Summer 7-25-2024

Cross-stitched Stones: Untangling Gender and Ritual from the "Simple Lattice" Motif at Uxmal

Cassidy Cannon

Recommended Citation

Cannon, Cassidy, "Cross-stitched Stones: Untangling Gender and Ritual from the "Simple Lattice" Motif at Uxmal." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2024.
doi: https://doi.org/10.57709/37371339

CROSS-STITCHED STONES: UNTANGLING GENDER AND RITUAL FROM THE "SIMPLE LATTICE" MOTIF AT UXMAL

by

CASSIDY FRANCIS CANNON

Under the Direction of Grace Harpster, PhD

ABSTRACT

My thesis focuses on the simple lattice or cross-stitch motif that is present throughout the design program at the Classic Maya site of Uxmal. I use the Nunnery Quadrangle building group to address imposed gender associations that have evolved during its study. I argue that the layering of craft practices referenced in the facades' making have been under-considered and point to an alternative interpretation of Classic Maya gender and relationships that call Western-derived gender categories and power structures into question.

INDEX WORDS: Classic Maya, Textiles, Gender, Craft, Uxmal, Architecture

CROSS-STITCHED STONES: UNTANGLING GENDER AND RITUAL FROM THE "SIMPLE LATTICE" MOTIF AT UXMAL

by

CASSIDY FRANCIS CANNON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of the Arts

Georgia State University

2024

CROSS-STITCHED STONES: UNTANGLING GENDER AND RITUAL FROM THE "SIMPLE LATTICE" MOTIF AT UXMAL

by

CASSIDY FRANCIS CANNON

Committee Chair: Grace Harpster

Committee: Susan Richmond

Jennifer Siegler

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Academic Assistance

College of the Arts

Georgia State University

August 2024

DEDICATION

To the many communities of women who have had a hand in supporting, shaping, and inspiring my work—the women of Xocen, Xkansaj Anacleta yéetel Xkansaj Marce, Mama, Meg, Ann, and my professors:

Thank you for teaching me and mending me along the way.

And, of course, to Will: for everything.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the generous support of my committee, Dr. Grace Harpster, Dr. Jennifer Siegler, and Dr. Susan Richmond, this first milestone of my academic career would not have been possible. Their generous mentorship has set me on a path that has been a (very) long time in the making. I am incredibly grateful.

To Dr. Harpster I am thankful for the kind and considerate feedback and for patiently working with me to better understand the mechanics of effective research, idea mapping, and writing. After our time together, I feel both open-minded and prepared for what comes next in my academic career. Dr. Susan Richmond has been an incredibly positive force during the last two semesters. I am thankful for her helpful connections and guidance while working across periods and methodological frameworks and for her humorous and helpful insights on teaching. To Dr. Jennifer Siegler, I owe my interest in Colonial Latin American art and Ancient American history. Without her enthusiastic interest in my studies and her facilitation of connections across departments at Georgia State University, I would have undoubtedly missed the rich field of research in which I now continue to work. I cannot thank you all enough.

Outside of my formal thesis panel, I would like to thank Dr. Molly Harbour Bassett for sharing her new book with me and the ideological threads she wove together in its creation; it has been an inspiring experience. Of course, I cannot adequately express my gratitude to my dad, and Ann for their stable and loving support here in Georgia. A José, gracias por España, The Blue Room, Noodle, Garbancita y - sobre todo - por estar. Mom—thank you for always being in my corner, I cannot think of a better coach than you.

I hope I continue to make you proud.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

The carved stone facades at the Northern Lowland Maya site of Uxmal represent a radical shift in Maya architectural adornment. In place of the elaborate stucco ornament typically associated with Classic Maya buildings, the architecture of Uxmal is richly decorated in mosaic-like fields of low-relief carved stone. The site's ornamental scheme, that is indicative of the Puuc Maya architectural style, has been broadly connected to motifs derived from weaving and other textile techniques.[1] Textile's influence over the design scheme at Uxmal is most clearly observed in the patchwork sections of stonework that ground much of the site's figural stone sculpture. Conventional brick laying techniques frame these sections, whose stones' seams break from the familiar staggered grid and instead create geometric designs that build up the facades. While geometric patterns do not wholly belong to the world of textiles, saw tooth diamonds, interlocking x's, stepped "cloud" frets, and other, similar geometric motifs often appear in sculptures and drawings of Pre-Classic and Classic Maya garments.[2] When not attached to the human form via clothing, many of these same geometric motifs are arranged as "skybands," or patterned boundary lines that distinguish one conceptual or physical plain from another.[3] The geometric patterns upon which this study focuses do not frame, but rather are framed, and require a shift in analytical approach. Instead of creating a boundary line of individual symbols, that have generally been translated iconographically, the patterned facades at Uxmal meld into

[1] Puuc architecture features a heavy presence of textile patterns. In her doctoral thesis, Cara Grace Tremain explores the intersections between dress and identity in Late Classic Maya Court. She cites evidence of textiles' role in the temporary architecture of courtly buildings. Cloth and curtains were used to extend and divide courtly space and, like mat patterns that distinguished council houses or *popol nah* from the surrounding buildings, became a part of stone architecture. See Cara Grace Tremain, "A Study of Dress and Identity in the Late Classic Maya Court," PhD diss., (Calgary, Alberta 2017).

[2] Caitlin Early and Julia Guernsey, "The Textile Associations of Preclassic Geometric Bands," in *Wearing Culture: Dress and Regalia in Early Mesoamerica and Central America,* ed. Heather Orr and Matthew G. Looper (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014), 323.

[3] Early and Guernsey, "The Textile Associations of Preclassic Geometric Bands," 324.

textural wholes. Such a shift in focus and scale emphasizes the repeating patterns' resemblance to textiles, bringing their ambivalent materiality to the fore. These large, textural fields provide the opportunity to step away from symbol decipherment and instead look to the physicality of the facades, where one material behaves like another.

References to textile arts are present in most of the site's architectural adornment, but those in the structural complex known as the Nunnery Quadrangle are particularly revealing. Due in part to the Quadrangle's imposed colonial name and the feminine-coded nature of textiles and their study, the facades on the Nunnery Quadrangle offer the opportunity to consider how Maya gender dynamics are understood, translated, and potentially reinvented, within Western discourse. In the lattices, plaits, and framed patches of woven patterns, (Fig. 1-1), the facades embody textile techniques that other Maya representations of cloth do not completely address. For example, the technique that is most closely examined in this paper is what art historian Marta Foncerrada Moreno called the *celosía simple*, or the simple lattice pattern.[4] This pattern is built in much the same way a Maya woman may apply cross-stitched adornment to a woven cotton fabric—creating small x's stitch by stitch and row by row. Each of the stone stitches subtly captures how a crossed string sits atop and passes through the weave of a cloth or garment.[5]

[4] Foncerrada Moreno points out that the lattice patterns play two decorative roles; one, as a background plane upon which other design motifs and imagery may interact, and two, to a impart a plastic, moving character to the buildings' facades. (My translation) Marta Foncerrada Moreno, "Estudio Sobre La Ornamentación de los Monumentos en Uxmal," Masters thesis, Universidad Iberoamericana Incorporada a la U.N.A.M. Escuela de Historia del Arte, 1963.

[5] Color would have further emphasized this thread/fabric relationship. Jeff Karl Kowalski indicates there is evidence that red plaster was used in the gaps of each x-shaped brick, while the x was left a natural plaster color. The use of color would not only conjure symbolic reference but, relevant to the scope of this paper, would push the illusion of thread on fabric. See Jeff Karl Kowalski, "Painted Architecture in the Northern Maya Area," in *Painted Architecture and Polychrome Monumental Sculpture in Mesoamerica: A Symposium and Dumbarton Oaks*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1981), 77.

Figure 1-1 Simple cross-stitch pattern on East Building, Plaited snake border on North Building, and complex or woven lattice pattern on North Building.

The complex lattice pattern on the North Building Façade is also made in a mosaic fashion but, unlike the cross-stitch lattice, does not reflect the same sculptural depth. While woven patterns can have texture variation depending on the weight of yarn or the tension through which a weaver pulls that yarn through the warp, a woven pattern *is* the fabric and therefore does not create the same dimensionality that cross-stitching or other additive types of embroidery do. An eighteenth-century Catherwood drawing of the West Building's facade captures the movement of lines and textures that originally adorned the facades (Fig. 1-2). The combination of geometric patterns that adhere to an implied gridline and heavier figures that sit further away from the wall demonstrate a patchwork of different techniques that create a relative schema of dimensions that echo how they would appear and function on a textile.

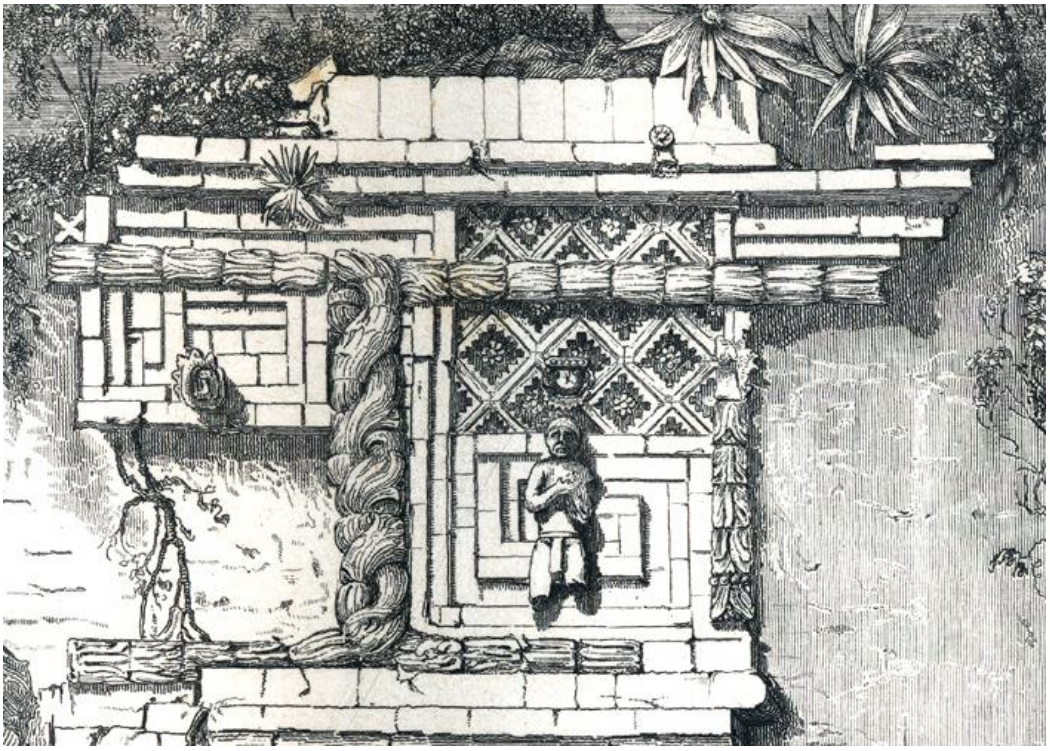

Figure 1-2 Cropped detail of 1841 Frederick Catherwood Engraving of West Building

By focusing on the crafting process and material translation at Uxmal as a model and metaphor for gender construction, we can better define the relationships between making, material, and (inter)gendered behavior among the Classic Maya. Craft—especially textiles—and the actions they index, can serve as a primary source "text" of Maya rituals grounded in cosmology. The designs at Uxmal do not simply nod to textile arts through pattern and motif facsimile; instead, they demonstrate evidence of the physical relationship between maker and material. In other words, the facades' ornament indexes an embodied, gender fluid performativity, through the feminine weaver/needleworker's hand as well as that of the masculine stonemason. I argue that, draped in these carved stone "fabrics," the facades create a union of gendered craft practices that bridge material gaps as well as ideas of traditional inter-gender dynamics. Each limestone block within the skeuomorphic facades was hand-carved and

fit into a whole, each one like a stitch in a wall of fabric. Thus, the stone's references to textiles are not only iconographic or aesthetic, but technique-based and material-specific. Textiles, their making, and their gendered connotations play an integral role in the conceptual reading of the Uxmal facades and the society they reflect. With an express focus on the intersection between craft-as-action and gender-as-material interpretation, I hope to add a new layer to prior readings of gender. Instead of symbol or political analyses, I will approach the facades at Uxmal as an indexical model for gender performativity exercised through craft.

Western scholars have been interested in Uxmal since Europeans first encountered the site in the sixteenth century. The interpretations of Puuc Maya architecture have evolved according to changing methodological ideologies and thus offer a varied record of interpretive interests. At times, such results appear to conform to changes in Western thought more so than unpacking and clarifying elements of Maya cosmology. This is particularly evident when we look at how scholars have interpreted gender roles or gender symbolism. While much has been done in addressing Maya gender relationships, many interpretive entanglements remain. As there are still fundamental questions about gender and its connection to biological sex (or if biological sex even exists outside of Western thought), Maya notions of gender, and how they could be expressed through material, is in need of further study.[6] Using feminist phenomenological and material culture theories, as defined by both Judith Butler and Jules David Prown, will help us to decipher Maya gender performativity while also untangling the Euro-American influence of gender interpretation from Classic Maya cultural production. While these theories are still Western articulations, their sense of fluidity breaks with Western binary thought and, thus,

[6] Traci Ardren, "Studies of Gender in the Prehispanic Americas," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 16, no. 1 (2008): 1.

provides a path that brings us closer to gender as performativity and how that may have been expressed through visual culture.

In the first section *Counting Stitches,* I will lay out a brief history of Uxmal's ocularcentric interpretation and then its materiality; specifically, how the making of the facades' stone stitches are critical to the overall reading of the site. Using Jules David Prown's sensorial approach to objects as a methodological guide, I will focus on the navigation of the Nunnery Quadrangle as a phenomenological experience—especially as it pertains to the merging of tactility and sight—to break out of Western dualist conditioning. In the second section, *Untangling Meaning*, I will explore the Maya tradition of visual impersonation and how it layers various meanings and contexts to create a complete message. Stepping briefly away from gender and architecture, I will analyze a Northern Yucatec bowl that depicts the Maize God figure represented as a cacao tree. The bowl clarifies the non-essentialist and composite manner in which Maya identity was constructed and visually expressed. By extension, the Maize God's "impersonation" of a cacao tree demonstrates how aspects of identity (including gender) manifest as a performance—rather than a fixed, predetermined concept—where essences of objects, people, deities, and animals come together from outside the materiality of one's own human body to express complex ideas of the self.[7] *Wrapping Ritual in Stone* places the facades and their stone textiles within ritual performance. I will show how the ritual of auto sacrifice is particularly revealing, since it reproduces the use of needle and thread in a way that creates parallels between textile craft, bloodletting, and the gendered nature of each. The section *Crafting a Nonbinary Materiality* provides a summary of how scholars categorized gender in ancient Mesoamerica in accordance with Western views. Rosemary Joyce addresses how this

[7] Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond Bricolage: Women and Aesthetic Strategies in Latin American Textiles," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics Autumn*, no. 22 (1992): 374.

rigidity in Western thought has led to misreading of classical Maya figures and their represented genders. I will then rely on the process of crafting materials and gender performativity as more accurate tools to appreciate the gender fluidity, its making and maker, and its composition in Maya visual culture.

2 COUNTING STITCHES

During the Terminal Classic Period, Uxmal represented one of three powerful cities in the Puuc Maya region, along with Mayapan and Chichén Itza.[8] The surrounding area is relatively flat and packed with dense, lush forests clamoring with iridescent songbirds. Built into one such forest, Uxmal's architectural body crests just above the tree line. The main complex—the Pyramid Temple of the Magician, the Nunnery Quadrangle, the House of Turtles, the House of Pigeons, and the Governor's House (Fig. 2-1)—are all tightly grouped within little more than a half square mile.[9] The Nunnery Quadrangle, on which this study will focus, was built between 889 AD and 909 AD.[10] It is a group of four buildings surrounding an open, quadrilateral space. Each building is richly decorated in figurative and abstract imagery, where masks, human representations, and animal figures all interact against a backdrop of textured mosaic facades. Renamed for its seeming resemblance to Spanish nunneries, the Quadrangle coincidentally is often aligned with femininity and women's roles within Classic Maya society. The building group's feminine reading is bolstered by the fact that textiles and their making have been associated with women craftspeople for many Mesoamerican indigenous groups.[11] For the Maya

[8] Enrique Dulanto Gutiérrez, "Uxmal Metrópoli Maya de Yucatán," 94.
[9] William H. Holmes, "Archeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico: Part 1, Monuments of Yucatán," *Publications of the Field Columbian Museum. Anthropological Series* 1, no. 1 (1895): 81.
[10] Jeff Karl Kowalski, "A Preliminary Report on the 1988 Field Season at the Nunnery Quadrangle, Uxmal, Yucatán, Mexico," *Mexicon* 12, no. 2 (1990): 27.
[11] For an in-depth demonstration of weaving as an apt paradigm for many cosmovisions of the Mesoamerican world, see Cecilia Klein, "Woven Heaven, Tangled Earth: A Weaver's Paradigm of the Mesoamerican Cosmos," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385, 1 (1982) 1-35.

especially, weaving became a metaphor for femininity and women's roles as creators of life and family lineages.[12] As such, textile analysis across scholarship often makes mention of societal gender dynamics. While perhaps the persistent connection to femininity is in part due to a colonial projection, the presence of textile techniques and the feminine presence they connote are on full display within the walls of the Quadrangle. Beyond the rich, interwoven iconography, the Nunnery Quadrangle expresses a subtle tactile quality that brings the lived environment and the constructed elements of the facades in relational proximity. This under-considered tactility establishes a sensuous blurring of the skin's interaction with cloth and the eye's interaction with stone.

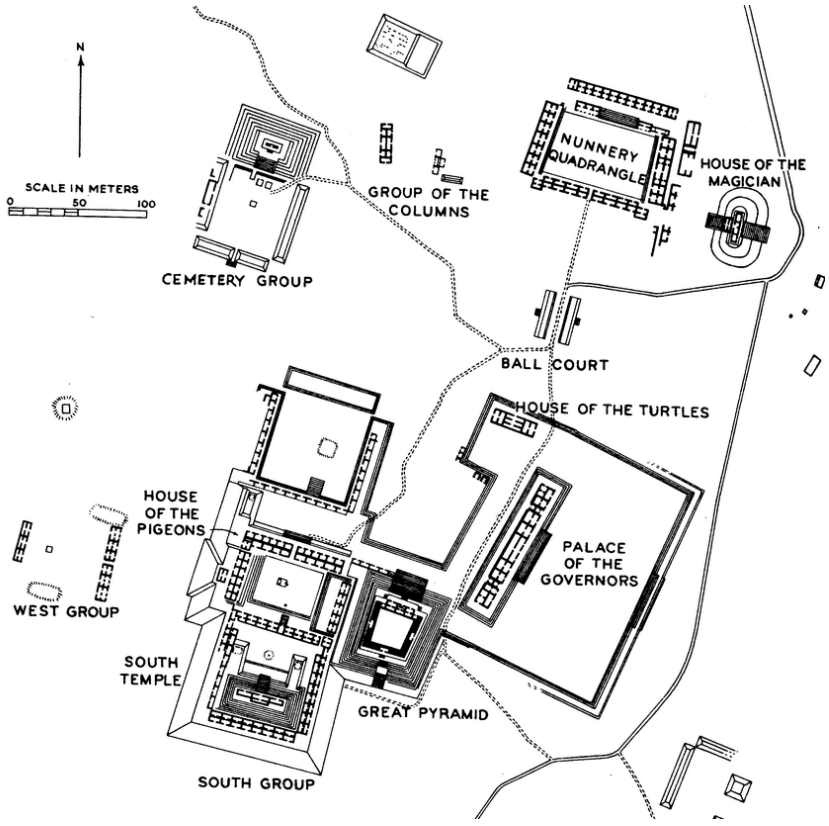

Figure 2-1 1947 Map of Uxmal from Sylvanus Morely.

[12] Berlo, "Beyond Bricolage: Women and Aesthetic Strategies in Latin American Textiles," 116.

Studies of the Nunnery Quadrangle up until the end of the twentieth century have been mainly concerned with narrative histories aimed to explain why the facades look the way they do. Such explanations include—but are not limited to—possible ethnic origin, political instigation and changes in propaganda messaging, chronological concerns of when the design shift took place, as well as proposed meanings behind the scenes carved into the facades of the Quadrangle and Uxmal as a whole.[13] Much of the preceding examples, that Foncerrada Moreno describes in detail, rely heavily on translations of visual symbols and figurative scenes. Translating symbols as one reads a text, Elisa Perego argues, is the interpretive approach most susceptible to an investigator's biases. She describes two weaknesses that come with symbolic and iconographic translation, "[f]irst, they sometimes rely exceedingly on the scholar's viewpoint," and "[s]econd, iconography is a medium which retains a strong ideological load and does not offer a neutral view of social reality."[14] These two issues cannot be wholly avoided, but Jules David Prown's approach to sensual observation can be a useful tool to mitigate such issues and others that come with Western essentialist modes of thought. Prown argues that our Western conception of history has been long characterized by man's "progressive triumph of mind over matter," where the "evidence of human history seems to confirm our sense that abstract, intellectual, spiritual elements are superior to material and physical things."[15] The application of Prown's model provides a phenomenology-minded method for interpretation that prioritizes sensorial appraisals of cultural output—one where an interpreter's biases and assumptions are consciously managed and kept in check by centering formal evidence. [16] For Prown, the

[13] Foncerrada Moreno, "Estudio Sobre La Ornamentación de los Monumentos En Uxmal,"1.
[14] Elisa Perego, "Women's Voices in a Male World: Actions, Bodies, and Spaces Among the Ancient Maya," *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 18, (2007): 71.
[15] Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 2.
[16] Prown, "Mind in Matter, 4.

manifest—what Heidegger called that which is observable through experience—functions as a system of conceptual checks and balances that become incredibly relevant when an interpreter of an object lives outside the culture or period of said object's origin. [17] Prown writes,

> We, the interpreters, are products of a different cultural environment. We are pervaded by the beliefs of our own social groups—nation, locality, class, religion, politics, occupation, gender, age, race, ethnicity—beliefs in the form of assumptions that we make unconsciously. These are the biases that we take for granted; we accept them as mindlessly as we accept the tug of gravity. [18]

In short, Prown's solution is to "engage the other culture in the first instance not with our minds, the seat of our cultural biases, but with our senses." [19] While objectivity can never truly be present, of course, there is a world of interpretive possibilities that come with breaking familiar structures of analysis common in Euro-American scholarship.[20] For Mesoamericanists, Marvin Cohodas writes, conjuring a more "accurate picture of the past," is not the ultimate goal, "but because political aspects of archaeological reconstruction cannot be eliminated, they should be more responsibly directed. Mayanists need to think through the political ways in which reconstructions of a past Maya have potential political applications in the present."[21]

Scholars today focus their attention on the intricacies and vagaries of materiality, given its notorious nebulousness. For the scope of this paper, I have anchored my use of the term in what Rosemary Joyce has called "an accumulation of *traces of actions*" that are perceptible in our present.[22] "Traces" represents a flexible alternative to "data" or "evidence" that reconcile the

---

[17] Don Ihde, "Indians and the Elephant: Phenomena and the Phenomenological Reductions," in *Experimental Phenomenology, Second Edition*: *Multistabilities*, (State University of New York Press 2012), 15.
[18] Prown, "Mind in Matter, 4.
[19] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 4-5.
[20] Prown, "Mind in Matter," 4-5.
[21] Marvin Cohodas, "Multiplicity and Discourse in Maya Gender Relations," in *Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations*, ed. Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), 15
[22] Rosemary Joyce, "Transforming Archaeology, Transforming Materiality," in *The Materiality of Everyday Life*, ed. Lisa Overholtzer and Cynthia Robin, (Arlington: Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 2015), 185.

physical closeness of a material object and the distant phenomena in which it lived and participated.[23] It is important to establish, however, that materiality is not indicative of a passive, documentary relationship. Rather, materiality provides a sensuous and reactive space with the ability to not only index human force, but to recognize a corresponding physical force innate to different materials.[24] Humans, regardless of gender, "exercise agency with the support of material culture."[25] There is a clear difference, for example, in how someone raises a vessel from metal sheets verses wheel-thrown porcelain. Even though both materials can conform to a same shape, wet clay and thin metal require completely different sensibilities of making and react to human force in radically different ways and over different durations of time. Additionally, the daily experience of each vessel is notably different, where each one is differently weighted, brittle, cold or warm, and so on.[26] This push and pull generates a complex network of exchange between social experience and physical objects. Scott R. Hutson and Gavin Davies argue that material culture is so bound up in human action, that objects are not only shaped by people, but shape people in exchange.[27]

Joyce's take on materiality and its trace is useful when approaching the facades of the Nunnery Quadrangle. In the case of the stone stitches, murky boundaries between stone/fabric, masculine/feminine, process/product, temporal/permanent all coalesce on the limestone surfaces. Depending on where a viewer stands in space, the tactile quality of the facades shifts scale. This is made clearer when the quality of the light is considered.[28] The angle of the bright Yucatecan

---

[23] Joyce, "Transforming Archaeology, Transforming Materiality," 191.
[24] Tim Ingold, "On Weaving a Basket," in *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill,* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2021), 342.
[25] Scott R. Hutson and Gavin Davies, "How Material Culture Acted on the Ancient Maya of Yucatán, Mexico," in *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 26, no. 1 (2015): 11.
[26] Hutson and Davies examine the contrast between clay vessels and basket vessels in daily life.
[27] Hutson and Davies, "How Material Culture Acted on the Ancient Maya," 12.
[28] Linda Schele and Peter Mathews, "Uxmal: The Nunnery Quadrangle of Chan-Chak-K'ak'nal-Ahaw," in *The Code of Kings*, (New York, NY: Scribner, 1998), 266.

sun brings out different depths and details within the mosaic walls. In Peter Matthews and Linda Schele's description of the complex, for example, the authors point out that the thatch huts on the outside façade of the South Building are carved to appear as though a soft wind is rustling the thatch roofs (Fig. 2-2).[29] The visual relationship established between the viewer and the facades, as well as within between the walls and one another, is quite flexible.

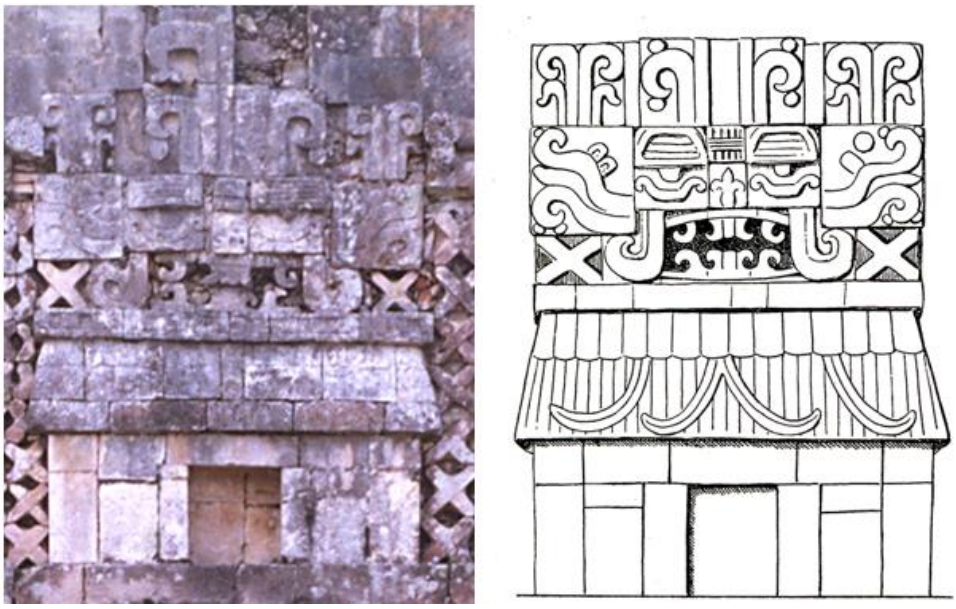

Figure 2-2 Photograph and 1917 Eduard Seler drawing of Door 3 on South Building ext. façade.

The corners of the quadrangle do not meet, but the East Building visually recedes into the medial molding of the South Building and creates a unified whole that can be seen from many vantage points at the site (Fig. 2-3).[30] From various heights and angles across the inner building group, the Nunnery Quadrangle's architectural lines create a game of visual and physical semi-permeability that, when considering the intensity of Yucatán's tropical sun and the game of light and shadow reflected in the facades' low relief, seem to billow in response to their natural

[29] Schele and Mathews, "Uxmal: The Nunnery Quadrangle of Chan-Chak-K'ak'nal-Ahaw," 265.
[30] Schele and Mathews, "Uxmal: The Nunnery Quadrangle of Chan-Chak-K'ak'nal-Ahaw," 266.

environment.[31] As such, tactility and flexibility become a governing factor in the experience of the Nunnery Quadrangle, in both the visual and experiential realms. In many ways, space confronts the body of the individual and appears to move and react in response, challenging the stone from which it is carved. I present this element of tactility to illustrate how the facades can be read beyond their figurative content and how those readings may add to or alter previous scholarly interpretations of the facades' visuals.

Figure 2-3 Quadrangle from above. Photographed by Ulises Carrillo Cabrera.

The main interpretive knot that I am addressing in this paper is best demonstrated in an academic back and forth between Jeff K. Kowalski and Virginia E. Miller in their "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," and Amelia Trevelyan and Heather Forbes' "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal." Both interpretations build from one another, as well as explore the site's ties to gender, gendered craft, and the sociopolitical reasons the stone textiles were commissioned by Maya elite in the first place. Kowalski and Miller, in part building from Kowalski's extensive past studies of the site, label the simple lattice pattern as a "pars pro toto image that refers particularly to the appearance of the interwoven mat along its

[31] Schele and Mathews, "Uxmal: The Nunnery Quadrangle of Chan-Chak-K'ak'nal-Ahaw," 266.

outer edges."[32] Kowalski and Miller support this connection by looking to the lattice pattern seen on Altar 7 at Tikal (Fig. 2-4). [33] The type of weaving carved on Altar 7 is more closely related to dynastic authority, as woven reed mats served as literal seats of power in the Classic Maya world. [34]

Figure 2-4 Detail of stone weaving on Altar 7 at Tikal.

Kowalski further ties this woven pattern to a medallion worn by a human figure on another structure at Uxmal, the House of the Governor (Fig. 2-5). He ultimately argues that these different instances of lattice-work confirm that the simple lattice or cross-stitch pattern on the facades of the Nunnery Quadrangle "serves to identify the stone structures as edifices fit for the 'Lord of the Mat.'"[35] But, by reading all lattice work and weaving as derived from the same craft action, I believe that Kowalski's interpretation limits the potential meaning that can be pulled from the site, its architecture, and those tasked with its construction. When we consider tactility

[32] Jeff Kowalski and Virginia E. Miller, "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," in *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica,* ed. Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III, (Barnardsville, NC: Boundary End Archaeological Research Center, 2006), 147.
[33] Kowalski and Miller, "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," 147.
[34] Kowalski, "Painted Architecture in the Northern Maya Area," 78.
[35] Kowalski, "Painted Architecture in the Northern Maya Area," 78.

and the experience of making, there are clear contradictions to Kowalski's original ideas about the lattice-work and Kowalski and Miller's later visual comparison. The lattice pattern on Altar 7 and the Uxmal medallion are carved in low relief and pay special attention to the way that reeds would be woven over and under one another in the weaving process. This attention to the mechanical aspect of the reeds' crafting is not clearly apparent in the Uxmal facades, where instead the stitches overlap only at their central points. Additionally, ceremonial mats more typically "take the form of a pair of twisted, plaited strands" and as such, Trevelyan and Forbes see this as an indication that the simple lattice instead refers to cross-stitching, an additive textile technique commonly used in Yucatec Maya ceremonial shawls and clothing.[36]

Figure 2-5 Principal human figure on House of the Governor with Seler illustration of woven medallion

The simple lattice or cross-stitched pattern brings an interpretive difficulty common to skeuomorphic material, or material made to mimic a second in either appearance or use, to the surface. While a lattice can be created by the sum of x-shaped stitches as well as the under-over weaving of the reeds carved into the altar, their distinct materialities indicate differences in their

[36] Amelia M. Trevelyan and Heather T. Forbes, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," in Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations, ed. Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), 98.

making –and thus readings– that must be considered. The Mayan name for cross-stitching, *xokbil chuy,* can provide us insight as to how the technique is executed and how the resulting threadwork could be used to layer metaphorical meaning. *Xok* is the word for to read and to count and *chuy* means sewing. *-Bil* is the connective tissue that signals necessity so that in literal terms, *xokbil chuy* means: "sewing that has been or must be read and/or counted."[37] In practice, a craftswoman must *xok,* or count, the threads of the woven fabric and pass her needle over and under these threads in one direction and then back over in the opposite direction—snaking across the working fabric. Perhaps due in part to how the technique requires a needleworker to slither her needle through an established weave and the overall visual and texture effect, *xokbil chuy,* was closely associated with the skin patterns of the sacred cascabel rattlesnake (Fig. 2-6). [38] With snakes' powerful connection to creation and the spiritual realm, through needle work, women created small cycles of life and death .[39]

[37] Manuel J. Andrade, "A Grammar of Modern Yucatec," Microfilm Collection of Manuscripts on Middle American Cultural Anthropology 7, no. 41 (1955), 4.56.
[38] Lourdes Rejón Patrón, "Tastes, Colors, and Techniques in Embroidered Mayan Female Costumes," in *Crafting Gender: Women and Folk Art in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Eli Bartra, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 234.
[39] Snakes, for a host of reasons were powerful symbols of life cycling into death. Their forked tongues resemble a young corn plant, recently sprung from the Earth. See Lowell Gustafson, "Mother/Father Kings," in *Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations,* ed. Lowell Gustafson and Amelia Trevelyan, (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2002), 150.

Figure 2-6 Neo-tropical Cascabel, photographed by Kevin K. Caldwell, 2015.

Movements and gestures associated with crafts were a significant part of a product's animacy. In certain Maya areas, weavings were discussed in terms of being born rather than made. Julia Hendon writes, "the movements of the woman's body and the loom attached to it mimic those associated with giving birth and the beating of a heart." [40] Even this type of weaving, while closer to that of the ceremonial mats, is distinct both in its making and its symbolic potential. The difference between a stitch and a woven plait may seem inconsequential but, as Janet Catherine Berlo writes, "scholars may find significance in aspects of the past that are relatively inconsequential in the minds of the Maya. Conversely, Maya weavers claim legitimacy through channels we would be mistaken to think of as epiphenomenal." [41] In sum, something as small as a stitch could indicate, a world of interpretive difference.

[40] Julia A. Hendon, "Objects and Persons: Integrating Maya Beliefs and Anthropological Theory," in *Power and Identity in Archaeological Theory and Practice: Case Studies from Ancient Mesoamerica,* ed. E. Harrison-Buck (University of Utah Press, 2012), 87.
[41] Berlo, "Beyond Bricolage," 128.

3 UNTANGLING MEANING

From a materialist perspective, iconographic interpretation (per Erwin Panofsky where an *object* and *event* unite to convey meaning) is complicated when the cultural context of craft is involved. In Panofsky's prime example, a man lifts his hat in a gesture of greeting. Panofsky writes, "Neither an Australian bushman nor an ancient Greek [is] to be expected to realize that the lifting of a hat is not only a practical event with certain expressional connotations, but also a sign of politeness."[42] Panofsky stresses that not only must a recipient of such a gesture be familiar with "the practical world of objects and events, but also with the more-than-practical world of customs and cultural traditions peculiar to a certain civilization."[43] When the icon up for interpretation is no longer a human-object engaged in gesture-event, but rather a depiction of one material rendered in the fashion of another, distinct, material, both the practical world and the more-than-practical world become acutely abstract and rooted in material and technical literacy.

Craft and material literacy, Matthew G. Looper cautions, are not easily or commonly acquired, as they generally come with time and a certain level of mastery or specialization.[44] "Technological representation is not a simple phenomenon," Looper writes, "because it posits complex relationships between a representation and often a hypothetical 'origin' source."[45] A representation of yarn that has been drawn or sculpted, for example, can be easily mistaken for henequen twine.[46] Without specialist knowledge, mistaking images of different processes for one another is not only likely, but difficult to avoid. This challenge becomes more complex when the

[42] Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance,* (Oxford University Press, 1939), 3-4.
[43] Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology,* 3-4.
[44] Matthew Looper, "Fabric Structures in Classic Maya Art and Ritual," in *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica,* ed. Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III, (Barnardsville, NC: Boundary End Archaeological Research Center, 2006), 82.
[45] Looper, "Fabric Structures in Classic Maya Art and Ritual," 82.
[46] Looper, "Fabric Structures in Classic Maya Art and Ritual," 87.

problems of limited language and technique exactness are factored into an analysis. English, for example, employs both "weave" and "weaving" to refer to a range of techniques "including interlacing and basket-weaving, as well as loom-weaving."[47] Our Western-centric version of material specificity does not align with the intricate and varied ways in which Maya textile workers layered weaving, brocading, and embroidery techniques nor how those layers were understood in poetic language. Such homogenization of process, while appropriate for the interpretive model that material is passive matter ready to be shaped into a predetermined form, does not account for the "form-taking activity" inherent to craft, or, as Tim Ingold names it, the "becoming of things."[48]

The making of things and the relationship between maker and material carry with them a wealth of poetic references and communication through metaphor and metonym. Such layering and manipulation of signs and signifiers, exhibited across Maya communication materials, demonstrates that oblique forms of building meaning were "fundamental to ontological models and modeling of reality."[49] To illustrate how these models of making worked across Maya communication materials, it is necessary to explore how "the boundaries between text and image were permeable."[50] For example, carvings and paintings of elite Maya people and deities often

[47] Looper, "Fabric Structures in Classic Maya Art and Ritual," 83.
[48] Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, and Architecture*, (NY: Routledge 2013) 25.
[49] Trevelyan and Forbes, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 99.
[50] Janet Catherine Berlo, "Beyond Bricolage: Women and Aesthetic Strategies in Latin American Textiles," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics Autumn*, no. 22 (1992): 122.

depicted figures wearing the regalia of other gods and animals. Appropriated adornments imbued the wearer with outside strength and/or spiritual quality of others.[51]

Figure 3-1 Illustrated roll-out fifth century Maya Bowl with Maize God as cacao tree. Dumbarton Oaks, Pre-Columbian Collection, Washington, DC.

A Northern Yucatán stone bowl, from a similar period and area as Uxmal, serves as a fitting illustration of the flexibility of meaning supported by layering physical materials (Fig. 3-1). The bowl features two legible scenes of a figure dressed as the Maize god—here identified by his jewelry, hairstyle, and idealized brow shape. The superimposition of diverse plant parts, costume, and body parts depicted on the bowl reflect the complex spiritual make-up of the Maize God.[52] Despite the clear cues to the Maize God as a central subject, it is entirely possible that this is a Maize God "impersonator," or a figure wearing the regalia of the Maize God.[53] Impersonation in Maya visual communication is a device that assembles a composite figure (not limited to human beings) and dresses it with the attributes of another figure, concept, deity, etc., in order to impart the figure with their life-essences.[54] Tatiana Proskouriakoff saw impersonation

[51] Karon Winzenz, "The Symbolic Vocabulary of Cloth and Garments in the San Bartolo Murals," in *Wearing Culture: Dress and Regalia in Early Mesoamerica and Central America*, ed. Heather Orr and Matthew G. Looper, (Boulder: University Press of Colorado 2014), 378.
[52] Rebecca A. Dinkel, "The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts: Metaphor in Changing Political Climates," PhD diss. (University at Albany, SUNY 2021), 226.
[53] Rebecca A. Dinkel, "The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts: Metaphor in Changing Political Climates," PhD diss. (University at Albany, SUNY 2021), 226.
[54] Karon Winzenz, "The Symbolic Vocabulary of Cloth and Garments in the San Bartolo Murals," 373.

as an indication that, perhaps, deities were not person-like characters at all, but rather, "compositions of ideograms, capable of expressing very complex conceptions" that, while similar to hieroglyphic writing, were not restricted by syntax nor serial arrangement.[55] In the case of the bowl's Maize God image, cacao pods sprout from his limbs, appearing to exist somewhere between bodily attribute and adornment. Whether or not this figure is a deity or an impersonator, the representation of maize growing cacao pods has caught the attention of researchers in a particular way. As Rebecca Dinkel writes, "though puzzling at first […] maize was regarded as the most important agricultural crop with the maize god's lifecycle [and allowed] for the creation of other crops, such as cacao."[56] Instances such as these, where one body appropriates the adornment or features of another, reconfigure history through myth and allow the flow of the past to connect into the present. Dennis Tedlock describes this bundling of contexts as a "figurative detour that leaves a residue of additional meanings."[57] By assembling a body with references to crops essential to the continuation of Maya life and society, whomever this figure is, they demonstrate an embodied connection to two powerful sources of nourishment that cannot be avoided in the image's reading.[58]

Impersonation has perhaps presented the most challenges for Western researchers in the realm of gender. In the case of the lattice patterns, the process of carving stone, a masculine aligned craft, has within it the residue of textile making, a feminine aligned craft. In other words, impersonations—and their ability to obliterate boundaries (especially those demarking binary opposites in the Western mind)—provide insight into gender construction and presentation

[55] Tatiana Proskouriakoff qtd in Karl Taube, "The Major Gods of Yucatán," 7.
[56] Dinkel, "The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts," 226.
[57] Dennis Tedlock, "Toward a Poetics of Polyphony and Translatability," *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*, ed. Charles Bernstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.
[58] Dinkel, "The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts," 226.

within the Classic Maya world. Should we extend the relationship of maker/material to person/gender, we can begin to untangle Western essentialist notions of gender and think of both material and gender as processes of becoming. Tim Ingold writes,

> [Making is] a process of correspondence: not the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance, but the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming. In the phenomenal world, every material is such a becoming, one path or trajectory through a maze of trajectories."[59]

A compromise of becoming is a durational exchange full of small negotiations between maker and material. When apply the compromise of becoming to the realm of craft, and all the meanings that crafted materials carry with them to the Classic Maya, similarities and connections between literal materials like thread and stone and nebulous categories of masculine and feminine become clearer. To flesh out the impersonation of textiles and the semantic residues carved into the facades, we must handle some of the formal and technical attributes of weaving, cross-stitching, and stonework. In reference to the cross-stitch pattern, Kowalski writes that "on a purely visual basis, the flat strands of the simple lattices seem more closely related to the broader strands of a mat woven from reeds or palm rather than interwoven cotton threads."[60] However, it is apparent that labeling cross-stitching as "interwoven cotton threads," demonstrates a misrepresentation of its making and ignores the potential residue of meaning that is left behind.

In "Woven Heaven, Tangled Earth: A Weaver's Paradigm," Cecilia Klein discusses how the movement of a maker's hands informs a textile's symbolic importance. Nets and hammocks—still a common sleeping set-up across the Yucatán—while *appearing* as formally similar or "orderly, as that of a weaving," Klein argues, "it must be recognized that the structural principle is by no means the same. While the many threads of the weaver are kept essentially

[59] Ingold, *Making,* 31.
[60] Kowalski and Miller, "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," 147.

straight on either a horizontal or a vertical, but never both, the single cord of a net constantly reverses direction along zigzagging diagonals."[61] Noting where nets are used in visual material versus weaving, Klein indicates an important connection between material and metaphoric significance. The undulant movements that create the structure of a hammock are metaphorically tied to the movement of water—a crucial element of the Maya underworld. Netted and knotted forms are frequently associated with Maya underworld deities' costumes and associated objects and "may have symbolized the disordered filaments of the underworld," indicating a correlation between movement and symbolic reference.[62]

As far as weaving versus cross-stitching is concerned, Klein's example demonstrates that a purely visual basis is not an adequate approach to Maya visual output. By referring to cross-stitching as interwoven cotton thread, as Kowalski and Miller do, there is a fundamental misrepresentation of cross-stitch's making and the movements necessary to its execution. Cotton fabric is woven in an over-under pattern, much like a reed or palm mat. While the technology and movement of making is different (and, I argue, significant) from a structural perspective, mats and woven fabric have more in common than mats and the additive technique of cross-stitching. Considering Tedlock's, Klein's, and Joyce's theories of constructed meaning in the Mesoamerican world, an object's (or image's) making is a central part of its communicative power.

Given Joyce's "traces of action," the cross-stitch pattern at Uxmal, unless intentionally buffed out or obscured due to erosion, is a detailed record of a maker's movement. Adding to Trevelyan and Forbes' assertion that "each [x] stone is carved as though it is a stitch, with one thread crossing over the other," it is evident that, unlike weaving—a process that creates a

[61] Klein, "Woven Heaven, Tangled Earth," 9.
[62] Klein, "Woven Heaven, Tangled Earth," 9.

consistent over/under pattern—the x bricks indicate variation.[63] Additionally, the points of each x "stitch" taper and meet with the surrounding "stitches," formally appearing to recede into the wall's ground (Fig. 3-2). Kowalski observes that these x bricks would have been covered in plaster, arguing that their precise joinery would be obscured.[64] While there is evidence at the site of Uxmal for the use of colored plaster, Uxmal represents advanced stonecutting techniques that yielded "more refined stone surfaces, which required only a thin layer of stucco facing."[65] It could be argued, then, that the individual x-stitches could have remained as separate visual entities, rather than simply disappearing into the woven whole. In fact, Weldon Lamb counted cordoned off x-bricks at the site in his 1980 report, finding that within six double-headed snake structures, numerical references to both the moon and Venus's synodic periods were present in the simple lattice.[66] Counting the x's as Maya glyphic text would be read—or how *xokbil chuy* is executed—he proposes that the numerical evidence, combined with recurring iconic reference to the feathered serpent as well as astronomical glyphs, suggest that the Nunnery Quadrangle contains a "fine harmony of astronomy and aesthetics" that combine "astronomical, calendric, and ritual information."[67] Thus, even if the cross-stitch x's were covered by plaster, they communicated important ritual information through their individual carving and assembly.

---

[63] Amelia M. Trevelyan and Heather T. Forbes, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," in Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations, ed. Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), 122-123.
[64] Kowalski, "Painted Architecture in the Northern Maya Area," 77.
[65] Ana Laura Rosad-Torres, Laura Gilabert-Sansalvador, and Riccardo Montuori, "Stonecutting in Maya Architecture: The Palace of the Governor at Uxmal (Yucatán, Mexico)," (presented at The History of Building Trades and Professionalism: The Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of the Construction History Society, University of Cambridge, September 2021), 48.
[66] Weldon Lamb, "The Sun, Moon and Venus at Uxmal," *American* Antiquity 45, 1 (1980), 80.
[67] Lamb, "The Sun, Moon and Venus at Uxmal", 85.

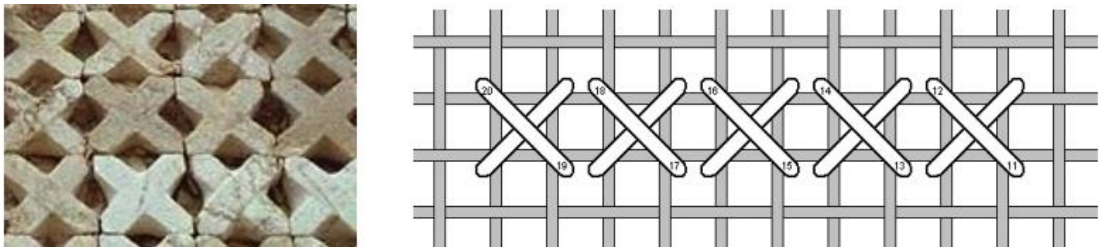

Figure 3-2 Cross-stitch motif compared to a cross-stitch diagram

The "complex web[s] of symbolism and metaphor" present in the facades at Uxmal are, as Trevelyan and Forbes write, better understood in "terms of agency rather than mere artistic convention."[68] The Puuc craftspeople could have reproduced textile references in malleable stucco plaster with much greater ease than painstakingly sourcing, cutting, and carving stone.[69] I would like to underline that artistic convention, as I interpret Trevelyan and Forbes' work, is not to downplay indigenous craft people's preferences and aesthetic choices, but rather to indicate that the human and material exchange in making the facades is deeply important. According to them, "…each Puuc facade was built up in horizontal courses, just as woven, brocaded, and embroidered fabric is—stone-by-stone, almost literally warp by warp, stitch by stitch."[70] Trevelyan and Forbes rightly draw the connection between craft of textiles and craft of stonework. Building on their ideas, we can understand the terms of agency in two ways; one being that the shape of making and a maker's associated movements in time and space are an important material force in the construction of the facades and two, the facades at Uxmal work as agents because they "induce people to relate to them in certain ways," after their initial manufacture.[71]

[68] Forbes and Trevelyan, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 99.
[69] Forbes and Trevelyan, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 98.
[70] Forbes and Trevelyan, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 98.
[71] Hendon, "Objects as Persons," 85.

Julia Hendon proposes that in the Classic Maya world, objects (such as tools, artefacts, daily-use objects and buildings) are more than a means to an end. Approaching Mesoamerican production of goods from a non-anthropocentric perspective, she proposes that objects are "nonhuman actors that help shape the relationships of which they are a part through their properties, their purpose, and their connections to social institutions […] above and beyond the individual interactions in which they participate."[72] When we transpose her ideas to the facades of Uxmal, we recognize how the cross-stitched patterns, carved of stone but appearing as textiles, serve as a charged material that provides a literal and metaphorical backdrop upon which the iconographic and symbolic story-telling of the facades may take place. The materialities of the facades at Uxmal, including the craftspeople associated with the source and final products, imbue the Quadrangle with potent metaphors for the creation of life, the Maya universe, and how both the earthly and spiritual realms are maintained.

4 WRAPPING RITUAL IN STONE

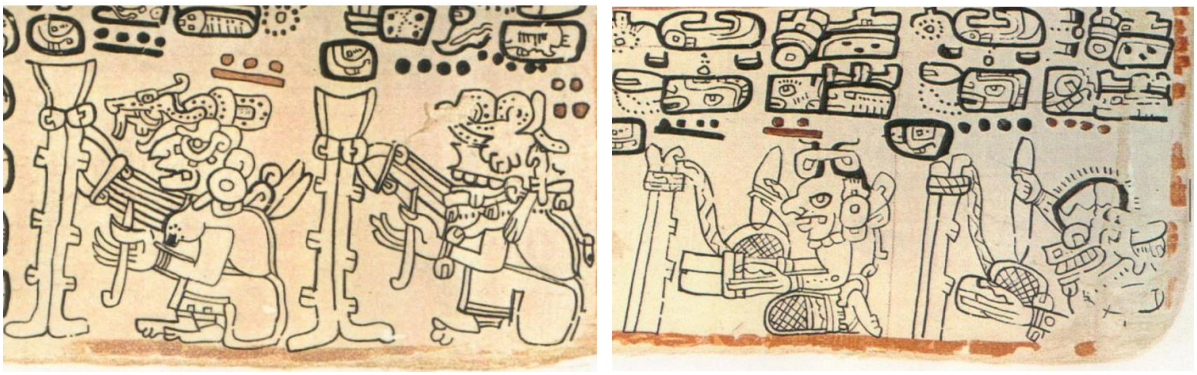

Figure 4-1 Fiber arts depicted in Maya codices Madrid and Dresden.

Visual representations of textile crafts make frequent appearances in the Maya codices and demonstrate a strong connection to the cosmos and ritual practice. In numerous drawings and glyphic texts in the codices, women, genderless humans, deities, and skeletons are illustrated

[72] Hendon, "Objects as Persons," 85.

mid process in several textile crafts including warping, weaving, brocading, netting, and embroidery (Fig. 4-1). Mary A. Ciaramella elaborates on such appearances as a part of what she deems the "weaving complex." She writes that "[a]ctivities that pertain to weaving are imbued by the Maya with cosmological importance" and function as metaphors for "sexual intercourse, gestation, and childbirth."[73] Metaphor extends weaving's cosmological importance to female-sexed biology. As I will explore in this section, through ritual performances like bloodletting, biologically tethered experiences can be created for *any* body, no matter gender. The cyclical bleeding of menstruation, or *u yilik* in Yucatec Maya, could have brought women in closer biological contact with the ancestral and divine realms, explaining their important role in forging ties to the cosmos.[74] Pete Sigal writes that *u yilik* also translates to "one who sees," which could account for their initiatory role in auto sacrificial performance.[75] Through gendered ritual action and its connection to craft, textile's making is not only tied to the creation of life and child rearing, but also can create and open connections to other realms, ancestors, and new political landscapes.

When it came to ritual language and sacred speech, the power to interlace meaning and to convey multiple, interrelated concepts at once was especially important.[76] Given the oblique way Maya communication layered puns and double entendres, I argue that the ritual of bloodletting is replicated through language and imagery as a kind of material performativity. As male and female craftspeople engaged with distinct aspects of society and community management, so too did male and female persons engage in bloodletting and its surrounding ritual process in distinct

[73] Ciaramella, "The Weavers in the Codices," 47.
[74] Pete Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins: The Colonization of Yucatecan Maya Sexual Desire,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 158.
[75] Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins,* 158.
[76] Forbes and Trevelyan, "Gendered Architecture at Uxmal," 99.

ways. Women generally initiated the ritual by piercing a hole through their tongue with a stingray barb or a lancet while men did so through the skin of their penis. Strips of cotton, paper, or rope, were then threaded through the holes and sewn through the body to add material and visual weight to the spilling of blood, a gesture that could be obliquely tied to cross-stitching.[77] In Yucatec Mayan, the word for tongue, *aak'*, bears striking resemblance to the word for clitoris, *ak'*.[78] This indicates that much like cloth and stone demonstrate a figurative and material connection in the facades, so do the gendered/sexed acts of ritual bloodletting. Whether exercised through stone or the human body, both performances are embodiments of the same ritual translated through different but related "materials."

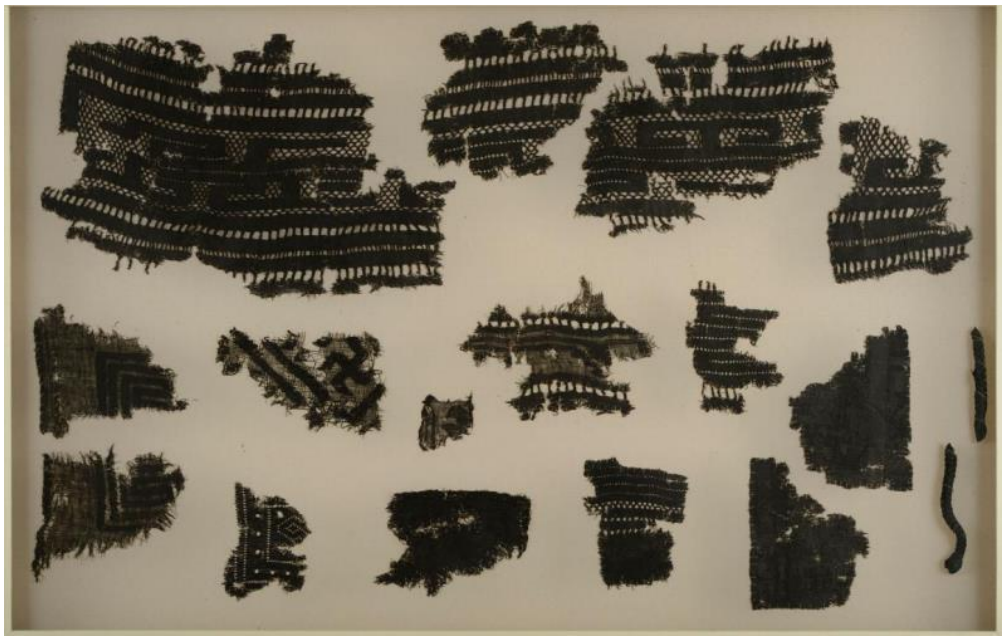

Figure 4-2 Carbonized textile remnants from the Sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza

[77] David Joralemon, "Ritual Blood-Sacrifice among the Ancient Maya: Part I," *Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Part II,* ed. Merle Greene Robertson. (Pebble Beach, CA: Robert Louis Stevenson School, Pre-Columbian Art Research, 1974) 61.

[78] These definitions are pulled from two dictionary sources, John Montgomery, *Maya-English/English-Maya (Yucatec) Dictionary and Phrasebook,* (NY: Hippocrene Books, Inc. 2003). And Juan Ramón Bastarrachea Manzano and Jorge Manuel Canto Rosado, *Diccionario Maya Popular: Maya-Español/Español Maya,* (Mérida, MX: Academia de la Lengua Maya de Yucatán, 2003).

Despite such importance placed on femininity in language and in the codices, there is still a curious lack of women figures displayed across Maya sculpture and monuments. I propose that this perceived lack of feminine presence in sculpture is due in part to the impermanence of certain materials as well as some of the interpretive hang-ups to which I pointed in previous sections. Due to the tropical climate, where textile disintegration is a common problem, very little cloth evidence remains, with the exception of a few remnants from the sacrificial cenote at Chichén Itza (Fig. 4-2). David Stuart discusses a common Classic Maya ritual process, *k'altun*, or "stone-binding," in which stelae and other large monuments were wrapped or bundled in cloth.[79] Ritual cloth lost to humidity and time could have indeed represented the feminine presence that has been described as lacking. The only cloth that could survive is that which is carved in stone or painted or solidified in a surface. A Classic period ceramic vessel illustrates that material substitution was a means to create an enduring object that could accumulate history through repeated use (Fig. 4-3).[80] In the Nunnery Quadrangle, the simple lattice pattern represents gendered action distributed across a human-tool-material relationship that embodies a potent ritual act of wrapping a building group in an everlasting limestone cloth. As the actions of both the textile's making and those who participate in its making have ritual significance, the Quadrangle's stone cloth adornment could be thought of as a sustained ritual practice exercised through cloth material.

Bloodletting performed by the Maya elite were spectacles of shared ritual. Audience members participated by preparing their bodies and minds by fasting and ritually cleansing and,

[79] David Stuart, "Kings of Stone: A Consideration of Stelae in Ancient Maya Ritual and Representation," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 29/30, 1996. 155-156.
[80] Hutson and Davies, "How Material Culture Acted on the Ancient Maya," 20.

perhaps caused by sustained deprivation, all shared in the visionary experience.[81] The shock and blood loss of the performer worked as an entheogen, connecting a ritual actor with the spiritual realm through a visionary experience embodied by the Vision Serpent (Fig. 4-4).[82]

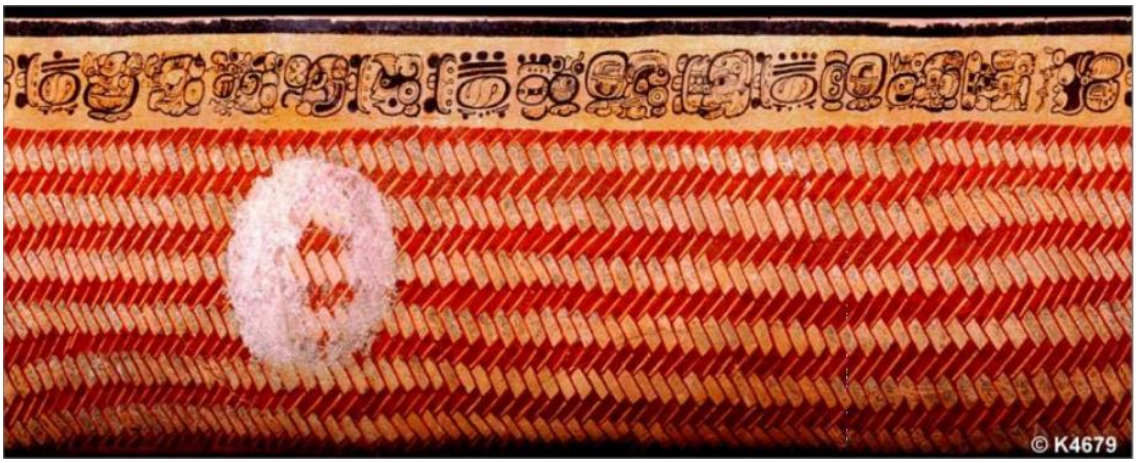

Figure 4-3 Rollout of Classic Maya skeuomorphic "woven" ceramic vessel, Justin Kerr.

After the vision, the bowl along with the tools and fabric strips were then burned and fed to the gods and ancestors in the form of a dark column of smoke, echoing the writhing form of the Vision Serpent for the onlookers.[83] Bloodletting performed by the elite were also carved in stelae, lintels, and painted on ceramics, which would remain in view of the public on a day-to-day basis.

[81] Linda Schele and Mary Miller, "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," in *The Blood of Kings* (NY: G. Braziller: 1986) 177.
[82] Schele and Miller, "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," 177.
[83] Schele and Miller, "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," 178.

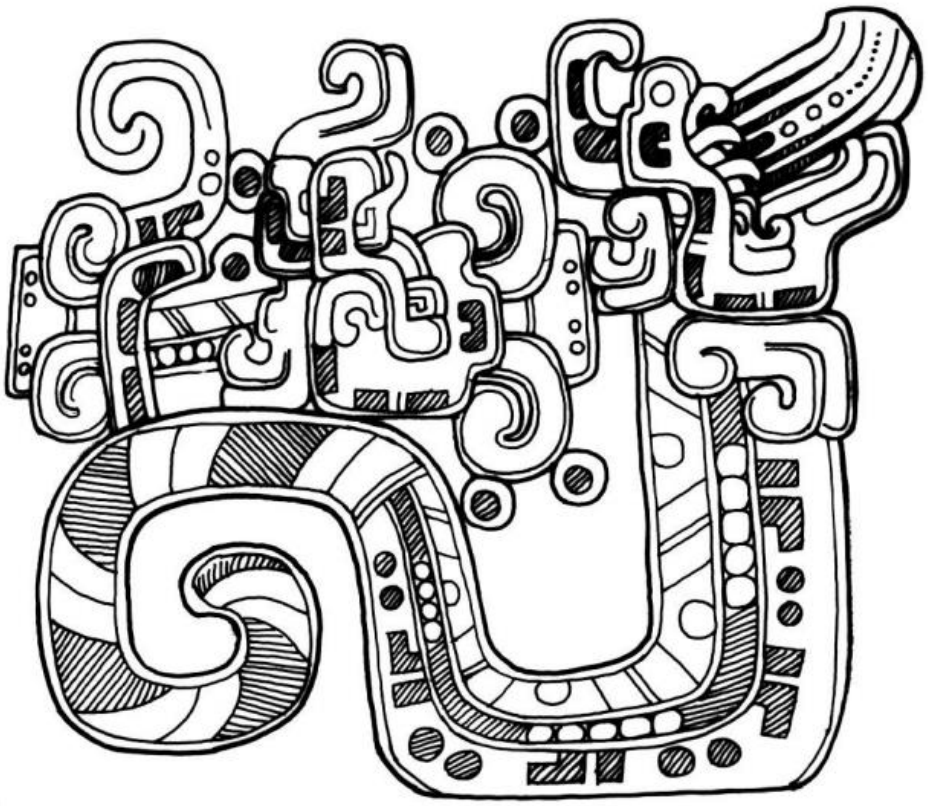

Figure 4-4 Vision serpent drawing by Linda Schele, Schele number 3515

One of the most famous and complete documentations of bloodletting is a collection of lintels from Yaxchilan, another Yucatecan site that was also active during the Late Classic Period.[84] At Yaxchilan, several narrative panels illustrate the ritual performance I have just outlined, perhaps the most famous of which document a ritual performed by Lady Xok. In Lintels 24, 25, and 26, Lady Xok begins by sewing a thorned cord through a hole in her tongue at the feet of her counterpart, Maya ruler Shield Jaguar or Itzamnaaj Bahlam III (See Appendix 1).[85] Through such a painful ritual performance, Lady Xok, "gave birth to the path of

[84] Andrew D. Turner and Michael D. Coe, "A Portrait of Lady K'abal Xook, Queen of Yaxchilan," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, Recent Acquisitions, 2018, 69.
[85] Turner and Coe, "A Portrait of Lady K'abal Xook," 69.

communication" through which the Vision Serpent may travel.[86] From the serpent's mouth springs forth an ancestor in battle regalia, sanctifying the accession of Shield Jaguar. Miller and Schele write that "[d]uring the accession rites of the king, his wife underwent bloodletting so that she could communicate with this warrior […]. The warrior is not named, but it is clear that the purpose of the bloodletting rite was to cause the vision to materialize."[87] Contrary to Bishop Diego de Landa's reported observation that women did not participate in ritual performance, Lady Xok is the prime conduit through which Shield Jaguar's reign is sanctified.[88] After the ritual, with blood still marking her face, Lay Xok hands Shield Jaguar battle armor, readying him for war, yet another means through which sacrifice rituals were conducted.[89]

Bloodletting draws the blood from the actor's body, enfleshing a physical material from an otherwise internal and ephemeral visionary experience. The outward blending of gender and reciprocal ritual engagement of sex organs supports that not only did "anatomy [not] guard access to the ritual world," but its public display was an important factor in the ritual's power.[90] In the union and performance of masculine and feminine participants, the ritual is a significant moment of sanctification created by two parts of a royal whole. Ultimately, it is through the union of the feminine and the masculine that life, and therefore lineage and power, may persist. The stone textiles could be read as a metaphorical extension of the bloodletting ritual, able to consecrate a site and draw it in proximity to godly and ancestral power. Like bloodletting

[86] Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins,* 155-156.
[87] Schele and Miller, "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," 177.
[88] Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins,* 156.
[89] Schele and Miller, "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," 177.
[90] Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins,* 197.

conjures the Vision Serpent through the action of sewing into the body, the cross-stitch lattice at Uxmal also conjures serpentine imagery that could be used to clothe the body or other materials.

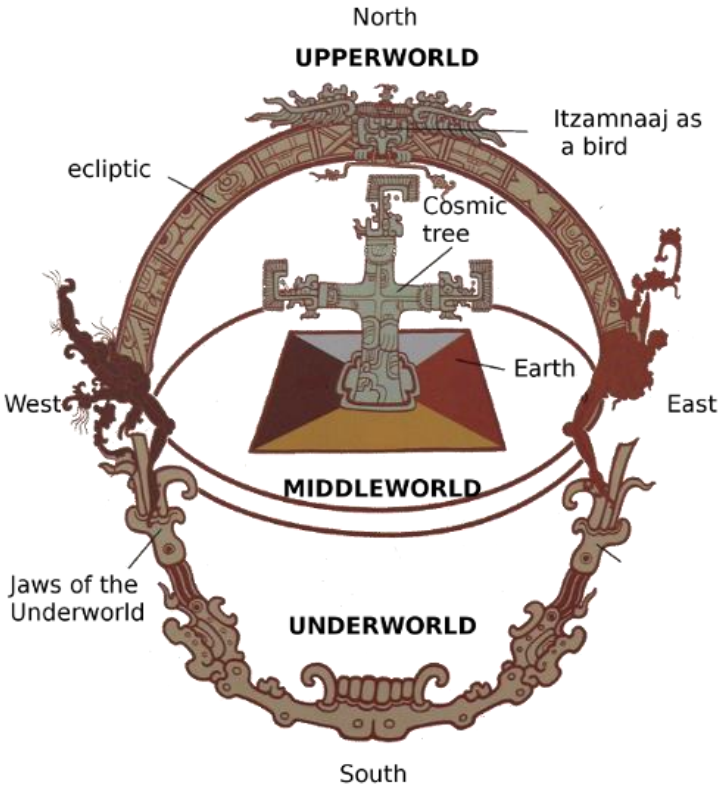

Figure 4-5 Illustrated diagram of the Maya Universe model.

The quadrangle itself reflects diagrams of the Maya universe's creation where the "North and South Buildings [reference] the upper and lower worlds," and "the East and West Buildings, the horizon of the Earth—the birth and death places of the sun." (Fig. 4-5).[91] The complex lattice that marks the "death place" of the sun, provides interesting contextual evidence that may further align the simple lattice pattern with textiles and ritual over ceremonial mats. Formally speaking, the complex lattice bears striking resemblance to both the designs on the *huipiles* worn by Lady Xok during her bloodletting ritual, and to a pre-Columbian embroidery technique called

[91] Forbes and Trevelyan, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 123.

xmanikté or *xmanikbeen* (Fig. 4-6). Forbes and Trevelyan remind us that "[*Xmanikté*], in Yucatán, it is [the] oldest form of embroidery practiced by Yucatec women today and is the stitch employed in the creation of special ritual shawls used by Mayan groups in Chiapas."[92] The technique signifies "siempreviva" or "eternally living" and is appears to shimmer between floral and reptilian symbols.[93] In a conversation with Maya linguist, José Alfredo Hau Caamal, he explained that due to the contextual nature of Yucatec Mayan, *xmanikté* could also point to death or an absence of creation.[94] The technique's ability to communicate elaborate existential cycles extend it far beyond a trade-based good or a woman's pastime but rather a potent adornment style that can wrap—and thus designate—ritually or spiritually significant objects.

Figure 4-6 (L) Xmanikte in process from Yicel Mis Góngora. (R) Finished embroidery sample at the Museo de Ropa Etnica.

[92] Forbes and Trevelyan, "The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal," 123.
[93] Jazmina Barrera, *Punto de Cruz* (Oaxaca: Almadía Ediciones, 2021) 29.
[94] José Alfredo Hau Caamal, personal correspondence 2023.

Through craft and its ritual extension, the internal mechanisms for gender construction and reaffirmation are externalized. By aligning craft action with ritual action, every part of Maya society was steeped in spiritual significance and alive with malleability. While it could be argued that an externalization of gender creates a status quo for others to follow, the public display of gender as performed by Lady Xok and her potential masculine counterparts illustrates that differently sexed bodies had pathways to the spiritual realm through ritual performances that metaphorically made their bodies similar. As such, boundaries between perceived opposites—male/female, spiritual/earthly, stone/fabric—were regularly transgressed through daily activities.

In drawing attention to a body's interaction with material through craft and its ritual connection, the reference to textiles in the Nunnery Quadrangle weaves together a model of the Maya universe.[95] This universe, also modeled in *huipiles* and Maya farmland, contains within it complex references to the ritual maintenance of the Classic Maya life and spiritual worlds.[96] Between semi-permanent limestone and ephemeral textile, an edification of ritual communication between earthly and heavenly realms is made possible through evidence of the human hand through stitching, bloodletting, and carving. As such, the stone textiles fuse feminine and masculine bodies (who carry with them strong ties to their communities through the performance of craft labor) and project them against the backdrop of a site and society that sought to place itself in close relation to the spiritual and political power of its ancestors. Like Lady Xok's clothing indicating her proximity to the Vision Serpent and the premonition it offered her, the carving of stone reflects the feminine act of creation through both textile arts and

[95] Forbes and Trevelyan argue that the specific model of the universe that the Quadrangle references is the traditional garment called a *huipil.* Other scholars have written extensively on the connection between the diagram of a *huipil* and the Maya Universe. See Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, "Prehispanic Traces in the Symbolism of Maya Weavings from Guatemala," in *Symposium of Archaeological Investigations in Guatemala,* ed. Juan Pedro LaPorte, Bárbara Arroyo, Héctor E. Mejía (Guatemala City: Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, 2004) 7-8.
[96] Jennifer P. Mathews and James F. Gerber, "Models of Cosmic Order: Physical Expression of Sacred Space Among the Ancient Maya," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 15, no. 1 (2004): 51.

its role in gendered ritual performance. If we read the facades as primarily tied to woven reed mats (as Kowalski and Miller suggest) the making of the Quadrangle's universe get snagged by semantic meaning that, as I have shown, does not fully account for the repeated references to bloodletting and its ability to create spiritual doorways via the union of masculine and feminine performance.[97] In centering the ceremonial mat as the reigning meaning behind the lattice, we affirm a patriarchal understanding of Maya society in which masculine rule defined a community's power, instead of exploring other potentialities of gender, its creation and maintenance, as well as its flexibility over time. This is not a direct contradiction of Kowalski and Miller's analysis of the textile work in the Uxmal facades, but rather a methodological alternative where gender, craft, and meaning are malleable, interchangeable, and critical ingredients to ritual recipe.

[97] Kowalski and Miller, "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," 146.

Figure 4-7 Visual comparisons of Lady Xok's huipiles, xmanikte sample, and complex lattice pattern at Uxmal.

5 CRAFTING A NONBINARY MATERIALITY

In order to further delve into the nature of the complexity of impersonation, it will be useful to address the particularities of gender construction in the Classic Maya world. Western thought, throughout modernity, has relied on categorizations and neatly separated concepts, which may not be a useful strategy to understand non-binary cultural production. While not discussing gender construction directly, Carolyn Dean's work on Inka rockwork can serve as an illustrative example of how we can gain a deeper understanding of categorical concepts so radically different from our own cosmovision. A brief detour showing how Dean handles the

issue of cultural misalignment is therefore warranted and, borrowing from Tedlock, will leave behind a semantic residue that will aid in understanding Maya gender.

In the introduction to her book, *The Culture of Stone*, Dean uses scholarship's historical perception of stone in the Indigenous Andean worldview as an instrument to untie the concept of *art* from the material's cultural value. She writes that "as an art historian I am mindful that much of Inka rockwork—extant since the fifteenth century and still sitting in plain view—has just recently been recognized and talked about as 'art.'"[98] What may appear, to a Euro-American audience, as a cross-cultural elevation of a numinous material points instead to a fundamental misunderstanding of the Inka perception of stone. "Art" conjures a historical record that may not necessarily accommodate what is valuable to a culture nor valued about an object. While Dean does not deny that Inka rockwork is often visually impressive, her book teases out the "non-Andean notions that have shaped current understandings of Inka rockwork"[99] and underlines the interpretive gaps that such descriptions foster. In that sense, her attention to "non-Andean notions," will later serve us as a model of thought to avoid the "non-Maya notions" of gender and, perhaps, gender itself.

Dean's critique of the aesthetic appraisal of Inka rocks falls in line with other contemporary attempts to call attention to—and better understand—decades of Euro-American influence over non-Western histories. One of the many binary products of this influence is the interpretation of gender—both within societies of the present as well as those of the past. Miranda K. Stockett works through the layered issues of a binary understanding of gender as it appears in scholarship about Mesoamerica. In her paper, "On the Importance of Difference: Re-

[98] Carolyn Dean, *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) 1.
[99] Dean, *A Culture of Stone*, 1.

envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica," Stockett explains that not only is there a binary construct of male/female gender as it relates to the corresponding sexed bodies, but also within scholarship's interpretative models of genders within society.[100] For the bulk of Mesoamerican study, gender hierarchy—where men/males serve as the dominant party—has been the standard operating model, in accordance with the scholars' own culture. More recently, however, views on gender hierarchy are shifting toward gender complementarity, where there is an equal/opposing and interdependent balance between male/female sexes and genders.[101]

Views based on gender complementarity recognize a third gender, or an ambiguous sex/gender that can account for gender presentations that deny Western categorization.[102] While this 'other' category is often seen as a progression from the male/female dichotomy, opting for a 'miscellaneous drawer' of sex and gender does not offer an alternative model for understanding complex cultural dynamics carved into the facades at Uxmal. Instead, it suggests a catch-all for such things that do not fit inside a neat, binary schema that works within Western dualist thought. What a binary—or even ternary—understanding of gender based on sex does, as Stockett and others have discussed, is to put a cap on the interpretive possibilities that can be sown from historical records. Marvin Cohodas notes, too, that such a sex/gender system "misrepresents the fuzzy boundaries of male and female—the many crossovers, overlaps, and indeterminacies—to construct rigid [categories] designed to prescribe behavior."[103] Much like Dean explores the usefulness of the word "art" applied to Inka rock work, concepts such as "women" and "men" may convolute, more than clarify cultural output and thus should be

[100] Miranda K. Stockett, "On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica," *World Archaeology* vol. 37, no. 4 (2005): 569.
[101] Stockett, "On the Importance of Difference," 567.
[102] Stockett, "On the Importance of Difference," 570.
[103] Cohodas, "Multiplicity and Discourse in Maya Gender Relations," 15.

handled with a bit of skepticism. Judith Butler writes that, while understandable, relying on "a universal presupposition of cultural experience […], in its universal status, provides a false ontological promise of eventual political solidarity."[104] It may be inaccurate to draw conclusions such as whether Maya women were oppressed, if we rely on a logic that may not make sense in a culture so different from ours.

Equally, following Dean's example of identifying aesthetic appraisal as the outside projection that it is, gender's individual and culturally tied status should be considered with care. For this reason, Rosemary Joyce appropriately asks "[h]ow, analytically, can we even begin to talk about the relationships between gender and power if we cannot even identify the gender identity of our subjects?"[105] While the desire to identify gender in absolute terms is part of the overall tension, I argue that it is the conflation of sex and gender that has created an interpretive wrinkle in the history of interpreting Maya gender and gender roles, especially as it is channeled through osteology. Joyce labels the unresolvable desire to definitively name gender as "academic discomforts" with gender categorization in Maya and Mesoamerican scholarship. She adds that qualifying the Western notion of cultural analysis is a "procedure that should be guaranteed to not see ambiguity." [106] The desire to clarify ambiguity, however, has a tendency to mine from the scholars own ideological position as there is no evidence that ambiguity was a problem for the Classic Maya. Discomforts that put established analytical norms through their paces "include female-sexed skeleton whose associations are more like those of male-sexed skeletons than of

[104] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory, *Theatre Journal* 40, 4 (1988), 523.
[105] Rosemary A. Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) 5.
[106] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 5.

other females in their own community," and the accompaniment of male or female associated tools with skeletons that do not "match" with their prescribed gender norms.[107]

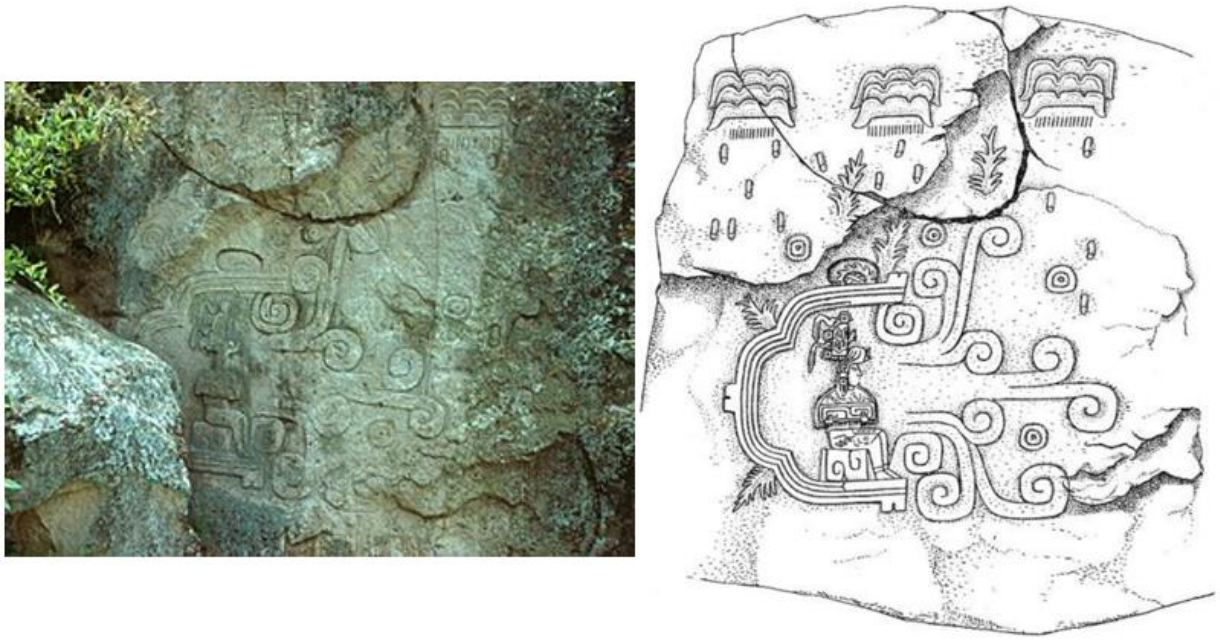

Figure 5-1 'El Rey' Monument 1 at Chalcatzingo.

Academic discomfort with gender does not only extend to osteology or ancient sites, but also to figurative representation. Joyce uses Classic Maya figures whose "identifiable primary or secondary sexual characteristics are absent, even when the body is nude," as a primary example.[108] One such figure is found in a relief carving at Chalcatzingo, *El Rey,* in which an ambiguously rendered figure is both associated with royalty and wearing a skirt (Fig. 5-1). Joyce writes that such figures "have serially been identified as women, male priests, women again, royal men dressed as women, royal men or women dressed as a bigendered deity, and royal women dressed as men dressed as a deity."[109] There is an element of humor to Joyce's historiographic observation, but such a game of musical genders is in part due to a predetermined

[107] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 5.
[108] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 5.
[109] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 5.

binary—or, when identification is particularly difficult, a ternary—system. It has been suggested that feminine impersonation is a means to indicate control over the feminine realm and feminine labor.[110] Impersonation, as indicated in the Northern Yucatec Bowl as well as rituals such as *Jeetz' Meek',* is a much more plastic and often oblique interweaving of many significances bundled together (Fig. 3-1). When we examine a more phenomenological constitution of gender and make space for the complex webs of Maya gender and image construction, intention behind gender bending and blending is perhaps better understood outside the realm of propagandist images of royal power.

For Judith Butler, gender was not a predetermined or fixed condition that followed a person throughout their lives, nor was it wholly informed by physical body traits. Instead, she argues for an accumulative gender, in which the actions of a person weave together self-identity over time through action. She writes that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*."[111] In other words, gender is grown and ritualistically fed over a person's lifetime through performance of behavior. Butler's use of "stylized" references a specific, shared understanding of masculine and feminine action. In the facades at Uxmal, where materiality and craft are tied to gender, stylization of said actions—especially ritual action/performance—become literal. In Maya society, gender and personhood were built and supported by craft action and occupation.[112] From as young as three months for female babies and four months for male babies, Maya youth were ritually introduced to tools that

[110] Kowalski and Miller, "Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture," 153-154.
[111] Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 519.
[112] John E. Clark and Stephen D. Houston, "Craft Specialization, Gender, and Personhood among the Post-conquest Maya of Yucatán, Mexico," *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 8, no. 1 (2008) 31.

would later define their professional occupations and the associated gender. [113] The ritual, *Jeets' Meek',* fuses the performance of gender to the fulfillment of communal responsibility via the symbol of tools and the actions they represent.[114] In order to create an incorporated familiarity with craft, babies were made to touch various tools that embodied later job specializations. A machete, for example, could represent a male baby's later care for *milpa*, or Maya farming land, and a grinding stone could encourage a female baby's later aptitude for processing maize or cacao.[115] These symbols; a metate, farming tools, or even children, also served as visual grammatical strategies to recontextualize the figure whom they surrounded, similar to the cacao pods expanding the power of the Maize God and textiles expanding the power of stone.

Jeets' Meek' was a beginning to a lifetime of ritually built identity and gender.[116] Craft was so interwoven with the Maya understanding of gender that, eventually, processes of making—along with their associated tools—became metaphors for the gender to which they were connected. Joyce clarifies that "[t]he performance of gender in Mesoamerica came to encompass not only specific distinctions in dress, […] but also differences in action, particularly craft production. By the Postclassic Period, spinning and weaving were not only the work of women but also metaphors for womanhood."[117] Thus, through metaphorically infused craft objects, the gendered self was not only limited to the human body, but through that body's relationships with the materials and persons around it.

---

[113] William N. Duncan and Charles Andrew Hofling, "Why the head? Cranial Modification as Protection and Ensoulment among the Maya," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22, no. 1 (2011) 202.
[114] Duncan and Hofling, "Why the head?" 202. *Heetz-meek* (also called jeets' meek' depending on the orthography) refers to the shift in how a baby was carried—across the arms of the parent through its infancy and then, at three to four months, straddling the hip of the parent, god parent, or other community member.
[115] Duncan and Hofling, "Why the head?" 202
[116] Clark and Houston, "Craft Specialization, Gender, and Personhood," 31.
[117] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 50.

The relationship constructed between agentive bodies and materials is perhaps most clearly rendered in the ritual space of the Nunnery Quadrangle. Here, tools that contained within them potent meaning were exercised in constructed processes that fused action with metaphor; essentially blending the two. As such, bloodletting and *Jeets' Meek'* ritually recontextualized everyday tools and craft actions—that all Maya people regardless of status could recognize—to engender community hygiene and fortify dividual Maya society. Gender and its materiality were so rooted in the Maya ritual performance, that considering it as a fixed binary of either male or female obscures potential interpretation for sites like Uxmal. By looking to Maya gender and crafted materials as things that are created by repeating significant action over time, we can better understand how the two coexist and inform one another.

6 CONCLUSION

The textile facades at Uxmal do not only edify a shift in craft and aesthetic sensibilities within the Classic Maya world, but also demonstrate the abstract and intricate ways that gender is initially cultivated and subsequently remodeled through scholarly analysis. Using both gender and crafting materials, I have argued that the simple lattice pattern at the Nunnery Quadrangle creates a conceptual base through which the rest of the imagery in the facades can be contextualized. Instead of applying the Western world's binary understanding of gender and our historical devaluation of both women and textiles, I have sought evidence of making and metaphorical assembly within Maya constructed materials that would challenge such views. In so unraveling the facades from one of their simpler motifs, I have pointed to the durational relationship to craft, the means through which the Classic Maya built meaning through bundled references from both the quotidian world and mytho-history, to raise questions about how women appeared across cultural output.

I do not wish to imply that women were not oppressed, or that the Classic Maya world provides an idealized alternative to Western society's treatment of gender and gender variance. Rather, the purpose of this study is to draw our attention to tactility and materiality as avenues through which we can deepen our understandings of complex concepts. By temporarily foregoing iconographic analysis and instead focusing on materiality, we can gain an interpretive flexibility where intellectual assumptions can be enriched or even negated through sensory evidence. While we cannot fully understand how things of the past were created—including the social, political, or spiritual conditions that inspired such creation—sensory appraisal of material provides a vehicle through which an empathetic connection to the past can be forged. By employing the phenomenologically minded strategies used by Jules David Prown, Judith Butler, Tim Ingold, and others, avenues of meaning can emerge that break with the rigidity of dualist or essentialist thought.

Everything within the Mayan *miatsil,* or "lived culture," is intertwined. Contradicting or opposite readings of signs coexist and readily shift meaning in different contexts. What Classic Maya culture can teach us is that there does not need to be one primary answer to gender identity or gender roles. Rather than adhering to Western models of interpretation—where something fundamentally either *is* or *is not*—the liminal spaces where multivalence and "third gender" are often relegated are perhaps better appreciated through the flexibility of performativity. Instead of interpreting gender as an absolute state of being, by looking at how gender is exercised through action, we evade the rigidity of concepts related to gender norms and, by extension, the need for breaking those norms. Requiring an empathetic participation with images, objects, or architecture, the methods herein used to establish a connection between the lattice pattern at Uxmal and ritual/gender performativity consider the temporal nature of objects and makers; not

only in how people shaped the architecture, but also how the architecture shaped the surrounding community. In essence, it is the common denominator of crafted concepts, objects, and ritual events that is illuminated through material consideration: the human hand and the reciprocal relationship it builds within the world and across time.

REFERENCES

Andrade, Manuel J. "A Grammar of Modern Yucatec." *Microfilm Collection of Manuscripts on Middle American Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 41 (1955), 4.56.

Ardren, Traci. "Studies of Gender in the Prehispanic Americas." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 16, no. 1 (2008): 1-35.

Barrera, Jazmina. *Punto de Cruz*. Oaxaca: Almadía Ediciones, 2021.

Berlo, Janet Catherine. "Beyond Bricolage: Women and Aesthetic Strategies in Latin American Textiles." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics Autumn,* no. 22 (1992): 115-134.

Boot, Erik. *The Updated Preliminary Maya – English, English- Classic Maya Vocabulary of Hieroglyphic Readings*. Mesoweb Resources, 2009.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40, 4 (1988):519-531.

Ciaramella, Mary A. "The Weavers in the Codices." *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 44 (1999): 29-50.

Clark, John E. and Stephen D. Houston. "Craft Specialization, Gender, and Personhood among the Post-conquest Maya of Yucatán, Mexico." *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 8*, no. 1 (2008): 31-46.

Cohodas, Marvin. "Multiplicity and Discourse in Maya Gender Relations." In *Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations*, edited by Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson,11-54. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

Dean, Carolyn. *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

Dinkel, Rebecca A. "The Materiality of Metaphor in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts: Metaphor in Changing Political Climates." PhD diss., University at Albany, SUNY, 2021.

Duncan, William N. and Charles Andrew Hofling. "Why the head? Cranial Modification as Protection and Ensoulment among the Maya." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22, no. 1 (2011): 199-210.

Early, Caitlin and Julia Guernsey. "Framed: The Textile Associations of Preclassic Geometric Bands." In *Wearing Culture: Dress and Regalia in Early Mesoamerica and Central America*, ed. Heather Orr and Matthew G. Looper, 323-349. Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2014.

Gustafson, Lowell. "Mother/Father Kings." In *Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations*, ed. Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson, 141-168. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

Gutiérrez, Enrique Dulanto. "Uxmal Metrópoli Maya de Yucatán." *Artes de México*, no. 176 (1974): 82–92.

Hendon, Julia A. “Objects and Persons: Integrating Maya Beliefs and Anthropological Theory.” In *Power and Identity in Archaeological Theory and Practice: Case Studies from Ancient Mesoamerica*, ed. E. Harrison-Buck, 82-89. University of Utah Press, 2012.

Holmes, William H. “Archeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico: Part 1, Monuments of Yucatán.” *Publications of the Field Columbian Museum. Anthropological Series* 1, no. 1 (1895): 82-98.

Hutson, Scott R. and Gavin Davies. “How Material Culture Acted on the Ancient Maya of Yucatán, Mexico.” *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 26, no. 1 (2015): 10-26.

Ihde, Don. “Indians and the Elephant: Phenomena and the Phenomenological Reductions.” In *Experimental Phenomenology, Second Edition: Multistabilities,* (State University of New York Press 2012) 15-34.

Ingold, Tim. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, and Architecture*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Ingold, Tim. “On Weaving a Basket.” In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, 339-361. Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2021.

Joralemon, David. “Ritual Blood-Sacrifice among the Ancient Maya: Part I.” *Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque, Part II*, ed. Merle Greene Robertson. Pebble Beach, CA: Robert Louis Stevenson School, Pre-Columbian Art Research, 1974. 59-75.

Joyce, Rosemary A. *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

Joyce, Rosemary. “Transforming Archaeology, Transforming Materiality.” In *The Materiality of Everyday Life*, ed. Lisa Overholtzer and Cynthia Robin, 181-191. Arlington: Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association, 2015.

Klein, Cecilia. “Woven Heaven, Tangled Earth: A Weaver’s Paradigm of the Mesoamerican Cosmos.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385, 1 (1982) 1-35.

Knoke de Arathoon, Barbara. “Prehispanic Traces in the Symbolism of Maya Weavings from Guatemala.” In *Symposium of Archaeological Investigations in Guatemala*, ed. Juan Pedro LaPorte, Bárbara Arroyo, Héctor E. Mejía, 1-19. Guatemala City: Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, 2004.

Kowalski, Jeff and Virginia E. Miller. “Textile Designs in the Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture.” In *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica*, ed. Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III, 145-174. Barnardsville, NC: Boundary End Archaeological Research Center, 2006.

Kowalski, Jeff Karl. “A Preliminary Report on the 1988 Field Season at the Nunnery Quadrangle, Uxmal, Yucatán, Mexico.” *Mexicon* 12, no. 2 (1990): 27-33.

Kowalski, Jeff Karl. “Painted Architecture in the Northern Maya Area.” In *Painted Architecture and Polychrome Monumental Sculpture in Mesoamerica: A Symposium and Dumbarton*

Oaks, edited by Elizabeth Hill Boone, 51-87. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1981.

Lamb, Weldon. "The Sun, Moon and Venus at Uxmal." *American Antiquity* 45, 1 (1980): 79-86.

Looper, Matthew. "Fabric Structures in Classic Maya Art and Ritual." In *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding in Mesoamerica*, ed. Julia Guernsey and F. Kent Reilly III, 411-446. Barnardsville, NC: Boundary End Archaeological Research Center, 2006.

Mathews, Jennifer P. and James F. Garber. "Models of Cosmic Order: Physical Expression of Sacred Space Among the Ancient Maya." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 15, no. 1(2004): 49-59.

Montgomery, John. *Maya-English/English-Maya (Yucatec) Dictionary and Phrasebook*. New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc. 2003.

Moreno, Marta Foncerrada. "Estudio Sobre La Ornamentación de los Monumentos en Uxmal." Masters thesis, Universidad Iberoamericana Incorporada a la U.N.A.M. Escuela de Historia del Arte, 1963.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. Oxford University Press, 1939.

Perego, Elisa. "Women's Voices in a Male World: Actions, Bodies, and Spaces Among the Ancient Maya." *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 18, (2007): 70-83.

Prown, Jules David. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 1-19.

Ramón Bastarrachea Manzano, Juan and Jorge Manuel Canto Rosado. *Diccionario Maya Popular: Maya-Español/Español Maya*. Mérida, MX: Academia de la Lengua Maya de Yucatán, 2003.

Rejón Patrón, Lourdes. "Tastes, Colors, and Techniques in Embroidered Mayan Female Costumes." In *Crafting Gender: Women and Folk Art in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Eli Bartra, 220-236. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Rosad-Torres, Ana Laura and Laura Gilabert-Sansalvador and Riccardo Montuori. "Stonecutting in Maya Architecture: The Palace of the Governor at Uxmal (Yucatán, Mexico)." Presented at *The History of Building Trades and Professionalism: The Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of the Construction History Society*, University of Cambridge, September 2021. 47-59.

Schele, Linda and Mary Miller. "Chapter IV: Bloodletting and the Vision Quest," in *The Blood of Kings*, 175-185. New York: G. Braziller: 1986.

Schele, Linda and Peter Mathews. "Uxmal: The Nunnery Quadrangle of Chan-Chak-K'ak'nal-Ahaw." In *The Code of Kings: Language of the Seven Sacred Maya Temples and Tombs*, 257-290. New York, NY: Scribner, 1998.

Sigal, Pete. *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins: The Colonization of Yucatecan Maya Sexual Desire*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

Stockett, Miranda K. "On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica." *World Archaeology* vol. 37, no. 4 (2005):566-578.

Stuart, David. “Kings of Stone: A Consideration of Stelae in Ancient Maya Ritual and Representation.” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 29/30 (1996): 155-156.

Taube, Karl. “The Major Gods of Yucatán.” *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, no. 32 (1992): i–160.

Tedlock, Dennis. “Toward a Poetics of Polyphony and Translatability.” In *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*, ed. Charles Bernstein, 1-24. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Tremain, Cara Grace. “A Study of Dress and Identity in the Late Classic Maya Court.” PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2017.

Trevelyan, Amelia M. and Heather T. Forbes. “The Gendered Architecture of Uxmal.” In *Ancient Maya Gender Identity and Relations*, ed. Amelia M. Trevelyan and Lowell S. Gustafson, 93-140. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

Turner, Andrew D. and Michael D. Coe. “A Portrait of Lady K’abal Xook, Queen of Yaxchilan.” *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, Recent Acquisitions (2018):66-73.

Winzenz, Karon. “The Symbolic Vocabulary of Cloth and Garments in the San Bartolo Murals.” In *Wearing Culture: Dress and Regalia in Early Mesoamerica and Central America*, ed. Heather Orr and Matthew G. Looper, 373-409. Boulder: University Press of Colorado 2014.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

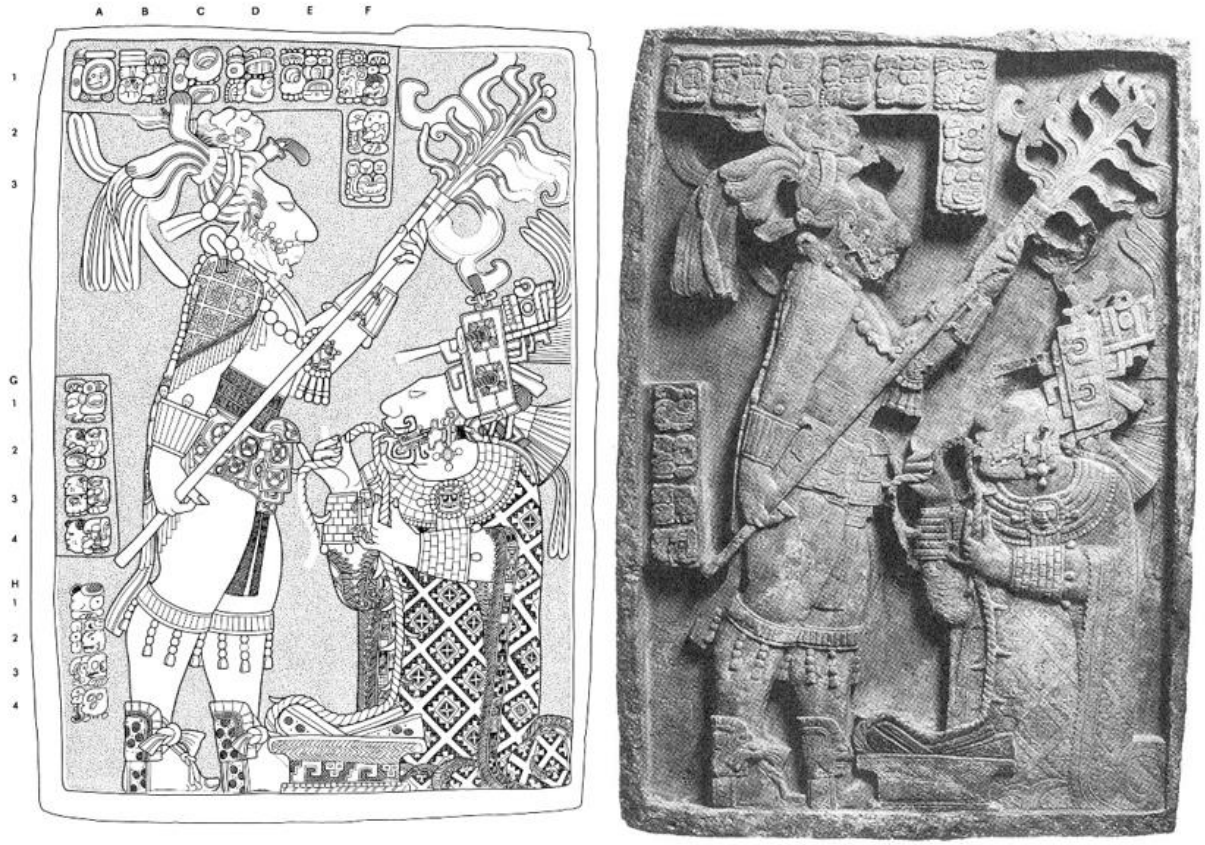

Figure 7.0-1 Lintel 24, Yaxchilan.

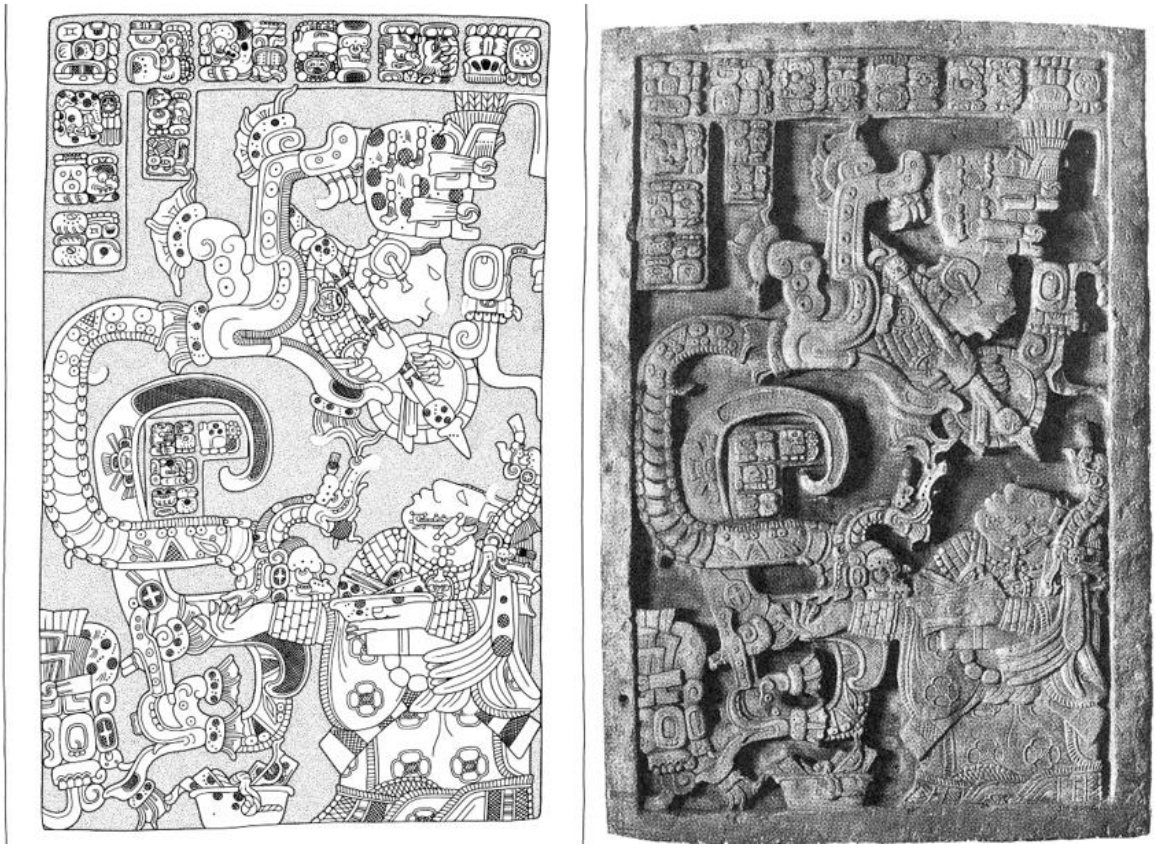

Figure 7.0-2 Lintel 25, Yaxchilan.

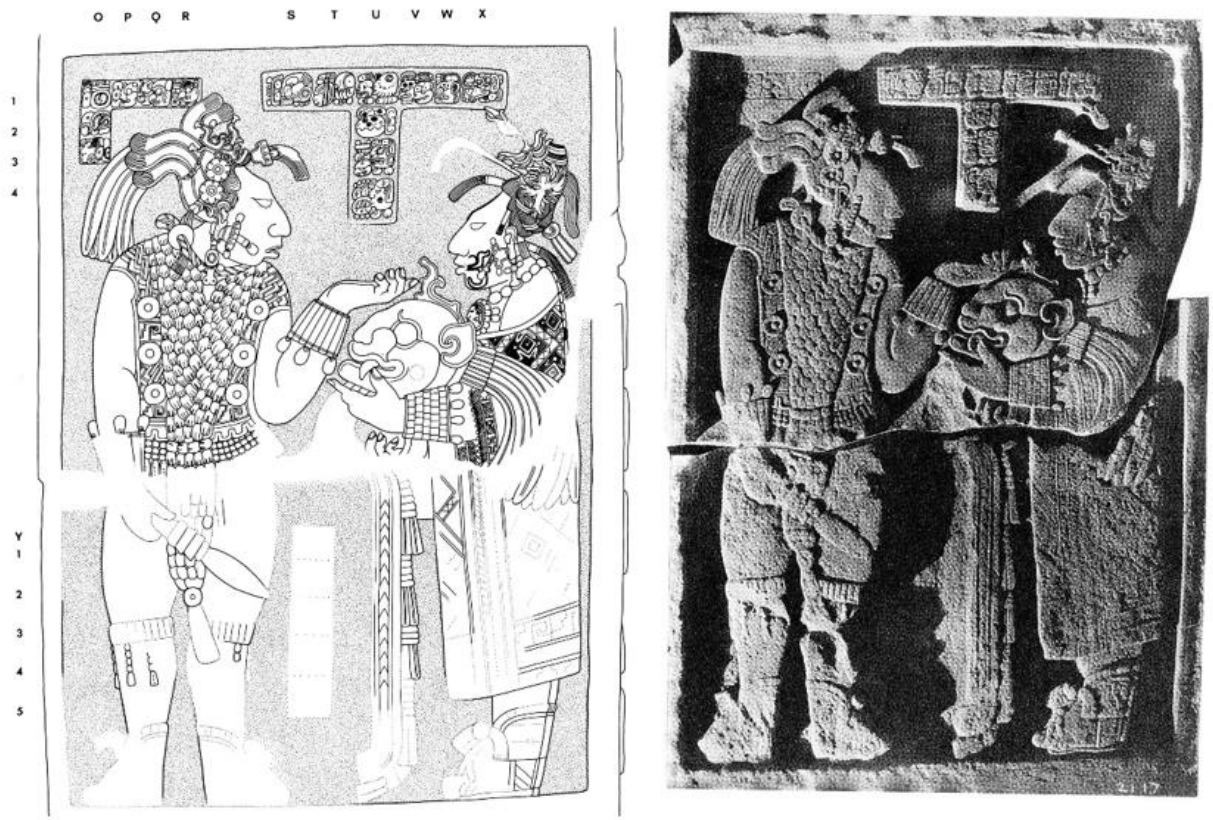

Figure 7.0-3 Lintel 26, Yaxchilan.