Subregional organization of the sixteenth-century Q’eqchi’ Maya, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

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RESUMEN
Organizacion subregional en el siglo xvi de los Mayas Q’eqchi’, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

La investigación sobre los patrones prehispánicos de asentamiento es un tema importante dentro de los más recientes estudios arqueológicos en el altiplano maya. Tales investigaciones están generalmente basadas en rasgos fisiográficos naturales, tales como valles intermontanos y cuencas de ríos, prestando poca consideración a límites de mayor significación cultural. En este artículo se examinan tres títulos coloniales de propiedad de indígenas maya q’eqchí con el objeto de buscar su utilidad para identificar, localizar y definir las primeras unidades territoriales supralocales, y reconstruir la geografía política colonial indígena.

Palabras clave: Maya Q’eqchí, Guatemala, patrones de asentamiento

ABSTRACT
The investigation of prehispanic settlement patterns is a major theme in recent archaeological research of the Maya Highlands. Such studies are usually based on physiographically natural features such as intermontane valleys and river drainages with little consideration of culturally significant boundaries. In this paper three early colonial Q’eqchi’ land titles from the Guatemala Highlands in order to examine the

possible utility for identifying, locating, and defining suprahousehold territories and the reconstruction of colonial political geography.

Key words: Maya Q’eqchi’, Guatemala, Settlement patterns

INTRODUCTION

The investigation of prehispanic settlement patterns has been a major theme in recent Maya archaeological research (Ashmore 1981). Households are usually considered to be the basic functional units in settlement systems emphasizing structures and structural aggregates (Ashmore 1981; Ciudad Ruiz 1984; Fauvet-Berthelot 1986; Wilk and Ashmore 1988). However, despite this emphasis on localized social groups in prehistoric or protohistoric in southern Mesoamerica, few attempts have been made to identify and define suprahousehold groups within the context of regional polities (Carmack 1967; Weeks 1988, 1991). The reasons are numerous although the primary constraint has been the lack of appropriate material correlates and relevant historical documentation upon which to base such studies. As a result, the study of regional settlement systems has been usually based on such physiographically discrete natural features as intermontane valleys or river drainages with little consideration of culturally significant boundaries.

The purpose of this essay is to present the texts of three early colonial Q'eqchi' Maya land titles from the northern highlands of Guatemala and to examine their possible utility for identifying, locating, and defining suprahousehold territories and the reconstruction of colonial political geography.

LAND TITLES AS A SOURCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Early colonial indigenous documents were prepared primarily for legal and political purposes (Carmack 1973: 19). Many of these documents functioned as land titles although some were not designed primarily as such but came to function as land titles as disputes over land became more critical. Rights to land were complex, and various entitlements could be claimed by different social groups. Most early documents refer to local rights of administration or to rights of tribute. Administrative rights were usually based on mythological or legendary associations between property and local group occupancy, in which case land boundaries were given.

Colonial land titles are of some importance for understanding the local organization of indigenous groups to the extent that they specifically identify
geographical locations, neighboring social groups, and other kinds of cultural information (Barrera Vásquez 1984; Riese 1981; Roys 1939, 1957). For the Guatemala highland region these documents complement information presented in more substantial texts such as the *Popol Vuh* (Carmack 1967, 1973). Robert Hill (1989, 1991) has recently identified patterns of nativism, innovation, and cultural resistance in colonial period Kaqchikel property documents. Hill argues for the continuity of prehispanic writing traditions and presents evidence that the Kaqchikel used such documents to perpetuate the past as well as for such pragmatic uses as acquiring, keeping, and transferring land. Documents were used to secure land holdings against claims by Spaniards and others using three kinds of texts: simple bills of sale between individuals (*cédulas*), covenants or formal agreements concerning the ownership, division, or use of land between families, lineages, and towns to avoid or settle land disputes (*convenios*), and wills to secure passage of land to descendants (*testamentos*).

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Historical linguistic evidence suggests that Q'eqchi' speakers occupied the Alta Verapaz region since the Preclassic period (ca. 300 BC) and maintained relations with various other lowland and highland Maya groups (Campbell 1977). At the time of the Spanish invasion the Q'eqchi' were confined to a small area near the upper reaches of the Río Cahabón in the northern highlands of Guatemala (Dieseldorff 1909, 1936, Sapper 1895 a y b) (Figure 1). The Q'eqchi' were bordered to the north and east by the Acalá and

![Map of Verapaz Province](image)

**FIGURE 1.—Verapaz Province in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Centuries.**
Manché Ch’ol, to the west by the Lakandon, Ixil, and K’iche’, and to the south by the Poqomchi’ (Sapper 1985: 16-17). Their range today extends from the core communities of Cobán, San Pedro Carchá, and San Juan Chamelco to include most of northern Guatemala and parts of adjacent southern Belize.

The Q’eqchi’ were among the last highland groups in Guatemala to be pacified by the Spaniards. The central highland kingdoms of the K’iche’ and Kaqchikel were subjugated by Spanish conquistadors and Tlaxcalan auxiliaries in 1524-1525, but the less centralized polities of the northern highlands remained independent for another twenty years. The fierceness of Q’eqchi’ and Poqomchi’ resistance encountered in late 1529 inspired the Nahuatl-speaking Tlaxcalans to refer to the region as Tuzulutlán (Land of War). Prior to their subjugation these groups were partitioned into a series of relatively independent chieftdoms or petty states, some of which were tributary to the center of the K’iche’ kingdom at Q’umarcaaj (Utatlán) (Carmack 1981).

The peaceful pacification of the Verapaz region during the 1540s by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas has been often recounted in the literature (King 1974: 15-25, Remesal 1932, Saint-Lu 1968). Las Casas, reacting strongly against the atrocities which indigenous peoples of Hispaniola suffered under the Spanish colonists, advocated a pacification strategy based on peaceful persuasion rather than military force. His program of spiritual conquest was a failure when first attempted on the coast of Venezuela but in northern Guatemala it was successful. The early Dominican penetration in the Verapaz region was concentrated near Rabinal in 1541 and by 1544 a series of successful reducciones resulted in the founding of Santo Domingo Cobán, San Juan Chamelco, and San Pedro Carchá. The Indian don Juan Matacbatz (Matalbatz or Apobatz), the cacique of San Juan Chamelco, was appointed governor of Verapaz (Saint-Lu 1968: 229-230). After his death, sometime between 1560 and 1570, the first Spanish alcalde mayor was appointed. By 1547 most of the Verapaz had submitted to Spanish sovereignty and was nominally Christian. Attempts to resettle the indigenous population were to continue for another two centuries, with only partial success (Remesal 1932).

The initial work of the Dominicans consisted of resettling indigenous populations into newly founded nucleated settlements. Here, as elsewhere in New Spain, the Spaniards congregated the Indians into towns so that they could be Christianized and registered as tributaries. The prehispanic settlements at Carchá and Chamil (Chamelco) were reorganized as Spanish-style townships (municipios) and renamed San Pedro Carchá and San Juan Chamelco. Along with Cobán, Cahabón, and Lanquín, they became the main Q’eqchi’ townships of colonial Verapaz. The relación of the Dominicans Francisco de Viana, Lucas Gallego, and Guillermo Cadena, written in 1574, contains population counts taken for tax purposes in 1571 and indicates appro-
approximately 2,350 indigenous households were registered as having been permanently settled in these and a few other towns (Relación Verapaz, 1955). The Spanish policy of congregación conflicted with the indigenous milpa system of agriculture, a form of shifting cultivation, which favored a dispersed settlement pattern. Many Q’eqchi’ gradually resettled to be nearer to their traditional land as Dominican control in Verapaz subsided during the eighteenth-century (Escobar 1841: 90). Apart from a few resident friars, the region remained largely indigenous until the imposition of the coffee-based plantation system in the middle of the nineteenth-century.

The conquest of northern Guatemala did not however end with the subjugation of the Q’eqchi’. The lowland groups further to the north, the Manché Ch’ol, the Mopán, and the Itzaj remained independent for another century (Thompson 1938). During the seventeenth-century many Q’eqchi’ served as soldiers in the conquest of the Manché Ch’ol lowlands. Many of the Manché Ch’ol were eventually resettled in the Q’eqchi’ region, specifically Lanquin and Cahabón (Feldman 1978). It has been noted that the people of these two towns maintained customs that are Ch’ol in origin into the late nineteenth-century (Sapper 1907). The memory of the Ch’ol as a distinct cultural group lives on in Q’eqchi’ oral history which has transformed the Ch’ol (Q’eqchi’: ch’ol-wiink’) to a mythical people gifted with magical powers (Schackt 1983: 14).

THREE Q’EQCHI’ LAND DOCUMENTS

The Dominicans anticipated and attempted to prevent conflicts between resettled groups. Because ownership of land was a major cause of dispute, documents were prepared in which each group identified the limits of their possessions, their neighbors, and affiliated waterholes. Each generation renewed their document through time by having it rewritten, both the Q’eqchi’ and Spanish. As coffee became an important commodity on the world market, lands were bought up by German investors and, from the 1860s to the 1930s, Alta Verapaz received growing numbers of foreign immigrants. Many large coffee plantations were established throughout highland Verapaz. The land laws of the 1870s declared all untitled lands to be public property, terrenos baldíos, and established procedures to promote putting baldíos into private hands resulting in a land rush. Between 1880 and 1900 the government granted land titles that ranged from 1,500 to 5,000 acres to most of the highland areas (Náñez Falcón 1970: 83). Indians in some cases obtained title to their traditional land, but the majority of the baldíos, many with indigenous residents who remained on the land and came under the jurisdiction of the legal owner, were granted to ladinos or foreigners. Peasant Indians were then forced to work either on finca lands or for the municipal authorities. To escape the
mandamiento, many Q'eqchi' gave up their own holdings to become tenants on finca lands (Sapper 1891a: 45). Residents on finca lands were exempted from labor laws, but with the habitación law of 1894, all such residents were legally tied to the land and would have to work for their landowners for a defined number of days per year. By putting into private hands parcels of land that could be sold or combined into larger units, and by permitting the owners to assume control of the residents, the terrenos baldios laws opened the way for the development of the latifundia system in Alta Verapaz.

Increased repression of the indigenous population of the Verapaz region was met with violent reactions by the Q'eqchi'. An insurrection in San Pedro Carchá led by Melchior Yat was ruthlessly crushed in 1864 and many of the rebels withdrew to more remote areas. Additional nativistic movements based in San Juan Chamelco erupted in 1885 and again in 1906 (King 1974: 34).

The three land titles presented here were acquired at the end of the nineteenth-century by Erwin Paul Dieseldorff, a wealthy German coffee planter and avocational archaeologist, through the purchase of coffee plantations east of San Pedro Carchá and north of the Río Cahabón at Chiquixjí, Raxahá, and Sechaib, and south of the Río Cahabón across from Sechaib, three contiguous fincas at Chajcar, Secac, and Ulpán (Náñez Falcón 1970: 111-112). The original documents were retained by Dieseldorff and deposited during the 1960s with the Dieseldorff Collection curated in the Special Collections Division at Tulane University Library in New Orleans. Realizing their significance and with the encouragement of Charles P. Bowditch of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, Dieseldorff transcribed each document in Q'eqchi' with English translations and submitted them in typescript in September to Frederick W. Putnam at the Peabody for publication in American Anthropologist. The manuscript was eventually sent to Franz Boas at the American Museum of Natural History in New York for review. Boas deemed them unsuitable for publication and returned them to Bowditch in November 1903. The manuscript was never returned to Dieseldorff and remains in the collection of the Peabody Museum Library (now Tozzer Library) at Harvard University (C.A. 6 D 566F).

The three land titles include the Testamento Chicojí, pertaining to land located north of Cobán and San Pedro Carchá, Testamento Tontem, located east of Carchá and north of the Río Cahabón, and Testamento Tux, located east of Carchá and south of the Río Cahabón. A complete linguistic analysis of these documents is beyond the scope of this paper. However, according to Dieseldorff (1903) the Q'eqchi' language used in the texts was understood by Q'eqchi'-speakers in San Pedro Carchá in the late nineteenth-century. Dieseldorff also notes that the orthography and spelling used is inconsistent thereby making some meanings unclear. In order to resolve these difficulties, he consulted several informants and provided the most likely interpretations.
No attempt has been made to correct errors in the original Dieseldorff typescript although some editing has been imposed on his English translation.

In 1991 the author visited the territory included in the Tontem and Xalija Chah Pixol documents to verify the Dieseldorff translations with Q'eqchi' speakers and to locate toponyms on modern 1:50,000 topographic maps. Most of the landmarks mentioned, including waterholes and natural springs, are still recognized today.

**Q'EQCHI' LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY**

The northern highlands of Guatemala comprise an impure limestone formation with occasional exposures of shale, upon which a relatively complete complex of karstic landforms has developed. The overall relationship of the Q'eqchi' to their landscape is highly religious. Mountain ridges are deified and anthropomorphized and today their names are called up in the course of prayer (Sapper 1925). Obligations are felt when approaching the earth deity to prepare milpa and caves are the places where these obligations are kept.

Historically the Q'eqchi' cultivated dolines and valley floors since these have soils which support perennial cropping (Cortés y Larranz 1958:2: 11). More recently, population increase and alienation of superior land by ladinos and others has led go the cultivation of all but the highest ridgecrests. Springs abound in the region although there are places where the underground drainage is so deep that drinking water is at a premium.

The 1:50,000 scale topographic maps for Alta Verapaz are rich with indigenous place names although the actual density is much greater. Within a radius of frequent travel, a Q'eqchi' can identify and define locations to within a few hundred meters of trail by naming an aldea, caserío, finca or hacienda, and the name of a waterhole, natural spring, cliff, cave, bridge, or wayside cross (Wilson 1972: 53). Living plants are often used to mark the corners and boundary lines of property. To be effective protectors and markers of gardens and other property, plants must have repulsive or prolific properties. The most common hedge and property marker is *kuk'il* (*Yucca elephantipes*). While *kuk'il* serves for immediate marking of corners and minor lines in the survey and partition of land at sale or inheritance, *tz'inte* (*Erythrina* spp.) cuttings are often planted to provide long-term witness trees (Wilson 1972: 167-168).

Most place names are based on plant or animal names, or physiographic features qualified with one of a number of locative affixes, including *cham-* (deep, large), *chi-* (bank, edge, lip), *chirre-* (at the bank or shore), *jolom-* (peak, summit), *pan-* (locative), *rocjá-* (river mouth, literally foot or leg of the water), *rubel-* (below), *sa-* (inside), *se-* (in, inside), *xal-* (cross), *xe-* (below), *xuc-* (corner), and *yal-* (water, water source). Informants usually prefer to con-
sider the place names to be simply identifications of specific locations, having no other lexical significance (Hopkins 1973).

**TESTAMENTO CHICOJL**

The *Testamento Chicojí* relates the land title of Cristóbal Ba to the lands of Chicojí. The original document, now lost, was dated October 10, 1539. There exists a copy in Q’eqchi’, dated February 6, 1802, as well as a translation into Spanish of the Q’eqchi’ made at the request of the communal landholders dated March, 1832 which is accompanied by a copy in Q’eqchi’ made in March, 1832. Accompanying documentation includes a document in Spanish, dated March 26, 1832, regarding the decision of the alcalde of Cobán in a dispute over the ownership of a portion of the Chicojí lands; a copy dated March 6, 1857 in Q’eqchi’ together with a copy of the 1832 decision in Spanish; a copy dated April 30, 1870 in Q’eqchi’ together with a copy in Spanish of the 1832 decision. Other documentation includes a letter from Dieseldorff to Jacobo Vádez, dated September 22, 1937, requesting information about the testament of Cristóbal Melchor Ba.

1. Apoba años de 1539. Jesús María y Joseph
   In the year 1539. Jesús, Mary and Joseph

2. van covi laheb catanc y be le po octubre de 1539 año nac ta czoc yn
   We are at the tenth day, the road of the month October, of the year 1539

3. memoria yn testamento rech val-bal choch hain chichol y ccaba
   when this is title is made, my will of my native lands called Chicojí

4. hain don Xptoval Melchor Ba haut abban aran quin yolac albal choch
   I, Cristóbal Melchor Ba, and because I was born there, my native lands

5. rech vi yn mam chi haruh chi harah chimay chihab
   belong also to my grandchildren, for all time, for all the periods of twenty years

6. ah ban na quin ulac ah val don Gaspal Cuculna vinc don Bartolome
   After I had been here, there arrived the chief don Gaspar Cuculná and don Bartolome

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1 Chicojí is an aldea of San Pedro Carchá; chi, locative; c’ojl, beater or scout.
2 Clear reference is made here to the katun, or calendrical cycle of twenty years.
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7. cocona vinc na queb chal aran chi za lacantun nil chirix cambal ratin Dios Coc, who came from where is the Usumacinta 3 river. In the name of God

8. ta co xic ut ta cacameb le ah val don Quespal Cuculna tax xic ca tau we go and bring along the chief Gaspar Cuculná; we go and find the

9. le po carcha vinc chi caniabah y ccaba toh hunpalac y ha yquch municipality of the Carchá people at the waterhole Chicaniabaj 4, beyond the water

10. nac ta co elc aruin chi cuculna chi cocona y ccaba nac ta co alc aruin Chicuch. We start from here with Cu-culná and Coconá, we start from here

11. chiza le ualbal choch chichol yb y ccaba aran alan bilin etpanic ce hul in my native lands Chicojí, they are called, where I was born. The water-hole

12. y ccaba le ha alanbilin vi hunah caticaribí ruquin ahval don Basilio called Eztpanic, where I was born, is where we live in the same

13. calelbac aruin chi ruch taca pocolha y ccaba uancovi ut taco xic ruquin settlement with Basilio Caalel Bac, here in the plain of Pocolá 6

14. cambal ratin y Dios ha eb cablahu chi chohom holchan and we go with the word of God and with the twelve holchanes 7

15. vancovi ut ta cohlac retal y nupalhil ualbal choh aruin We are here to set down in writing the boundaries of my native lands

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3 The Río Usumacinta is the longest river in Central America and the important to drain into the Gulf of Mexico.

4 Chi, locative; q’anibash, yellow rock, possibly impure recrystallized limestone (MW).

5 A title for the head of a substantial lineage or town; TC gives 3alel as lord (ahau), caciquc, or prince; in the Popol Vuh (1950: 120), Galel is the title of one of the officials who served in the K’iche’ court, together with Loinmay, Atzihuinac and Ahuchan.

6 Pocolá is an aldea of San Pedro Carchá; pok, sand or white earth.

7 A fragment of an early Q’eqchi’ vocabulary published by Freeze (1975) gives holchan as: was a captain or valiant one in ancient times, and now it is used when someone does a great deed. The title holchan was probably comparable to the Yucatec holpop, a lineage head who usually served as a batab or local head of a town Roys (1957: 7). After the conquest the functions of the holpop were only social or ceremonial although most were created caciques.
16. y behen ynupalhil ta cohlac arvin hain don Xptoval Malchhor Ba

Here I set up the first landmark, I, don Cristóbal Melchor Ba

17. haut y behen ynupalhil chichuy-yha y ccaba ruquin calel Cac nan cul aran

The first landmark is called Chuyha, and my lands meet there with Caalel Bac

18. y cab ynupalhil vanc ui tolOX cahui la calel Bac na cul aran

The second landmark is where the tolox⁸ tree grows, I meet there with Caalel Bac

19. rox ynupalhil cequec choch y ccaba cah ui lm calel Bac tain cul aran

The third landmark is called Sequerk Choch, and I meet there with Caalel Bac

20. tain canab ut le ah ual don Basilio Calel Bac aran

I leave there with the chief don Basilio Calel Bac

21. cachin ut tain que rech a Bartolome Cocona cachin taun que rech ah val

I give a little land to Bartolomé Coconá; I give some land to the

22. don Quespar Cuculna vinc ta queb y toc chihi yal y looconquil yn ban

chief don Gaspar Cuculná, which they have to divide in halves, only for

23. yn xutan chirucheb ha le chic-quec choch tain que rech a

the esteem and respect I have for them, but the land Sequerk Choch

24. Bartolome Cocona na tama ui chiunch yn xutan chiruch eb queb ulac ah ual

I give to Bartolomé Coconá, who requested it, out of respect for

25. don Quespal Cuculna naqueb chalc chi lacantun vanc vi cansin retal

him and don Gaspar Cuculná, who came from the Usumacinta valley, and there the cansin⁹ tree is the landmark

26. le tain que rech a Bartolome Cocona ac vinc vi zaebacte

I give to Bartolomé Coconá where there is a sacbacte¹⁰ tree

⁸ Tolosh, matapalo (*Ficus tuerckheimii* Standl.).

⁹ K'ansin, EH gives c’ansin or quenak’ che’ as a type of tree.

¹⁰ Baache’, a small tree (*Eupatorium ligustrinum*) whose bitter leaves are used in the treatment of colic and diarrhea.
27. ta elc aran vi vanc vi tucup hul y ccaba ta ca cal quib ruquin cac quib bil vinc
   From here we come to Chituhul where we meet with the Cac-Quib people\(^\text{11}\)

28. ta elc aran tamil chire y yal yn sarb cham cacsisqur y ccaba chi holom
   From here we come to the edge of the waterhole under the forest called

29. y tzul
   Cham Cacsisq\(^\text{12}\), beneath the summit of the hill

30. ta elc aran xacamilin chi behen y tzul uanc ui y yal in sarb pahalche
   From here I come to the summit of the hill, where there is the waterhole Pajalché\(^\text{13}\)

31. y ccaba ac ah ual don Quespal Cuculna tain cul aran
   and here I meet with the chief don Gaspar Cuculná

32. taquin elc aran xacamilin chah chubal y ccaba ac ah choh hain ta yn cul aran
   From here we get to Chaj Chubal\(^\text{14}\), it is called, where we meet with the Choc people

33. ahban le ta quin sihinc tain cihi hun xucul rach al ual don Cuculna
   and because I wish to, I present to the chief Cuculná a corner of land

34. oxib ut roc ahuil che uanc chi ca calbaib ruquin ah Poncio Cac
   And there are three trees planted where I meet with Poncio Cac

35. ah ban taqueb uachab aran
   and here I leave them

36. taquin elc chac aran xacamilin cham ccana u chul y ccaba
   From here to Cham Cana u Chul, it is called

37. taquin elc chac aran xacamilin xaltaca chi olococ y ccaba
   I leave here and come to the valley Chi Olococ\(^\text{15}\), it is called

\(^{11}\) EPD gives tribe for vink; cwïink, hombre, is perhaps better given as people.
\(^{12}\) Cham, tall; cak, color red; sisik', a legume of the family (MW).
\(^{13}\) Paxl (Solanum spp.).
\(^{14}\) Chaj, taj, locative; ch’ub, a general term for wasps (MW).
\(^{15}\) Olokok, an edible mushroom (Basidiomycete).
38. ta elc chac aran xacamilin chi holom y tzul chahba soyon y ccaba
   I leave here and come to the summit of the hill Chajba Soyom 16, it is called

39. ac quib bil vinc tain cul aran
   The Quib people I meet there

40. ta elc chac aran xacamilin chi holom y tzul cechach y ccaba
   I leave there and come to the head of the hill Sechaj 17, it is called

41. ta lec aran xacamilin cepoc y ccaba
   I leave there and come to Sepoc 18, it is called

42. uanc ui y yal sarb ha uichic le ah choh ayn vuch behen
   where there is the waterhole, bordering again with Choc

43. nac ta quin elc aran xacamilin uan ui ah uil che cah ui ah choh ayn vuch behen
   When I leave here I come to the planted tree, alongside only with Choc

44. ta elc aran xacamilin chi holom y tzul cetzah y ccaba
   I leave here and come to the head of the hill Setzac 19, it is called

45. tain canab ah choh ahin aran
   Here I leave the Choc people

46. ta elc aran xacamilin cham cocom y ccaba achich vuchben le Francisco de García
   We leave here and get to Cham Cocom 20, bordering here with Francisco de García

47. ta elc aran ac rubel saconac pec xilic y ccaba
   We leave here and come to beneath the white cliff of the animals of the wind 21

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16 Chajba Soyom; sooyom, rectum, intestine (EH).
17 Se, locative; chaj, pine (Pinus spp.).
18 Pok, sand or white earth.
19 Se, locative; tz'ac, mortar, wall; probably refers to a prehispanic ruin; Setzac is a place located northwest of Arenal and south of the Río Cahabén near Carchá; Burkitt (1906) reports excavating a terraced mound at Se-Tsak. La his reading of the K’iche’ Popol Vuh, DT reads tz’aq (tzac) to refer to constructions whose major materials are earth, stone, or cement, rather than wood.
20 Cham, tail; kokom, a thin reed (Stigmatophyton pseudopuberium Niedenga) used for lashing.
21 Xilic as small animals, companions, or servants of the wind, which one hears in caves, but whoever sees them must die (Dieseldorff 1903); xilic, woman with wild uncombed hair, who maintains the ceiba tree, and transforms herself into a young girl (PW).
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48. ta elc aran ac chamuchulc ix ccaba
49. ta elc aran xacamilin rubel moxante y ccaba vanc vi y yal in sarb
50. havi uuchben de Francisco García
51. ta elc aran ac chi holom y tzul seoboc ha vi uuch a Francisco de García
52. ta elc aran xacamilin ce chicoyab y ccaba ac ha le Gaspal de la Cruz tain cul aran
53. ta elc aran xacamilin chi benhen canococ y ccaba
54. ta elc aran ac sirso ui pec chimucan y ccaba
55. ta elc aran ac chiholom y zul chach sanc y ccaba
56. ta elc aran ac multun cepopol cal y ccaba
57. ta elc aran xacamilin chimu y ccaba ac ah zut cholom tain cul aran
58. ta lec aran xacamilin cehubub y ccaba

We leave here and come to Chamuchule
From here to beneath the moxante tree, where exists a waterhole
bordering only with Francisco de García
From here to the head of the hill Seoboc, bordering only with Francisco de García
From here to Se Chicoyab, where I meet Gaspar de la Cruz
From here I get to the summit of Canococ, it is called
From here to the circular stone Chimucan, it is called
From here to the head of the hill Chach Sanc, it is called
From here to Multun, the maize fields of the municipality, it is called
From here to Chimu, it is called, where I meet Cholom, the wearer of the headdress
From here to Sehubub, it is called

22 *Mutch*, a wild plant whose leaves are used to wrap meat and tamales (*Crotalaria penduliflorum* (Dunal) Baillon) (MW).
23 Possible reference to *ch'obok* (*Philodendron tripartitum*).
24 *Chi*, locative; *mucaan*, something to protect with; glass vessel for images or icons.
25 Chach Sanc; *sank* is a general term for all ants.
26 *Muul*, shrub; *toon*, trunk of a tree, origin of a family.
27 EPD gives *ah zut cholom*, the wearer of the headdress; *ah*, personal affix; *suut*, small crown; PW glosses *zut* as cotton cover, blanket; *cholom*, personal name.
28 *Ubub*, an edible mushroom (*Portulaca* spp.).
59. Ta elc aran xacamilin hun zulil sehul pecxilic y ccaba From here to a hill where there is a cave\textsuperscript{29} of the xilic

60. na elc aran xacamilin vanc ui nim la tzup ce nim be chises y ccaba From here to where grows a large tzup tree, in the road, which leads

61. ac ha le don Juan Sotzoh tain cul to Chisis\textsuperscript{30}, and here I meet don Juan Sotzoh

62. ta elc aran xacamilin chi ruch y pec chichior y ccaba From here to facing the stone Chaj Chior, it is called

63. ha vi la ah chocoh vuchben bordering only with Chocoh

64. ta elc aran ta unachab ce tzacanbil pec chah chior yal hun roc taca From here I go to the masonry stone Chaj Chior\textsuperscript{31} and going along a plain

65. ta quin xic hun cotin vanc ui xulu ycque where I come to a fallen maguey\textsuperscript{32} plant

66. yal hun roc taca taquin xic tain cul hin tzutz aran From here always going in the plain I meet Tzutz

67. vanc ui moxante chuhia y ccaba where there is the place Moxante Chuiha\textsuperscript{33}, it is called

68. cahvi an xquiozo y culbaib hi xoralinquil rib le ualbal choch Only herewith the closing and circumscribing of the borders of my native lands is completed

69. na ca cul ui quib ruquin calel Bac, hain don Xptobal Melchor Ba and we have again met with Caalel Bac, I, Cristóbal Melchor Ba

70. hale ualbal choch rech ui yn mam chi haruh chi harab Therefore my native lands belong to my grandchildren for all time

\textsuperscript{29} As entrances to the underworld, are used for sacrificial and other rites.

\textsuperscript{30} Chi, locative; sis, pizote (\textit{Nasua narica narica} L.); pottery figurines at reported from a site named Sesis (Sapper 1897, Seler 1904: 97).

\textsuperscript{31} This probably refers to a prehispanic settlement.

\textsuperscript{32} Ik'\textit{e}, maguey (\textit{Furcraea guatemalensis}) (MW).

\textsuperscript{33} Chui, locative; ha, water.
And now I swear before those who are in Heaven and those on earth...

...and before all the Christians, in the name of God the Father...

God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. Amen. Jesús, Mary and Joseph...

And now is completed the title, the will of the chief...

Cristóbal Melchor Ba concerning his native lands. Here is the writing done on the tenth of...

October of the year 1539, when it is completed on the altar of God the King...

alcalde Tomás de Aguilar Ah Pocac, Juan de la Cruz Hernández...

Caalel Bac; regidores Pedro Hernández Rax, Juan de la Cruz Yaxcal...

Gaspar Mendez Coc, Juan de Olaris Valna, Pedro Ah Pocac, Pedro de Torres...

ah Poxi; chief secretary of the municipality Francisco from San Miguel...

also don Perip Sarip Ba, from San Miguel Tucurú...
And because my will is made, when I meet you in the road you have no right [to ask me for land] whether you like it or not The small piece of land called Chix Chior you no longer have any right to, because I have made my testament, only that I say to you. Friar, Pedro Mejía, parish priest Here I name my forests, my hills, my valleys, my waterholes, from which get my sustenance, and I name one by one and they belong to my grandchildren for all time. I state now the names of my waterholes: The first waterhole is called Rubelhi; the second waterhole is called Chi Quercha The third waterhole is called Chi-Chaib and the fourth waterhole is called Cham Cacsis The fifth waterhole is called Pahalché and the sixth waterhole is called Se Poc

---

34 Rubelhi, beneath; ji, oak (Quercus spp.) (EH).
35 Cham, tall; cak, red; sisik', a kind of legume.
92. y vuc yn sarb chi chinla eleha y ccaba y vacxac chi nimla eleha y ccaba
The seventh waterhole is called the little Eleha 36 and the eighth the large Eleha.

93. y bele rubel Moxante y ccaba chi ca nupalc ruquin a Francisco de García
The ninth waterhole is called Rubel Moxante 37, our landmark with Francisco de García.

94. y lahe yn sarb cham amay y hunlahu ce oboc y ccaba
The tenth waterhole is Seamay 38 and the eleventh is called Seocob 39.

95. y cablahu ce coc sanau y ccaba roxlahu chi nimla eleha y ccaba
The twelfth is called the small 40 Sesanau and the thirteenth is called the large flowing waterhole, our landmark with Dionisio García Tiul.

96. chi ca nupalc ruquin ah nicho de Garcia Tiul

97. y calahu ce hub chi nupalc ruquin al tzutz cholom
The fourteenth is Sehubub 41, the landmark with Tzutz Cholom.

98. cah ut an qui ccaba ca memoria yn testamento ta otzoc vanc covi laheheb
Only these are the names. Our title and will was finished on the tenth day of October, 1539. Friar Pedro Mejía, priest.

99. cutanc y be po octubre de 1539 años fray Pedro Mexía cura

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36 Eliha', natural water spring.
37 Rubel, beneath; moxante, probably much', a wild plant whose leaves are used to wrap meat and tamales (Crotalaria penduliflorum (Dunal) Baillon) (MW).
38 Se, locative; amay is a species of Chusque Ion gifolia, a common reed grass used to make flutes; a cave near Seamay in aldea Candelaria is where jade beads have been reported (Dieseldorff 1894, 1905, Sapper 1895b: 14, Seler 1915:3: 600).
39 Se, locative; oqob, liquidambas (Liquidambar stryicifera).
40 Se, locative; canau, an indeterminate type of tree.
41 Sehubub is a caserío of aldea Chisón; se, locative; ubub, an edible herb (Portulaca spp.) (MW).
TESTAMENTO TONTEM

The original sixteenth-century document was lost and the copies preserved are based on a reconstruction made in 1779. The present document, in Q'eqchi', is dated February 17, 1862, and is accompanied by a Spanish version dated October 31, 1878. Related documentation includes a letter from Dieseldorff to Jacinto Vázquez, dated September 21, concerning the testament of Diego Zeb.

1. En el nombre de Padre, de Dios Hijo, de Dios Espíritu Santo
   In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost

2. Amén. Jesús, María y José
   Amen. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

3. Hayn jun chi a guabax Diego Zeb yn ccaba tayn banu li testamento
   I, the chief, Diego Zeb, is my name, I make this testament

4. rech li jun chi calebal choc como each li calebal guan chi Tontem
   of a maize land\(^2\), because it is mine, it is Tontem\(^3\)

5. quin chutub li testamento chix caycal bam quitzec li retalil li gue
   I bring together the titles of my neighbors because I have lost my

6. la in Diego Zeb haut ta raah in school nac ta oc lix testamentoil
   documents. I, Diego Zeb, this is what my heart wishes, that my

7. lix xoranliquil nac jo ze choxa joc chiruch y choch
   The measuring should be made as in Heaven so on earth, before the

8. chi ruch cheb li jun chol chi uabeh a guababnac testigo chirix lin
   assembled chiefs, which shall be witness to my dispositions

9. cauxí 1am ah Diego Zeb
   I, Diego Zeb

10. tain cojob lix nupalxil yx xoralinquil li calebal choc arquin
    I put up its landmarks; the boundaries of the maize lands, here I

---

\(^2\) c'alebal, caserío, series of houses, or settlement.

\(^3\) Tontem is a caserío of aldea Chirrequim (Figure 2) located approximately three kilometers north of the Río Cahabón and some 14 kilometers east of San Pedro Carchá; toon, tree trunk or the origin of a family; lineage; tem, bench (EH).
11. tain coyob li nupalix

12. arquin chiziguan ca calbaib ruquin ah choc agau-guil vinc tain cul aran

Here at Chi-Siguan⁴⁴, our boundary with the chief of the Choc people, whom I meet here

13. tain lech aran xacamilin chi guarom guan gui cruz

I leave there and come to Chi Guarom⁴⁵ where there is a cross⁴⁶

14. taquin leec chic ut aran xacamilin chimuxc

I leave there and get to Chi Muxc

---

⁴⁴ Chisiguţ is a caserío of aldea Pocolá; chi, locative; sicwan or sihuan, sinkhole or doline (EH).
⁴⁵ Chiguarrom is a caserío of aldea Pocolá; chi, locative; guarom or cuarrom, owl (Bubo virginianus) (EH).
⁴⁶ The cross is considered as a representation of Tzuul tak’a (lit. mountain and valley), the earth deity, and is considered to be especially sacred and powerful, and receives prayers and offerings of flowers, incense, pine boughs, and candles on hilltops, in caves, and at waterholes during agricultural rituals.
15. ta llec chic aran ac zecherechenc guangui zaconac pec I leave there and get to Se Chirre Quenq, where there is a white cliff
16. xin cul ah choh xi li vinc aran Here I meet with the Choc people
17. taquin leec aran xacamil chiunch guan vi z zarb I again leave there and come to Chiunch, where there is a waterhole
18. tain leec aran xacamilin se lala ocob I leave there and get to Seocob
19. cuncumcab chibatz to Cuncumcab, to Chibatz
20. xicanab ah choh aran ac ah cheil vinc gui cul aran secumcumab I leave the Choc and meet with the Che people, here at Secumcumcab
21. xin alc aran xacamil rubel tzul chire y quim I leave there and get to below the hill Chirrequim
22. ze be jun be ixben xacamil chiru cruz xal y tzul chi quisis From here straight to the summit, facing the cross on the side of the hill Chi Quisis
23. xi canab ah cheil vinc aran quin cul rib ruquin al chubil vinc I leave the Che people here and meet with the Chub people
24. xin el aran xin cam jun roctaca xacamil guan vu zaconac pec senima I leave there and go along a valley and come to a white cliff at
25. yx cajee gui riob ruquin ah zeb bil vinc the river, where we divide with the Zeb people
26. xin ca jun rocnima xacamil chi ziguan lix quin cob gui lin monjon I go along the river valley and come to Chi Siguan, where I set up

47 Se, locative; chi re, at the edge; queenk', a general term for bean (Phaseolus spp.).
48 Se, locative; oqob, liquidambar (Liquidambar styrificera).
49 Chi, locative; batz', howler monkey (Alouatta spp.).
50 Secumán is a caserío in aldea Chirreché; se, locative; comán, waterhole or deep pool in a river.
51 Chirrequim is an aldea of San Pedro Carchá; chi re, at the edge; q'uin, thatch (roofing material).
52 Chiquisis is a caserío in aldea Chirrequim; chi, locative; q'ui, many; sis, pizote (Nasua narica narica L.) (MW).
53 Reference to Río Cahabón.
27. quix cul ut rib nupalix li calebal choch

28. chi cu lao alcaldes regidores de municipales

29. De esta ciudad esta población de San Pedro Carchá

30. Los señores alcaldes son los siguientes nombres

31. El alcalde primero, Cornelio Choc

32. El alcalde segundo Pedro Martil Ycal

33. Ocho regidores decanos: Antonio Chub, Domingo Cucul, Tomás Tiul

34. José María Ycal, Manuel Choc, Lucas Ycal, Vicoriano Coc

35. Santiago Chub

36. Testigo de asistencia J. Luciano Mucu, síndico primero

37. Sacada copia y traslado de esta memoria en la ermita de San Sebastián

38. Martín en 17 de febrero de 1862

39. Por el señor gobernador Pioquinto Yaxcal. J. De los Santos Coc, síndico primero

40. Tomás Coc, escribano primero

41. J. Luciano Mucu, síndico segundo

my first landmark. They have met, the landmarks of the maize fields

Before us, the alcaldes regidores of the municipality

of San Pedro Carchá
42. El año que tiene la memoria original; en que copié esta escritura

43. Noviembre 18 de 1779. November 18, 1779.

TESTAMENTO XALIJA CHAJ PIXOL

On October 10, 1539, on the basis of testimony given by Poncio Tux, a document was prepared which set forth the landmarks that demarcated the boundaries of the property owned by Tux and his people. The original document was lost and the copy preserved is based on a reconstruction made in 1834. The present document, in Q'eqchi' and Spanish, is dated March 3, 1834, and is accompanied by a Spanish version dated September 9, 1871. Accompanying documentation includes a letter from Dieseldorff to Ismael Delgado and Salvador Santa María, dated September 21, 1937, requesting information about the testament of Poncio Tux.

1. Se yx ccaba y Dios aguabeh Dios caholbeh Dios, Espiritu Santo
   In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost

2. Amén. Jesús, María y José, Joaquín y Ana

3. Hayn ah Pon sio Tux guanco vi se li hab de 1539 años laheb ix be y po
   I, Poncio Tux, in the year 1539, tenth day on the road of the

4. octubre nac ta osoc yn memorial testamento rech valbal choch aran
   month October, complete my title and testament of my native land

5. xaliha chah pixol harran yx cul rrib rruquin ah García Tiul
   Xalija Chaj Pixol 54, where it borders with García Tiul

6. yx cab yn nupalh se ix pense hunah ca be rruquin García Tiul
   The second landmark is the pens tree 55, still our boundary with García Tiul

54 Xalija Chaj Pixol; shaliha', confluence of two rivers or streams; EH gives pixol as that which is fastened or lashed.
55 Allspice (Pimienta dioica L. Merrill) is an important cash tree crop (MW).
Subregional Organization of the sixteenth-century...

7. rox yn nupalh chirre saguaquitum The third landmark is the edge of the water Secuaquitum 56

8. yx el aran yal ticc xacamilin chi- I leave here and go directly to the water course at Arenal 57

8. roroqueha samaib

9. yx el aran xacamil chi ynup From here I come to Chi Ynup 58

10. yx el aran xacamil se cantal From here I come to Cherital 59

11. yx el aran xacamil sa nima sa- From here I come to the river Chac- 60

acte chi rubel pec chi tzalam 61, below the hill called Prison

12. yx el aran xacamil chi nim la cub- From here I come to a long incline, sinq aran ut quin ccanab aj García where I leave García

13. Tiul se taca Tiul in the valley

14. quin el ut aran xacamilin se-pos, From here I come to Se Pos, our boundary with the people of Santa María Cajbón

15. yx el aran xacamilin guan vi saho- From here I come to where are white nac pec hunah ut chic ca be rruquin cliffs 62, our boundary with

16. don Juan Matacbatz don Juan Matacbatz 63

56 Secuaquitum is a caserío in aldea Rubeltum.

57 Finca Arenal (Spanish: sandy place or quicksand; Q’eqchi’: samahib) is located where the Quebrada Arenal flows as a subterranean stream three kilometers northward to the Río Cahabón. A number of archaeological resources have been identified near Arenal. Dieseldorff (1905) reports finding jade objects in a cave site at Arenal. Seacal, a small Late Classic period masonry group comprising some ten structures is also located on Finca Arenal (Smith 1955: 56, Fig. 33, 34a-e, 129, R.E. Smith 1949: 229). Chijolum, a Late Classic-Postclassic period site consisting of five platforms, including a ball court, is located on Finca Semarac, approximately three kilometers east of Finca Arenal (Smith 1955: 57, Fig. 35, 36a-f, R.E. Smith 1949: 230).

58 Inup, ceiba (Ceiba pentandra L. Gaertn.).

59 Chi re, locative; tal, teosinte (Tripsacum spp.).

60 EPD gives tzalam, prison; however, other sources gloss tz’alam as plain, flat, wall; also, tz’alam che’, board; tz’alam pec, stone slab, large rock. Given the context, a more appropriate translation refer to a wooden stockade or, by extension, a late prehistoric defensive settlement.

61 Se, locative; acte’, wild pacaya (Chamaedora spp.). Seacte is a small river in the vicinity of San Pedro Carchá. Jade beads are reported to have come from a cave near Seacte (Dieseldorff 1905, Sapper 1895b: 14).

62 Sakoonac, white rock, large stone (EH).

63 The Testamento Chamelco describes negotiations between the caciques Juan Matacbatz of San Juan Chamelco and Coconha Zal of San Pedro Carchá (Sapper 1897).
From here I come to the red colored cliff, still alongside of don Juan Matacbatz

From here we come to where is a lagoon

From here I come to the large hole and cave

From here I come to the water

From here I come to the top of the hill Sejalaute

The reading of this sentence is not clear; it seems to be a repetition: EPD]

From here I come to beneath the cancoj tree, at the edge of the water Chipos

From here to the white cliff, below which the water sprouts

From here to the edge of the water at the foot of the tzaaaj tree

From here to Ulpan, where I meet the people of San Juan Chamelco

From here I come to Sacpur

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Rokha is small stream (EH).
Halaute, a type of palm (Chamaedora spp.) (MW).
Canoj, an indeterminate tree.
Tza’ax, tree (Vernonia leiocarpa DC) (MW).
Ulpan is a river within the jurisdiction of San Pedro Carchá. Dieseldorff (1894, 1905) reports recovering jade objects and thin sheets of gold associated with human burials. An archaeological site is reported at Finca Panzamala, located near the Río Canlich some nine kilometers east of Ulpan and seven kilometers west of Arenal (Villacorta and Villacorta 1927: 322, Seler 1901: 179, Fig. 256).
Sacpur is a caserío in the jurisdiction of San Pedro Carchá; sak, white, many; pur, a general term for jute or highland river snail (Pachychilus spp.), a mollusc with many associated beliefs (MW).
Subregional Organization of the sixteenth-century...

28. yx el aran xacamil zemesche From here I come to Semesche\textsuperscript{70}, there aran nin cul ah choh ahau I meet the chief of the Choc people

29. yx elc aran xacamilin chitap From here I come to Chitap\textsuperscript{71}

30. yx elc aran xacamil cacau chiben From here I come to Chi Cacao\textsuperscript{72} y zul

31. yx el aran xacamil chiritel seritche From here I come to Chirital Seritche

32. yx el aran quin el hun rocika From here I get to a valley alongside chire cacnab of a river with deep pools

33. xacamilin chire nimlahul chirrei From I come to the edge of a large hole in the rock, on the side of a deep pool\textsuperscript{73} li cacnab

34. quin el aran xacamilin xaliha From here I come to Xaliha Chah chah pixol quin [...] quix cul Pixol, from where I started; they have

35. rib yx [...] le ain Ponsio Tux aran From met, the boundary lines, which [...] ruquin belong to me, Poncio Tux, there

36. García Tiul where I meet with García Tiul

37. guan gui yn tzul yn taca yn sarb I possess hills and valleys [and water- yx tzacanquil rib tain qu rretal holes] where I find my support, and I state

38. yx ccaba rech vi yn mam chi their names; they are for my grand- jaruj chi jarab chi jun may ta chihab children forever, for every period of twenty years\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{70} Semesche is located within the boundaries of Finca Chajcar at the source of the Río Ulpan and some six kilometers south of the Río Cahuatlán. Dieseldorff excavated extensively throughout Finca Chajcar during the late 1890s recovering some 12,000 pottery fragments, at latest 12 burials, some including jade objects, deer antlers, and tepescuintle teeth, and two thin copper ear flares (Dieseldorff 1894, 1895, 1905, Seler 1915: 3, Plate 3, Villacorta and Villacorta 1927: 322, 343-346).

\textsuperscript{71} Chitap is a caserío in aldea Chiacalté; chi, locative; tap, land crab found near rivers and springs (MW).

\textsuperscript{72} Cacao (Theobroma cacao L.).

\textsuperscript{73} EH gives caknaab as ocean, sea, or vast expanse.

\textsuperscript{74} Reference to a katun, the calendar cycle of twenty years.
I state the names of my waterholes: here the first, Petche.

My second waterhole is Sehacolol.

My third waterhole is Chichache.

My fourth waterhole is Sehacolol.

My fifth waterhole is Chi Cac y Pec.

My sixth waterhole is Sera Suup Secopur.

My seventh waterhole is Setanpaz.

My eighth waterhole is in the plain Zecanpaz.

My ninth waterhole is Se Hocob.

My tenth waterhole is under the cliff on the edge of the water Chicheheh.

My tenth waterhole is Chi Chahba Buch.

My eleventh waterhole is the small Purulha.

My twelfth waterhole is the large Purulha.

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75 Probable reference to *peche*, a term for *Rubus* spp. (MW).

76 *Kolol*, a short-billed pigeon (*Columba nigrirostris*) (MW).

77 Secocpur is an aldea of San Pedro Carchá; *se*, locative; *coc*, small; *pur*, is a general term for jute or highland river snail (*Pachychilus* spp.), a mollusc with many associated beliefs (MW).

78 *Sejocob* is a caserío in aldea Sechinacté; *se*, locative; *oqob*, liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).

79 A species of carpintero or bushy-crested jay (*Cassilopha melanocyanea*) (MW).

80 EPD gives this as Secac, a caserío in aldea Secajc; *se*, locative; *oqob*, liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).

81 Purul, something which boils; reference to a small hot springs.

82 Reference to a large hot springs.
Subregional Organization of the sixteenth-century...

52. roxlahu yn sarb sehalba ca
   My thirteenth waterhole is Sehalbalj

53. yx calahu yn sarb ze rettzi
   My fourteenth waterhole is Seretzi

54. cah ut yn memorial testamento
   le hayn Poncio Tux
   Only this is the title of Poncio Tux
   and

55. testamento re le Poncio Tux se le ab 1539. Jesús María y José
   Joaquín y Ana
   will of Poncio Tux in the year 1539.
   Jesús, Mary and Joseph. Joaquín and
   Anna.

56. alcalde primero Tomás de
   Aguilar Ah Pocac

57. alcalde segundo Juan de la Cruz
   Hernández Calel Bac

58. regidor Pedro Hernández Rax,
   regidor Juan de la Cruz Yaxcal

59. regidor Gaspar Mendez Coc,
   regidor Juan de Olaris Balná

60. regidor Pedro Ah Pocac; Pedro
   Dolores Apoxy

61. maestro el escribano hayn ah don
   Francisco ha Tucurba San Miguel
   The chief secretary I Francisco from
   San Miguel Tucurú

62. escribano segundo haut hayn don
   Felipe Tucurba San Miguel
   The second secretary I Felipe from
   San Miguel Tucurú

63. oso ut ratin guano vi laheb
cutan ix be y po octubre de 1539
   años
   The wording is completed on the
ten day of October 1539

64. fraile Pedro Megía.
   Friar Pedro Mejía.

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83 San Miguel Tucurú is a Pokomchi-speaking municipality bounded to the north by
Senahtí and San Pedro Carchá, to the east by Senahú and Panzos, to the south by Purulhá, and
to the west by Tamahú and San Juan Chamelco.
The general region considered in the three land titles is significant for the archaeological and historical study of the Guatemala highlands. The Cobán-Carchá area was an important conduit from the highlands to the adjacent Petén lowlands during the prehispanic and colonial periods. Perhaps more significantly, Carchá was an important population center in ancient Tuzulutlán, the region in which the Kiche placed the mythological deeds of the Hero Twins in the *Popol Vuh* (1950: 112-113).

The land titles provide several kinds of information important for reconstructing aspects of the local social mosaic in the Q’eqchi-speaking northern highlands of Guatemala. Of particular interest is the mention of the Coc and Cucul lineages, presumably remnants of Ch’ol-speakers who were resettled into the highlands from the adjacent lowlands to the north. In the *Testamento Chicoj*, Cristóbal Melchor Ba claims his legitimate right to property referred to as Chaj Chicoj as he identifies land held by Bartolomé Coc and Gaspar Cucul, originally from the Río Usumacinta region, and defines boundaries with Bac, Cac, Choc, Cholom, Cruz, Quib, Sotzoh (Chocoh), Tiul, and Tzutz lineages.

The documents are also of considerable use for the reconstruction of social groups larger than individual homesteads and smaller than regional centers. The regional organization of the Q’eqchi’ can be generally described in terms of two distinct spatial concepts: *tenamit* and *c’alebaal*. The *tenamit* (Nahuatl: *tentamitl*, fence, enclosure) is generally coterminous with municipio or town, although the term applies to all categories of political units above the level of the *c’alebaal* (village). Q’eqchi’ towns of any size were divided into wards (*molam*) or barrios (*teep*), each administered by a *caalel*, later referred to as a this official was called a *principal* or a *regidor* by the Spaniards.

Seven Late Postclassic period Q’eqchi’ centers or *tenamits* have been located on elevated mountain spurs above valleys in the Cobán-Carchá area by Arnauld (1986). The lack of protohistorie remains is probably the result of survey methodology since historical documentation clearly indicate that the region was not thinly populated when the Spaniards first entered.

The largest of the sites is Chicán, consisting of several rectangular platforms arranged around one or more plazas. Plastered masonry is usually visible. At Chicán two high platforms show inset or projecting stairways flanked by wide sloping balustrades. Similar types of architecture are noted at two sites near Tactic, and at a late site located above San Pedro Carchá. No ballcourt, central altar, pyramidal structure, except Group A at Chicán, have been found. The sites generally exhibit residential or funerary functions and apparently lack the primary ceremonial functions associated with Classic period sites they had during the Classic period. The religious centers probably moved
from the bottom lands to mountain summits, which are presently important religious foci of the Q'eqchi'. One of these is Kaacwa' Xucaneb, located just above the site of Chicán. The site of Chichen was another important protohistoric important center. In 1550, Juan Matacbatz was the cacique of San Juan Chamelco, probably populated by the residents of Chichen. The general population resided on or near cultivated flat lands (c'alebaal) during the Late Postclassic period.

The c'alebaal (milpería, aldea, caserío; c'al, milpa) is an extension of the patrilocally extended domestic group. The members of a patrilineage live on adjacent lands which they have inherited from their ancestors. A patrilineage possess some jural authority, in that important decisions for lineage members are made by the senior males. In addition to control of land, some patrilineages also own ritual paraphernalia used in ceremonial or ritual occasions. The c'alebaal may vary in size from approximately ten to fifty families which act as a large residential corporate group in which marriage, residence, and social interaction are influenced by membership (Sapper 1891b: 893; 1913). Nuclear families characteristically inhabit separate dwellings, and corporate lineage (toon) boundaries may be difficult to recognize physically. Dwellings are scattered about an ermit (hermitage), a specialized public structure of the local community to conduct and administer such corporate matters as education, worship, sacrifice, and economic affairs, within a specific residential zone. In the eighteenth-century the floor of the hermitage served as a common burial area and the building housed crosses and other saintly images, and probably also attended other non-religious functions as local temples may have done in ancient times. These structures, when reduplicated in various parts of a landscape, may represent one type of evidence for the existence of a lineage group. Waterholes (sarb), important sacred places within each c'alebaal, are marked by cross shrines. Control of rights to water is crucial for human life in this karstic environment, especially during the long dry season. The milpa (c'al) is usually cleared on high and well-drained lands generally located relatively far from the village nucleus.

The c'alebaal groups were apparently nested within larger divisions known as xakibaal, or paraje, the largest subdivision of a municipality. The data are unclear however whether such ethnographic constructs were present in the sixteenth-century.

In order of frequency, boundary markers given in the documents are: waterholes, forests or trees, hills or elevated places, caves or dolines, valley floors or level areas, cliff faces, and cultural features. Boundary maintenance and composition are made clear by ceremonies performed to the ancestral deities and the tzultakaj. The sacred landscape is marked by the distribution of lineage shrines (mayejbaal) dedicated to the worship of the tzultakaj. These shrines are typically located in low places near springs or other water sources, high on mountain summits, and at natural openings into the earth, caves and
sunken waterholes. The *tzultakaj*, literally hill-valley, define a class of deities that are multiple, but can also be conceived of as a unitary entity (Schackt 1986:60). Each hill and mountain has its own *tzultakaj*, but the term generally personifies the totality of the earth. The number of *tzultakaj* is usually considered to be thirteen, a number with a special sacred and ritual connotations.

The *tzultakaj* are all associated with specific physiographic features in northern Guatemala, most located in the Verapaz highlands. A Q’eqchi’ prayer recorded by Sapper (1925) in Alta Verapaz requesting protection for a maize crop names the following: *Cancuen* and *Chahmayic*, both rivers, and the mountains *Kana Itzam*, the northern boundary in the *Testamento Tontem*, and the only female and most malevolent, and Pecmo’, a mountain with a sacred cave and the place of great pilgrimages. The Q’eqchi’ in southern Belize recognize several other *tzultakaj* including, *Kaacwa’ Xucaneb* (a hill near San Juan Chamelco), *Kaacwa’ Cojaj* (near San Pedro Carchá), *Kaacwa’ Ixim* (near Tactic), *Kaacwa’ Siyab*, *Kaacwa’ Sayil* (in the Department of Izabal), *Kaacwa’ Rax Hon*, *Kaacwa’ Chit’unum*, Señor San Vicente, *Kaacwa’ Chimuy*, *Kaacwa’ Saki Pec*, *Kaacwa’ Chikoivon*, and *Kaacwa’ Sariquib* (Schackt 1986: 61).

The *tzultakaj* are believed to keep wild animals locked up in pens inside their hills. On receiving appropriate offerings of copal, the animals are released to become the prey of hunters. The animals may also be let out to trespass on a milpa if one has neglected the customary rituals in connection with clearing and sowing. Since the *tzultakaj* are masters or owners of both the land and the animals, people are completely dependent upon them for their livelihood. The masters must be appeased, both to give and not to destroy. The *Testamento Chicojil* makes reference to the *xiilic*, or animals of the wind, as boundary markers in two places, possibly corresponding to the *tzultakaj*.

In addition to the *tenamit* and *c’alebaal*, historical documents make reference to other sociospatial constructs, such as the *amak*, given variously as a collection of families, clan or lineage segment, or pueblo in general. The *amak* is probably not a discrete localized unit but rather a more dispersed social unit. Such groups may be only amorphous constructs but remain useful for the study of social groups.

The pattern of residence in the Q’eqchi’ region over the past generations has been radically affected by the expansion of the Germans and ladinos, frontier society, and particularly by fluctuations in the Guatemalan coffee trade. The phenomenon of clustering is essential to the formation and maintenance of residential groups in the face of low and unstable subsistence capabilities. The practice of milpa or swidden agriculture, along with a hunting and gathering economy has resulted in a dispersed population. Q’eqchi’ residence groups are nested into larger local groups. The concept of the *c’alebaal* is a useful analytical construct that provides a convenient unit of study for the analysis of social relations above the domestic group and below the town cen-
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It is a discrete localized settlement unit corresponding to a rough natural or geographical subdivision of the region defined by more or less explicitly recognized political and social units.

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