

THE SIRENS AND OTHER TEXTS IN NAHUAT

ARCH MCKINLAY

Heraclio Oropeza dictated the following folk beliefs to Mr. McKinlay in 1942-1946 in Xalacapan, Pue.

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SWATEYOMEH

Kihtoah (que) onkaken swateyomeh; kihtoah tapakah teč in wei at; senkis istakeh, wan nin'on kintamilia teč ninmečkečtah so ninkočko, wan čonmahkawtoken; wan kihtoah sa mokikinačah, wan sa mowewečkitiah; wan kihtoah makohkoyoktikeh wan masesepahtikeh, wan no kihtoah (que) keman kitah se takat, kitohtokah; kinekih kikičkiskeh; kinekih se pili; wan in takat kimačilia wei ya ničontekon, wan noči sisipoltia; wan no kitah ehakaiško nehnemihin

SIRENS

They say that there are "swateyomeh"; they say they wash at the river; they are white all over, and their hand comes to an end on them at their kneepits or their ankles; and they say that chat among themselves a lot, and make each other laugh a lot; and they say they have holes in their hands and their hands are cold to touch, and they also say that, when they see a man, they chase him; they want to catch him; they want a baby; and the man feels his head getting big, and all his hair stands on end; — and they also see the swateyot going through the air; and she also cries

swateyot; wan no čoka mah ya se siwat; čoka in swateyot teč in we at; kitemoa nipili; ačto katka yek siwat; ihk on mokepak swateyot; ihk on yolčičik katka, wan kiatamotak nipili.

ICHCAMEH

Amo nikelnamiki toni mešti kinšimah in ičkameh; keman nokta tohmiohkeh ya, ihko ak kinšimah; ohpa teč in šiwit kinšimah; keman kinkištiliah in tohmit, čawak wan sasaltik; kimateololah in tohmit, wan ihk on mokawa mateololiwtok ne tohmit; kwakah teč in wei at, wan kikwih se takot, wan kwihwitekih in tohmit; wan kimasakwaloah kwali, wan kitaliliah in ahmol; niman kišsowah ya, mah waki; keman waik ya, kimapočinah ya, wan niman kimatetsiloah ika

like a woman; the swateyot cries at the river; she looks for her baby; before she was (a) real woman; thus she turned into a swateyot; because she was hardhearted (heart-bitter), and she threw her baby into the water.

SHEARING TIME

I do not remember what month they shear the sheep; when they are very wooly, then they shear them; twice in the year they shear them; when they take the wool from them, it is greasy and sticky; they roll up the wool (fleeces), and thus it stands in balls (rolls, piles); they take it to the river, and take (get) a stick, and beat the wool; and they rub it with their hands well, and put amole on it; then they spread it out to dry; when it is dry, they comb it, and spin it by hand with "the dish and stick"; and the thread

malakat; wan mokawa in tetsilol teč nimeč in malakat, wan niman kitetekwinoah.

SE TORO

Ihk on se kimiktis se toro; ačto kikwailpiah ičintan se kwowit; niman kimečihilpiah ya; wan niman kiti-lanah ke se wei mekat, wan ihk on kitamotah ya, wan weči: niman kiškwohtomah, wan kikečtetsiloah, wan kipiah teč nicuernos wan teč nikwitapil; wan ihk on čikawak kitatakatssoah ka mekat, wan kimečilpiah, wan kimailpiah; kisenoločmečihilpiah, wan niman kikečhko-

stays in the leg of the "malacate", and then they roll it into a ball.¹

KILLING THE BULL

This is the way one kills a bull; first they tie its head close to a tree; then they tie its feet round and round; and then they pull it with a big rope, and thus they throw it, and it falls; then they untie its head (from the tree), and twist its neck, and they bind it at the horns and at the tail; and this way they arch its back tight with a rope, and they tie its hind legs, and they tie its front legs; they tie all its feet

¹ The Indians clip their sheep, when it is warm enough in the spring; usually they can begin in April. They clip the sheep again, when they are wooly again.

The winter months bring much fog, mist, rain and chilly wheather; often the sky is overcast for two weeks at a time; in the months of December and January there is a morning frost as many as 15 times. Every Indian man has a wool "coton" koton, a square wool blanket with its neck hole "nikec." The women who are undisturbed by the fashions and modes of the outside world wear all wool skirts, of black, brown or navy blue.

Naturally much wool is used to make blankets and skirts; there are enough Indian weavers to supply the demand; they also make enough blankets to have a surplus to sell at market to buyers.

A simple square blanket without a complicated design that would take the weaver's time cost 6 to 8 pesos; for a fancy blanket, a white one, one with pretty design, a larger one that reaches the elbows, and contains more wool, the Indian will get 15 pesos.

wakiah ka se cuchillo; wan niman keman kikištilih in cuchillo, mochorrohkeſa in esti, wan kičiyah in esti ka se bote; wan niman noči kitohtomah ya; wan niman kimehmelawah, wan kiahkeſtitekah, wan ihko ak kiſelowah ya, wan niman keman kiſelowah ya, kištilih nimenudo, wan kištilih nikeswan wan nimawan, wan noči ihk' on kitehtekih; kači patiyoh nikwetaſyo wan amo ninakayo; tiwehkawkeh ya.

IN SINTI

Keman kitamikalakiah in sinti, kwalkwih, wan kihitah se awakwowit, ten kipiya ome so eyi sinti; yehwa nohon kilwičiwiliah, wan kitakentiah ka miak ſočit; monoſa in viuda.

together, and then they cut it in the neck, and as soon as they take the knife out of it, the blood gushes out (from the arteries), and they catch the blood in a vessel, and they completely untie it; and then they straighten it out, and pull its head up and back, and then they skin it, and then when they skin it, they take out the entrails, and they take away its hind quarters and its front quarters, and thus they cut it all up in pieces; the skin is dearer than its meat; we have taken a long time (telling the story).

CORN HARVEST

When they finish bringing in the ripe corn, they carry it to the house, and they pick out a corn stalk that has two or three ears of ripe corn; for that one they make a fiesta, and adorn (clothe) it with many flowers; it is called the "widow."

IN TONALTZIN

Investigator: "Toni kičiwah yehwan ten kimowistiliah in tonalč'in?"

Informant: "Nikan simi amo miakeh kimowistiliah; sekin sa."

Inv.: "Toni kičiwah?"

Inf.: "Kičiwah se cruz ka ninmahpilwan, wan motio-čiwah niniskwako, wan tečnintenoh, wan teč ninelpan, wan niman kitennamikih ninmahpilwan."

Inv.: "Kan ika moiškepah?"

Inf.: "Moiškepah kamp' ika kistiwič in tonalč'in; sayoj 'n okyepá."

Inv.: "Ok seko kipiayah oraciones."

Inf.: "Nikan kihtoah:

'Mah Dios nečpalewi.'

'Mah amo tei nečpasaro.'

THE SUN

Investigator: "What do those do who worship the sun?"

Informant: "Here very few worship it; just some."

Inv.: "What do they do?"

Inf.: "They make a cross with their fingers, and bless themselves on their forehead, and on their mouth, and on their chest, and then they kiss their fingers."

Inv.: "Which way do they face?"

Inf.: "They face toward where the sun comes up; just in the morning."

Inv.: "In other parts they have prayers."

Inf.: "Here they say:

'May God help me.'

'May nothing happen to me.'

'Mah amo tei nečtekipačo.'

'Mah amo nisiowi.'

'May nothing dismay me.'

'May I not get tired.'