

## El *Cuceb* de los *Libros de Chilam Balam*: difrasismos e intertextualidad

### *The Cuceb of Chilam Balam Books: Difrasismos and Intertextuality*

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**RESUMEN:** El *Cuceb* es uno de los textos más misteriosos de los *Libros de Chilam Balam* realizados durante el periodo Colonial temprano. Investigadores anteriores han comentado que se correspondía a un *katun* ficticio y contenía eventos de diferentes épocas, del siglo XIII hasta el XVII. Mientras tanto, el texto mismo incorporó alusiones de narrativas históricas y mitológicas. Sus orígenes provienen de los periodos Posclásico y Clásico. En este artículo examinaré algunas expresiones y partes centrales del *Cuceb*, argumentando que tales pasajes se interconectan con otros textos de los *Libros de Chilam Balam* y del *Códice París*, los cuales, en conjunto, apuntan al colapso de Mayapán, la última capital del norte de Yucatán.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Época Colonial, norte de Yucatán, *Libros de Chilam Balam*, difrasismos, intertextualidad.

**ABSTRACT:** *The Cuceb* is one of the most mysterious texts in the Books of Chilam Balam written during the early Colonial Period. Previous scholars have commented that it recounts a fictitious *katun* and contains events from different epochs ranging from the 13th to the 17th centuries. The text itself incorporates allusions of historical and mythological stories with origins from the Postclassic and Classic Periods. In this paper I will examine some expressions and key parts of the *Cuceb*. I propose that these passages interconnect with other texts in the Books of Chilam Balam and Paris codex, which together point to the collapse of Mayapan, the last capital of the Northern Yucatan.

**KEYWORDS:** Colonial Period, Northern Yucatan, Books of Chilam Balam, *difrasismos*, intertextuality.

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## Introduction

The *Cuceb*<sup>1</sup> is one of the most interesting narratives found in the Chilam Balam books, but it is also one of the most difficult texts to interpret. On one hand, it describes a war between cavalcade gods and monsters. Meanwhile, it likewise describes the cycles of the *tun*, *haab*, and *katun* as well as the days themselves (which embody time) as a journey in the sky, on earth, and across the Underworld, during which individuals and communities (Itza) generally suffer from diseases, wars, starvation, and thirst. Throughout this text, each sentence contains dense metaphors that sometimes can be interpreted correctly, but other times we have only vague conjectures as to what they actually refer to.

This text likely dates to the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as the *Cuceb* itself states in the first sentence, however, other fragments suggest that it was written sometime in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both the language and vocabulary in the Perez manuscript had been altered from the original, which in some cases helps interpretation, but also raises the question whether these changes redesign the original narrative, are hypothetical texts, or contains additions copied from another manuscript.<sup>2</sup>

The etymology of *cuceb* is derived from the verb root *cuc* (“to turn, to revolve”) with the added instrumental suffix *-eb* meaning, “that which revolves” (Bolles, 2001). At the beginning of the Pérez manuscript, there is a drawing depicting a squirrel, pronounced *kúʔuk* in the Yucatec language (Bricker, 1998: 202) which is almost identical to the pronunciation of the word *kúuk* (“returns”) – noting that Colonial orthography never signaled the tone – therefore this squirrel functions as a rebus. *Cuceb* is an old noun: the instrumental suffix in the Colonial Yucatec was already *-Vb* by the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, therefore we expect the form of *\*cucub*. Nevertheless, this noun used the Proto-Yucatecan *-eebʼ* suffix (Bricker, 2019: 201), which was not used in the Colonial Period. The root of *cuc* as “return” has disappeared in the Modern Yucatec language, although it remains a productive root in Modern Itza (*kuk* as “roll”; Hofling and Tesucún, 1997: 365).

<sup>1</sup> For the Colonial Yucatec texts I use the Colonial orthography save in the cases of ejective consonants, for which I employ the following letters: chh = chʼ, pp = pʼ, thh = tʼ. For the Modern Yucatec I use Bricker’s orthography (1998), while for the epigraphic texts I don’t accept the theory of disharmonic principle.

<sup>2</sup> The Perez ‘codex’ was copied from different manuscripts in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Juan Pío Pérez (1798-1859) from the Archives of Maní. Later, the codex was copied and deposited at the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, and the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Tozzer Library (Gunsenheimer, 2006: 23-24, Table 1). According to Gunsenheimer (2006: 44) the original manuscript was made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, copied from the hypothetical Archetype B. The actual manuscript of Chilam Balam of Tizimín was made in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original is in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, and several copies located in the Berendt Linguistic Collection, University Museum of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Instituto Yucateco de Antropología e Historia, Mérida; Latin American Library, Tulane University, New Orleans; Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Berlin; Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge; Newberry Library, Ayer Collection, Chicago; and Brigham Young University (Gunsenheimer, 2006: 23-24, Table 1).

The authors of previous translations have interpreted the text very differently depending on when they wrote their narratives as well as which period are they referring to. Roys (1949: 158) says that the *Cuceb* was a fictitious *Katun 5 Ahau*, while Barrera Vásquez and Rendón (1948: 46) have argued that it is about *Katun 3 Ahau*, but both agree that it is a *tun* prophecy wheel. Craine and Reindorp (1979: 99-101) accepted the argument of Roys concerning the *tun* wheel and that it was a fictitious *katun*, however, they argued that the internal criticisms recounted in *Cuceb* clearly occurred before either 1544 or 1593. Edmonson (1982: 69-70), on the other hand, claimed that the text was finished by Kauil Chhel in Bacalar on February 8, 1596, and that he forecasted the history of *Katun 5 Ahau* two years before it was due to begin. Furthermore, Edmonson believes that Kauil Chhel used the preceding cycle of the calendar round (fifty-two years earlier) and was recounting the events from 1541 to 1561. According to Edmonson (1982: 70, note 1549) “[the author] presents instead a year-by-year and calendar round (i. e., totally Nahua) view of the events, he chronicles, using *tun* (360 days) for *hab* (365 days) and misdating the *katun* by five years”. Edmonson thought that Kauil Chhel was of both Xiu and Nahuatl origin and was adviser to the lord of Uxmal, although he relocated, in old age, to Bacalar. Nevertheless, Edmonson (1982: 112, note 2980) also said that he did not believe that the real Kauil Chhel wrote the narrative, but a scribe who used the famous prophet’s name and purportedly in the years of 1618-1623.

Gunsenheimer accepted both that the *katun* is fictitious as well as the travel to Bacalar in 1544, and that this tale was invented intentionally to hide the original source:

An original hieroglyphic source from a region exempt from Spanish rule, on the other hand, would have been much more authentic and credible, in particular with respect to the prophecies. In addition, dating the text with the year 1544 also meant less risk for the scribe, because it set them in the generation of his parents or even grandparents. At the same time, the dating of the journey linked to an original hieroglyphic source dating from the year 1544, must be seen as programmatic, not accidental. [...] Rather [...] [the] record 1544 as the year marking the advent of Christianity, the first baptism of Mayans, and the arrival of Bishop Toral. [...] It is therefore possible that the year 1544 was intentionally chosen to juxtapose the traumatic transformation of the lives of the Maya with the apparent continuity of their own culture. By virtue of that date claim, the historical, calendrical and prophetic testimony was rendered unique and genuine. It suggested that at a time when old, familiar traditions were disintegrating into chaos and destruction, there was still credible contemporaneous documentation that could serve as a basis for generations to follow (Gunsenheimer, 2009: 132).

Most recently, David Bolles (2010: 97) offered an interesting explanation that the anomalies that occur in the *Cuceb* suggest that the text is a partial remnant of a 52-year-old calendar circle, but only the first 21 years, the rest being lost. If

this suggestion is true, then every 52 years of the prophecies presumably include not only the events of *Katun 5 Ahau* but others as well. Bolles also speculates that the scribes wrote the original manuscript in hieroglyphs but renewed it on its anniversary date 52 years later in 1596, but this time in Latin script. The date Bolles refers to is mentioned in the Prologue chapter of the *Cuceb* (2010: 97).

Albeit it is in itself a fascinating topic to unravel, the true time of production of the *Cuceb*, for the purpose of this presentation I will focus on some facets of the narrative. These intriguing entries associate with Pre-Columbian historiography while the scribes applied expressions which link to the Postclassic and possibly the Classic Periods. Additionally, I consider other texts from the Chilam Balam, some of which contradict the correct framework of dates that appeared in other parts of the books as well as the Spanish sources. In the following pages I deal with two features of the *Cuceb*, namely *expressions* that connect to Pre-Columbian sources indicated by a scribe familiar with traditional (pre-contact) indigenous literary style; the second feature is the *recollection* about famous destruction of Mayapan through the viewpoint of the Xiu family, whose member allegedly wrote the narrative (Bolles, 2010: 97) claims that Gaspar Antonio Chi Xiu would be a possible candidate for the real author of the *Cuceb*.

### ***Difrasismos* and the Eclipse Monster**

The structure of the *Cuceb* is simple: it consists of 21 *tun* (360 days) prophecies. These prophecies actually refer to *haab* year (365 days) prophecies because each one begins with a year-bearer -13 Kan 1 Pop, 1 Muluc 1 Pop, 2 Ix 1 Pop, 3 Cauac 1 Pop and so on. The seat of the *katun* is Mayapan. The *Cuceb* hints at several events such as depopulation, destruction, famine, diseases, and death everywhere, which are very similar to the *katun* prophecies (*u uudz katunoob*) in the Chilam Balam books.

In the narrative there are many gods, monsters and malevolent beings. We know about some of them from other sources, but the rest are still waiting to be identified. There are metaphors for people, objects and actions. Among these, some are metaphors, while others are animals such as jaguar, opossum, deer, ants and bees which represent people. One particular expression that often appears in the *Cuceb* (in 13 Kan, 7 Cauac, 1 Ix, and 4 Muluc prophecies) and in parts of Chilam Balam, connects to a Classic Ch'olan expression. It could be possible that the latter was the origin for the Yucatec *difrasismos*.

Originally Garibay Kintana coined the word *difrasismo* to describe the pairing of two terms employed as a single metaphorical unit (1968).<sup>3</sup> *Difrasismos* work as nouns in Mesoamerican languages. In Mayan languages, just as in Classic Ch'olan,

<sup>3</sup> For other works on *difrasismos* in Nahuatl see Montes de Oca Vega (2013) and for Maya contexts see Hull (2003, 2012) and Lacadena (2009).

there are compound and complex nouns (England, 1983: 70). Compounds contain two roots but they refer to a single lexeme. When it is possessed, the ergative precedes the compound and the eclitic follows it (examples in Classic Ch'olan are *u-lakamtun-il*, *u-k'altun-il*, *y-etk'ab'a'-il*, etc.). Complex nouns contain two roots, where the first is possessed by the second, however this phrase refers to a single lexeme. When a complex noun is possessed, it is only the second root which receives the possessive affixes. Such complex nouns are rare in Classic Ch'olan, but in Yucatec we can find *u lèekilimpòol* “my skull” (from *leek* “gourd” and *pool* “head”) or in Ch'orti' *uut e k'in* “sky” (from *ut* “surface, face, eye, fruit” and *k'in* “sun”). *Difrasismos* are added to the system. They contain two roots which express one single lexeme but when they are possessed the ergative precedes both roots (in Classic Ch'olan the example are *u-b'akil u-jolil*, *u-ch'ahb'il y-ahk'b'al*, *u-k'ab u-ch'e'n*, etcétera).

Other expressions would be metaphors, and some of them could have already appeared in the Classic Period inscriptions, one occurs often in the Cuceb.

### **Mul tun tzek**

The first-year prophecy (13 Kan) contains the sentence *t u kinil yan ox mul tun tzek*, which can be translated as “at that time there will be a large mound of skulls”:

*t-u-kin-il yan ox mul tun tzek*  
 pre-3erg-TIME-poss.suff EXIST THREE MOUND/HILL-STONE SKULL

The item *mul* could have either a noun, such as “*montón, cerro*”, or a verb meaning, “*reunirse en montón, amontonarse*” (Barrera, 1980: 538). With the noun *tun* “stone” the meaning changes to “*montón grande de piedras o montecillo hecho así a mano, cerro hecho a mano, cerro natural, montículo, colina*” (Barrera, 1980: 538). The *mul tun tzek* expression has another meaning, “*mortandad*”, an apt description of this articulation (Barrera, 1980: 540).

As it happens, a well-known expression from the Classic period inscriptions describes the piling of skulls into mountains: *witzij jol*, in which the noun *witz* “mountain” with the *-Vj* intransitivizing suffix creates a verb (Tortuguero, Mon. 6, C6-D6; see Lacadena for the morphological analysis; Figure 1):

**NAB'-ja CH'ICH' WITZ-ja JOL**  
*na[h]b'[a]j ch'ich' witz[i]j ujol*  
 nahb'-Vj-∅ ch'ich' witz-Vj-∅ jol  
 POOL-intra.suff-3ab BLOOD MOUNTAIN-intra.suff-3ab SKULL  
 “The blood pooled like rivers, the skulls piled up like mountains”.

The “skull” as a symbol of war is also appearing in another expression of *kokol tzek* in the Cuceb (for example in the 4th *tun* narrative), as a synonym of *mul tun tzek*:

1, 3rd <i>tun</i> , Tizimin folio 1v	Pérez page 102	Translation <sup>4</sup>
<i>tukin tukatunil, oxkokol tzek,</i>	<i>tu kin tu katunil oxkokol tzek</i>	In the time of the <i>katun</i> , skulls will be struck in the stone.
<i>u uat nom yax cach, tu hoc a be, tu hoc an luub</i>	<i>auat u caah yax cach tu hocanbe tu hocan lub</i>	The flies will cry at the intersections and rest areas,
<i>tu than ca tu likil, auat nom cui auat nom ycim, auat nom ah ya</i>	<i>tu than cati liki: auat u caah mucuy auat u caah icim, auat u caah h yaa</i>	the pigeons will cry, the owls will cry and the flycatchers will cry!

*Kokol* is derivate of *kol* “beat, struck, hit” (Bricker, 1998: 155) and it describes the action of struck of the skulls on the stones or on the sticks in the intersection (*kokol be* “las piedras movedizas y palos que están en el camino”, Barrera, 1980: 411). It is even possible that it would refer to the Central Mexican *tzompantli* “skull rack” platform.

## Well and Cave

There is a particular *difrasismo* which I believe refers to settlements and cities, and it only appears in the *Cuceb*.<sup>5</sup> In the prophecies of the 3rd, 10th, 12th, 14th, 18th *tuns*, and the end of the 13 Oc chapter this expression consists of the words *chhen* (well) and *actun* (cave):<sup>6</sup>

1, 3rd <i>tun</i> , Tizimin folio 1v	Pérez page 102	Translation <sup>7</sup>
<i>oxil cauac ual u kin upec tu chhenil tu yac tunil</i>	<i>Oxil cauac ual u kin u pec tu chhenil tu yactunil</i>	3 Cauac would be the time of movement from their wells and their caves
<i>binel u cah utzacle kauil</i>	<i>binel u caah u tzacle, kauil</i>	for going to seek food.
<i>... ti to tu kinil tu katunil uale, u uuil che, u uuil tu nich<sup>8</sup></i>	<i>ti tu kinil tu kaatunil, uilmon che, uilmon tunich</i>	At that time, at that <i>katun</i> , their food will be wood, their food will be stones,

<sup>4</sup> Other translations are Barrera Vásquez and Rendón 1948: 103; Roys, 1949: 166; Makemson, 1951: 5; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 102; Edmonson, 1982: 75.

<sup>5</sup> One example occurs in the Chilam Balam of Kaua (page 256) as *yan ichil chhen ych actunob* (I thank an anonymous reviewer for this information).

<sup>6</sup> Edmonson (1982: 76; 1986: 19) argued that *chhenil actun* referred to towns and villages, though he translated it as “wells-springs”, which I cannot concur.

<sup>7</sup> Other translations are Barrera Vásquez and Rendón 1948: 103; Roys, 1949: 166; Makemson, 1951: 5; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 102; Edmonson, 1982: 75.

<sup>8</sup> Che *tunich* “wood-stone” is another *difrasismo* and from other contexts it refers to “war, conflict” as other scholars suggested.

<i>yokol culan tu chhenil ti yac-tunil,</i>	<i>yokol culan tu chhenil ti yac-tunil,</i>	those who sit on the thro- nes at their wells and their caves.
<b>2, 10<sup>th</sup> tun, Tizimin folio 4</b>	<b>Pérez page 107</b>	<b>Translation<sup>9</sup></b>
<i>lai u koch tu uuclahun ca bin hokoc tu chhenil ti yac tunil ma</i>	<i>lay u kooch tu Uuclahun tun lae lay ca bin hokoc tu chhenil tu yactunil-mta.</i>	This is the true destiny in the 17 <sup>th</sup> tun when they will leave their wells and their caves. Edict.
<b>3, 12<sup>th</sup> tun, Tizimin folios4r-4v</b>	<b>Pérez page 108</b>	<b>Translation<sup>10</sup></b>
<i>ti tun sutnom tu chhe nil ti yac-tunil uchhapakoch,</i>	<i>tii tun u zutpahal tu chhenil tu yactunil uchhapakoch.</i>	Then they return to their wells and their caves to get the stored food.
<i>... amayte u uich ah kine, lai bin ocbal tu chhenil / ti yac tunil tu caten,</i>	<i>... amayte u uich ah kine: lai u katunil, ocbal tu chhenil tu yactunil tu caten,</i>	The priests' faces would be Amayte Kauil when the katun will enter to their wells and their caves.
<i>bin kamac u payalchi, bin tu yactunil,</i>	<i>bin kamac u payalchi, bin tu yactunil,</i>	Their prayer shall be received in their caves.
<i>... catun sut nac ti yac tunil, tu chhenil tu catene,</i>	<i>... Catun sutnac ti yactun tu chhenil tu caten:</i>	Then they will return again to their caves and their wells.
<b>4, 14<sup>th</sup> tun, Tizimin folio 5r</b>	<b>Pérez page 109</b>	<b>Translation<sup>11</sup></b>
<i>emom xulab emom chac uayab cab,</i>	<i>ti eman xulab, eman chac uayab cab.</i>	Then Xulab ants shall descend, and Chac Uayac Cab ants shall descend
<i>paic tu chhenil, ti yactunil</i>	<i>Paic tu chhenil tu yactunil,</i>	to destroy their wells and their caves.

<sup>9</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 110; Roys, 1949: 171-172; Makemson, 1951: 9; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 108; Edmonson, 1982: 89.

<sup>10</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 112; Roys, 1949: 172; Makemson, 1951: 14-15; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 109; Edmonson, 1982: 92-93.

<sup>11</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 114; Roys, 1949: 174; Makemson, 1951: 17; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 110; Edmonson, 1982: 97.

5, 18 <sup>th</sup> <i>tun</i> , Tizimin folios 6r-6v	Pérez page 112	Translation <sup>12</sup>
<i>tu kin u sutup tu chhenil ti yactunil</i>	<i>tu kinil u sutup t u chhenil,</i>	At that time, they return to their wells and their caves.
... <i>tu kinil u sutup ah itza, likul tu cal ya tu cal ukah, bai ual bin ualakhnahbal</i>	<i>tu kinil uchci u zutup ah itza, likul tu cal yaa, tu cal ukah: bai ua bin ualakhnahbal,</i>	At that time, it occurred the return of the Itza because of misery, because of thirst.
<i>u kat / u cuchil u yanalex yactunil,</i>	<i>u kat u kuchil u yonixil actunil,</i>	Thus, it would be necessary to seek other caves.
<i>ti uchom u pec can ti u chom u pec luum,</i>	<i>ti uchan u peec caan yetel luum,</i>	Then it will resound on high, it will resound on earth
<i>hum no mix chac ix chuah tu cheenil ti yactunil,</i>	<i>hum nom, ix chacix- chhuuah tu cheenil tu yactunil:</i>	and the Chacs and Chuah will thunder in their wells and their caves.
6, 13 Oc, Tizimin folio 7r	Pérez page 114	Translation <sup>13</sup>
<i>halili uchan tu dzoc u cuch katun, ti to uil yokol maya pan</i>	<i>halili uchan tu dzoc u cuch katun: ti to yokol mayapan,</i>	Truly the burden of the <i>katun</i> over Mayapan will be ended.
<i>ti uchom may cu u yedz uchhibal ti chhenil ti yactu nil,</i>	<i>ti uchan maycu, u yeedz, uchibal te tu chhenil ti yactunil</i>	Later it would come to pass in Maya Cuzamil [when] its lineages settle down in their wells and their caves.

The “well-cave” behaves as other *difrasismo*: it contains two roots that express one single lexeme but when they are possessed the ergative precedes both words (example: Classic Ch’olan *u b’akil u jolil, u ch’ahb’il yak’b’al*, etcétera). In this particular case of *chhen actun*, the order of the roots is not regulated. In most cases *chhen* is the first word in the expression, although in one instance *actun* comes first (Example 3). Moreover, this expression occurs in abbreviated form when either of the words is missing: for Example 5, the CB Tizimin version has *tu chhenil ti yactun*, while in the parallel version of Pérez appears *tu chhenil*; in same *tun* prophecy *yactun* shows up alone.

<sup>12</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 118; Roys, 1949: 176; Makemson, 1951: 22; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 113; Edmonson, 1982: 105.

<sup>13</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 120; Roys, 1949: 177; Makemson, 1951: 25; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 115; Edmonson, 1982: 110.



The expression then works like *kab-ch'en/chan-ch'en* in the Classic Period (Stuart and Houston, 1994; Hull, 2003, 2012; Lacadena, 2009; Bíró, 2011; Tokovinine, 2013). *Ch'en* often appears alone while it refers to settlement, or in rare cases, it is associated with a shrine in which the gods are living. In the Yucatec language, *chhen* has a special meaning of “well, water cistern” (Barrera, 1980: 131); Modern Yucatec *č'éʒen* in Bricker (1998: 82). *Actun* is “cave” (Barrera, 1980: 7); Modern Yucatec *ʒáaktun* in Bricker (1998: 2). In Colonial Yucatec there is the lexeme of *actunchhen* “cave with water” (Barrera, 1980: 7), which in Modern Yucatec changes to “collapsed cave” (*ʒáaktunč'éʒen* in Bricker, 1998: 3).

Nevertheless, there are two examples (2 and 6) which offer key insight into understanding the meaning in the *Cuceb*. At the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> *tun* prophecy there is an omen which says that the Itza will leave their well-and-cave in the 17th *tun*. On the surface this is a confusing entry because this year supposedly gives the next year's (the 11th one) prophecy. Barrera Vásquez and Rendón (1948: 116) corrected it to eleven, but I think it connects to another narrative within the books of Chilam Balam, one which clarifies this mysterious passage.

In the 3rd, fragmented *katun*-wheel, in the *Katun 8 Ahau* there is a description of the conquest of Chichen Itza in the 17th *tun* (in the Pérez version it is the 16th *tun*; see Roys, 1962: 80). I suggest that the *Cuceb* story contains data from *Katun 8 Ahau* in which Mayapan was destroyed and depopulated (more below). In this particular case of the 10th *tun* prophecy, the author used the same tradition in which the siege of Chichen Itza occurred in the 17th *tun* of *Katun 8 Ahau*. The “cave-and-well” then refers to Chichen Itza, or the town of the Itza.

Following the *tun* prophecies in the *Cuceb* there is a confusing explanation of how the *katun* works (Roys, 1949: 177, note 224) in the so-called “pacing off the *katun*” section. Here the scribe describes the ending of the *katun* over Mayapan and it passes to Maya Cuzamil (Bíró, 2012, on this toponym). The text then recounts the events of *Katun 8 Ahau*, when Mayapan was abandoned by its inhabitants and major noble families, which later settled down in different regions of Northern Yucatan. In this specific example, the *chhibalob* established (*edz*) themselves in their cities after leaving Mayapan, an apt description of the historical event, which probably took place in the second half of the 15th century. It is apparent that terms “well-and-cave” are referring to settlements and from these two contexts I believe that it can expand into other contexts in which the meaning of “city” functions well.

## Eclipse and the Big Shark

The eclipses of the sun and the moon feature prominently in the Maya codices and are also mentioned many times in the Chilam Balam (Bricker and Bricker, 2011: 249-366). The Pre-Columbian Maya and the Colonial Yucatec believe that a monster devours the sun or the moon, which is represented in the codices. The best two examples are in the Paris codex's so-called ‘Zodiac’ pages (*Codex Peresianus* 1968: 23-24) and the Eclipse Table in the Dresden codex (*Codex Dresdensis*,

1975: 51-58). The images of the eclipses are varied but one representation occurs frequently in which an animal opens its mouth trying to swallow the sun or the moon. In D56b and D57b the images show the serpent and the fish-like creature (shark) opening their mouths while the sign of K'IN is stabbed by two bones. This complex emblem hangs on the sky-band glyphs of star (EK'), skull (the moon UH), cloud (MUYAL), or darkness (AK'AB'). On both sides of the K'IN sign are white and dark cartouches called "the eclipse glyph" in the epigraphic literature (T326), and according to Christian Prager (2006), the reading is NAM, "disappearance, waning, vanishing, dearth, lack" (from Ch'orti). In pages 23 and 24 there are 13 beasts that swallow the sun while they are clinging from the sky-band. Beast 6 is a shark-like creature, the others are scorpion, turtle, rattlesnake, *muwan* owl, frog and so on (Bricker and Bricker, 2011: 695-708). We can find the particular representation in the prophecy of the 14th *tun* in the *Cuceb* narrative:

Tizimin folio 5r	Pérez page 108	Translation
<i>u kinil tu katunil, ualci<sup>14</sup>ual uxix tic u ba<sup>15</sup> ah xixtee ul, chac uayab xoc,</i>	<i>tu kinil tu katunil: laix ua tu kinil: u yichtic uxixte uba ah xixte ulil yetel chac uayab xoc:</i>	In its time of this <i>katun</i> , it will be at that time that Ah Xixte Ul and Chac Uayab Xoc deloused themselves.
<i>tu kin uti dzay<sup>16</sup>kak, utzai ne xoc</i>	<i>tu kinil u dzai kak utzaine<sup>17</sup>xooc:</i>	At that time, it was set fire on, and it is tied the tail of the shark
<i>lai ual tzailic<sup>18</sup> ca tzayi ti can ti muyal,</i>	<i>lai ual tzailic ca tzayi<sup>19</sup>ti can ti muyal:</i>	when it became joined and it clings to the sky, to the clouds.
<i>tu kinil yuklah chaan,</i>	<i>tu kinil yuklah chan:</i>	At that time, it is beheld every part of the sky.
<i>tu kinil u macal uuich kin u macal uuich u.</i>	<i>tu kinil u macal u uich kin, u macal u uich U.</i>	At that time, the face of the sun is covered, the face of the moon is covered. <sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ualci* "a estas horas, por este tiempo" (Bolles, 2001), which is parallel to Pérez version expression of *tu kinil*.

<sup>15</sup> *Xixtaba* "espulgar" (Bolles, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> *Dzay/dzai* is the perfective form of the transitive verb root *dza* "give, put, place" (Barrera, 1980: 870; Bricker, 1998: 47; Bolles, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> *Tzaine* "rabiatar vn cauallo con otro, y v baxel con otro" (Barrera, 1980: 855; Bolles, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> *Tzailic* "la acción y efecto de aumentar anudando" (Bolles, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> *Tzay* "to cling", a root intransitive with the perfective *-i* suffix (Bolles, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> The translation is from Roys (1949: 173) with minor changes by the author. The other translations of the same text are very different among the scholars:

Barrera and Rendón (1948: 113-114): "Entonces será cuando se encrespe Ah XixteelUl, El-rugoso-caracol-de-tierra, juntamente con el maligno Xooc, Tiburón, porque el fuego les pegará y será en-

Here we have a curious description which hitherto scholars have not paid sufficient attention. The text begins with two creatures, Ah Xixte Ul and Chac Uayab Xoc who initially deloused themselves. Although it is difficult to understand what the sentence refers to, these two monsters prepare to act during the ominous last five days of the year, on which the ceremony of the New Year occurs. Ah Xixte Ul was translated by Barrera Vásquez and Rendón (1948: 1 y 13) as *El-rugoso-caracol-de-tierra* or the Rough Earthly Snail, however Barrera provides another translation, “*caracol-arrugado-o-espulgador*” or Wrinkle Licker Snail (Barrera, 1980: 947), or “a snail who cleanses off lice/fleas” -an association with death. The other creature, Chac Uayab Xoc is the Great Uayab Shark, *uayab* connects to a Classic Ch’olan expression *uwayhab’*, “the sleep of the year” or the last month of the year (in Colonial Yucatec *uayeb*). Because the *Cuceb* contains the prophecies for the next year, it is obviously that the prophet or the priest identifies this as a menacing period.

The next sentence describes that the Great Shark’s tail is set on fire while the shark is tied up clinging from the sky and the clouds. Although we do not have this particular image of a burning shark in the Classic Period, we have another monster, the Starry Deer Crocodile, which is often represented with incense on its tail—the latter called the Quadripartite Badge (Taube, 2009: 99-106). In the *Cuceb*, the shark clings from the sky and clouds which aptly describes the iconographic figures in the Dresden and Paris codices where monsters try to swallow the sun and the moon (here “it is covered”); a later narrative also mentions this (Figure 2). In summary, we can say that these lines of the 14th *tun* prophecies really recount the general image of an eclipse and a celestial creature.

## Pre-Columbian Past and Intertextuality

*Intertextuality* was coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s working on Bakhtin’s theories on literature (Kristeva, 1986: 34-61). In her own words, “any text is cons-

tonces cuando se anuden unos a otros los tiburones de la cola, y pegue el fuego en el cielo y en las nubes. Será entonces cuando se mueva el cielo y se cubra la faz del Sol y se cubra la faz de la Luna”.

Makemson (1951: 16-17): “[...] their burning needs, a tale of great distress, on the day in which they read their fortunes in the fangs of the fire. After they had assembled, they rejoiced to see the sky covered with clouds. On that day everyone saw it. Then the face of the sun was veiled, the face of the moon was covered”.

Craine and Reindorp (1979: 110): “The fourteenth Tun was the time of the great count. It was the time when the fire which was set in the Petén broke out among the clouds in the sky and was seen everywhere. It was time when the face of the sun and the face of the moon were covered”.

Edmonson (1982: 96): “On the fourteenth *tun* is the time in the *katun* period. There remains being made to fight oneself. The fighters arrive with the East priest Uayab Xoc at the time of seeking fire, of seeking shark tails. That is the return of seeking things, when one seeks then in the sky, in storms, sun phases far seeing, at the time of covering the face of the sun, of covering of the face of the moon”.

tructed as a mosaic of quotation; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, 1986: 37). Later on, she proposes that we must think on literary genres as a “imperfect semiological system signifying beneath the surface of language but never without it” and secondly, we can discover “relations among larger units such as sentences, questions-and-answers, dialogues, etc.” (Kristeva, 1986: 37). Although intertextuality would become a common concept in literary criticism in the age of postmodernism (see Allen, 2000, for this development in several academic disciplines), it also appeared in the research of ancient literacy such as in Mesopotamian, Biblical, and Classic hermeneutics (Bauks, Horowitz, and Lange, 2013).

One important concept is the realization that the textual world, which has been flourishing for millennia, is “saturated”, it is no longer possible to write something that has not been written before. This means that things cannot be written, only rewritten. Therefore, literature is not a creation or a representation, but a rearrangement of pre-existing stories, images, symbols. This is accomplished by the text having a “dialogue” within the text, and the resulting literature is created out of the interaction between old and modern texts.

The manuscripts of Chilam Balam contain multiple texts in different genres, such as prophecies, chronicles, stories of the Bible, correlation of the Maya and European calendars, etc. which ultimately derive from other texts (Roys, 1933; Edmonson, 1982, 1986; Gunsenheimer, 2002, 2003, 2009). The *Cuceb* is among the prophecy genres where the wheel or fold of the *katun* texts is of noted importance. The *Cuceb* engages distinctive sources and stories all underscoring that are part of the mythological narratives.

In this section I argue that some of the *tun* prophecies are directly concerned with the destruction of Mayapan. These narratives explicitly use sentences from other stories, or they employ those from an original source. First, there is a puzzling entry in the Third Chumayel Chronicle, which connects to the narrative of the *Cuceb* (Roys, 1933: 140, notes 1 and 4; Edmonson, 1986: 60, note 268):

**Chumayel page 79**

*Hoo ahau pacxi u cab yahau ah ytzamal Kinich Kakmoo. y pop hol chan tumenel hunnac Ceel,*<sup>21</sup>

**Translation**

In 5 Ahau the rulers of Itzamal, Kinich Kakmoo and Pop Hol Chan were destroyed by Hunac Ceel

The mystery is the date of *Katun 5 Ahau*; in every other source, such as the other chronicles and the *katun* prophecies, the events concerning Hunac Ceel occurred in *Katun 8 Ahau* (Roys, 1933: 177-181). This anomaly, however, could be explained if there were two traditions, one which dated the events to *Katun*

<sup>21</sup> For Yucatec text I use Boot, 2005: 483.

8 *Ahau*, while the second one fixed them to *Katun 5 Ahau*. There are many hints for this in the narrative of the *Cuceb*. In several parts of the *Cuceb* we find events associated with the collapse of Mayapan, which are traditionally dated to *Katun 8 Ahau*.

In general, the ‘face’ or the aspect of *Katun 5 Ahau* in the *Cuceb*, is Mayapan. This is unique in the Chilam Balam (CB) manuscripts because the face (*u uich*) is connected to gods (or rulers) and not with places. When the fictitious *Katun 5 Ahau* ended, the *Katun* leaves Mayapan (see 13 Oc chapter above in the Example 6), alluding to these events occurring in *Katun 8 Ahau* at Mayapan.

In the first *tun* prophecy there is a line which describes the overthrow of a wall, which usually relates to Mayapan (one common epithet of the city is *ich paa* “within the walls”):

Tizimin folio 1r	Pérez page 101	Translation <sup>22</sup>
<i>tu kinyan ox mul tun tzek, pail akab<sup>23</sup> ppixich<sup>24</sup> ox hublah cot,</i>	<i>tu kinil yan ox mul tun tzek: pail akab, chhamil, ox hublah cot,</i>	At the time there will be a large mound of skulls. Vigil at dawn thrice the wall will be thrown down.

In the second *tun* prophecy, at the beginning of the narrative there is a description of talking among the people of the mountain:

Tizimin folio 1r	Pérez page 101	Translation <sup>25</sup>
<i>ual tu kinile ti u thantamba ui—yokol u suyil cab yokol ah uuc chapat</i>	<i>Tu kinile ti uthantanba uitzi, yokol u suyil cab, yokol uuc chapat</i>	At that time [the foreigners] from the hills discuss among themselves over the surrounding lands and over Ah Uuc Chapat,
<i>u—te u cuch, uucte u ppic</i>	<i>uucppel u cuch uucppel u ppic</i>	over the seven-year of tribute.

Although in the CB Tizimin *ui* appears alone, in the Pérez version *uitzi* shows up which I can reconstruct as *uitzi[l dzul]* “foreigners from the hills”. These foreigners are mentioned in the Tizimin and Pérez chronicles in *Katun 8 Ahau*: *pax ci cah mayapan tumen uitzil dzul* or “the city of Mayapan was destroyed by the

<sup>22</sup> For other translations see Barrera Vásquez and Rendón, 1948: 102; Roys, 1949: 165; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 100; Edmonson, 1982: 71.

<sup>23</sup> *Pa akab* “dawn”, from *pa* “to break, to destroy” and *akab* “night”, so its meaning is “breaking the night”.

<sup>24</sup> *Ppixich* “vela por desvelo, vigilia” (Barrera, 1980: 695).

<sup>25</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 102; Roys, 1949: 165; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 101; Edmonson, 1982: 73.

foreigners from the hills (Boot, 2005: 487). In the *Cuceb*, the winners of the battle discuss the lands and the tribute (*cuch* is in burden and *ppic* is also), as well as the captives whom later they sacrifice to Uuc Chapat, the mouth of the monster who controls the gate of the Underworld.

In the tenth *tun* prophecy, at the end of a rather long narrative, there is a story of the destruction of Mayapan by the Xiu family containing metaphorical expressions and puns:

[	Pérez pages 106-107	Translation <sup>26</sup>
<i>ti emon u cuch uitz, yokol may cuy</i>	<i>ti eman u cuch uitz yokol may zuy.</i> <sup>27</sup>	The burden of the hills will descend over Maya Cuzamil.
<i>uai uhom mayan, tu may ceeh, tu xau cutz mani,</i>	<i>uay uchan mayapan, tu may ceeh, tu xau cutz manii</i>	It will occur in Mayapan from the deer hoofs and turkey claws of Mani.
<i>uai u man uay yuchul,</i>	<i>uay u manel<sup>28</sup> tulacale: uay u yuchul u dzoc lae,</i>	Here is the passing of all things; it would occur to finish [the <i>katun</i> ].
<i>u yokot chac dzidzib, chac tum pilix<sup>29</sup>, tu may actun,</i>	<i>lay u katunil ca bin okotnac chac dzidzib lae yetel chactun ppilix, tu may actun:</i>	In this <i>katun</i> the red parrot and the cardinal dance at [i. e. <i>katun</i> ] stone table,
<i>lai uaan tan chakan,</i>	<i>lau u uaan tan chakan,</i>	which is set up erect in the savanna.
	<i>ti u yuchul uale yoklal lay u chhichhilob. U mut halach uinicob,</i>	There it would occur because these are the birds, the augury of the rulers.
	<i>lay ca bin babal zithnac yxuixum u chhichh ahau</i>	The <i>yaxum</i> birds, the birds of the ruler shall hop about.
	<i>u dzoctu than buluc am lay montesumae</i>	It is fulfillment of the command of Buluc-Am Montesuma,
	<i>uayi u dzoc tu may ceeh,</i>	it is fulfillment of the deer hoofs.

<sup>26</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 109-110; Roys, 1949: 171; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 107; Edmonson, 1982: 88-89.

<sup>27</sup> For *may zuy* as Maya Cuzamil see Bíró, 2012. From the various contexts, this particular combination of toponyms may refer, as a literary formula, to the Yucatan peninsula, or the former territories of Mayapan naming the center and the easternmost boundary of this realm.

<sup>28</sup> Manel “pasar, exceder” (Barrera, 1980: 493), máan “pass by, move” (Bricker, 1998: 179).

<sup>29</sup> For the identification of the two birds see Roys, 1949: 171.

<p><i>uaye u manel tulacale caix bin</i> <i>u yalahob manii</i></p> <p><i>uaye u cahal ah itzaob. Alab-</i> <i>tiob tumenel he montesumae.</i></p> <p><i>U tunil ah ytzaob tu-/ menel</i> <i>ah buluc am u kaba,</i></p>	<p><i>u chom ti to tu katunil, bini tu</i> <i>ual uchom, tumen lai u katunil bini</i>  <i>ca uchi hapai canil,</i></p>	<p>Here passes everything and they will say “it passed to the town of the Itza”. Montesuma said it them, the year for the Itza, therefore they called it Ah Buluc Am.</p> <p>It shall occur, still is its <i>katun</i>, it would come to pass because this is its <i>katun</i>, when happened with Hapai Can.</p>
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This very complex story describes the collapse of Mayapan and Itza cities. While the Pérez version is longer than that of the Tizimin, this text might be interpolated with the original narrative remaining in the Tizimin version. The text begins with the descending of the burden from the hills to Maya Cuzamil, a toponym which may refer to the polity of Mayapan in the 15th century. The “burden from the hills” is associated with the Puuc region and with the Xiu family who rebelled against the power of the Cocom dynasty as Landa noted in his *Relación* (Tozzer, 1941: 31-39). The next line mentions that the burden falls over Mayapan from the deer hoofs and turkey claws of Mani. Although “the deer-and-turkey” is the name of Yucatán in Landa, it is curious that in this particular part of the *Cuceb* is connected to Mani, the capital of the Xiu after they left Mayapan. A relevant key in understanding this sentence can be found in the Xiu family tree, from the Xiu Chronicle. On the bottom of the image (Restall, 1998: 145) there is a bowl with burning deer hoofs (*may ceeh*) which can represent the Xiu family and the ancestor Hun Uitzil Chac or One Hilly Chac. It is obvious that the place name of Mani in this context is anachronistic because the town was founded after the abandonment of Mayapan.

The next part of the narrative depicts the birds of the king as the animal augury: here there is a pun *mut*’s meanings are “bird” and “augury” (Barrera, 1980: 542). The next line there is a corrupt word (*yxuixum*) which Barrera Vásquez and Rendón (1948: v109) reconstructed as *yaxum* or “cotinga” a turquoise bird which in Classic Nahuatl is *xuihtototl*, or Tutul Xiu. Whatever the significance of this section is, it certainly symbolizes the Xiu family.

Next, we find a story within the story where the scribe creates an ethnic etymology of Mani, which according to him is derived from the perfective aspect of *mani* “it passed” or “it is past” (Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 107, note 154). In these passages are mentioned the names of Montesuma and Buluc Am (11 Spider) which appear in another part of the Pérez manuscript (Craine and Reindorp,

1979: 127). Note that in the latter text the scribe begins with the date of the 10th of May 1756 and follows by discussing the fragmented *katun*-wheel. The first wheel is *Katun 8 Ahau* which tells the plotting of Hunac Ceel against Chac Xib Chac of Chichen Itza. Similar to the section of the *Cuceb*, the author highlights that Montezuma and Buluc Am foresaw the events and also the Aztec emperor said it to the Itza. It is highly likely that this is a fictitious narrative invented by the Yucatec people in the 18th century. Nevertheless, the text shows the link between the *Cuceb*'s presentation of the past and the later pieces of the story. The two last lines of the *Cuceb* tale finish introducing Hapai Can, the "Sucking Serpent", from the famous storyline of *Katun 8 Ahau*. Hapai Can plays a prominent role in the *Katun 8 Ahau* of the fragmented third *katun*-wheel (Roys, 1962: 80) with his arrival to Izamal, and also the ruler fed his children to him (presumably meaning sacrifice).

After examining the narrative of the 10th *tun* of the *Cuceb*, I believe this to be strong evidence that it is describing the fateful events which took place in *Katun 8 Ahau*, albeit here they are associated with *Katun 5 Ahau*.

The first *katun*-wheel in Pérez version has a peculiar feature, namely that each *katun* prophecy contains a year list table which corresponds the Christian year and its correction (Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 157). In three *Katuns* (*Katun 8 Ahau*, *Katun 11 Ahau* and *Katun 9 Ahau*) there are historical events associated with specific years. In 13 Muluc of *Katun 8 Ahau* there is an entry which describes the rebellion in Mayapan (Roys, 1962: 78).

**Pérez page 153**

*Oxlahunil Muluc: Uchici puchhtun ichpa tu uu-cppl u uaxac ahau*

**Translation**

13 Muluc was when throwing stones occurred within the fortress. This was in the 7 [year] of [Katun] 8 Ahau.

This event also appears in the *katun* chronicles (First Chumayel Chronicle and the Tizimin Chronicle) in *Katun 8 Ahau*. If we check the year of 13 Muluc in the *Cuceb* we find an intriguing entry right at the beginning of the prophecy:

**Tizimin folio 4v**

*ca bin emom pope, emom dzame, yoxlahun pis katun uale*

**Pérez page 109**

*ca bin emom pope, emom dzame tu yoxlahun dzit katun uale*

**Translation<sup>30</sup>**

Then the mat shall descend, the throne shall descend in the thirteenth year of the *katun*.

*tu kinil multepal*

*tu kinil multepal*

In the time of the assembly of the kings.

<sup>30</sup> Barrera and Rendón, 1948: 113; Roys, 1949: 173; Craine and Reindorp, 1979: 109; Edmonson, 1982: 95.



Recently, Tsubasa Okoshi (2018) has convincingly explained the meaning of *mul tepal* as an “assembly of the kings/nobles”, which actually shows up in Landa in Spanish:

Que entre los sucesores de la casa Cocomina hubo uno muy orgulloso, imitador de Cocom, y que éste hizo otra liga con los de Tabasco, y que metió más mexicanos dentro de la ciudad, y que comenzó a tiranizar y hacer esclavos a la gente menuda y que por esto *se juntaron los señores (multepal) a la parte de Tutuxiu*, el cual era gran republicano como sus antepasados, y que concertaron de matar a Cocom, y que así lo hicieron, matando también a todos sus hijos, sin dejar más que uno que estaba ausente (Landa, 1938: 17, cited by Okoshi, 2018: 912).

If we view the full entry for relevant passages of *Katun 8 Ahau* in the First Chumayel Chronicle, then we see that the entry of 13 Muluc in the first *katun*-wheel in Pérez is part of the full description of the siege of Mayapan:

#### Chumayel page 76

*Vaxac ahau. uch ci pucch tun. ychpaa: maya pan. tumen u pach paa.*

*u paah tu lum: tumen multepal ych ca mayapan lae*

#### Translation

In 8 Ahau it occurred the **throwing of stones within the fortress** of Mayapan because of the outsiders of the wall;

[it occurred] the destruction of the fortification because of **the assembly of the kings**.

It is also intriguing that the 13 Muluc year events are registered in different years, dated to the 7th *tun* of 8 Ahau, while in the *Cuceb* they are dated to the 13th *tun* of 5 Ahau, while in another chronicle they put it in the 10th *tun* of 8 Ahau. I can say then that while the 13 Muluc year and the events were not changed, the scribes associated them with different *katuns* and different countings of the year. Nevertheless, this part of the *Cuceb* uses the occurrences of *Katun 8 Ahau* to make its prophecy.

## Conclusion

David Bolles (2010: 97) speculated that

The *Cuceb* is a series of year prognostications. It is probably incomplete, as there should be 52 years with their prognostications instead of the 21 listed here. The 22nd year given in the *Cuceb*, 8 Muluc, does not have a prognostication, but rather is a statement by Ah Kaul Chel that he, along with Ah Na Puc Tun and Ah Xupan Nauat, is responsible for “taking this out of the hieroglyphs” (line C560). (See Section J for more on these three men.) Fifty-two years would make a complete cycle of *u bubukilhaaboob* (see table on lines A440-475) and would be more in keeping with the name *Cuceb* and the nature of all the other prognosticatory material presented

by the Colonial sources. On lines C566-568 Ah Kauil Chel writes that he wrote the Cuceb with Ah Na Puc Tun in the Mayan date of 18 Zac 11 Chuen, which he equates with the Christian date of February 15, 1544. This Mayan date of 18 Zac 11 Chuen happens only in the year 2 Hiix when the year bearer set is Kan, Muluc, Hiix, Cauac. The year 2 Hiix did fall in the Christian years 1543-1544 if one assumes the Colonial method of dating, but it also fell in the years 1595-1596 which is the year in which the “Prologue to the Cuceb” was written. While the following thought is just speculation on the compiler’s part, it could well be that the Cuceb was in fact originally written in 1544 in hieroglyphs and then renewed on its anniversary date 52 years later in 1596, but this time in Latin script.

If we can accept provisionally this suggestion (below), then we can try to count the wheel of 52-year back:

1st wheel	1596-1544
2nd wheel	1544-1492
3rd wheel	1492-1440
4th wheel	1440-1388

The 52-year 3rd wheel almost matches the date of the 20-year *katun* wheel of *Katun 8 Ahau*, which lasted from 1441 to 1461. I am unsure why the scribe used this particular count and dated 5 Ahau from 1593 to 1614, but he employed a tradition in which the collapse of Mayapan dated to *Katun 5 Ahau*. The *Cuceb* then recounted, in part, events from *Katun 8 Ahau* - apart from kennings and descriptions of occurrences which can connect to hieroglyphic sources. Other events come from the Colonial period, such as changing the clothes from Maya garb to Christian garb, or the explicit mention of Spanish people as white men. Although, I believe, as Gunsenheimer has argued convincingly, that the *Cuceb* was written later than 1544, I also believe that parts of this story were already written up in the Pre-Columbian era. If this is true, then it is a 52-year wheel prophecy that contains events that occurred between 1440 and 1596 written in clever ways of the age of lore of the *katun* literature.

In this paper I addressed some of the many metaphors or *difrasismos* and I also try to explain the intertextuality remaining in the narrative of the *Cuceb*, the only text in the Chilam Balam which focuses on the year-by-year (or *tun*) prophecies. Indeed, in the hieroglyphic Paris Codex there is a *tun*-prophecy, from pages 2 to 14, located above the *katun*-prophecy. According to Bricker and Bricker (2011) the scribes who made the codex copied a *katun*-prophecy from the early 8th century and it is also possible that the *tun*-prophecy originated from the same era. Some *difrasismos* truly came from the Classic Period literature (for example in the 4th *tun*: *elom u uich tu cab tu chhenil* “they will be burned the faces of the earth, of the wells”, i.e. the cities will be burned). The *Cuceb*, to a certain extent, is a past narrative of the Classic Period, though it was updated to the 16th and the 17th centuries.

There are many more intriguing metaphors and gods for future scholars to address here. With our increasing knowledge of the Classic Period inscriptions, perhaps they will continue with what I have unraveled here, revealing more secrets of this wonderful Yucatec text.

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