negate the numen that could reside in pagan statuary whether or not an image was explicitly idolatrous. A wide arsenal of treatments, besides simple destruction, was therefore developed. At times, statues were exorcised so that their demons were expelled prior to destruction. Some were buried in Christian churches, beneath crosses and altars, where they could do no harm. Some were reworked into portraits of priests and apostles. Some were installed in courts and palaces where their antique beauty was admired. Some were incorporated into the walls of Christian buildings where their contiguity with Christian symbols negated their paganism. And still others, including the antique krater in the bronze baptismal font at Beaujeu and the Luna marble slab in the baptismal font at Limans, both in southeastern France, became Christian church furniture (Greenhalgh 1989: 202–218). Could the baptismal fonts made from Tonina's statuary, and similar New World examples, be part of this tradition?

If we assume that there was a common understanding among the Spanish friars of how to interact with pagan statuary, then we might expect to find similar baptismal fonts made from indigenous statuary in other parts of the New World. Such examples would create what the art historian Michael Baxandall (1985) called a "pattern of intention"—a set of similar solutions to similar problems. In this case the problem was how a Christian missionary should interact with pagan statuary in the New World. The shared mindset among the friars is attested to by the fact that indigenous art and architecture was spoliated across Mesoamerica. In central Mexico the phenomenon has been more systematically studied than in the Maya area. Several colonial baptismal fonts, indeed, incorporated Mexica statuary or were used unaltered (Lara 2008: 84–89; Metropolitan Museum of Art 1990; Sullivan 2007). Lara (2008: 87) has noted, for instance, examples of *cuauhxicalli*—sculpted vessels that the Aztecs used to hold the hearts of victims of human sacrifice—that were reused as baptismal fonts (figure 6.6). But why did indigenous sculpture get used in this way? Was it a statement of cultural dominance, in which the Spanish were visually communicating that they had squelched indigenous traditions? If so,



FIGURE 6.6. An Aztec *cuauhxicalli* (container to hold the hearts of victims of human sacrifice) that was likely used as a baptismal font during the colonial era. Now in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz / Art Resource, NY).

the baptismal fonts made from the kingly portraits at Tonina become, essentially, war trophies, and the pedestals were meant to be continuous reminders to the Maya of their subjugation.

VISUALIZING CONQUEST OF A SPACE

The practice of spoliation has, indeed, accompanied warfare so frequently that, as the art historian Mrinalini Rajagopalan (2011: 199–200) has pointed out, spoliated objects invariably suggest a violent past, whether it is true or not. Monuments incorporating spolia are almost invariably perceived by viewers as entailing the forcible transfer of cultural property from its original setting, as evidencing new systems of domination and as asserting radical change. As Dale Kinney (1997: 120) once explained about the ancient Old World, “recontextualized in the city of the victor, statues and other military spolia became elements of Rome’s display of world dominion.” Both architectural and sculptural spolia have, indeed, frequently been

used as visual tropes of military conquest and the legitimation of political authority. The Roman use of spolia as such a trope is well-attested in ancient sources, as exemplified by the conquest of the city of Ambracia in 189 BCE. After achieving their military goals, the Romans removed the city’s statues intact to Rome, leaving Ambracia with what their ambassadors described as “only bare walls and doorposts . . . to adore, to pray to, and to supplicate” as a painful memento of its defeat (quoted in Kinney 1997: 120–121). As Kinney observes, the abduction of the spolia “left a scar of absence on the conquered city” (1997: 120).

In the case of the Maya area, we note that the spoliation eagerly practiced by ancient Roman and medieval Christian powers was thoroughly familiar to the Spanish forces that conquered the indigenous peoples of the Americas. For fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spaniards, militant Christianity was integral to their worldview. This conflation of Christian religion and military power was particularly evident in campaigns against Muslims and Jews, begun centuries earlier, both in Iberia and the Holy Land, where looting of art provided war trophies (Greenhalgh 2009: 144–151). Known as the Reconquest, the Iberian campaigns had begun as territorial conflicts but had later shifted in meaning to a religiously justified war against infidels and pagans. Fueled by the development of a new ideology of “One Faith, One Law, One King,” the Reconquest began as a crusade against Muslims in which Jews were soon also targeted. The persecution began in 1492 CE, with the Edict of Expulsion issued by Ferdinand and Isabella, that ordered all Jews to leave the kingdom of Castile within three months of its issuance. Then, between 1496 and 1526 CE, a series of decrees required the conversion or expulsion of all Spanish Muslims and Jews. Christopher Columbus envisioned his mission as a continuation of the Reconquest with its concomitant goals of establishing political sovereignty of the Spanish crown in the Americas and of converting all of its peoples to Christianity.

The drive to evangelize the indigenous peoples of the Americas was further fueled by the doctrine of *ius predicando*, or the “law of preaching,” developed by the Dominican friar Melchor Cano, who lived from 1509 to 1560 CE. As a cornerstone of Spain’s legal justification for its overseas empire, *ius predicando* posited that a Christian nation could establish hegemony over a non-Christian power for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, based upon principles of natural law. Heathens, pagans, and heretics could be subjected to foreign rule, specifically for Christianization (Schwaller 2011: 41–42). It was with this goal of converting the native peoples to Christianity that Dominicans arrived in the Americas in 1526—only two years after Spanish forces began the conquest of Chiapas—a process that proved violent and extended. The first military expedition, led by Luis Marín, had encountered strong resistance from the inhabitants of the region and was followed by a second military expedition, begun in 1526 under Diego de Mazariegos. This expedition was more

successful in achieving Spanish aims and brought most of Chiapas under Spanish control—although active resistance continued to be mounted by the Lacandon Maya until 1695.

Although we recognize the horrifying abuses of military power that occurred in colonial Latin America, we suggest that domination is only one of several frameworks that account for the creation of Christian baptismal fonts made from Maya sculptures from Tonina. As contemporary scholarship on spolia has astutely recognized, even when spoliated art has originated in contexts of conquest and forcible change, the original monuments are transformed into new products invested with multiple meanings. We therefore regard Monuments 28 and 166 as similar to other spoliated art forms in functioning as signifiers of cultural *translation*.⁹ As is frequently noted by translators of written documents, it is difficult to move ideas from one cultural context to another. Rather than being a simple mechanical process, translation involves actively interpreting and reinterpreting ideas.

We might ask ourselves whether the Maya passively relinquished their old religion and lifeways, once confronted by militant Christianity. The answer, unsurprisingly, is no. The cultural communications that took place in colonial Chiapas were complicated cultural translations. According to the ethnohistorian Amos Megged, the Maya in Chiapas were highly critical of the Spanish. They held firmly to some traditional Maya beliefs while adapting and adopting some of those of the newcomers. They were even actively involved in conversations about art and idolatry (Megged 1991, 1995, 1996, 1999). Indeed, the Dominicans' awareness of such resistance and the powerful roles art played in promulgating indigenous belief systems led some Church officials to encourage the collection of artworks, and cultural information, in order to better understand what constituted popular practices and *supersticiones*—a general term employed to describe a range of idolatrous practices (Megged 1995: 66). For example, in his *Historia de las indias de Nueva España* of 1570, Fray Diego Durán advocated for his order to “try and comprehend the roots of Indian beliefs in order to avoid the fusion between the ancient rites and superstitions and our Christian religion” (Durán 1570, 1967: volume 1: 3–6; quoted in Megged 1995: 67–68). To further our comprehension of the baptismal fonts, we should consider how the Maya and the Spanish would have experienced these fonts, the debates that informed their experiences, and how their experiences would have been undergirded by spatially specific ways of understanding their bodies and their environment.

THE SPACE OF THE BODY

On a most literal level, we can presume that many Maya people likely stood, sat, bent over, or otherwise manipulated their bodies before the baptismal fonts, as their

heads touched holy water. But would they have understood this ritual in the same ways that the Spanish friars did? Almost certainly they did not. Rather, the Maya brought with them a cultural framework for understanding their bodies, which was informed by their own experiences of ritual immersion and washing. We can thus understand the baptismal fonts made from portraits as evidence that people translated ideas about water from one culture to another. The incorporation of indigenous sculpture in the fonts, indeed, highlights the syncretic nature of the Christian religion. Since the very beginnings of Christianity, artists had borrowed selected signs, symbols, and motifs from the imagery of other religious traditions and had reinterpreted them in a Christian context. This reinterpretation was most effective when it occurred in situations of cultural compatibility or ritual substitution (Lara 2008: 17). Such a situation was presented to Christian friars by the formal bathing rituals for Maya children that marked their development.

Between four and five days after birth, Maya children experienced their first ritual bath, at which time they were given tokens specific to their age and gender. At approximately age three, children underwent a second ritual bath. Conflating Christian and Maya practices, the forceful proselytizer Spanish Bishop of Yucatan, Diego de Landa (Tozzer 1941: 103–104) reports that the children received “godparents,” and that “the priest undertook the purification of the dwelling [in which the baptism was held], chasing the evil spirit out of it.” According to Landa (Tozzer 1941: 104–105), children were “blessed with many prayers,” after which they were “anointed . . . on their foreheads and the features of their faces.” The water used in this ceremony was extraordinary in its composition, having been made from “certain flowers and cacao pounded and dissolved in virgin water.” After this second bathing ritual, children began to wear versions of adult clothing and were subject to discipline by adults (Joyce 2006). These rituals included the consumption of small food items and the offering of “wine” to the gods. These rituals also involved the use of smoke. Ground maize and incense were burned, and censings were made (Tozzer 1941: 104). Although the concept of removing original sin was foreign to the Maya, the pre-Christian water ritual had parallels to the Christian sacrament of baptism in godparenting, priestly activity, formulaic blessings and prayers, purification acts, and the token consumption of food. Similar parallels can be found in Aztec culture (Lara 2008: 81–83). The spoliated baptismal fonts could thus be emblematic of the remodeling of indigenous Maya customs into the Christian ritual of baptism.

At the same time, the spoliated fonts could, we propose, have been used as visual devices in the extensive instruction in the doctrines of Christian belief that the Dominicans considered necessary for the valid reception of the sacrament of baptism. For the Dominicans, baptism was more than a ceremony through which the catechist gained admission into the Christian church (Cline 1993: 458). Baptism

was structured as the ritual passage from the world of sin to the Kingdom of God, and it was deemed a necessary step for salvation. The friars had an Iberian precedent for extended catechesis in the baptism of Muslims. The large number of adult converts that resulted from the Reconquest of Spain had led Pope Leo X to direct the Dominican friar, Alberto Castellani, to compose a handbook of the sacramental rituals. These were adapted and readapted for New Spain, in 1540 CE in the *Manual de Adultos* and in 1560 in the *Manuale Sacramentorum*. The manual of 1540, of which no copy has survived, probably advocated instruction for 30 continuous days with exorcisms and scrutinies, performed 20 days before Easter or Pentecost. The later manual of 1560 shortened the rite and reduced the prebaptismal exorcisms, but it remained rooted in medieval Iberian liturgy (Lara 2008: 90–96).

Given the length of religious instruction, and the challenges of cross-cultural communication, missionaries relied on visual art to convey ideas. The friars at Ocosingo would have been aware of the potential opacity of language, both in aural and textual form, when communicating across cultures. Thus, in order to communicate nonverbally, at least some missionaries in the region developed complex visual languages. One man, Fray Jacobo de Testera, who lived from about 1470 to 1543 CE, devised a system of depicting important prayers and creeds using rebus pictures, and he recorded them in what are now known as the Testerian codices (figure 6.7). A Franciscan, de Testera missionized among both the Maya and Nahua peoples and was a friend of Bartolomé de las Casas, the bishop of Chiapas (Leeming 2005; Normann 1985; Robertson 1994: 53–55; Schwaller 2011: 59–65). Given these practices in the region, the fonts at Ocosingo are likely part of the deliberate visualizing of Christian doctrine that was intended to help overcome linguistic miscommunications.

Such strategies were likely effective, as the Maya were, and are, a visually astute people who have taken an active role in the construction of visual meanings. In Mayan languages, the verb “to see” was denoted by the term *il* (Kaufman and Norman 1984: 121). In Classic-era inscriptions, this term involved visual references to the eye, as logographic variants of the hieroglyphic sign feature an eye in profile view (see Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006: 163–173, 172, figure 4.28a). When described in the form of hieroglyphic signs or in artworks, the eye frequently exhibits scrolls that suggest the concept of active looking, as well as a directional gaze. As Stephen Houston, David Stuart, and Karl Taube (2006: 167) assert, the ancient Maya believed that the eye “not only receives images from the outer world, but positively affects and changes that world through the power of sight.” Ancient Maya modes of looking were, therefore, much more complex than has been generally acknowledged. Further enriching our understanding of indigenous modes of viewing, recent scholarship suggests that this type of agentive looking was not perceived

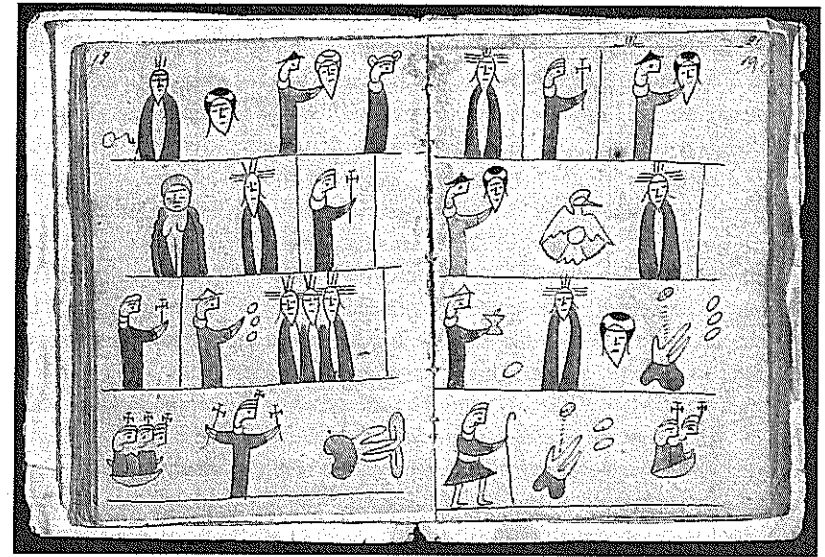


FIGURE 6.7. *Catecismo pictórico Otomí*, 1775–1825. Testerian codices were used to teach Christian ideas to indigenous people in a newly contrived visual language. The baptismal fonts, along with other colonial sculpture, likely functioned in conjunction with such documents to teach religious ideas (courtesy of Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Garrett Mesoamerican Manuscripts, no. 3a, fols. 18v–19r).

to be fixed in space. In Yucatec Mayan, the term *-iknal* can refer to a changing “field of action related to an agent the way one’s shadow or perceptual field is” (Hanks 1990: 91). Considering the meanings of *-iknal* in Yucatec in relation to its expression in Classic-period texts (generally occurring as variations of *-ichmal*) Stephen Houston, David Stuart, and Karl Taube (2006: 173) propose that the ancient Maya considered vision from a multiplicity of vantage points simultaneously, or as a “totality of objects within view,” wherein participants (both human and sculptural) played active roles.

Unfortunately, the exact meaning of the baptismal fonts of Ocosingo—essentially basins with human legs—has become obscured by the passage of time. One can imagine, however, that the form of the fonts was useful rhetorically to convey to the indigenous people that the water within the basin was special. At the very least, it was held aloft and not allowed to mingle with the rest of the water of the world. An emotional, rather than semantic, motivation may also have been in play when the friars chose to make their baptismal fonts with legs at Ocosingo. That said, to

understand what the Maya thought of the legs supporting this basin, it is important to consider what the lower extremities symbolized in Mesoamerican worldviews. In ancient Mesoamerica, it was believed that an individual's power and identity was concentrated in the human femur or thighbone (Tedlock 2003: 146–147; Burdick 2010: 121–127; Feinman, Nicholas, and Baker 2010). Perhaps for this reason, the leg was a conceptual focus for the Maya, especially in cases involving the depiction of prisoners. In sculpture the legs are generally rendered carefully, and we posit that in portraits at Palenque the thighs are often exaggerated to call the viewer's awareness to the symbolism of them (Spencer 2015: 253–254). Catherine Burdick (2010: 122) suggests that the "tags" or labels that oftentimes appear on a captive's upper leg, as is seen on K'an Joy Chitam II's portrait as a captive at Tonina (figure 6.5), "refer to the role of the thigh bone as a trophy," that links the "captive image, the actual captive body, and his femur as a memento of the capture and sacrifice events." Given Tonina's tradition of rendering kings with thick, corpulent, thighs, it is possible that viewers perceived the legs featured on Monuments 28 and 166 as celebrating the subjects' essence, or individual power. The colonial-era Maya may thus have felt more empathy and sympathy with these sculptures than many of us do in the twenty-first-century West, where legs have a less deep symbolic meaning.

In addition to understanding the legs to be especially important, indigenous viewers also would have recognized parallels between the "supporting" functions of the disambiguated lower bodies of the composite baptismal fonts, and many types of Maya sculpture. In numerous preconquest examples, carved human figures play pivotal roles by lifting up lintels (and roofs), skybands, altars, and thrones. In doing so their efforts literally support temples and monumental sculptures, and conceptually support the cosmos, ritual activities, and the bodies of enthroned kings.

Indeed, one of the universal ways that we understand each other as humans is through the spaces that our bodies occupy, and the result is empathy. Such empathetic responses have been exploited by artists worldwide, and they are a major way that art becomes meaningful (Freedberg 1989). One striking feature of the baptismal fonts made from Tonina's kingly portraits that promotes an empathetic connection between the sculpture and the viewer is that the sculpted torsos are life size. A second striking feature of the fonts is that the channel used to drain the basin is carved through the hieroglyphic inscription on the rear of the monuments, but not through the human figure itself. The baptismal fonts of Ocosingo may thus have exploited the empathetic power of art to great effect. The sculpted figures, themselves converted to Christianity through their new use and context, were likely understood by the friars as enhancing the effectiveness of their missionizing. But what emotions were evoked for the Maya as they stood near these fragmented stone bodies? To answer that question requires us to think about memories.

REMEMBERING SPACE AT TONINA

Enough of the portraits from Tonina were preserved when they were reworked as baptismal fonts to retain a link to the memory of their placement in a plaza at the great ancient Maya city. The statues were thus kept alive in the memories of the devout. We can therefore ask ourselves what the implications were of this living memory.

As was the case with spolia as a whole, scholarship about Western art can provide us with a critical framework. Acts of mutilation and defacement directed toward the Tonina sculptures correspond to the treatment commonly directed in Roman antiquity toward statues representing individuals damned by the state. Romans used the term *memoria damnata* for the damnation of a person's memory and the term *abolitio memoriae* for the abolition of the memory of an individual. This treatment was almost always directed postmortem at the time of a dynastic change toward the new ruler's predecessor, his family members, or his political associates. The realization that it was possible to alter posterity's perception of the past through changing the visual, as well as epigraphic, record led to widespread campaigns to mutilate or transform the images of enemies of the state. Writers, as exemplified by the early Christian historian and theologian Jerome, who lived from 347 to 420 CE, described the fate of portraits of Rome's "bad" emperors as part of a systematic approach to images: "When a tyrant is destroyed, his portraits and statues are also deposed" (quoted in Varner 2004: 1). Romans believed that a deceased individual enjoyed an afterlife through the perpetuation of his or her memory, and this was at the core of Roman cultural identity. The condemnation, damnation, or abolition of an individual's memory, with its calculated obliteration of images, was a posthumous destruction of his or her very essence or being. The aims were several: (1) to cancel that person's identity and accomplishments from the collective consciousness, (2) to express dissatisfaction with the policies and personalities of the condemned emperor, and (3) to serve as a stark political warning to future offenders. Fictive images became, in effect, stand-ins for a hated person.

The destructive treatment of the sculptures at Tonina can be read as a continuation of the Roman practices of *memoria damnata* and *abolitio memoriae* and, as we will describe later, has affinities with pre-Columbian practices. Since the Christian church taught that authority was derived from God, these practices, when inflicted by Spanish authorities upon the statues representing indigenous rulers and priests, struck at the heart of social authority. Just as damning the memory of an emperor canceled their identity, so too might damning the memory of an indigenous ruler help to erase them from the collective consciousness. Just as damning the memory of an emperor conveyed strong disapproval of that individual, so too did damning the image of a Maya king show that the indigenous monarchy was despised. And

just as the damnation of a Roman emperor sent a strong message of warning, so too did the damnation of the Maya kings at Tonina illustrate the power of the Spanish monarchy over native lords.

Was this damnation of the memory of the kings of Tonina widespread? The condition of the sculptures at the site suggests that it was, indeed, so. Almost all three-dimensional figural sculptures at Tonina have been marred by destructive acts (figure 6.8). This sculpture chronicled the triumphs of Tonina royalty over the site's enemies, and monuments showed both rulers and their captives. The most common form of sculpture mutilation consisted of severing the head and lower legs from the torso. As many as 13 rulers' images and six captives' images received this treatment. The next most frequent treatment was cutting off the head alone, resulting in at least seven rulers' images and five captives' images receiving this treatment. Instances of defacement can be seen in three rulers' images and one captive's image. The large majority of images in both categories—ruler and captive—are mutilated.

To anchor this destruction in time, we might ask whether there are colonial-era descriptions of the sculpture at Tonina that can help us. The earliest known account was written by Fray Jacinto Garrido, sometime before his death in 1661 CE, and it suggests that a significant number of sculptures stood erect and complete in plazas during his lifetime. Indeed, he describes the heads of the rulers by noting that "they have on their heads something like crowns or hats which end in a point" (quoted in Ayala 1995: 123).¹⁰ This suggests that the sculptural mutilation was not a task that was taken to its conclusion with the initial erection of a church in Ocosingo in 1545 CE, but rather was part of a process that unfolded over a century or more, as Ocosingo's modest church grew in significance and grandeur.

IDOLATRY AND THE CONTAMINATION OF SPACE

The systematic mutilation of the art at Tonina can be understood as a Christian act of denigrating idols, motivated by a belief that they contaminated space. This was, indeed, a world in which people believed in the earthly presence of demonic forces, which could inhabit ungodly sculptures and spaces. Diego de Landa (Tozzer 1941: 108, footnote 496) describes the Maya of Yucatan as possessing "such a great quantity of idols that those of their gods were not enough for there was not an animal or insect of which they did not make a statue." Spanish estimates of the number of idols they had ferreted out ranged from 100,000 to more than a million. These idols were found by the Spanish in temples, residences, and patios of settlements and in the mountains, hills, and caves of the surrounding landscape. In order to end "the mistaken adoration of their false gods," the Spanish friars burned both wooden figures and clay incensarios. The ceramic fragments were gathered,

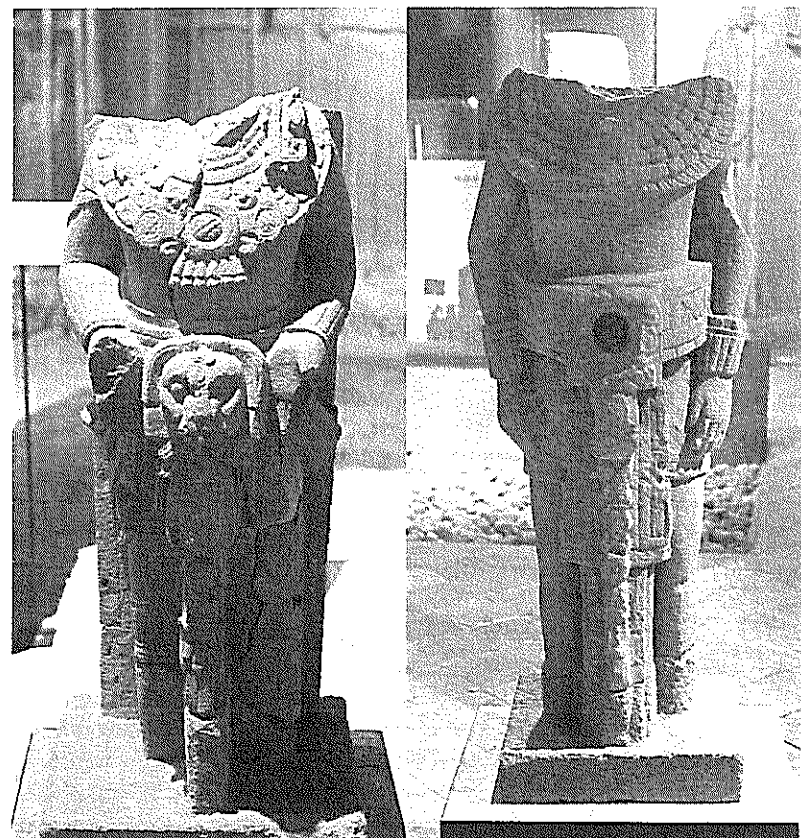


FIGURE 6.8. Examples of headless sculptures of rulers from Tonina, Monuments 176 and 134. Almost all of the portrait sculptures at Tonina were mutilated, most frequently by decapitation and severing the legs. Although difficult to date, such destruction likely took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries CE and was undertaken as part of colonial political domination and religious missionizing. Now in the site museum of Tonina, Chiapas, Mexico (photo by Amanda Hankerson, for the Maya Portrait Project. Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic License).

ground to a powder, and together with wood ashes, were deposited in bodies of water so that no particle could be recovered and reused (John Chuchiak, personal communication, 2012). In New Spain, Christian clergy were assiduous in targeting clay effigy braziers and wooden figures that the Spanish considered to be idols, as well as targeting the bark codices, which the Spanish regarded as indigenous books

that preserved and perpetuated idolatrous religious knowledge and practices. The evidence from Tonina suggests that the friars in Chiapas also viewed portrait sculpture as idolatrous.

Landa used the terms “idol” (*idolo*), “image” (*imagen*), “statue” (*estatua*), “brazier” (*braseo*), and, occasionally, “demon” (*demonio*) interchangeably (Landa in Tozzer 1941: 110, footnote 502). Like their medieval predecessors in Europe, the clergy in New Spain attributed life forces to images and considered the idols to be active agents of demons (Barry 2010: 34). Although the principal efforts at idol destruction were directed toward wooden figures and clay braziers, the severing of the heads and feet of the Tonina lordly images parallels the treatment of idols advocated by the medieval pope Gregory the Great (540–604 CE). Gregory had urged his missionaries to crush the heretical manifestations of pagan sculptures by breaking off their heads and limbs. The severed heads of such sculptures were sometimes displayed, in a custom that mimicked the display of the heads of executed criminals (Barry 2010: 36–39). This practice parallels the Roman treatment of the corpses of deposed rulers subjected to *memoria damnata* and *abolitio memoriae*.

The same abuses were inflicted upon the corpses of condemned leaders and their families and upon their statues. In the case of a Roman male, the individual's corpse was decapitated, the head displayed in public, and the torso was mutilated and dragged through the streets with hooks. Often the remains were then dumped into a river or another body of water, perhaps to purify it (Varner 2004: 108–109; Furstenberg 2010: 345). Ancient authors describe the abused statues of the condemned as though they experienced the same painful sensations as living human beings, and the mutilated faces of many ancient Roman statues testify to the symbolic gouging of sensitive parts of the body (figure 6.9). Pliny recounts that Domitian's images were attacked as if “blood and agony could follow every blow” (as translated by Radice 1969: 441; also see Varner 2004: 3). Dio portrays the assaults on Sejanus's statues as if they were attacks on the man himself: “They hurled down, beat down, and dragged down all his images, as though they were thereby treating the man himself” (translated by Cary 1981, vol. 7: 217; also see Varner 2004: 3). By attacking the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, two goals were accomplished (Lucan 1977: book II: 71–73; Varner 2004: 3). The capacities of these images to see, hear, or speak were negated while the lessons that the condemned individuals were disgraced and their misdeeds were avenged were thrown into high relief as a public lesson.

Such symbolic violence, sometimes directed toward living and breathing bodies, while other times directed at statuary as surrogates, characterized not only the ancient Romans, but also many other human societies. The attack on statuary as a surrogate for an individual is evident in pre-Columbian practices in Mesoamerica.

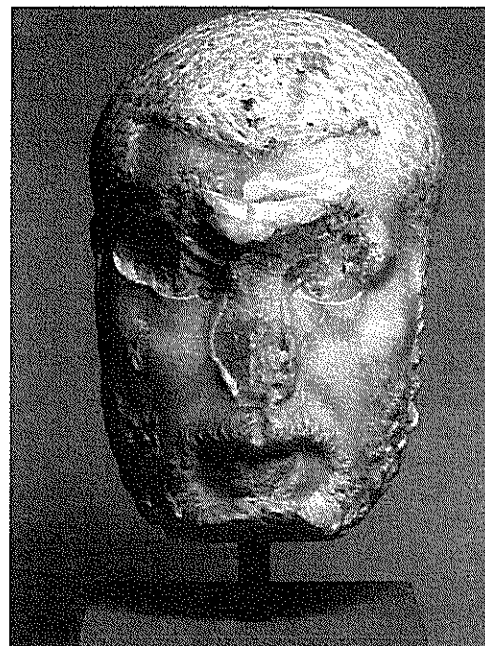


FIGURE 6.9. Portrait of Macrinus, ca. 217–218 CE, luna marble, 0.28 m. Ancient Roman portraits were often mutilated by gouging of the eyes and other sensitive parts of the anatomy as part of campaigns to abolish or damn the memories of condemned individuals (courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums [1949.47.138]).

At Tonina, indeed, statues of captives can be found that likely had their eyes gouged in ancient times (figure 6.10). Because the affinities between the symbolic and literal violence of the Old World and Mesoamerica are strong, we suggest that the theoretical perspectives regarding spoliation in ancient Mediterranean and medieval European cultures can enhance our understanding of spoliation in preconquest societies of the Americas. In the case of the colonial world in New Spain, two cultures with their own assumptions about imagery, violence, the body, and godliness came into contact and attempted to translate each others' worlds. Ultimately, although they elude unequivocal interpretations, the baptismal fonts from Ocosingo are a historical shadow that testifies to that complex encounter.

CONCLUSIONS

Baptismal fonts were important expenses for the churches of New Spain. Because catechumens were required to relinquish idolatry and to destroy idols secreted from Christian gaze, the inclusion of spoliated sculpture from Tonina in the fonts at Ocosingo must be seen as more than pragmatic recycling. Deliberate choices



FIGURE 6.10. Detail of a portrait of a captive from Tonina, whose eyes were likely gouged out in antiquity. Tonina Monument 152, now in the site museum of Tonina, Chiapas, Mexico (photo by Amanda Hankerson, for the Maya Portrait Project. Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic License).

appear to have guided the Dominican friars at Ocosingo in the creation of fonts that served their mission to evangelize the indigenous population.

Spoliated monuments are multifaceted. They are not simply statements about conquest, but they can rather be ways to send creative messages that cross cultural boundaries. As the French philosopher and social theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991) observed, space is not empty, nor is it a void. It is a socially constructed and corporeal phenomenon. In the case of the baptismal fonts of Ocosingo, that social reality involved experiments in bicultural and bvisual communication. The result was a complex set of new connotations for the art. The decapitation of portraits from Tonina was an act that intended to destroy their original meaning; their removal to Ocosingo and incorporation into baptismal fonts had been intended to impose a new framework onto them. However, at some point prior to 1904 the baptismal fonts were removed from their ecclesiastical settings. Their exile from the church context for which the spoliated monuments were made suggests that the innovative inclusion of indigenous sculpture in a Christian font was problematic. We suggest

that this can be explained by the ambiguous nature inherent in spolia and the contested ways that people understand their spaces.

The appropriated monuments from Tonina might have been regarded as exemplifications of the misuse of power by Spanish conquerors and Dominican friars. In such an atmosphere, tainted by mutual suspicions of heresy and ill-will, the earlier incorporation of indigenous art forms in Christian fonts might have become unacceptable to the Dominican friars. The fonts, by displaying the vigorous bodies of former Maya rulers in combination with the baptismal basins, might have raised complex cultural issues about the collision of cultures. If reinterpreted by indigenous viewers, the fonts could have suggested subversive narratives and become volatile sites of destabilization and decentering that questioned the authority of the Spanish friars and the Ladino settlers. It is that probable history, carved and recarved in stone, that makes these monuments fascinating.

NOTES

1. Across the Maya area, Classic-period sculpture was most often situated within site centers (Martin 2000), and excavations at Tonina have revealed that this site conformed to the norm (Blom and La Farge 1927; Becquelin and Baudez 1979–1982; Mathews 1983; Yadeun Angulo 1992; Yadeun Angulo, González Manterola, and Oseguera Iturbide 1992; Graham and Mathews 1996).
2. Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube suggest that Jaguar Bird Tapir's name may have been read as Bahlam Yaxuun Tihil (Martin and Grube 2008: 179).
3. Elizabeth Hill Boone (1994: 17) demonstrates that within Mesoamerican cultures, writing was not limited to rigid visually recorded language. Rather, pre-Columbian writing systems included "hieroglyphics, pictorial images, and abstract signs," where various combinations and adaptations permitted communication across and between wide, often-times bicultural, audiences.
4. The last Long Count date recorded during the Late Classic era is from Tonina. Monument 101 bears the Long Count date of 10.4.0.0.0, or January 15th, 909 CE (Martin and Grube 2008: 177, 189).
5. The volumes recording Tonina's ancient monuments, *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions* (Graham 2006; Graham and Mathews 1996; Mathews 1983) reveal, in their synopses of the artworks' provenance, that early scholars, including Alfred Tozzer, Eduard Seler, and Cécilie (Cecilia) Seler-Sachs encountered sculptures from Tonina in various locations in the town of Ocosingo. The explorers John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood noticed "two sculptured figures from the ruins" of Tonina in the wall of the churchyard in Ocosingo (Stephens 1969: volume 2: 256). Maricela Ayala (1995: 1–3) located an even earlier statement that probably dates to the seventeenth century,

explaining that Tonina's "shields and statues have been carried to the town of Ocosingo" (Juárez Muños 1935).

6. Ayala (1995:155) identifies on Monument 28 the seating of the king named chum-yahi and the display of the royal headband in the inscription recorded. Tonina's Monument 28 is also published in the secondary literature as Stela 1 (Spinden 1913: pl. 25, no. 4) and T-28 (Blom and La Farge 1927). In Sylvanus Morley's unpublished diary and archives it is variously referred to as Stela 12 and T-28, as noted by Graham and Mathews (1996:72).

7. Ayala (1995: 155-156) has also discussed the inscription on Monument 28, building on Sylvanus Morley's partial reading of a date in the lunar calendar on it as 9.11.5.0.0, or September 18, 657 CE, which is included in his unpublished field notes from 1944. Ayala suggests that the inscription refers back to Tonina's Ruler 1. Peter Mathews also tentatively reiterates Morley's 9.11.5.0.0 date in his chronology of dates from inscriptions at Tonina, linking it to Bahlam Chapaat (Mathews 2001: table 2).

8. Andrea Stone and Mark Zender argue that many kings at Tonina were interested in the warrior-like qualities of centipedes; at least five different rulers adopted Chapaat as part of their name (Stone and Zender 2011: 179).

9. For an insightful discussion of how colonial artists translated concepts, see the study of art in Turkey by Esra Akcan (2012).

10. Ayala's source for the quote by Fray Jacinto Garrido is a document from 1892 titled *Isagoge Historica Apologética de las Indias Occidentales, y especial de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala, de la orden de predicadores. Manuscrito encontrado en el convento de SantobDomingo de Guatemala, debido a un religioso de dicha orden, cuyo nombre se ignora*. A copy of it that she used, from 1935, is in the Biblioteca "Goathemala" XIII, de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, Guatemala, Centro America (see Juárez Muños, 1935).

REFERENCES

- Adams, Richard E. W. 1968. "A Refutation of R. G. Baker's Thesis of Recarving and Alteration of Maya Monuments." *American Antiquity* 33 (1): 102-103.
- Akcan, Esra. 2012. *Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey, and the Modern House*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822395577>.
- Alchermes, Joseph. 1994. "Spolia in Roman Cities in the Late Empire: Legislative Rationales and Architectural Reuse." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48:167-178. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1291726>.
- Appadurai, Arjun, ed. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511819582>.
- Ayala, Maricela. 1995. "The History of Tonina Through Its Inscriptions." PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, Austin.
- Baker, Robert George. 1962. "The Recarving and Alteration of Maya Monuments." *American Antiquity* 27 (3): 281-302. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/277796>.
- Bacquelin-Monod, Aurore, and Alain Breton. 2003. "¿Cuál espacio para los kabinal de Bachajón?" In *Espacios Mayas: Usos, Representaciones, Creencias*, ed. Alain Breton, Aurore Monod-Becquelin, and Mario Humberto Ruz, 327-362. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Barry, Fabio. 2010. "Disiecta Membra: Ranieri Zeno, the Imitation of Constantinople, the Spolia Style, and Justice at San Marco." In *San Marco, Byzantium, and Myths of Venice*, ed. Henry Maguire and Robert S. Nelson, 7-62. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Baxandall, Michael. 1985. *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Becquelin, Pierre, and Claude F. Baudez. 1979-1982. *Tonina, una cité maya du Chiapas (Mexique), Etudes mésoaméricaines. Études Mésoaméricaines*. México City: Mission archéologique et ethnologique française au Mexique.
- Berenson, Bernard. 1954. *The Arch of Constantine; or, The Decline of Form*. New York: Macmillan.
- Blom, Frans Ferdinand, and Oliver La Farge. 1927. *Tribes and Temples: A Record of the Expedition to Middle America*. New Orleans: Tulane University of Louisiana.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill. 1994. "Introduction: Writing and Recording Knowledge." In *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. E. H. Boone and W. D. Mignolo, 3-26. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, Durham.
- Brenk, Beat. 1987. "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology." In *Studies on Art and Archeology in Honor of Ernest Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, edited by I. Lavin and W. Tronzo. Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Volume 41. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1291549>.
- Burdick, Catherine E. 2010. "Text and Image in Classic Maya Sculpture." PhD dissertation, Art History, University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Cary, Earnest. (Original work published 1924) 1981. *Dio's Roman History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cervantes, Fernando. 1997. *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Caso Barerra, Laura, and Mario Aliphath Fernández. 2006. "Organización política de los itzaes desde el postclásico hasta 1702." *Historia Mexicana* 51 (4): 713-740.
- Cline, Sarah. 1993. "The Spiritual Conquest Reexamined: Baptism and Christian Marriage in Early Sixteenth-Century Mexico." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 73 (3): 453-480. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2517698>.

- Cummins, Thomas. 2011. "The Indulent Image: Prints in the New World." In *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew, 203–225. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
- Dean, Carolyn, and Dana Leibsohn. 2003. "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America." *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (1): 5–35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/106091603202341>.
- Deichmann, Friedrich Wilhelm. 1975. *Die Spolien in der säptantiken Architektur*. Munich: Beck.
- Donahue-Wallace, Kelly. 2008. *Art and Architecture in Viceregal Latin America, 1521–1821*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Durán, Fray Diego. 1967 [1570]. *Historia de las indias de Nueva España e islas de la Tierra Firme*. Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa.
- Elsner, Jaś. 2000. "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms." *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68: 149–184. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0068246200003901>.
- Feinman, Gary M., Linda M. Nicholas, and Lindsey C. Baker. 2010. "The Missing Femur at Mitla Fortress and Its Implications." *Antiquity* 84 (326): 1089–1101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00067107>.
- Freedberg, David. 1989. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Furstenberg, Yair. 2010. "The Rabbinic View of Idolatry and the Roman Political Conception." *Journal of Religion* 90 (3): 335–366. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/652262>.
- Gibbon, Edward. (Original work published 1776) 1994. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Vol. 1. Ed. D. Womersley. London: Allen Lane.
- Graham, Ian. 2006. *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions: Volume 9, Part 2: Tonina*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
- Graham, Ian, and Peter Mathews. 1996. *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions: Volume 6, Part 2: Tonina*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
- Greenhalgh, Michael. 1989. *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*. London: Duckworth.
- Greenhalgh, Michael. 2009. *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Medieval Mediterranean*. Leiden: Brill.
- Guillén, Ann Cyphers, and Fernando Botas. 1994. "An Olmec Feline Sculpture from El Azuzul, Southern Veracruz." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 138 (2): 273–283.
- Hanks, William F. 1990. *Referential Practice: Language and Lived Space among the Maya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Houston, Stephen D., and David Stuart. 1998. "The Ancient Maya Self: Personhood and Portraiture in the Classic Period." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 33: 73–101.
- Houston, Stephen D., David Stuart, and Karl A. Taube. 2006. *The Memory of Bones: Body, Being, and Experience Among the Classic Maya*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Joyce, Rosemary. 2006. "Where We All Begin: Archaeologies of Childhood in the Mesoamerican Past." In *Social Experience of Childhood in Ancient Mesoamerica*, ed. Traci Ardren and Scott R. Hutson, 283–301. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Juárez Muños, J. Fernando. 1935 [1600s]. *Isagoge histórica apologética de las Indias Occidentales, y especial de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala, de la orden de predicadores. Manuscrito encontrado en el convento de Santo Domingo de Guatemala, debido a un religioso de dicha orden, cuyo nombre se ignora*. Prologue to a lost manuscript originally written in 1892, by an anonymous friar. Guatemala, C.A.: Tipografía Nacional.
- Just, Bryan. 2005. "Modifications of Ancient Maya Sculpture." *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* (48): 69–82.
- Kaufman, Terrence S., and William M. Norman. 1984. "An Outline of Proto-Cholan Phonology, Morphology, and Vocabulary." In *Phoneticism In Mayan Hieroglyphic Writing*, ed. John S. Justeson and Lyle Campbell, 77–166. Publication no. 9. Albany: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University of New York at Albany.
- Kinney, Dale. 1997. "Spolia: Damnatio and Renovatio Memoriae." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42: 117–148. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4238749>.
- Kubler, George. (1961) 1985. "On the Colonial Extinction of the Motifs of pre-Columbian Art." In *Studies in Ancient American and European Art*, ed. Thomas Reese. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lara, Jaime. 2005. *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Lara, Jaime. 2008. *Christian Texts for Aztecs: Art and Liturgy in Colonial Mexico*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Leeming, Benjamin Howard. 2005. "Preaching with Pictures: Hieroglyphic Catechisms and the Shaping of Native Mesoamerican Christianity in Sixteenth-Century Mexico." MA Thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lucan 61. (1928) 1977. *The Civil War Books I–X (Pharsalia)*. Translated by J. D. Duff. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Magaloni Kerpel, Diana. 2011. "History Under the Rainbow: The Conquest of Mexico in the Florentine Codex." In *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew, 79–95. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

- Martin, Simon. 2000. "At the Periphery: The Movement, Modification, and Re-Use of Early Monuments in the Environs of Tikal." In *The Sacred and the Profane: Architecture and Identity in the Maya Lowlands*, ed. Pierre R. Colas, Kai Delvandahl, Marcus Kuhnert, and Annette Schubart, 51–61. Verlag Anton Saurwein, Markt Schwaben.
- Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube. 2008. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. Revised edition. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Mathews, Peter. 1983. *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions: Volume 6, Part 1: Tonina*. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
- Mathews, Peter. 2001. "The Dates of Tonina and a Dark Horse in Its History." *The Precolumbian Art Research Institute (PARI) Journal* 2 (1): 1–6.
- Megged, Amos. 1991. "Accommodation and Resistance of Elites in Transition: The Case of Chiapa in Early Colonial Mesoamerica." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71 (3): 477–500. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2515880>.
- Megged, Amos. 1995. "'Right From the Heart': Indians' Idolatry in Mendicant Preachings in Sixteenth-Century Mesoamerica." *History of Religions* 35 (1): 61–82. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/463407>.
- Megged, Amos. 1996. *Exporting the Catholic Reformation: Local Religion in Early-Colonial Mexico*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Megged, Amos. 1999. "The Religious Context of an 'Unholy Marriage': Elite Alienation and Popular Unrest in the Indigenous Communities of Chiapa, 1570–1680." *Ethnohistory (Columbus, Ohio)* 46 (1): 149–172.
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1990. *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*. New York: Little, Brown.
- Miller, Mary Ellen, and Simon Martin. 2004. *Courty Art of the Ancient Maya*. San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco distributed, Thames & Hudson.
- Normann, Anne Whited. 1985. "Testerian Codices: Hieroglyphic Catechisms for Native Conversion in New Spain." PhD dissertation, Tulane University, New Orleans.
- O'Neil, Megan E. 2011. "Object, Memory, and Materiality at Yaxchilan: The Reset Lintels of Structures 12 and 22." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22 (2): 245–269. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0956536111000290>.
- O'Neil, Megan E. 2012. *Engaging Ancient Maya Sculpture at Piedras Negras, Guatemala*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Palka, Joel W. 2014. *Maya Pilgrimage to Ritual Landscapes: Insights from Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Peterson, Jeanette Favrot. 1993. *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Peterson, Jeanette Favrot. 2005. "Creating the Virgin of Guadalupe: The Cloth, The Artist, and Sources in Sixteenth-Century New Spain." *Americas* 61 (4): 571–610. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tam.2005.0091>.
- Radice, Betty. 1969. *Pliny, Letters and Panegyricus*. In two volumes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rajagopalan, Mrinalini. 2011. "A Medieval Monument and Its Modern Myths of Iconoclasm: The Enduring Contestations over the Qutb Complex in Delhi, India." In *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- Robertson, Donald. 1994. *Mexican Manuscript Painting of the Early Colonial Period: The Metropolitan Schools*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Satterthwaite, Linton. 1958. "The Problem of Abnormal Stela Placements at Tikal and Elsewhere." *Tikal Reports* (3): 62–83.
- Schele, Linda, and Peter Mathews. 1991. "Royal Visits and Other Intersite Relationships Among the Classic Maya." In *Classic Maya Political History: Hieroglyphic and Archaeological Evidence*, ed. T. P. Culbert, 226–252. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwaller, John F. 2011. *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*. New York: New York University Press.
- Spencer, Kaylee R. 2015. "Locating Palenque's Captive Portraits: Space, Identity, and Spectatorship in Classic Maya Art." In *Maya Imagery, Architecture, and Activity: Space and Spatial Analysis in Art History*, ed. Maline D. Werness-Rude and Kaylee R. Spencer, 229–270. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Spinden, Herbert Joseph. 1913. *A Study of Maya Art, Its Subject Matter and Historical Development*. Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Stephens, John Lloyd. 1969. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Stone, Andrea, and Marc Zender. 2011. *Reading Maya Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture*. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Stuart, David. 2003. "Longer Live the King: The Questionable Demise of K'inich K'an Joy Chitam of Palenque." *Precolumbian Art Research Institute (PARI) Journal* 4 (1): 1–4.
- Stuart, David, and George Stuart. 2008. *Palenque: Eternal City of the Maya*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Sullivan, Edward J. 2007. *The Language of Objects in the Art of the Americas*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Taube, Karl. 2003. "Maws of Heaven and Hell: The Symbolism of the Centipede and Serpent in Classic Maya Religion." In *Antropología de la Eternidad: La muerte en la*

- cultura maya*, ed. Andrés Ciudad Ruiz, Mario Humberto Ruz, and Ma Josefa Iglesias Ponce de León, 405–442. Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Mayas.
- Tedlock, Dennis. 2003. *Rabinal Achi: A Mayan Drama of War and Sacrifice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tozzer, Alfred M. (Original work published 1566) 1941. *Landa's Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán: A Translation*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology vol. 18. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Varner, Eric R. 2004. *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*. Leiden: Brill.
- Vasari, Giorgio. (1568) 1878. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi. Florence: Sansoni.
- Vos, Jan de. 1988. *La paz del dios y del rey: La conquista de la selva lacandona (1525–1821)*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Wagner, Logan, Hal Box, and Susan Kline Morehead. 2013. *Ancient Origins of the Mexican Plaza: From Primordial Sea to Public Space*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Yadeun Angulo, Juan. 1992. *Toniná*. Mexico City: El Equilibrista.
- Yadeun Angulo, Juan, José Ignacio González Manterola, and Pablo Oseguera Iturbide. 1992. *Toniná: El laberinto del inframundo, Chiapas eterno*. México City: Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas.

7

Final Thoughts

Space, Place, Ritual, and Identity in Ancient Mesoamerica

NICHOLAS P. DUNNING AND ERIC WEAVER

There was a great variety of interpretations of cosmic space, the ritual experts in virtually every ceremonial center tending to incorporate in, or exclude from, their models such details as might enhance the standing of their own community. Nevertheless, it is evident that all the versions were formulated within the framework of a common paradigm. (Wheatley 1977: 55–56)

The deep cave underlying the heart of the ruined Maya city of Xcoch, Yucatan, is a place of ancient magic. Around the lip of a yawning sinkhole, crumbling pyramids speak of a longstanding interest and investment in this place. A small hole at the bottom of the sink leads to a passage opening into the Maya underworld. Enter in the early morning and the air in the passage is still as a tomb. Enter in the afternoon and a fierce wind bellows out of the passage, agitating the leaves of surrounding trees as if the *witz* monster of the Maya cosmos is alive and breathing.

After crawling down the entrance passage, the cave soon expands into a labyrinth of side passages and chambers, many filled with bones, both human and animal, broken ceramics and other artifacts testifying to centuries of ritual practice (Dunning et al. 2014; Weaver et al. 2015). Running through this honeycomb is a path worn into the cave floor by countless human feet, hands, and knees, and flanked by thousands of torch fragments. This path weaves through the maze, occasionally plunging downward, at places constricted to the point where crawling is necessary, and at places broadening into wider chambers. In the penultimate chamber, air quality

Memory Traces

Analyzing Sacred Space at
Five Mesoamerican Sites

EDITED BY
Cynthia Kristan-Graham
and *Laura M. Amrhein*

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO
Boulder

978-0-8203-2811-1