

In this way it came about that people were cut open before the gods. The shields of war were made then; it was the very beginning of the fortification of the citadel at Bearded Place. The root of fiery splendor was implanted there, and because of it the reign of the Quiché lords was truly great. They were lords of singular genius. There was nothing to humble them; nothing happened to make fools of them or to ruin the greatness of their reign, which took root there at Bearded Place.

The penance done for the gods increased there, striking terror again, and all the tribes were terrified, small tribes and great tribes. They witnessed the arrival of people captured in war, who were cut open and killed for the splendor and majesty of Lord Noble Sweatbath and Lord Iztayul, along with the Greathouses and the Lord Quichés. There were only three branches of kin there at the citadel named Bearded Place.

And it was also there that they began feasting and drinking over the blossoming of their daughters. This was the way the ones they named the “Three Great Houses” stayed together. They drank their drinks there and ate their corn there, the payment for their sisters, payment for their daughters. There was only happiness in their hearts when they did it. They ate, they feasted inside their palaces.

“This is just our way of being thankful and grateful that we have good news and good tidings. It is the sign of our agreements about the daughters and sons born to our women,” they said.

Epithets were bestowed there, and the lineages, the allied tribes, the principalities gave themselves names there.

“We are intermarried: we Cauecs, we Greathouses, and we Lord Quichés,” said those of the three lineages and the three great houses. They spent a long time there at Bearded Place, and then they sought again and saw another citadel. They left Bearded Place behind.

AND THEN THEY GOT UP AND CAME TO THE CITADEL OF ROTTEN CANE, as the name is spoken by the Quichés. The Lords Noble Sweatbath and Plumed Serpent came along, together with all the other lords. There had been five changes and five generations of people since the origin of light, the origin of continuity, the origin of life and of humankind.

And they built many houses there.

And they also built houses for the gods, putting these in the center of the highest part of the citadel. They came and they stayed.

After that their domain grew larger; they were more numerous and

palaces, and what lies around or below that citadel as well. The effect is to extend the sense of settlement or community beyond its fortified core, with temples and palaces, to the surrounding population, creating a compound concept meaning something like “town” or “city.” T. J. Knab (personal communication) suggests that this expression might be the Quiché equivalent *altepetl*, the Nahuatl term for town or city, which also involves a juxtaposition of the low with the high; it is compounded of *al* (from *atl*) “water,” and *tepetl*, “mountain” (AM). The Quiché also use a water-mountain pairing, but it is applied not to towns but to outdoor shrines, which (ideally) exist in low-high pairs (see B. Tedlock 1992:76, 80).

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lords of singular genius: “Singular” is *jumaj*; DB has *junaj*, “make oneself unique.”

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nothing happened to make fools of them or to ruin the greatness of their reign: “To make fools” translates *alachinaq*; DB has *alachinik*, “joke.” “Or to ruin the greatness” translates *xawi b’anol rech nimal*, in which *xawi* indicates “the same as the aforesaid” and links this clause to the negative one preceding it, while *b’anol* is translated “to ruin” on the basis of *b’anoj*, “disaster” (FV).

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the blossoming of their daughters: The verb stem here is *si’j*, a form that means “flower” as a noun (MX).

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ate their corn: The verb here is *wech*, which refers specifically to the eating of foods made of corn, and what I have translated “corn” is *wa*, which refers to these same things, primarily to tamales (which are often made of nothing but corn dough in Guatemala).

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“our way of being thankful and grateful”: The former is *k’amowab’al* [camouabal], “thanks-instrument,” and the latter is [pacubal]; DB has *paq’uj*, “be thankful for.”

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allied tribes . . . principalities: See the notes to p. 149 for a discussion of these terms.

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Rotten Cane: This name is *q’umaraq aj* [cumaracaah], “rotten-plural cane-plant.”

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