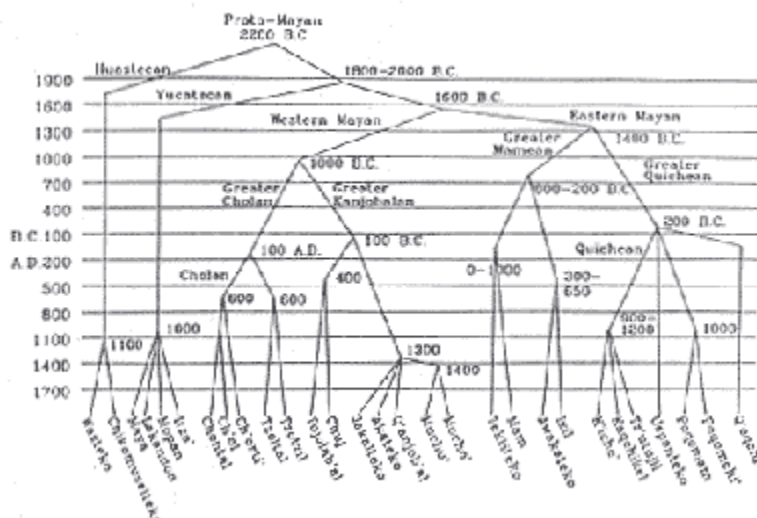


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Chol Ritual Language

with Terrence Lee Folmar, Heidi Altman, Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, and Bernardo Pérez Martínez

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Chols and the Chol Language

Chol is an American Indian language spoken in parts of southern México (see [Map 1](#)). The term is also used to refer to its speakers, about 100,000 corn farmers living in the tropical lowlands and adjacent uplands of the state of Chiapas. The name is often said to derive from the term **chol** 'agricultural field', but since the dialect variant **ch'ol** (with glottalized initial consonant) also exists for the name of the language, this etymology can be questioned. Speakers refer to the language as **lak t'an** 'our language'. In Colonial documents, Chol populations living along the Usumacinta River valley were identified as Palencanos (near Palenque, Chiapas), Pochutlas and Topiltepeques (in the middle Usumacinta River region), and Lacandones (near the mouth of the Lacantún River). The latter term now refers to Yucatecan-speaking Indians who moved into the region after Chol resettlement during the sixteenth century.

The Chols currently occupy a continuous area in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, and adjacent parts of the state of Tabasco. Population is concentrated in the **municipios** (county-like political subdivisions of the state) of Tila, Tumbalá, Salto de Agua, Yajalón, Palenque, and Sabanilla, and has expanded in modern times into jungle areas to the east (in the Usumacinta drainage lowlands east of Ocosingo). The great majority of Chols live in small rural settlements, but a few urban centers are dominated by Chol populations, notably Tila, Tumbalá and Salto de Agua.

Census figures for 1980, by municipio (Valdez and Menéndez 1987), give an indication of the major concentrations of Chol speakers: in Tila, some 26,000 Chol speakers among 35,000 residents; Salto de Agua, 16,000 residents, almost all Chol speakers; Tumbalá, 12,000 Chols of 16,000 residents; Palenque, 13,000 Chols, 35,000 residents; Sabanilla, 8,000 Chols, 12,000 residents; Yajalón, 5,000 Chols, 10,000 residents. Allowing for some under-counting in the census, the Chol-speaking population numbers about 100,000.



Map 1. The Maya Area, from J. E. S. Thompson, 1960, Figure 1.

The Linguistic Affiliation of Chol

Chol is a member of the Mayan family of languages, a family which currently has about 30 languages located in southern México, Belize and Guatemala (as well as sizeable refugee populations in the United States and elsewhere). [Figure 1](#) presents a genetic tree model of the Mayan family, with dates of separation between branches. Within this family, Chol belongs to the Western branch (as opposed to the Huastecan, Yucatecan, and Eastern branches), and within Western Mayan, Chol belongs to the Greater Cholan subdivision (as opposed to the Greater Kanjobalan subdivision). The two components of Greater Cholan are Tzeltalan (Tzeltal and Tzotzil) and Cholan proper (Chol, Chontal and Chortí). Cholan proper includes a Western Cholan branch, consisting of Chontal and Chol, and an Eastern branch, consisting of Chortí (and its Colonial ancestor, Cholti).

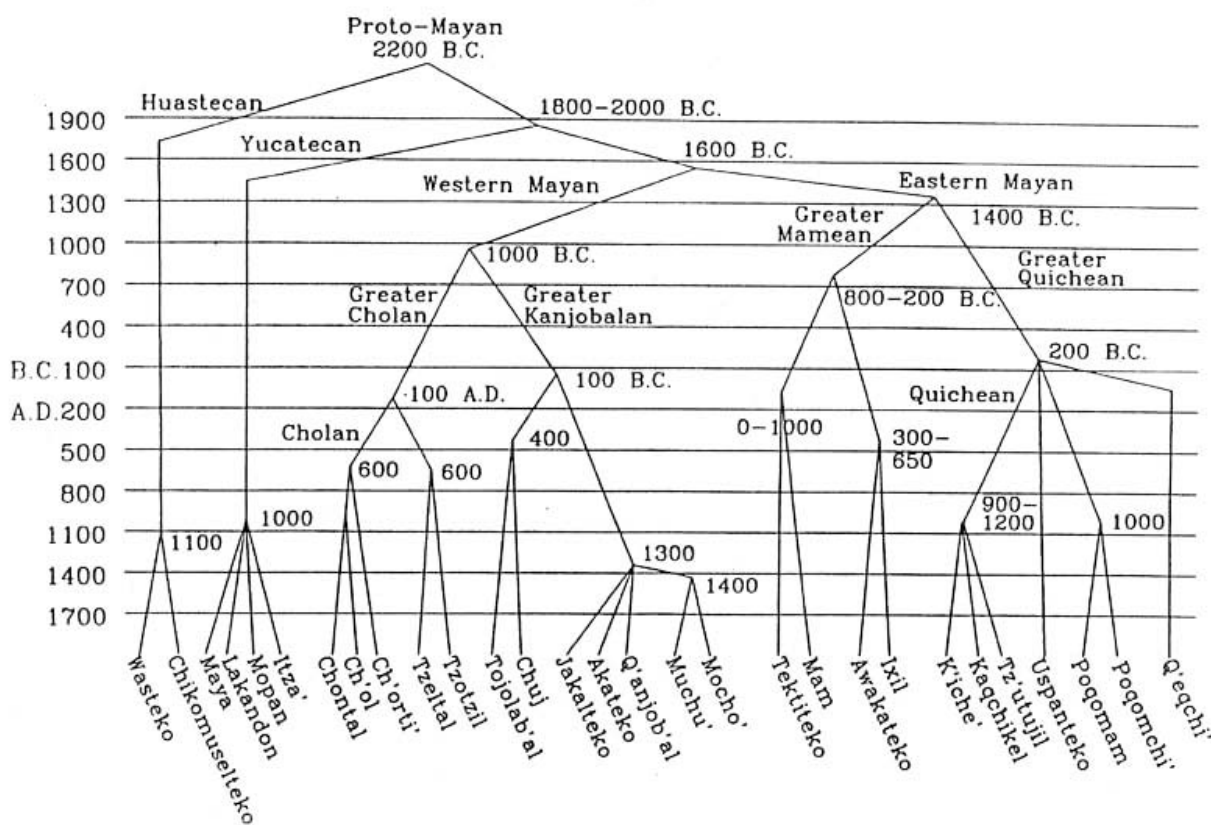


Figure 1. A Family Tree of Mayan Languages.

Within Chol itself, there are two major dialect areas, one including Tila and Sabanilla (and their lowland colonies), the other including Tumbalá and Salto de Agua (and their colonies). These are referred to in the literature as the Tila (or Western) dialect and the Tumbalá (or Eastern) dialect. There is a high degree of intelligibility between the

varieties, but notable differences in lexicon and verbal tense-aspect marking occur. The origin of lowland agricultural colonies can usually be discerned from the local variety of Chol, although some dialect mixing has taken place in pioneer settlements.

The close relationship of Chol to the language transcribed in the Maya Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions (A.D. 300 to 900) was noted by J. Eric S. Thompson (1938, 1960: 16) and Sylvanus Morley (1946). More recently, linguistic analysis of the hieroglyphic texts has confirmed this relationship (Josserand 1995; Josserand, Schele and Hopkins 1985). Although the verbal morphology of Classic Cholan does not match exactly that reconstructed for proto-Cholan on the basis of comparison of modern languages (Kaufman and Norman 1984), the most recent models for hieroglyphic grammar are remarkably similar (Josserand 1995; Josserand and Hopkins, n.d.). The relatively few differences are to be expected if the 1000-year old written materials record the speech of an educated elite, while the modern languages derive from vernaculars.

Earlier stages of Cholan (Josserand 1975) were influenced by the Mixe-Zoquean languages associated with the Olmec civilization of the Gulf Coast to the west of the southern Maya lowlands. This influence is seen principally in loan words in Chol, and in religious concepts and sociopolitical patterns characteristic of Classic culture. By the beginning of the Classic period, Cholan Proper had become distinct from its closest relation, the immediate ancestor of Tzotzil and Tzeltal, located to the south of the Cholans, in the Chiapas highlands. During the Classic Period (A.D. 300 to 900), as Classic culture spread throughout the Maya world, loan words and other linguistic features spread from Cholan to all adjacent Mayan languages, especially to Yucatec, whose population the Chols had overrun when they entered the lowlands of the Peninsula during the Late Preclassic. Because of this intimate cultural and linguistic interaction, all varieties of Cholan reflect influence from Yucatecan Mayan languages, and most scholars accept some version of a model of bilingual Classic society, with Chol serving the functions of the High, or literary, language at most or all Classic sites. Despite its importance for understanding Classic Maya culture and deciphering the Classic inscriptions, there is still a need for basic documentation of Chol, especially for terminology related to cosmology and ritual spheres of action.

History and Cultural Relations

Cholan once occupied most of the lowland areas from the Grijalva River on the west to the Motagua River on the east, including the southern (riverine) half of the Yucatán Peninsula, a distribution virtually matched by that of Classic Maya monumental inscriptions. The urban centers of this civilization were abandoned with the still unexplained fall of the Classic Maya around the tenth century. Considerable population apparently survived in small agricultural settlements until the sixteenth century, when they were decimated by diseases and other results of Spanish colonialism.

At the end of the sixteenth century, Chol settlements were located along the Usumacinta River and its lowland tributaries, from northern Guatemala (Alta Verapaz, where the Eastern Cholan language, Choltí, was spoken) to the Gulf Coast (Tabasco, where the majority of Indian population was Chontal rather than Chol) (Thompson 1938). Chols were called by many local names, including Lacandón, a name taken from the Lacantún River and later applied to immigrant Yucatecans. These lowland Chol settlements resisted Spanish incursions, including missionary activity, and carried out raids on highland areas pacified and controlled by the Spanish crown. As a consequence, they were subjected to a 100-year military effort (1590-1690) that conquered and resettled Chols area by area, beginning with the lower Usumacinta and Tulijá River areas, and proceeding upriver in successive campaigns that concluded with the conquest of the Mopán and Itzá Maya, east of the Chols (de Vos 1980).

Chol populations that survived pacification were resettled among highland Maya Indians along the border of the conquered lowlands, including Palenque (founded by Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada to house resettled Chols), Tila, Tumbalá, and Bachajón, in Chiapas, and Retalhuleu, in Guatemala. Of these, the only Chol populations to survive into the twentieth century were those that had been resettled in the Tila and Tumbalá areas. Chol speakers either assimilated or otherwise disappeared in all other areas, while distinct dialects of Chol began to develop in Tila and Tumbalá. While "Palenque Chol" is mentioned in the literature, all evidence indicates the language is that of Tumbalá immigrants, and no separate Palenque dialect has been attested. In the late Colonial period, Salto de Agua was founded by Chols who had colonized the Tulijá River valley from the highland towns, principally Tumbalá.

John Lloyd Stephens, an American explorer who passed through the Tumbalá area in 1840, remarked that the Indians there lived in essentially aboriginal conditions, with little sign of Spanish influence (Stephens 1841). But by the middle of the nineteenth century German and North American interests began to found coffee plantations in the northern Chiapas Highlands, and incorporated Chols in a system of debt peonage that effectively replaced traditional social organization outside of the towns of Tila and Tumbalá. This debt peonage system gradually disappeared after the Mexican Revolution in the early twentieth century, and Chols eventually gained control of many coffee plantations through land reform during the 1930s, under the administration of President Lázaro Cárdenas (Villa Rojas 1969). These lands became the first dozen or so Chol **ejidos** (federally-sanctioned collective farms).

Despite its potential interest to Maya studies, especially the Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions, the Chol area was bypassed by the anthropological projects that have so extensively documented Tzotzil and Tzeltal cultures to the immediate south (Vogt 1969, 1976, 1994; McQuown and Pitt-Rivers 1970). A sketch of Chol ethnography for the Handbook of Middle American Indians (Villa Rojas 1969) filled only three pages, and could cite virtually no modern ethnographic sources, a situation that remains unchanged (Hopkins 1995).

About 1960, a major new development took place when the federal government authorized expansion of highland populations into lowland jungle areas left essentially

unpopulated since the seventeenth century. Hundreds of new settlements have resulted, as groups organize and petition for lands under the ejido system, and the population expansion has taken Chols back to virtually all of the Mexican territory their ancestors occupied before the sixteenth century.

Chol Settlements

The major urban settlements occupied by Chol speakers are indicated by the census figures cited previously: Tila, Tumbalá, Salto de Agua and Palenque; however, these are to some extent dominated by their Ladino (non-Indian) populations. Palenque is not only a major tourist destination because of the Classic ruins nearby, but the center of a coastal plain cattle industry, and its Chol population lives for the most part outside the urban center. Salto de Agua has a smaller ladino population, and has long been a major commercial center for lowland Chols. It is located strategically on the Tulijá River at the fall line, and handles cargo by boat from the Gulf and by rail via the Southeastern Railway (connecting Mérida to México City). Tila is the most conservative of these towns, both in its Ladino and its Indian cultures.

Tumbalá and Salto de Agua were centers of the nineteenth century foreign-dominated coffee industry, and have thus lost many of their traditional institutions. The center of a religious cult which continues a Pre-Columbian tradition (Pérez Chacón 1988), Tila is at once the most urban of the Chol settlements and the most conservative, retaining social institutions and customs long since lost by other centers (such as religious fraternities and symbolic public performances called "dances"). Tumbalá also retains some of these institutions (Meneses López 1986), but has undergone greater acculturation because of modern Catholic and Protestant missionization.

The great majority of Chols live outside these urban centers, in smaller agricultural settlements. The older of these are located in the municipios of Tila, Tumbalá, and Sabanilla. The designation of these settlements as **colonias** 'colonies', reflects their status as political and economic satellites of the towns. More recent agricultural settlements are the result of land reform under the ejido 'collective farm' system. The earliest ejidos are also located in the highlands surrounding Tila and Tumbalá, as well as along the adjacent stretches of the Tulijá River valley; many were the result of redistribution of foreign-held coffee plantation lands after the Mexican Revolution. Beginning about 1960, a new wave of ejidos carried Chols from the highlands to the unoccupied jungle lowlands further east, and hundreds of these communities have since carved out space for themselves as far as the Guatemalan border and up the Usumacinta River to the mouth of the Lacantún River.

Ejido settlements tend to be small, as the laws governing land reform specify exactly how many heads of family will have land rights, and restrict inheritance thereafter to only one son; land-poor younger sons are the major factor in the formation of new ejidos. As a consequence, these new ejido settlements also tend to be peculiar demographically, as they are founded by young generation mates and initially have few

elders. By the same token, they are innovative socially, and little traditional life survives in the lowland ejidos. For instance, a great majority are dominated by Protestant sects, in contrast to the well-entrenched Catholicism of the highlands; Biblical place names like Jerusalén and Babilonia (Jerusalem and Babylon) are characteristic of Protestant ejidos, rather than saints' names like Santa María and San Miguel (Saint Mary, Saint Michael) or Chol place names (Tiemopá, Joloniél). Though most ejidos have more than one church, and many include both Catholic and various Protestant groups, usually one church predominates in the social life of the settlement.

Economy of the Chol Region

There is considerable diversity to the economy of Chol settlements, although there is a strong component of subsistence agriculture based on the Mesoamerican triad of maize, beans, and squash, with the addition of manioc, chile peppers, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as tropical fruits. Cacao was produced in early Colonial times, but was replaced by coffee. Nineteenth and early twentieth century plantations also produced cattle, mahogany and other tropical hardwoods, rubber, and vanilla. Commercial agriculture is now centered on coffee production, although low market values have recently resulted in the destruction of established coffee plantations and their replacement by maize and other crops.

The economy of the ejidos varies widely, as each settlement struggles independently to develop its own locale. Some ejidos are strictly subsistence farmers; others have developed a variety of cash crops, including not only coffee, but cacao and fruit trees. Farming of produce for local markets is poorly developed; Palenque, a major tourist center, buys its vegetables from large-scale distributors in Villahermosa, Mérida, and México City rather than depending on unreliable local supplies. Government support of cattle production often results in lands cleared for farming being converted to pasturage.

Chols are overwhelmingly agricultural, with little development of other industries. Within agriculture, most families practice subsistence farming, but there is some commercial cattle ranching, and there are still large coffee plantations which offer employment possibilities. The major regional product for outside trade is coffee, produced both in large commercial plantations and by family enterprise on smaller plots. Males do most agricultural work, women do domestic work; that is, men produce food and women process it, as in other Mayan communities.

Weaving and embroidery, once essential crafts for women, have now disappeared almost entirely, to be replaced by machine sewing; Western style dresses of brightly decorated satin-like cloth, worn with multiple strands of beads and numerous hair clips, are a hallmark of ejido Chol women.

Kinship and Family

Kinship terminology and kin-based social organization are rapidly acculturating to regional hispanic norms (bilateral kinship, with a tendency to patrilineality but no unilineal descent groups). Reconstructions of kin terms and the kinship system, based on internal Chol and external Mayan comparisons, indicate an earlier stage of Chol society which had patrilineal clans; this hypothesis is further supported by evidence from Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions (Hopkins 1988). Various forms of evidence indicate the former existence of patrilineal exogamous clans (Villa Rojas 1969: 236), but these currently survive mainly in a feeling of implied kinship and reciprocal obligation between persons of the same surname. Tila Chol still utilizes a special form for the word 'who?' **majch-ki**, which is based on the root **majch**, as in **majch-il** 'family, kinsman', suggesting that a stranger's first identification was his family affiliation.

Ethnohistorical records in Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions indicate rule normally passed to a child of the preceding (male or female) ruler, preferentially to a male heir, since the society was patrilineally based. But, as is true of England and other monarchies, women heirs occasionally interrupted the dynasties of patrilineally-related kings, potentially allowing for changes in the power structure at a particular site. But beyond doubt, patrilineal descent groups were important elements in Classic Maya political organization.

Kinship terminology of Omaha type (a particular system of patrilineal terminology) is attested for Chol, but in most communities a degree of acculturation is noted: for example, collateral terminology shifts from Omaha (parallel cousin = **äskun** 'mother's sister's son = father's brother's son = brother') to descriptive (**yalobil chich** 'child of aunt') and then is replaced by Spanish terms (**primo/prima** 'cousin'). Unacculturated terminology is structurally identical to the working Omaha system attested in the nearby Tzotzil community of Chalchihuitán, where patrilineages are maintained through sibling exchange between neighboring families (Hopkins 1969). Family units are important to and positively valued by Chols. Relations between brothers are said to be strained and competitive, while relations with cousins are friendly. Uncles are counselors and helpers; grandparents are treated with respect and are sought out for advice.

Marriage is expected to take place when both parties are about 21; the prospective groom visits the bride's parents with an older male (father or other family member) in a series of informal visits, during which gifts of food are delivered to show the boy is capable of maintaining a wife. Courtship, after tacit agreement is reached, is expected to take six months or more. Marriage is accomplished by both civil registration and religious ceremonies. Postmarital residence is usually patrilocal, but this depends greatly on individual circumstance, and the possibilities include the groom residing matrilocally and working with his father-in-law, even ultimately inheriting as if he were a son (in the absence of other sons). Residential units are nuclear family or extended family households with elder parents or recently married children added to the nuclear family. Inheritance of the homestead goes to the last child, especially if this child is male. If the last child is female, she should be unmarried to receive inheritance so that the goods remain in the same patrilineal family. Socialization of young children is by a

combination of good role models, discipline and instruction, with the expectation that positive early formation prevents later problems from happening.

Contemporary Chol Sociopolitical Organization

Ejido settlements are governed by prescribed structures (an ejido commissioner and councils), but often function more democratically, with men meeting daily for public discussions, and more formal public assemblies weekly, decisions being made by consensus. Religious authorities exercise considerable authority over community members. Highland and urban settlements have legally prescribed systems of governance under federal law (municipal authorities), balanced against a traditional "cargo" system, which now has mainly religious functions but nonetheless constitutes a political power base capable of opposing civil authority. The traditional cargo system (**ch'ujulbä 'e'tel** 'holy work') survives best in Tila, where more than 50 citizens at a time hold ritual offices for one-year terms, with responsibilities for organizing festivals, caring for sacred images, receiving petitions from and interceding on behalf of supplicants, including pilgrims from outside the community. Marriage is a prerequisite for these offices, and cargo holders' wives also have ritual obligations, as they do in other Mayan communities.

In Tila, each saint represented in the central cathedral has a **mayordomo**; four of these mayordomos are hierarchically superior to the others and carry special staffs of office; they are charged with the organization of the major festivals. Lesser mayordomos organize minor festivals. A still-lower rank of mayordomos are the **capitanes** 'captains', who bear red flags as their symbol of office. Additional ritual advisors and assistants fill out the ranks of the cargo holders. All these officials constitute the 'principal men' or **trensipal** (from Spanish **principal**). Elder men who have passed through various offices gain the status of respected elders (local Spanish **tatuches**, Chol **lak tatna'ob**, literally 'our ancestors').

In Tumbalá, religious cargos are partially merged with political offices, and include captains (organizers of saints' festivals), church caretakers, rural police, and mayordomos. Completion of a series of offices results in the status of respected elder. Ritual staffs are carried by cargo holders as well as state-sanctioned civil authorities (such as the **Presidente Municipal**, or 'mayor' of Tumbalá), and some cargo holders and the respected elders carry flags during ceremonial activities.

The political organization prescribed by federal law is the **Ayuntamiento**, headed by the Presidente Municipal. In Tila, this organization is counter-balanced by the cargo holders, on the one hand, and the official church hierarchy (bishop, priests, etc.) on the other. While there are no formal ties between these three institutions, they communicate and mediate problems informally. In Tumbalá, the state-sanctioned offices have largely replaced the political roles of cargo holders, while the strong presence of Protestants has weakened the political influence of the Catholic church hierarchy.

Apart from legal institutions introduced from outside, social control is largely through socialization and internal social control. Individuals believe they are responsible for their acts not only to others, but to the supernatural world, and that bad actions will result in illness and other forms of supernatural discipline.

Religion and Ritual Activity

There is great diversity in current religious practices and beliefs among ethnic Chols, ranging from traditional Maya-Christian syncretism of various degrees, to mainstream Catholic, to fundamentalist evangelical Protestant. In broad terms, highland urban centers (especially Tila) and older ejidos occupy the traditional end of the range, while younger ejidos lie on the evangelical end, where Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, and Pentecostal churches dominate.

Traditional syncretic Maya-Catholic beliefs, as manifested in the Chol area, have merged the Sun with Christ, and the Moon with the Virgin Mary, in accordance with Pre-Columbian mythology, where the Moon is the mother of the Sun (and an older brother who is killed by his sibling and becomes the animals). This myth is also reflected in Classic Period inscriptions (as in the texts from Palenque's Group of the Cross).

In Chol communities, verbal arts are respected, and the Chols have a rich body of traditional folktales and sacred myths, as well as skillful joking and narration of ordinary events (Whitaker and Warkentin 1965, Alejos García 1988). Creation stories involve the Moon and her sons, who account for the origin of the animals as well as agricultural practices (and symbolize conflict between male siblings). Folktales include many variants of the creation story (see also the *Popol Vuj*, sacred book of the Guatemalan Quiché Maya, parts of which are replicated in Chol stories). Other common topics are pursuit by underworld beings, transformation (people changing into animals, and vice versa), and encounters with Earth Owner, who sometimes appears in the guise of a man named Don Juan (after whom the mountain range between Palenque and Tila is named). In Chol mythology, caves are the domain of the principal earth deity (the Earth Owner of the Tzotzil and other Mayan groups), the owner of all earthly goods who must be petitioned for reasonable use of his plants and animals. The underlying philosophy is that gifts must be repaid, and that evil will turn back against its agent. Offerings in caves for success in hunting and other pursuits continue to be made (Cruz, Josserand and Hopkins 1980).

Apart from priests and pastors serving mainstream Christian churches, shamanistic curers are the principal religious practitioners. Summoned to their responsibility in dreams, curers visit caves to solidify their powers. Curing practices involve the invocation of supernatural powers, both good and evil (the latter must be controlled by the shaman and made to act positively). Petitions to supernaturals are accompanied by offerings of candles, incense, and liquor, and an essential element is the **promesa**, or "promise" made by the interlocutor, in effect a kind of contract pledging offerings and good behavior for divine assistance. Most shamans are male, but a similar position is

held by female midwives, who likewise draw their powers from the supernatural and are destined to serve from birth. Men who have held a series of ceremonial offices and become respected elders, **tatuches** 'ancestors', also serve as intercessors for petitioners to the saints.

Major illness results from souls being imprisoned by earth powers (caves, rivers, etc.). Shamans cure with a combination of spiritual and herbal treatments; curers bargain for release with prayers, offerings and threats, and treat their patients with herbs. Some illness may result from witchcraft, accomplished by pacts with the earth lord. Principal illnesses are caused by fright, envy, and wrong thoughts, all involving disharmony with the spirit world. Curing techniques range from ritual bathing, including spraying (from the mouth) or sprinkling with herbal preparations, to herbal remedies and diets, to prayers and offerings, utilizing the shaman's special relation with good or harnessed evil powers. Midwives care for pregnant women and assist in deliveries.

Death is considered to be a natural process; people must die to make room for others, and this is part of God's plan. Burial is within 24 hours, in wooden coffins, in cemeteries, with Christian rites. A wake features prayers and offerings on behalf of the soul of the departed. Gifts of food and candles are received by a designated family member of the same sex as the departed, and money, candles, and incense are ritually presented to the cadaver. The dead are recalled on All Saints' Day (October 30-November 3), when house altars are supplied with food for the dead and religious services are held in the graveyards.

The Ritual Vocabulary of Tila Chol

Most scholars believe Chol to be the modern language most closely related to the language of the Classic period cities and their elites, but Yucatec, a distantly related Mayan language, is often used as a source by epigraphers because of the quality of Colonial dictionaries and other sources of information available for Yucatec. While Yucatec is probably the language of the Post-Classic codices, and linguistic material on Yucatec is relatively abundant, Yucatec is not as relevant to interpretations of Classic culture and hieroglyphic writing as is Chol. Knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of the modern Chol language has been shown to be the most important language for the study of Classic Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions. The interpretation of many of the political and religious acts displayed on monuments, on ceramics, and on other artifacts has been possible through glyphic readings involving words whose meanings can be deciphered because cognate words are attested in Chol and other Mayan languages. Chol sources, however, are still not extensive enough to serve the needs of scholars investigating Classic life.

The specialized vocabulary of ritual activity is preserved to some extent in the modern Chol town of Tila, Chiapas. Unique among Chol-speaking communities, Tila has preserved a ritual organization that dates back to Colonial times and beyond, along with the corresponding vocabulary in Chol. For instance, the 1789 response by the priest of

Tila to a royal questionnaire (Fernández 1892; Josserand and Hopkins 1988), contains a term for ritual performance, recorded as **ak'titi**, otherwise unknown in Chol sources, which corresponds to the Classic term recently deciphered and read as **ak'ota ti** 'dances as (a deity)' by Nikolai Grube (1992). While it is inevitable that the Pre-Columbian culture has been greatly affected by syncretism with Catholicism, it is still possible to analyze vocabulary for forms and meanings that indicate earlier usages, and it is of primary importance to identify native vocabulary for the best evidence of Pre-Columbian religious beliefs and practices.

Modern Chol texts describing Tila ceremonial life (Pérez Chacón 1988) document the use of specialized Chol vocabulary in the contexts of temple ceremonies focussed on sacred images, prayers, offerings, petitions, pilgrimages, house blessings, agricultural activities, ritual performances ("dances"), cave rites, and the ritual exchanges and ceremonies associated with marriage, birth, and other life cycle events. Most of these contexts have some parallel in Classic Maya life as depicted on ceramics and other media, and one can expect considerable continuity in associated language.

The Contexts of Ritual Language Use

Tila has been a major population center of Chols from the Colonial period to modern times. Of Tila's 35,000 residents (Valdez and Menéndez 1987), the great majority speak Chol in their daily life (Attinasi 1973: 3-4). The Tila area has a Chol-dominated social life that preserves institutions formed shortly after conquest and resettlement. The Ladino, or non-Indian, component of Tila's population is quite small, a provincial urban elite of shopkeepers and landowners, plus a resident Catholic priest and several nuns. Even most of the Ladinos speak Chol fairly fluently, and while most of the town-dwelling Chols also speak Spanish, their primary language use is Chol, and the Chols who live in the colonias and ejidos are less likely to have good control of Spanish. This rare urban setting for an indigenous language offers research possibilities unmatched elsewhere.

In addition to being urban, Tila has an extensive repertoire of ceremonial life that provides contexts for the use of Chol that do not exist in other communities. The isolation of this community is about to come to an abrupt end, as a major road project will soon connect Tila directly with the Spanish-speaking Gulf coastal lowlands, a development that can be expected to have significant consequences for the sociolinguistics of what has been a very conservative, traditional, Chol-speaking community.

The modern and perhaps also Pre-Columbian importance of Tila lies in its annual pilgrimage cycle, culminating in the events of Corpus Christi week each spring. Many thousands of pilgrims, Indian and Ladino, crowd the mountaintop town, sleeping in Medieval-style pilgrim halls, patronizing the extensive commercial fair which fills downtown streets for many square blocks, and celebrating Catholic masses with mariachis after making the arduous climb up the facing mountain to an anthropomorphic

stalagmite image associated with the Pre-Columbian deity Earth Owner, and with the Catholic Christ.

The Black Christ of Tila

The Black Christ, the **Señor de Tila**, is the center of a syncretic religion that combines the Catholic Christ with the Pre-Columbian Cave God, Earth Owner. When Tila was first being missionized (sometime after A.D. 1559), a mysterious man dressed all in white appeared to guide the founders of the town to its current site atop a craggy mountain, forcing them to abandon three earlier sites as unsuitable because of swampy ground or ant nests. The townspeople finally recognized the old man as Christ, and took him as their patron saint. After the sanctuary was constructed, people from San Cristóbal de las Casas came and looted the temple, and the image of Christ took refuge in a nearby cave, where his image is preserved in the form of the anthropomorphic stalagmite, also venerated in ceremonies honoring the Black Christ. People from the Gulf Coast state of Tabasco helped restore the Señor de Tila to his church, recovered some of the lost goods, and have since come to the annual festivals in great numbers, making Tila a major pilgrimage site for southern México. Related to this mythology, the name of Tila derives from Gulf Coast Náhuatl **tilan (til-lan)** 'place of (the) black (one)', and Black Men who live in caves figure prominently in highland folklore (Blaffer 1972; we have also collected a folktale about a Black Man who lives in the wild, the **Xnek**).

It should be noted that the looting of the Señor de Tila's shrine by "people from San Cristóbal" may represent an attempt by the official Catholic hierarchy of the Colonial capital to suppress an independent center of pilgrimage. The restoration of the shrine by "people from Tabasco" reflects the adoption of Tila (under the ecclesiastical authority of the Bishop of Chiapas) as a center of worship by Gulf Coast Catholics, whose popular cults were being suppressed in the state and diocese of Tabasco (the subject of Graham Greene's 1940 novel, **The Power and the Glory**, and his 1939 travel account, **Lawless Roads**).

The pilgrimage cult of Black Christs associated with caves includes other prominent shrines, such as those at Esquipulas, in southeastern Guatemala, and at Chalma, in central México just southwest of México City. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, the sixteenth century cult of Nuestro Señor de Esquipulas was introduced into the Southwest of the United States, at a shrine in Chimayó, New Mexico (Borhegyi 1956).

The Tila Cargo System

Tila residents participate in an extensive ceremonial organization similar to the cargo systems of better-known Tzeltal and Tzotzil Maya communities to the south (Cancian 1965, Gossen 1986; Arias 1990), but virtually unique in the Chol-speaking area. Formal speech in Chol survives in Tila to an extent not found in other Chol-speaking

communities, and Chol is spoken in Tila in ritual contexts that do not exist elsewhere. A rich cycle of annual ceremonial activities includes many "dances" with associated set speeches, public performances that act out core cultural values in symbolic form (such as Jaguars in combat with Bulls, symbolizing the clash between native and hispanic cultures). Shamanic curing, cave rituals, and other less public rites also present varied contexts for formal speech. Some of these ritual contexts are to a certain extent continuations of Pre-Columbian ceremonial life. On Classic Period monuments, the display of the ruler in ritual performances is a common theme (**ak'ota** 'dancing', in the terminology of modern epigraphers), and the language of these monuments has been shown to be reflected in modern traditional narratives (Josserand, Schele and Hopkins 1985, Hopkins and Josserand 1990, Josserand 1991).

The extent of ritual activity in Tila is evidenced in the number of ritual offices and occasions on which public rituals take place. Pérez Chacón (1988: 59-76) describes a cargo system (**ch'ujulbä 'e'tel** 'holy work') that in any given year includes between 50 and 90 cargo holders, depending on how many secondary and tertiary positions are filled. The positions are hierarchically organized, the top level composed of four mayordomos who manage the cargo system, headed by the **mak yumlal** '[mayordomo of] Our Great Father', who cares for the Señor de Tila, and the **mak na'lal** '[mayordomo of] Our Great Mother', who cares for the Virgin Mary. These roles are marked symbolically by ceremonial dress: the top 25 mayordomos carry staffs of office; behind them come 15 captains, who wear red headscarfs and carry red flags to mark their office.

These office holders are each associated with a particular saint, and as a group they have the responsibilities of caring for the church and its saints, organizing public ceremonies, and receiving from supplicants petitions directed to the saints. Marriage is a necessary prerequisite for office, and women's duties and participation are essential parts of the ritual occasions. A man who has passed through a number of cargos retires as a respected elder (local Spanish **tatuch**, Chol **lak tatna'ob** 'our ancestors'). The cargo system constitutes one of the three power bases in the political life of the community, the others being the official Catholic church hierarchy (bishop and priests) and the civil government (the **Ayuntamiento Constitucional**).

The Ceremonial Calendar

Tila celebrates a round of major religious ceremonies tied to the Christian calendar but retaining elements of Pre-Columbian and Colonial beliefs and practices. The ritual calendar begins on January 6th, with nine days of ceremonial activity leading up to the festival of the Señor de Tila on the 15th, organized by the four principal mayordomos, and including masses, processions of the Black Christ and other images from the sanctuary, and ritual meals at the homes of the mayordomos. (One of the texts we recorded during 1995 fieldwork in Tila, **La Novena**, is an account of the activities during the nine days of ritual activities between the 6th and 15th of January.)

Carnaval is celebrated from the last weekend of Lent until Ash Wednesday, and is the occasion for new cargo holders to replace old ones in office. It is also the occasion for public performances of male dancers (the Black Men versus the Marías) and the ritual combat between Bulls and Jaguars (symbolizing hispanic versus indigenous cultures). As described by Pérez Chacón (1988), Tila's Carnaval performances are similar to those of the nearby Northern Tzeltal town of Bachajón, which have been documented by Becquelin-Monod and Breton (1979). The Bachajón performances constitute a five-day confrontation between cargo holders representing the town, on one side, and representing savage jungle Indians (identifiable as Lowland Chols; Breton 1984: 147), on the other. The ritual encounters include "dances" (Tzeltal **ahk'ot**) which proceed from ritual speech events (Tzeltal **pat 'o'tan**, 'greetings from the heart') to mock combat, and terminate in a ritual meal. These events have been interpreted as symbolic representations of the oppositions between culture and nature, town and jungle, civilization and savagery (Becquelin-Monod and Breton 1979: 231).

Victoria Bricker has interpreted the dance cycles of highland Chiapas as records, or historical documents, of past ethnic conflicts (Bricker 1981: 129-154). The Tila "dances" have in common with Pre-Columbian Mayan ceremonies a number of features mentioned by Kurath and Marti (1964 *passim*) and Bricker (1989): they are calendrically scheduled, focussed on particular gods, with specified offerings; public ceremonies feature processions and mass formations of the population (with expressive gestures but without intricate steps and movements), banners are carried; mock combat between opposing forces is featured, and music includes flute and drum as well as secular (non-indigenous) music. A key feature is the use of masks and costumes, for ethnic, animal and deity impersonations.

The Feast of the Holy Cross (May 1 to 4) centers around the ritual procession of the image of the Señor de Tila from the church to the cave where his stalagmite image resides, with the intercession of the elders to convey petitions (see the text **Santa Cruz**, in Appendix II).

Corpus Christi, which usually falls in June (Thursday after Trinity Sunday, the Sunday following Pentecost Sunday), is a major commercial fair, when pilgrims from all over southern México and parts of Central America come to venerate the Lord of Tila, the Black Christ, in his two apparitions, the Cave God and the crucified Christ above the sanctuary altar. They clog the streets of Tila for more than a week, while their petitions are attended by elders and mayordomos.

Rainy season begins to intensify shortly after the Corpus Christi fair, and the ceremonial cycle is mostly quiescent over the summer, during the period of heavy rains. All Saints (October 30 to November 3) is mainly a family occasion, with house altars prepared to receive the family dead. Ritual activity features special prayers and offerings in cemeteries. (Another text collected in Tila during 1995 fieldwork is **Todos Santos**, an account of the ritual behavior associated with this period.) The ceremonial year ends with the festivals of the Virgin of Guadalupe (December 12) and then Christmas, both relatively minor occasions for ritual activity.

Each of the ceremonies in the Tila ritual year is the occasion for ritual speech, as are the planning sessions which precede each occasion, the formal meetings between applicants for cargos and the principal mayordomos, and many other situations. While a few samples of prayer have been published (see especially Pérez Chacón 1988), we know of no extensive record of formal speech, although Tzotzil examples (Cancian 1965: 223-224, Gossen 1974, Arias 1990) feature coupleting and structural opposition.

In addition to this public ceremonial life, Tila, as a center of religious activity, also abounds in other, less public, contexts for formal speech. Shamanic curers, midwives, and other ritual specialists have extensive repertoires of special purpose prayers and speeches, some samples of which have been reported by Pérez Chacón (1988). Much of this ritual speech is learned, and ritual advisors or 'coaches' are an ever-present component of public life in Tila.

Many ritual activities are carried out wholly in Chol, and analysis of published samples of ritual language show the standard inventory of features for formal speech found in other Mayan languages: couplets, special foregrounding devices, and a set of rhetorical phrases and patterns of text structure. Because of their subject matter, ritual texts are heavy with the vocabulary of ritual acts, the placing of offerings and summoning of deities, the making of contracts in support of petitions, and requests for supernatural help in curing souls.

The patterns of couplets used in ritual speech also reveal underlying structural oppositions and metaphors not accessible through ordinary language study. The systematic examination of this wide range of ritually-relevant terminology should prove productive, as it will provide us with a large number of previously unattested words and phrases—with their corresponding conceptual categories—of potential interest in the interpretation of Classic Maya materials. But this is among the most difficult of areas to research; the basic data of such metaphors occur rarely in normal language, and even when detected in ritual speech, their meanings are not always apparent even to speakers of the language. Ultimately their meanings must derive from an extensive understanding of the cultural matrix in which they are used.

For the various reasons put forth above, research in Tila should provide insights into the language of Classic Maya ritual activity, and while the pilot study was limited in its scope, it was quite successful, and some preliminary contributions to understanding Chol ritual culture and vocabulary are presented in the final section of this report.

Research on Chol Ritual Vocabulary, 1995

As a first step in the systematic investigation and documentation of Chol ritual language, a pilot study was carried out in Tila during the summer of 1995, using funds granted by the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc. (FAMSI, Project 1994.018, "The Ritual Vocabulary of Tila Chol," Dr. J. Kathryn Josserand, Florida State University, Principal Investigator) and by the Council on Faculty Research Support.

Project personnel included Dr. Kathryn Josserand (Department of Anthropology, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida); Lee Folmar and Heidi Altman, research assistants (undergraduate and graduate students, respectively, at FSU); Dr. Nicholas A. Hopkins (Department of Anthropology, FSU), and Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, a native Chol speaker from Salto de Agua and long-time research associate of the principal investigator. A principal contact and informant in Tila was Maestro Bernardo Pérez Martínez, a Chol-speaking bilingual schoolteacher resident in Tila. Of the two student assistants, Lee Folmar, an undergraduate Anthropology major, is currently writing his Honors thesis on the ethno-zoological classification of animals in Chol, based on materials gathered during this project. Preliminary results of his analysis are presented in Appendix III. Heidi Altman, now in a doctoral program at the University of California, Davis, included material gathered during fieldwork in her M.A. thesis in Anthropology at Florida State University on some of the defining characteristics of myths and folktales in Chol.

Preparations

Funds were requested from FAMSI in September, 1994, to support this pilot study of ritual speech in Tila, Chiapas. Additional funding for salary support for the Principal Investigator was requested from the Committee on Faculty Research Support at Florida State University. (Additional funding for a two year project was solicited from the National Science Foundation; although this funding was not obtained, we were encouraged to reapply with changes in the proposal. For reasons discussed below, in the assessment of the field situation, this proposed research has been postponed for the time being.) Following the award of funds for the pilot study, field work was carried out during the summer of 1995, and analysis of field materials continues. Preparations for the project began in the academic year 1994-95; during two semesters (Fall, 1994 and Spring, 1995), the principal investigator directed the two future student field assistants in studies of the Chol language, with special attention to the variety of Chol spoken in the region of Tila, Chiapas.

Field Work during Summer, 1995

Field work on the language and ritual activity of Tila was carried out during the summer of 1995. The first part of May was spent in preparing for field work, and project personnel arrived in Palenque, Chiapas, May 20-21. Field work in Tila began shortly thereafter, and lasted through most of June.

The goal of the pilot field season was to collect a preliminary corpus of lexical material and supporting ethnographic data concerning the ritual activities that characterize the ceremonial cycle in Tila, Chiapas, a regionally-important pilgrimage center with an annual round of festivals that include dances and other public performances, organized and carried out by Chol residents serving in the offices of a "cargo system" of voluntary

community service. Veterans of the cargo system continue to serve pilgrims and the community as ritual advisers, ceremonial specialists, and intercessors for pilgrims to the Señor de Tila, a Black Christ of the Esquipulas tradition.

The 1995 field season was timed to coincide with the preparation and celebration of Tila's most popular festival, held around Corpus Christi, and focussed on the Señor de Tila. During this two-week long festival, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit Tila to worship in the sanctuary of the Señor de Tila, the church located on the highest peak of the town, and in the associated cave shrine on a facing mountain peak. The entire town is transformed into a street fair, most private homes are converted to inns and hostels, food stands under tin-roofed sheds appear in front of many houses, and informal taverns open in the front rooms of other houses.

This period is one of intense ritual activity, participated in by townspeople and pilgrims alike, and most office holders are in attendance at the sanctuary throughout the pilgrimage fortnight. We were able to talk to both current and past cargo holders, and were invited to attend a ritual meal in the church kitchen for several dozen **mayordomos** (upper-level cargo holders) and their wives, who were making arrangements for the festival. We interviewed other ritual participants elsewhere in Tila, and also recorded verbal descriptions of the festival activities surrounding the Señor de Tila. Additional documentation was obtained in the form of photographs and ethnographic field notes. A limited amount of recording of local music and other festival activities was carried out, and locally-produced recordings of ceremonial music were also obtained.

A significant amount of field work time was spent in the recording, transcription, checking, and translation of text materials dealing with ceremonial activities. Texts describing the major festival of the Señor de Tila (in January), the festival of the Holy Cross (in May; also associated with the Señor de Tila) and All Saint's Day (in November; associated with the ancestors) were recorded, transcribed, and prepared for presentation and analysis. One of these texts is presented here in Appendix II. Other texts collected included samples of local folklore, specifically stories of the "Black Man" or **Xnek**, a story cycle associated with this region of the Chiapas Highlands. This association is of particular interest given that the town name, Tila, is derived from the Gulf Coast Nahuatl word **tilan** 'Black (Man) place' (cognate with Classical Náhuatl **tlil-lan** 'place of black').

Lexical material on ritual activity collected from informants and from published sources during the field season was transferred to 3" x 5" slips for filing, sorting, and eventual inclusion in a lexical database. A significant amount of this vocabulary was discussed with informants in the field. Informants and published sources were also examined for the vocabulary of animal names and several other semantic domains considered to be of potential value to studies of Classic Maya culture and language. These terms were also classified and discussed with informants.

One of the project assistants, Lee Folmar, carried out an intensive examination of the ethno-zoological classification of animals, especially the classes and sub-classes of

birds, and this material will form the basis of his honors (B.A.) thesis in Anthropology in the coming year (see Appendix III). Several newly published local Mexican sources on Chol language and culture were obtained during the field season, including a simple vocabulary, and a study of agricultural vocabulary. This material will be discussed with informants and analyzed in future field sessions, along with more extensive elicitation sessions for vocabulary and texts relating to ritual life.

Additional Activities

During the field season, two trips were made to the area of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, to observe other examples of ceremonial activity in towns similar to Tila. On the weekend of May 27-28, project personnel observed the festival of change of **mayordomos** of the Virgin of Guadalupe in San Juan Chamula. Later that day, in the neighboring community of Zinacantán, we attended a **mayordomo** ritual in the chapel of Esquipulas (like the Señor de Tila, a Black Christ associated with caves). On the weekend of June 24-25, we returned to San Juan Chamula to observe the festival of the patron saint. These ceremonies involve ritual speech and group performances including dancing, exchange of staffs and other symbols of office, and the public display of ritual paraphernalia, in a context of symbolic activity that parallels that of elite protagonists seen on Classic Period monuments.

From June 20-22, some project personnel attended an international conference in México City, the meeting of the Latin American Indigenous Literatures Association, and delivered professional research papers, one of which was based in part on this research. Kathryn Josserand discussed the literary structure of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, Palenque; Nick Hopkins analyzed the text structure of the Creation text of Stela C, Quiriguá. Heidi Altman presented an analysis of evidentiality markers in modern Chol texts, based on her 1994-95 research and interviews carried out during the 1995 field work in Tila. (These markers, phrases like "they say" and "I heard," distance the speaker from the actions narrated, and are a device for marking different genres of narrative, from tales of ancient mythological times to stories of personal experiences.)

Analysis and further processing of field data was continued in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, and Palenque, Chiapas, during the end of June and until July 8, when the field work phase of the project was closed down and all materials packed for transfer to the United States. Some project personnel then attended the Tercer Congreso Internacional de Mayistas (Third International Congress of Mayanists) in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, July 10-12. Josserand and Hopkins presented a joint paper in the plenary session on Maya hieroglyphic writing, chaired by Dr. Maricela Ayala of the Centro de Estudios Mayas (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México). This session also featured Victoria Bricker (Tulane University), Linda Schele (University of Texas) and Yuri Knorozov (Institute of Sciences, Moscow); the international prominence of the latter, a pioneer epigrapher, resulted in considerable press coverage of the papers in the Mexican and local Quintana Roo newspapers.

By mid July, all members of the research team had returned to the United States, where field data continue to be analyzed.

Assessment of the Field Situation, 1995

The current situation in Tila and elsewhere in México has significant implications for the productivity and even the advisability of field research in the area at this time. Economic stress has strained the social fabric in México, and there is a general atmosphere of uncertainty and uncontrolled conflict. At the national level, a series of political events, including the assassination of high level politicians and government officials, has led to widely accepted accusations of murder, theft, and treason against the former president, whose chosen successor continues to govern.

Charges of corruption and election fraud have discredited virtually all political authority, and there is a general feeling that few if any government officials hold power legitimately, or even firmly. Violent official responses to political action and unrest have exacerbated this general atmosphere. Our overall impression throughout the summer of 1995 was that in some thirty years of field work in México—including the turbulent late 1960s—we had never felt the country to be so unsettled.

In the State of Chiapas, this general state of affairs is manifested in a special way. Since the winter of 1993, an armed insurrection has been taking place, sparked in part by changes in federal land reform laws that protect ejidos. Rebel Zapatista forces, largely composed of Mayan Indians from the ejidos, with support from the Indian communities at large, have periodically occupied numerous municipal centers, occasionally deposing local officials and destroying land and tax records. In response, federal troops have occupied strategic locations throughout the state, controlling the flow of people and goods from region to region. After two years, a resolution of this conflict is stalled in an extended series of talks.

The lack of recognized authority and the precedent of opposition to established rule have resulted in constant maneuvering for power by virtually all interest groups. In politics, factions within the ruling party, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), are opposed to one another, while the party itself is opposed by several strong opposition parties—including one, the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático), which is often openly allied with the Zapatista rebels.

The head of the Catholic church in Chiapas, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, is a champion of the Zapatista cause, and is reviled by the powerful Catholic (and Ladino) businessmen's associations of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, the seat of his bishopric. Over much of the state, local conflicts have pitted subsistence agriculturalists against cattlemen and other agricultural industrialists. For many, the conflict revives the ethnic conflict between Indian and Ladino (non-Indian, or Hispanic).

In Tila, as we learned during field work, the current conflict operates in a context of existing social divisions within the community. The city is divided into **barrios**, each

associated with a prominent extended family, e.g., the Barrio San Sebastián, associated with the Pérez family (which in turn has an association with an outlying colony to the east of Tila). There are rivalries between barrios, and within barrios there may be long-standing feuds between segments of the same kin group.

Many local conflicts were once mitigated through symbolic or ceremonial activity, including ritual combat in the annual Bull-Jaguar "dance." In recent times, the federally-supported civil authority has gained in power with respect to the leaders of traditional society, the past and present cargo holders. Symbols of the traditional community have been diminished—the civil authority has gradually removed the "dances" from the center of town to a remote colony. Civil authority has been weakened in its turn; recently, a powerful Presidente Municipal (mayor) was driven from office after killing a citizen during a peaceful demonstration. With no clear locus of social control, small conflicts have tended to become more inflamed than at other times. There is more open conflict, it is less easily resolved, and it tends to become more serious. Political parties and other pressure groups use gangs of young men to harass their opponents.

We were able to carry out the research activities we had scheduled, and local conflicts rarely affected our field work to any notable extent. Nevertheless the potential for conflict was present. Inevitably, as we established relations with some local elements, we were drawn into potential conflicts with others. The stresses of the annual fair brought some conflicts to a head, in a series of street fights in the barrio we lived in, and we removed our field team from the area earlier than we had originally planned.

Within a week of our departure, government agents seized the parish priests from two towns adjacent to Tila and deported them overnight, with a minimum of judicial procedure, to Miami. One was an Argentine who had been priest at Sabanilla for several years; the other was a Mexican-American priest who had served Yajalón for 30 years. While locally popular, both were accused by the government of unduly influencing the Indians, and were deported, along with another foreign priest serving in Bishop Ruiz' diocese, in a government move to appease the conservative Catholics in San Cristóbal who wanted to embarrass the bishop (who at that time was traveling in Europe in support of his candidacy for a Nobel Peace Prize). The priest we had dealt with in Tila, accused like his deported friends of being a liberation theologian, could not be summarily deported, since he is a Mexican citizen. But local opinion held that the priest at Tila was being given a warning through the deportation of his fellow priests.

Our assessment of the situation that prevails in Tila and more generally in México does not invite an immediate return to the field. While circumstances may change momentarily, the combination of potential conflict in the field and withering federal research dollars in the United States argue for a period of analysis of materials already in hand rather than a return to the field. The National Endowment for the Humanities, a major funder for our research in the past, suspended grant reviews in 1995 for lack of funds, and the National Science Foundation, to which we had applied for support, also was irregularly funded, and is undergoing reorganization.

While prospects for the continuation of this pilot study are dim for the immediate future, we hope and expect that the situation will improve at some later time, and that we will be able to follow up on the preliminary results of this pilot project with more extensive direct elicitation and documentation of ritual performances through audio and video recordings.

Lexical Sets in Tila's Ritual Vocabulary

Several domains of the vocabulary collected during the field season have potential for contributing to hieroglyphic decipherments by attesting lexicon that might relate to Classic Period words and phrases. Likewise, analysis of domains of lexical items—semantically related sets of terms—may contribute to the understanding of cultural practices not yet well understood. In the Chol data we have recently organized, two areas stand out as having great potential. The first is the set of titles, or terms for ceremonial offices and other named statuses; the second is the lexicon of words, phrases, metaphors, and related concepts that are associated with religious beliefs and religious activity.

Terms for Ceremonial Office

The Tila dialect of Chol reflects Tila's importance as a center of ceremonial activity. Tila Chol's ritual vocabulary includes a large number of terms related to ceremonial statuses and roles, especially the offices associated with the cargo system. These offices are hierarchically organized, and there are specific terms for the individual offices, different ranks of offices, and the duties, activities, and paraphernalia associated with the exercise of holding office. Many of these terms are, or include parts which are, borrowed from Spanish. These terms are usually derived from a provincial variety of Colonial Spanish, and they have often undergone phonological changes as they have assimilated to other, native, Chol vocabulary patterns. Other terms for ritual offices are native Chol terms; some of these exemplify lexicon or constructions which have not been previously reported, and which shed light on earlier Classic Chol culture.

According to Pérez Chacón (1988), three large groups yield effective political power in Tila: the municipal government, the official church hierarchy, and the traditional religious hierarchy associated with the cargo system, a sodality of year-long religious service to the community. The religious hierarchy includes not only the current cargoholders at any given time, but all the past office holders—the respected elders (Spanish **principales**)—as well as shamanic curers and other practitioners of traditional medicine.

Cargoholders and Related Statuses

The religious cargos are organized around the saints, and cargoholders' activities include the day-to-day care of the saint's altar and image, the celebration of the saint's festival at the appointed time, and intercession with the saint on behalf of petitioners. The cargo system itself is called **ch'ujulbä e'tel** 'holy work', and the cargoholders are referred to individually as **aj ch'ujwanaj** (sometimes recorded as **aj ch'uwanaj**) 'cargoholder', and collectively as **xch'ujwanajobä** 'those who are cargoholders'. Alternatively, they are called the **motomaj(ob)**, an early Colonial loan from Spanish **mayordomo**, that has assimilated to Chol patterns (in a series of stages that were something like **mayordomo** > **martomo** > **motomaj**).

An appreciation for the historical importance of the base term **ch'ujwanaj** requires an explanation of its etymology. The term **xch'ujwanajobä** is composed morphologically of six elements (morphemes): **x-ch'uj-wan-aj-ob-bä**. The outer layers are most easily dealt with; it begins with the collective **x-**, and ends with the plural marker **-ob** followed by the relativizer **-bä**, thus the translation, 'those who are **ch'ujwanaj**'. The central part of the word, its stem, is derived from the root **ch'uj** 'holy', and the **-aj** suffix forms a noun agent from derived verb stems. But the suffix **-wan**, which must form a verb, is not otherwise attested in modern Chol data, and it appears likely that this term is an archaic frozen form, the only word currently known that preserves this suffix. It is interesting to note that Kaufman and Norman (1984: 107) reconstruct a Proto-Cholan verbal suffix ***-wan** (from pre-Proto-Cholan ****-(a)w-an**) expressing the completive aspect of positional verbs (verbs which describe a position or state of being). This suffix is found on positional verbs in modern Chontal, Chol's nearest relative. The **-wan** suffix is also known from Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions (written syllabically **-wa-ni**), where it again marks the completive aspect of positional verbs, most notably in **chum-wan** 'he was seated (in office)'. This may be the suffix preserved in the Tila Chol title **ch'ujwanaj** 'cargoholder', in which case the approximate meaning of this word in terms of its origin is something like 'those who are holy'. Thus, the modern Chol title which designates the whole class of cargoholders appears to be an archaic word based on the root 'holy', just as cargo service is described as 'holy work'.

Within the system of **ch'ujulbä e'tel** 'holy work', the specific cargos are referred to as **k'äjñibalbä e'tel** 'useful work'. The root of this word, **k'än** also appears in the forms **k'än-bil** 'used, used up' and **k'äjñ-el** 'to be used' which imply a transitive verb ***k'än** 'to use something', but this verb is, in fact, not attested in modern Chol, that is, it no longer is used in its full range of forms, and has become a defective verb, leaving only frozen archaic forms. These forms have taken on a new range of meanings, exemplified by **k'äjñ-ibal** 'importance, utility, duty', as in **Mi' wen mel i k'äjñibal cha'an komisariado** 'He does his duties as a commissioner very well' (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 45).

There are 25 **motomaj** 'mayordomos', cargoholders with the title **aj motomaj**, who occupy the top level of the Tila cargo system. At the top of this level of the hierarchy are the four principal mayordomos, who serve the principal figures of the Tila pantheon: Christ (the Señor de Tila), the Virgin Mary, the Blessed Sacrament, and Saint Matthew. The two highest cargoholders carry the modifier 'great' in their titles; they are the

(xch'uwanaj) makyumlal '(mayordomo of) Our Great Father' (the Señor de Tila) and the **(xch'uwanaj) makna'lal** 'mayordomo of Our Great Mother' (the Virgin Mary). These two phrases are based on the roots **yum** 'father' and **na'** 'mother', with the possessive prefix **k-** 'our', which requires the suffix **-lal**. Unique in modern Chol vocabulary, these two titles preserve the ancient adjective **ma** 'great', which is known from Classic Period hieroglyphic inscriptions, in royal titles like **ma k'inaj** and **ma kuch**.

The other two cargoholders of the top rank are known by the specific saints they serve, but they do not carry the **ma** title: **xch'uwanaj Sakramentu** 'Sexton of the Holy Sacrament', and **xch'uwanaj Samateyu** 'Sexton of Saint Matthew'. The rest of the mayordomos in this rank, who care for the lesser saints in the church, are also called by their saints' names. These 25 top cargoholders carry ceremonial staffs of office to symbolize their status, and may each have one or two men serving as their official helpers (their 'seconds' and 'thirds'), but these lesser offices are not always filled for the less important cargos.

The second rank of the Tila cargo hierarchy includes fifteen officeholders who are also called 'mayordomos', but their office title is **aj kaptan**, from Spanish **capitan** 'captain'; collectively they are called **xch'uwanaj kaptanob** 'mayordomo captains'. These, too, are associated with individual saints: **Santiku kaptan** 'captain of Santiago', etc. The captains symbolize their status by carrying red flags, called **y-oromentuj-ob** 'their vestments', an assimilated early loan from the ecclesiastical Spanish term **ornamentos** 'vestments' (otherwise 'ornaments'). The use of ceremonial staffs and banners or standards to symbolize ritual status again recalls Classic Period usage. Still lesser cargos are occupied by the **kapural-ob** 'corporals' (from Spanish **caporal**). In all, there are between 75 and 90 positions in the Tila cargo system, though not all the lesser positions are regularly filled. A civic-minded Chol aspires to serve a year in a cargo at each level of this hierarchy during his lifetime.

Numerous other statuses are associated with the practice of cargo rituals and the activities of the mayordomos. There are assistants, **aj kotayaj-ob** (from **ko(l)-tan** 'to help'), caretakers, **aj kántiy-ob** (from **kän-tan** 'to care for'), petitioners, **aj k'ajtiyaj** (from **k'aj-tin** 'to request'), the **xpejkayosob** 'those who speak to God', and the **xsubnichimob** 'those who offer the candles', and so on. The construction of these words is interesting, in terms of their prefixes. The prefix **x-** is used to refer to a 'class' of people (who do a certain work). This prefix is attested in Colonial documents and in hieroglyphic texts, in gods' names like **Xbalanque**, one of the Hero Twins, and **Xbolon Chac** 'the Nine Chacs'. The pre-posed element **aj** 'he of' or 'master of' is also attested in Classic Period titles (**Ah K'in** 'sun priest'; **Ah Hun-k'al Bak** 'he of (captor of) 20 prisoners'). Many modern Chol titles are formed from transitive verbs ending in **-tan** or **-tin**, which form agentive nouns with the suffix **-aj**. It would be reasonable to expect titles which end in these suffixes to emerge from among the undeciphered Classic titles. A number of known hieroglyphic titles are written with final **Ca** syllables even when this syllable is not synharmonic with the preceding root or stem vowel, e.g., **mak'ina(j)**, **ch'ahoma(j)**. It is possible that some of these reflect a final **-aj** suffix. Note that the preposed element **aj** gives the following nouns or noun phrases the status of titles, just as the similar suffix does for verbs.

A man who has passed through a series of cargos retires as a respected elder, one of the **trensipal-ob** 'principal men, chiefs, directors' (from Spanish **principales**). These men are also known as **lak tat-na'-ob** 'our-Fathers-Mothers', that is, 'our Ancestors'. They take on the social role assigned to the mythological ancestors, and are also known as **noj nox-ix-bä** 'the most ancient ones'. They are experienced elders who have proven their commitment to the welfare of the community. They know how things are supposed to be done, and they counsel younger, less experienced, people in the resolution of their affairs—as well as exercising sanctions against those who do not behave properly. In local Spanish, these influential elder men are called by a term which comes from Chol (but which is no longer thought of as a Chol word): **tatuch**, from Chol **tat-äch** 'really (intensively) father'.

Other Named Statuses and Titles

In contrast to the 'holy work' done by the cargoholders, the officials of the civil government are referred to as **x'e'telob lak yum** 'he of (or master of) the work of the Owner' (Spanish **trabajadores del patrón**). This is not 'holy work', but work done for "an authority that is not Indian" or even for "Earth Owner (Spanish **Dueño del Cerro**)" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 144, entry for **yumäl**). Thus the two competing kinds of authorities are likened to the forces of the Ancestors (the cargoholders) and those of Earth Owner (the civil authorities). Earth Owner is, in highland Chiapas mythology (see Vogt 1993: 16-17), the owner of all the material goods and resources of the earth, and he is both the source of material wealth and the potential enslaver of souls, to whom petitions must be made for the use of his earthly resources, and through whom witchcraft may be practiced against others (by selling souls into slavery in his mines and plantations).

Ritual specialists outside the cargo system include the **x-wujt**, **x-'ilaj**, or **tz'äk-ayaj**, alternate terms for 'curer'. The latter term comes from **tz'äk-an** 'to cure someone', which is based on the adjective root **tz'äk** 'complete'. A curer is someone who makes his patients 'complete'. The term **x-'ilaj** is based on **'ila(n)** 'to see' (thus, a 'seer'). **X-wujt** may be related to **wut** 'eye' or 'face', but the etymology is obscure. One specialist whose designation is of historical interest is the malaria worker, who takes blood samples. He is known as **x-lok' ch'ich'** 'he who takes out blood'. Note also that the verb **joch'** is still recorded in modern dictionaries as the term for 'to pierce with a glass splinter for bloodletting'.

Two classes of female curers are recorded. Midwives, **x-yot'-onel**, take their title from the verb **yot'** 'to exert pressure on the abdomen'. Other female curers are named for their technique, **x-yojk-onel** 'curandera', from **yojkon** 'to jump over a patient', one element of a curing ceremony.

Other terms for statuses or ceremonial roles which may ultimately prove of interest are **aj pa'an-ob-äch** 'those who are present, visible'; **nujp-em-ob-ix-bä** 'married people' ('those who have already been united'), and **aj k'ajt-iyaj** 'the one who asks'.

Finally, some status terms are loans from Spanish, and several of these are of interest because their altered shapes attest their age and therefore aspects of early Colonial Chol social organization. The loan **misiuneruj** 'missionary' is probably a recent loan from Spanish **misionero**. Older loans include **motomaj** 'mayordomo' (from Spanish **mayordomo**), **palej** 'priest' (from Spanish **padre**), and **trensipal-ob** 'principales, respected elders' (from Spanish **principal**). One term, **tala** or **tal'a** 'priest', is obscure in origin, but may be another loan from Spanish **padre**.

While these titles are interesting from a modern language-and-culture perspective, they are also of interest to epigraphers, since they demonstrate the patterns of status or role names in Chol, a pattern which might be expected to show up in hieroglyphic expressions. Such "titles" are marked with prefixed **aj-** or **x-** (individual vs. collective agentive prefix for nouns) and they are often followed by the **-aj** (agentive suffix for verbs) or by the modern Chol relativizer **-bä** 'who/which', which replaces the Classic Maya **-VI** (vowel + I) suffix.

The Lexicon of the Sacred

In the vocabulary of ritual and ceremonial activity, there are other nouns of interest that are not titles for religious or ritual offices. One large set of these has to do with concepts of the soul and the tripartite nature of Man, who in the traditional conception consists of the **ch'ujlel** 'soul', the **bäk'tal** 'body', and the **wäy** 'animal companion'. This triad of entities is imbued with 'life', **kux-täl-el** (based on the positional verb root **kux** 'to be alive').

Numerous words are based on the adjective root **ch'uj** 'holy, sacred' (which in Classic times was represented through a word-play as the homophone 'droplets of liquid'). In its various derivatives, the root appears in **ch'uj-lel** 'the holiness, the soul'; **ch'uj-lel-äl** 'the deceased, the dead one'; **ch'uj-el** 'mass'; and **ch'uj-ul** 'spirit, sacred, holy, relation with God', as in **ch'uj-ul-bä** 'otot' 'holy house' or 'temple'. The root **ch'uj** appears to be the root that **ch'uj-wanaj** 'cargoholder' is based on, but it is not the root that **ch'ujijel** (or **ch'uyijel**) 'prayer' is based on. This term is derived from the transitive verb root **ch'uy** 'to raise up', and signifies 'that which is being raised up', that is, 'prayer'.

The soul, **ch'uj-lel**, figures in a number of metaphorical expressions: the cadaver is referred to as **i-bäk'tal ch'ujlelal** 'the flesh of the soul', and the skin of one's companion animal (**wäy**) is known as **i-bujk i-ch'ujlel** 'the shirt of one's soul'. It is the **ch'ujlel** that is called forth by the shaman in order to cure a person when he or she has suffered a shock: **päy-ben ch'ujlel** 'to call the spirit of someone'. It is the **ch'ujlel** that is sensed in the pulse as the shaman diagnoses illness: **täl-ben ch'ujlel** 'to pulse (feel the pulse of) someone'.

Sets of related terms, such as those just described, give insights into the Chol belief system that are difficult to obtain by any other means. Folk systems of knowledge and belief are not formally organized and codified: There are no standard reference works to

consult, nor is the knowledge taught in a formal way in classes or organized instruction. As a consequence, speakers of the language are not always consciously aware of many of the relations between concepts which are nonetheless implied by the nature of the words used to express the concepts. Analysis of vocabulary can therefore provide insights into the unconscious logic of a belief system, resulting in hypotheses which can be tested by other means (such as structured interviews). This is the area of investigation which logically follows the pilot study just undertaken, and we look forward to continuing these lines of inquiry in the future.

Towards a Theory of Chol Religion

To date, we have accomplished only a preliminary analysis of the vocabulary items relating to Chol concepts of the sacred that occur in published texts and dictionaries as well as in our own field data. Even at this stage, however, the study of this lexicon complements impressions derived from ethnographic sources and our own observations about the nature of highland Chol religion as currently practiced, to give us a more certain understanding of religious activity in the Tila area. While we are by no means ready to attempt to formulate an adequate theory of Chol religious behavior, certain aspects of that behavior have become more apparent to us.

Offering-focused Behavior

A principal religious activity is the giving of offerings, which may be in the form of flowers, candles, and copal incense (**nich**, **nichim**, and **pom**), or in the form of a gift (**majtan**) or service (**pät**). The phrase 'to give an offering', **majtan 'ak'** (literally, 'gift-give'), is an archaic form of verb phrase with an incorporated object, rarely used in modern Chol but whose antiquity is well attested by the occurrence of similar constructions in related languages. The element of exchange is implied by the derivation of this verb stem from **maj** 'loaned/borrowed' (as in **maj-an** 'loaned'). A 'gift' is something 'made loaned or borrowed'. The sense of this phrase in the context is that something is expected back for the offering made, and this is a basic principle of Chol religious behavior.

The great majority of pilgrims come to Tila to make a **promesa**, Spanish for 'vow, promise, pledge'. In effect they enter into a contract or compact with the Señor de Tila, promising to give goods or services in return for health, wealth, or some other benefit. To show good faith, they make their petitions with gifts, while pledging other future gifts. The pledge is not without its risks if the petitioner fails to hold up his or her end of the bargain. The Chol term for 'to make a pledge (**promesa**)' is **i-wa'-täl i-kux-täl** 'his life stands (in the balance)', that is, 'he pledges his life'. The theme of repayment is common in Chol folktales, where one who takes without paying before will end up paying more later.

Because of what is at stake, petitions to supernaturals commonly take place through intermediaries, persons who are skilled in the necessary sort of delicate approach. The **aj k'atijaj** 'those who ask' or the **xpejkanyosob** (also **i-pejkan-ob i-bä yik'ot yos**) 'those who speak with God', and the **xsub-nichimob** 'those who offer the candles', mediate between the petitioner and the deity addressed. These are often old men who have passed through the cargo system and who are now part of the group of **trensipalob** or **tatuches**, the elders of the community.

The cargoholders, **x-ch'uj-wanaj**, also serve as mediators, and cargo work is **ch'ujulbä e'tel**, 'holy work'. Various terms express aspects of the responsibility of public office in the cargo system. A previously unreported term is **xik'ol** 'mandato; mandate', attested in the phrase **ch'ujbin i-xik'ol** 'to accept one's mandate, to carry out one's functions'. Another term is **pät** 'to do [activities]', which carries the sense of bringing the activities to a satisfactory end: **pät ch'ujel** 'to celebrate mass'; **pät wa'täl kuxtäl** 'to carry out pledges'; **pät-ben k'in (i-tojlel)** 'to perform festivals (in his honor)'. **Pät-äl-el** is 'force', and the construction of a house is **päjt-el** '(its) doing'.

Curing

From the vocabulary of curing, it is apparent that the main cause of illness for the Chols of Tila, as it is elsewhere in Mesoamerica, is soul loss, which results in or produces an incomplete state of being. While this is not expressly stated, terms for 'to cure' all stress 'completeness'. One set of terms is based on the root **tz'äk**, which in Yucatec and some other Mayan languages has the meaning 'to extend (by adding pieces)'. In Chol **tz'äk** is the term for 'medicine, remedy', with the extension **tz'äk-al** 'seasonings (for a food)'. A derived verb is **is tz'äk-an** 'to cure', which underlies its passive form, **tz'äk-än-tel** 'to be cured', and the agentive noun **tz'äk-ayaj** 'curer'. These forms are related to **tz'äk-äl** 'complete', **tz'äk-tesan** 'to complete' and **tz'äk-tesän-tel** 'to comply with an agreement' (literally, 'to be completed'). A related set of terms includes **laj** 'all' and **laj-mesan** 'to cure', which are related to **laj-al** 'equal' and **laj-in i-bä** 'to be equal (to something)'.

As mentioned above, two terms for female curers, **xyot'onel** 'midwife' and **xyojkonel** 'curandera' derive from their curative actions, **yot'** 'to exert pressure on the abdomen' and **yojkon** 'to jump over a patient'.

Other sets of terms will likely yield further insights into ritual behavior as analysis continues. It is interesting to note, for instance, that the term for saint, or saint's image (as in the church) is based on **lok'** 'to come out, emerge', attested in **lok'-san** 'to take out, to cause to come out'. Saints are **lok'-om baj** (in Tila) or **lok'-om-lel** (in Sabanilla). It is also notable that they are counted with the same numeral classifier as humans: **jun-jun tikil-ob i-lok'om-baj-ob** 'each (person) of the saints'.

Concluding Remarks

Analysis of sets of semantically- and morphologically-related Chol lexical items provides insights into the conceptual world of the speakers of Chol. While these insights are of humanistic interest in themselves, they also constitute hypotheses for further, more systematic, work which can validate these initial impressions. Such validation would require long periods of field work focussed on the exploration of the philosophy and practical knowledge that underlies the linguistic expressions.

It is our belief that the results of the preliminary exploration of this field of inquiry are sufficient to demonstrate the potential productivity of this kind of research in the area of Tila. We hope to be able to pursue this research in future projects. In the meantime, we will continue to process text and other language materials already obtained, and we look forward to the publication of more works by Chol authors from the region, the product of an increasing number of government-sponsored institutions charged with promoting native culture in the region.

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Appendix I. The Lexicon of Ritual Activity in Tila Chol

The lexical items in the following list were transcribed from various Chol sources by Kathryn Josserand, Lee Folmar and Nick Hopkins, during the Summer, 1995. Page references in the entries refer to the major sources: Pérez Chacón (1988), PC; Aulie and Aulie (1978), AA; Josserand and Hopkins (1988, Dictionary Database), J/H.

After transcription to 3" × 5" slips, the forms were discussed with Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, Bernardo Pérez Martínez, and occasionally other Chol speakers. Additional information is noted from these sources, especially Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, ACG. Specific notes are also attributed to Nick Hopkins, NAH, and Kathryn Josserand, JKJ.

Note that entries from Bernardo Pérez' texts, marked BPM (Santa Cruz), etc., are in the orthography used in those texts, which records /n/ as <ñ>, and distinguishes between Tila's non-palatalized /t/, written <t>, and palatalized /ty/, written <ty>.

Chol-Spanish-English Lexicon

aj ch'uwanaj

mayordomo; office holder in the cargo system

PC 59: iyaj ch'uwanaj

iy-aj ch'uwanaj, his/its master of cargo (NAH)

AA 56: ch'ujwanaj < ch'uj 'holy'

aj e'telob lakyum

funcionarios de gobierno; govt. officials

PC 60: yaj e'telob lakyum

ACG: trabajadores del patrón

aj kántiyob

los que cuidan; those who watch over, guard

PC 62

cf. kántan, cuidar (? kán-ta[n]-ya NAH)

aj kotayajob

ayudantes; helpers

PC 62

cf. koltan, ayudar = kotan (ko[l]-ta[n]-ya, NAH)

aj k'atiya

el que pide o pregunta; the one who asks

PC 61: suben aj k'atiya, to say the questions, to discuss how

AA: k'atin, preguntar
BPM: i tyen k'ajtinob, they ask all together (Novena)
cf. tempan, to gather

aj pa'anobäch

those who are really present; spectators
PC 62, k'ajpan = aj pa'an, presente
ACG: mij k'ajpan, lo estoy dejando visible
k'ajpa'anon, estoy visible
cf. tempan, ten-pan, to gather ?

ak'bil

brujería; witchcraft
J/H

amäy

flauta; flute
J/H

an i xibulel

hace brujería; practices witchcraft
J/H
xibäj-lel, xibäl-el ? (NAH)

bäk'tal ch'uleläl

carne de alma; flesh of the soul, dead person
i bäk'tal ch'uleläl
J/H: = chämij

bej päy kixtanä

animar a la gente; to animate people
(más/llamar/gente)
PC 63
ACG: päy, llamar a reunión, o llamar el espíritu de alguien cuya alma está capturada
por un brujo

bujk i ch'ujlel

la camisa del arte; skin of one's animal companion
J/H: i bujk i ch'ujlel
cf. i bäk'tal i ch'ujlel, the body

chanbä krus

cruz alta; high cross, cross at mountaintop shrine to Señor de Tila
BPM: ya ti chanbä krus, there at the high cross (Santa Cruz)

chächäk kajchiläl

pañuelo rojo; red scarf

PC 62

chä(k)-chäk, red (NAH)

chämij

flesh of the soul

J/H: = bäk'tal ch'uleläl, flesh of the soul, dead person

chajpan

preparar; to prepare something

PC 59

chijlaw

sonaja; rattle

J/H: cf. chilaj

chilaj

sonaja; rattle

J/H: cf. chijlaw

ch'äl

adornar; adorn

J/H: cf. ch'ajl, adorno; decoration

ch'älonib

la hoja de adorno; leaf used for decoration

J/H

ch'älonibäl

adornos; decorations

PC 59

ch'älonibältak

adornos (varios); decorations (various)

PC 60

ch'äm e'tel

tomar puesto; take office

J/H

ch'ajb

dieta, en ayunas; diet, fast

J/H: woyon ti ch'ajb, estoy ayunando

ch'ajl

adorno; decoration

J/H: cf. ch'äl, adornar; to adorn

ch'en(al)

fosa; grave

J/H: cf. mukojel

ch'ujbin i xik'ol

aceptar mandato, cumplir con sus funciones; accept mandate, meet obligations

PC 60

ACG: ch'ujbin lakyum, que acepte nuestro señor xik'ol, mandato

ch'ujlel

deceased, finado, espíritu; soul

alma; arte, ánima (animal); animal counterpart

J/H:

cf. i bäk'tal i ch'ujlel, body

cf. i bujk i ch'ujlel, companion animal

ch'ujul

espíritu; relation with God, spirit

sagrado, santo; sacred, holy

J/H

ch'ujulbä otot

templo; temple, church

PC 59

ch'ujyijel

rezo, rezar; prayer, to pray

J/H

NAH: < ch'uy, to raise it up, VTR passive > VIN/N

BPM: mi' cha' ujtyel ch'uyijel [sic], they again hear mass (Santa Cruz)

ch'ujwanaj

cargo; office in the cargo system

PC 59 and elsewhere: ch'ujwanaj

cf. forms in x-, x-ch'ujwanaj...

xch'ujwanaj makyunlal, sacristan of Our Lord

xch'ujwanaj makna'lal, sacristan of the Virgin Mary

xch'ujwanaj sakramentu, sacristan of Blessed Sacrament

xch'ujwanaj Samateyu, sacristan of Saint Matthew

xch'ujwanajobä, mayordomos (motiomas y m. capitanes)

xch'ujwanajobä kaptanob, mayordomos capitanes

es

requisitos; relationship

PC 61: chuki yes yom cha'an jini; what criteria does that require?

es -pät

responsabilidades; responsibilities

PC 61: chuki yes mi' i päto; whatever responsibilities they exercise

ACG: chuki yes ma päy majlel, por qué lo llevas

= chuki yes a wik'ot

an i yes, tiene utilidad, en qué usarse (= k'änibal)

ilaj

cuidar; watch over something

ACG: x'ilaj, curandero

cf. il, see, watch; ila(n), see

ilal päjtel

verlo hecho; to see it made, done

oversight of production, execution of a task

PC 61: wen yilal mi' i päjtel jini ch'ujulbä e'tel

AA: pä, to make a house

ACG: wen yilal, está bién (hecho)

i yorumentujob

banderas rojas (de los capitanes); red flags

PC 60

NAH: < ornamentos, vestments (ecclesiastical usage)

jalejel

tardarse; to stay (in office)

PC 60: jalejelob ti i ch'uwanajob

AA 62: jalijel

joch'

punzar, inyectar; pierce with glass splinter for bloodletting

J/H

ACG: inyectar; mi joch', lo inyecta

jula'an

peregrinos; pilgrims

PC 61: mubä i k'otelob i jula'anob, those who come as pilgrims

kajchiläl

pañuelo; scarf

PC 62: chächäk kajchiläl, pañuelo rojo

kalentariojlel nopbaläl

calendario religioso; religious calendar

PC 59

ACG: nopbal, creencia, religión (cult, denomination)

woli i nop, lo acepta, está aceptando

kapuralob

caporales; corporals, lesser officials

PC 62

kitaraj

guitarra; guitar

J/H

kixtanu

persona; person

PC 61

klesia

iglesia; church

PC 60

kolibal

antepasados; ancestors, forerunners

PC 61: lak kolibalob

AA 37: kolib, viejo

< kol-el, to grow large, to grow up, to mature

AA: kol, to grow

JKJ: < kol-ib-al those who enable us to grow

cf. alib, daughter-in-law, one who enables us to have descendants

kolibalojon

nuestros antepasados; our forefathers

PC 63

[k]kolibal-lojon (NAH)

kostumpre

costumbre; custom

PC 63

kotayaj

ayudar; help

PC 61

AA: koltaya; kol-ta(n)-ya (NAH), that which helps

kuch

llevar, cargar; carry

BPM (Santa Cruz):

mi' kuchob majlel li saj chuty Señor, they carry forth the small Christ

mi' kuchob tyilel li Señori, they carry (bring out) the Lord

ba' kuchul jiñi k'iñ krusi, where the Cross is carried out

baki mi' keje i kujche li k'iñi, where the festival will be held [next year]

kuktal

cadáver; corpse, cadaver

J/H

k'äjñibalbä e'tel

cargos; offices in the cargo system

PC 60

AA: k'äjñibal, importancia, utilidad, deber

AA: k'äjñibäjel, importancia

k'änol

uso, función (no sirven); commitment, use, function

PC 61

ACG: an i k'änol, tiene uso

anobäch i k'änolob, tienen uso, quehacer

k'ajal

acordado, se acuerdan bién (de uno); agreed, favorable (to a candidate)

PC 60: mi' i wen k'uxbintel yik'ot wen k'ajal i cha'anob tzijbä yumäl;

they are... and agree on those who are to have new cargos

cf. k'ajal, acordado

k'ajtin

pedir, preguntar; ask, ask for

PC 60: k'ajtinob pawortak, pedir favores

PC 62, preguntar, pedir

cf. laj k'aj

AA 41: k'aj -o, descanso

k'ajtiyaj

the one who asks, petitions

BPM (Santa Cruz): (jinix) li k'ajtiyaj lok'elbä (I k'aba'),

(He is) the one who asks for the benediction (is its name)

k'ay

canción; song

J/H

k'exonejel

cambio de cargos; change of officials

PC 59

ACG: k'exonel jabil, cambio de año (= k'exonejel)

k'extan

sustituir; to replace one thing with another

PC 60: i k'extan jini xch'uwanajob

k'in

fiesta, sol; festival, sun

BPM (Santa Cruz):

ñojo(l) k'iñ, big festival

mi' melob k'iñ, they celebrate the festival

cha'an mi' wa'tyäl k'iñ, because the sun is standing (it is very hot and dry)

mi' cha'lenob li k'iñijel li k'iñ krusi; they celebrate the day of the Cross

ba' kuchul jiñi li k'iñ krusi, where the Cross is carried out

baki mi' keje i kujche(l) li k'iñi, where the festival will be held [next year]

k'otel jula'an

llegar a visitar; to come to visit (pilgrims)

PC 61: mubä i k'otelob i jula'anob

k'uxbintel

ser amado; to be (be) loved

PC 60: wen k'uxbintel, ser bién amado

laj ch'uj(u) tat

dios, santo; God, saint

J/H: =lak ch'uj-ul tat

laj t'an

conversar; to converse

PC 61: mi' i lajob i t'an, entablan una conversación

ACG: mi lajob i t'an, se ponen de acuerdo

mi lak laj lajbä, nos ponemos de acuerdo

lajmesan

curarlo; to cure, to be cured

J/H: cf. läm, to cure J/H: läm, vtr, to cure > *lajm(el), vtr pas, to be cured > lajmesan, to cause to be cured

lajol

rank, placement?

PC 60: ilajol yik'ot i k'elol; jerarquización

JKJ: i-laj-ol < laj-ol; a noun derivation meaning 'rank' or 'placement';

the phrase *ilajol yik'ot i k'exol* would be '(determining) the ranks, and keeping vigilance (over the cargo system)'.

ACG: *ilajol*, un lugar donde cuidan
x'ilaj, curandero

lajte'

tambor; drum
J/H

lak na' konspyon

Virgen de la Concepción; Virgin of the Conception
PC 60

lak na' Walalupa

Virgen de Guadalupe; Virgin of Guadalupe
PC 60

lak tat San José

San José; Saint Joseph
PC 60

lak tana'ob

tatuches; respected elders
PC 62
lak tat-na'-ob (NAH)

lak ta(t) na'ob

tatuches; respected elders
PC 59

lembal

trago; liquor, firewater
J/H

lok' ch'ich'

sacar sangre; to draw blood
J/H
ACG: *xlok'ch'ich'*, los del Paludismo (malaria workers)

lok'i i ch'ujlel

espíritu del muerto; spirit of dead person
J/H: *xlok'i i ch'ujlel*

lok'ombaj

imágenes; images
PC 59: *jujuntikilob i lok'ombajob*

ACG: lok'on-majlel, salir

AA: Sabanilla, lok'omlel, copia (NB: m) < lok'-om ba, for the self to emerge??

lok'ombaj santuj

imágen del santo; image of the saint

PC 61

majtan

regalo, limosna; gift, alms

J/H

PC 61

BPM (Santa Cruz): jiñi majtyañältyak; the gifts

majtan ak'

regalar; to gift-give

PC 61

NB: This may indicate a class of verbal expressions with an incorporated object, Noun + Verb (majtan 'ak'), that might be related to glyphic expressions with "flat hand", e.g., 'set the stone', 'he stone-set'.

malil ch'ujulbä otot

interior de la iglesia; interior of church

PC 61: i malil ch'ujulbä otot

mal, interior

meno konspyon

mayordomo de Concepción menor; lesser (mayordomo of) Concepción

PC 60

misa

misa; mass

BPM (Santa Cruz): mi yäk' misa; they say (do) mass

misiuneru

misionero; missionary

PC 62

motomajob

motiomas, mayordomos; mayordomos

PC 59

< mayordomos, via *martomo (NAH)

mukojel

fosa; grave

J/H

mul

pecado; sin
J/H

nich

flor; flower, blossom
J/H

nichim

vela; candle
J/H
PC 59
ACG: = flor; nich k'ajk, braza

nijkan

tocar, mover; to touch, to move
J/H

noj noxixbä

los más ancianos; the oldest ones
PC 59

nojol

grande, importante; big, important
BPM (Santa Cruz): ñojo(l) k'in; big festival

nok

hincar; to kneel
J/H: noktäl, noki'

nopbaläl

religiön, creencia; beliefs, religion
PC 59: kalentariojlel nopbaläl, religious calendar
ACG: nopbal, creencia, religiön (cult, denomination)
woli i nop, lo acepta, está aceptando

nopo

creerlo; to believe
J/H
PC 59: kalentariojlel nopbaläl, calendario religioso
ACG: nopbal, creencia, religiön (cult, denomination)
woli i nop, lo acepta, está aceptando

nujpunemobixbä

casados; married people
PC 62

ACG: nujpunel, casarse; nujp, unidos; i nujp, su unión;
cha' nujp te', dos palos unidos (exx.: el amate y otro, o dos que chillan por
rasparse)
nujp-u(n)-em-ob-ix-bä (NAH < nujp-un-el)

nuki k'in

fiesta grande; big fiesta
PC 60

orasyontak

oraciones; prayers
PC 63: orosiontak [sic]

oromentuj

banderas rojas (de mayordomos capitanes); red flags (of the captains)
PC 62: yoromentujob, banderas (rojas)
y-oromentuj-ob
cf. orumentu

orumentu

bandera roja (de los capitanes); red flags
PC 60: i yoramentujob, banderas rojas; red flags
NAH: < ornamentos, vestments (ecclesiastical usage)
cf. oromentu

otzan i promesa

meter su promesa; to enter one's pledge
BPM (Santa Cruz): mi' majlel i yotzanob i promesa, they go to enter their pledges (make
their "promesas");
mi' k'otyel i yotzanob i promesa, they come to make their pledges
NAH < *och-san, to cause to enter

päjtel

hacerlo, verlo hecho; to see it made, done
PC 61: wen yilal mi' i päjtel jini ch'ujulbä e'tel
AA: pä't, to make a house

päk'ojel

elección, nombramiento; election, appointment
PC 60: ...bajche' yilal i päk'ojel, cómo está su nombramiento
JKJ: cf. verb in TI inscriptions (fist/net, pa-k'a)

pät

hacerlo; to do something, accomplish it
AA: pä't, to make a house
päjtel, be done

ilal päjtäl, to see it done
ACG: woli k päť lum, I'm polishing clay (in the last stages of making a pot before firing)
PC 60: anob(a) ti i tojlel i päťob yik'ot i k'extanon jini xch'uwanajob,
those who have the obligation to care for the replacements of the cargo holders
cf. *patan, tribute

päť ch'ujel

celebrar misa (hacer espíritu); to celebrate mass, to "make holiness"
PC 63

päť wa'täl kuxtäl

hacer promesas; to pledge, to make a vow
PC 62
AA 128: wa'täl, pararse
AA 39: kuxtälel, vida

päťbenob k'in i tojlel

hacerle (realizar) fiestas en su honor; to make festivals in his honor
PC 59

päy

llamar; to call
BPM (Santa Cruz): mi' päyob jubel tyilel li saj chuty Señori; they call forth the little image
of the Lord

päy kixtanä

animar a la gente; to animate people
(más/llamar/gente)
PC 63: bej päy kixtanä, animar a la gente (más-llamar-gente)
ACG: päy, llamar a reunión, o llamar el espíritu de alguien cuya alma está capturada
por un brujo

päyben ch'ujlel

llamar al espíritu; to call the spirit
J/H

palej

cura; priest
J/H
JKJ: < padre (old loan)

pam klesia

atrio; atrium of church
PC 61: i pam klesia
JKJ: pan/m, face

panämil

mundo; world

J/H: = panamil, panimil, panumil

panchan

cielo; sky

J/H

panlum

panteón; cemetery

J/H

pawortak

favores; favors

PC 60

pejkan yik'ot yos

hablar con Dios; to speak with God

PC 63: i pejkanob ibä yik'ot Yos, ellos los que hablan con Dios

ACG: mi mak pejkan wan, voy a hablar con Juan

sami [k]pejkan yik'ot wan, yo y Juan vamos a hablar con alguien

AA: pejkan, convince, read aloud, "sweet talk" and copulate (!)

pok säk'

limpiar; to clean, lit. to scrub and rinse

PC 61: mi' i pok i säk'ob, doing the cleaning

pom

incienso, copal; copal incense

PC 59

J/H

promesa

promesa; pledge, vow

BPM (Santa Cruz): mi' majlel i yotzanob i promesa; they go to enter their pledges

mi' majlel k'otyel i yotzanob i promesa; they come to enter their pledges

p'ätälel

fuerza; force

PC 60

ACG: an i p'ätälel, tiene fuerza para trabajar o levantar, o un viejo que todavía está fuerte

relijion katoliku

religión católica; Catholic religion

PC 63

resal

rezo; prayer

PC 63

BPM (Santa Cruz): mi' cha'lenob resal; they pray

saj

(parte) más pequeña; smallest (part)

BPM (Santa Cruz): li saj chuty Señor; the smallest image of the Lord

ACG: = Tumbalá sajl;

AA: migaja (de), astilla (de)

sajtel

morir (perderse); to die (to be lost)

BPM (Santa Cruz): tax sajtyiyobtak; they have already died

Tumbalá 'be lost', Tila 'to die'

santiku kaptan

Santiago Capitán; Captain of Santiago

PC 60

santiku montomaj

Santiago Mayordomo; Mayordomo of Santiago

PC 60

santujob

santos; saints

PC 59: jujuntikilob jini santujob

NAH: note use of tikil, classifier for 'persons'

senäjlel

símbolo; symbol, sign

PC 60

senäjlel jini i ye'telob

símbolos de su cargo; symbols of their office

PC 62

servisio

servicio; service

PC 61

sibik

cohete; fireworks

J/H

AA: cohete, pólvora de armas

cf. sib, tisne

son

baile, bailar; dance
J/H

sub nichim

hablar a las velas; to speak to the candles
BPM (Santa Cruz): li x-sub-nichim-ob, those who speak to the candles (pasados).
Cf. li xpejkayosob, those who speak to God; x-pejka(n)-yos-ob.

suben ajk'ajtiyaj

decir las preguntas; to say the questions, to discuss how something is to be done (lit., for the inquisitor to speak?)
PC 61
AA: k'ajtin, preguntar

tälben ch'ujlel

pulsar; to (take the) pulse
J/H

tala

padre; priest
PC 62?
AA: tal'a, priest
ACG: tala, pale
JKJ: < tal(el) 'come', one who comes, visitor, circuit priest?

tala ilel

parecer venir; to appear to come
PC 62
ACG: ...ma'an jun tikile[!] i tala yilel, no hay ninguno que parezca venir

ta(t) na'ob

tatuches; respected elders (ancestors)
PC 59: lak tana'ob, los tatuches

tempajbäjob

reuniones; meetings
PC 60
ACG: xtempaj, él que hace la reunión
AA: tempan, juntar; temel, junto
cf. tempa(n) -bä, reunirse, to meet

tempan -bä

reunirse; to meet, gather together
PC 59
BPM (Novena): i tyen k'ajtinob, they ask all together

tojlel

responsabilidad, está a su cuenta; responsibility, on one's account

PC 59: anbä ti i tojlel..., (quien) se encarga de...

cf. pätbenob k'in i tojlel, hacerle fiestas en su honor

cf. toj, recto; tojol, precio

tojlel pätob

obligación a hacer; obligation to care for, to do something

PC 60: anob(ä) ti i tojlel i pätob yik'ot i k'extanob jini xch'uwanajob;

those who are obligated to deal with the incoming cargoholders, those who are in the responsibility of...

i tojlel, por su cuenta

i pätob, abrir, hacer (casa)

AA: pät, chaporrear, limpiar camino

ACG: woli k pät lum, I'm polishing clay (in the last stages of making a pot before firing)

trensipalob

principales; principal men

PC 60

tzijbä yumäl

nuevo cargo; new cargo

PC 60

tzukben nichim

encenderle velas; to light candles (to someone)

PC 59

AA: tzukul, gastado

tz'äkayaj

curandero; curer

J/H

AA: tz'äkan, curar

cf. tz'ak, medicina

AA: tz'äkan, curar; tz'äkesan, completar; tz'äktesan, cumplirse; i.e., tz'äk = complete/make whole

tz'ak

medicina, remedio; medicine

J/H

utz'atbä k'ejlel ti jononlojon

ser respetados por nosotros; to be seen (well) by us, be respected by us

PC 63: jini kixtanu noj utz'atbä mi' i k'ejlelob ti jononlojon, ellos son los que son más vistos (como) buenos por nosotros

wa'täl kuxtäl

(hacer) promesa; make a vow or pledge

PC 60, 63: literally, to stand up (put at risk) one's life

ACG: i wa'täläch jini winik, se presenta donde debe estar

i kuxtäl, su vida, alma, qué le hace vivo

i wa'täl i kuxtäl, tiene el sentido de entregarse, de poner en juego su alma

BPM (Santa Cruz): mi' k'ajtyinob i wa'täl i kuxtäl, they ask to make their vows

wa'täl k'in

hacer la fiesta; to make a festival

BPM (Santa Cruz): cha'an mi' wa'tyäl k'in, because they put on the fiesta

wei'te'

altar, mesa de comer; altar, dining table

PC 60

AA 129: we'te'

JKJ: < *we'ib te', eating board

wen k'ajal

bién acordado, se acuerdan bien (de uno); to be agreed, to support (a candidate)

PC 60: ...mi' i wen k'uxbintel yik'ot wen k'ajal i cha'anob tzijbä yumäl;

...(he) is well liked and it is agreed with respect to the new cargos (?)

wen k'uxbintel

ser bien amado; to be well loved or liked

PC 60

xch'uwanaj makyunlal

mayordomo del Señor; sacristan of Our Lord

PC 60

ma k-yum-(i)lal, great our-lordship (NAH)

xch'uwanaj makna'lal

mayordomo of the Virgin; sacristan of the Virgin Mary

PC 60

ma k-na'-lal, great our-ladyship (NAH)

xch'uwanaj sakramentu

mayordomo de Sacramento; sacristan of Blessed Sacrament

PC 60

xch'uwanaj samateyu

mayordomo de San Mateo; sacristan of Saint Matthew

PC 60

xch'uanajobä

mayordomos (motiomas y mayordomos capitanes); mayordomos
PC 59

xch'uanajobä kaptanob

mayordomos capitanes; captains
PC 59

xibaj

brujo; devil
J/H

xibulel

brujería; witchcraft
nagual, shape-changer, sorcerer
J/H: an i xibulel ? xibalel, xibälel ?

xik'ol

mandato; mandate
PC 60: ch'ujbin i xik'ol, aceptar mandato, cumplir con sus funciones
ACG: ch'ujbin lakyum, que acepte nuestro señor xik'ol, mandato
AA: xik', atizar, obligar (with ti construction)
cf. xijk'ote'an, apuntalar (casa)
cf. xik'sajp, a kind of leopard

xlok' ch'ich'

los que sacan sangre; those who draw blood
J/H
ACG: xlok'ch'ich', los del Paludismo (malaria workers)

xlok'i i ch'ujlel

espíritu del muerto; spirit of dead person
J/H
NAH: < lok'-ib ?, cf. AA: lok'ib ja', vertiente de agua; manantial; spring
BPM (Santa Cruz): li xpejkayosob, those who speak to God; x-pejka(n)-yos-ob.
Cf. li x-sub-nichim-ob, those who speak to the candles (pasados).

xwujt

curandero; curer
J/H

xyojkone!

una mujer curandera; a female curer
J/H: yojkon
ACG: xyojkone!; mi yojkon, brinca al enfermo
NAH: < *yojk-one!, ADJ-one! or VTR-one! = agentive n ? or ultimately < ok, foot

xyot'onel

partera; midwife

J/H: yot'

ACG: xyot'onel

NAH: vtr-onel = agentive noun, cf. yot'

yojkon

brincar al enfermo; to leap the patient

ACG: xyojkonel, mujer curandera

mi yojkon, brinca al enfermo

yorajlel

tiempo; time (for something)

PC 60

yorajlel jini yumäl

tiempo de encargo; time of office

PC 60

yoromentujob

banderas (rojas); red flags

PC 62

y-oromentuj-ob

yorumentuj

bandera roja, red flag

PC 60: iyorumentujob

iy-orumentuj-ob

yos

Dios; God

PC 61

yot'

partera; midwife

J/H

ACG: xyot'onel

AA: yot', ejercer presión (sobre el estómago)

yum witz

dueño del cerro; Earth Owner

J/H

ACG: = lak tat don Juan = nox = salvaje

yumälob

encargados; those in charge (cargo holders)

PC 59

Appendix II. Tila Chol Text

In the course of the 1995 field season we recorded a number of Chol texts in Tila, including several texts about ceremonial activity narrated by Bernardo Pérez Martínez, a bilingual schoolteacher from the Barrio San Sebastián, Tila. During the summer, Pérez was asked by a colleague representing the federal Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP) if he would contribute texts to a project which planned to publish Chol materials for regional distribution and use in educational projects. In order to further this work, we prepared the texts we had recorded in an orthography suitable to SEP publications, rather than the orthography we usually employ. The text sample presented here, **Santa Cruz** (Holy Cross), retains this SEP orthography, and words which appear in the text or in lexical citations from the text are written in a form distinct from that of other sources.

The principal differences between our normal orthography and the one employed in the following text relate to palatalization. All Chol dialects regularly palatalize dental and alveolar stops and nasals (**t**, **t'**, **n**); we normally transcribe these phonemes without indicating the palatalization, since in most varieties of Chol the palatalization is automatic and non-contrastive. In the orthography used for the SEP texts, these phonemes are transcribed as palatals **ty**, **ty'**, and **ñ**.

As we worked on the transcription of Perez' Tila-dialect tapes, we became aware of a previously unrecorded phenomenon. While instances of the phoneme /t/ that derive from earlier *t are indeed palatalized, they now contrast in the Tila variety of Chol with an unpalatalized dental/alveolar stop which comes in part from earlier *tz: The verbal preclitic which signals completive aspect in Tumbalá Chol is **tza** (or **tzi** if it incorporates the following third person pronoun). In Tila Chol this preclitic occurs as **ta** or **ti**, with unpalatalized stops. This creates a direct contrast with forms like **tya'** 'excrement' and **tyi'** 'edge, mouth'. Other examples of non-palatalized **t** arise from reduced forms; as an adverbial of motion, ***til-el** 'come' is reduced to **te** (unpalatalized), contrasting with **tye'** 'wood'. Proper transcription of Tila Chol thus requires a distinction between these two phonemes, even if an understanding of the historical origin of the contrast allows an educated reader to supply palatalization (or not) as needed.

In the text which follows, palatalization is indicated where it occurs, using **ty**, **ty'**, and **ñ**. Forms which are transcribed with **t**, **t'**, and **n** are not palatalized.

Other texts recorded during the 1995 field season are listed below. These texts have been recorded, transcribed, discussed, analyzed, edited, and translated to Spanish; English translations are under way, but are not ready for inclusion in this report.

Recorded Tapes

A listing of field recordings made during the summer, 1995; archived as TIL 95. The text **Santa Cruz** is recorded on tape TIL 95-2.

TIL 95-1. Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, discusión de cuentos (en español y chol). A discussion of Chol narrative style.

TIL 95-2. Chol de Tila, Bernardo Pérez Martínez. La Novena del Señor de Tila (2 partes); Cuento del Xnek; Santa Cruz; Todos Santos. Texts describing and discussing Tila ritual activity.

TIL 95-3. Conversación sobre cargos y ceremonias en Tila, Sebastián Pérez P. and Alfonso Pérez Vásquez (en español). A conversation (in Spanish) with two informants from the Barrio San Sebastián, Tila, concerning past and future ceremonial activities.

TIL 95-4. Ausencio Cruz Guzmán (en chol y español): Xibaj me'; arte del tigre. A text in Tumbalá Chol, with retelling in Spanish.

Mariachi Los Coyotes: Peregrino. Cinta comercial que contiene "Himno al Señor de Tila" y otros himnos de la fiesta del Señor de Tila. A commercial tape with recordings of a traditional music for the fiestas honoring the Señor de Tila.

SANTA CRUZ: The Feast of the Holy Cross

Narrated by Bernardo Pérez Martínez, of Tila, Chiapas; 5 June 1995; Cinta Tila 95-2. Transcribed by Ausencio Cruz Guzmán y Lee Folmar, 21-22 June 1995. Revised by Cruz, Folmar, Nicholas Hopkins and Kathryn Josserand, 27 June 1995. Edited by Cruz Guzmán and Josserand, 28 June 1995. English translation by K. Josserand, January 1996.

Ili ty'añ mu bu ka laj käl wale', li jiñ bajche' li k'iñ krus, mu bu i melob wä' tyi lak lumal Tila. Che' bajche wajali, chäch kostumbre chañ lak tyaty, lak ña'ob, lak yum, laj ko'ob, mi' melob. Mi' melbeñob li k'iñ li krus, cha'añ li krusi, mi yäl lak tyaty, lak ña'ob, jiñäch ba' tyi jo'be lak ch'uj tyaty tyi wajali.

This story that I'm going to tell today is about how we celebrate the day of the Holy Cross here in our land of Tila. We do it just as in the olden days, according to the customs of our fathers and mothers, our grandfathers and grandmothers. They celebrated the festival of the cross, because the cross, our ancestors say, is where our Holy Father came down long ago.

Jiñ cha'añ, kostumbre jäch lak tyaty, lak ña'ob, mi' melbeñob i k'iñ li krusi. Mi' melbeñob i k'iñ li krus lak tyaty lak ña'ob, tyi yux p'ejlel tzik li mayo. Mi' tyempañoob i bä jiñi lak lumalob.

That's why it was the custom for our parents to celebrate the festival of the cross. Our ancestors celebrated the day of the cross on the third day in May. They gathered together in our land.

Chejach mach wä' tyi lumi, ya' ba tyi päsä i bä lak ch'uj tyaty wajali. Mi' laj käl jiñch li chañ bä krus. Mi' lu' majlelob pejtyelel jiñi lak pi'älob; mi' melob li k'iñ ya'ya'i. Chäch i kostumbrejob i cha'añ lak yum, lak ko'ob, wajali.

Not just here below (in the town); there (at the mountain cave shrine), where our Holy Father showed himself long ago. We call that the high cross. All our people come together; they celebrate the festival right there. That was the custom of our grandfathers and grandmothers long ago.

I che' jiñi, li xch'ujwañajob bä, mi' kuchob majlel li saj chuty Señor am bä wu' ti klesia. Pejtyelel kixtyañu mi' majlel i yotzañoob i promesa. Mi' majlel i tzuk'ob i ñichim. Mi' ch'ämob majlel li kojete; mi' ch'ämob majlel i pom. Mi' ch'ämob majlel i lembal je'el.

And so, those who are the cargo-holders carry forth the small Christ from the church. All Christians go to make their vows. They go and light candles. They take fireworks; they take incense. They also take along some liquor.

Jiñi yujilob bä i japob lembal, mi' ch'ämob majlel, cha'añ mi' tyjikña pañämil, cha'añ weñ k'otyajax. Che' bajche li xch'ujwañajob, mi' tyempañoob i bä, mi'

Those who are accustomed to drinking liquor, they take it, so that the world will be happy, so that they will be well content. And those who are the cargo-holders,

ch'ämob majlel i we'el, che' bajche jujun tyikil xch'ujwañajob, che' bajche makyumlal, pejtyelelob xch'ujwañajob añob bä tyi toñel ya' tyi klesia.

I che' bajche jiñi lak pi'älob je'el, mu bu i majlel i tzuk'ob i ñichimi, mi' ch'ämob majlel i we'elob je'el. Mi' ch'ämob majlel chuki yes mi' k'uxob, chuki yes mi' japob, ya' tyi krusi. Che' jiñi, weñ tyijikñajob mi' k'ayiñob i kitara. Añob i violin. Mi' jatz'ob kaxlan soñ.

Cha'añ che' jiñi, tyijikñayob ya' tyi ba mi' tzuk'ob i ñichim. Mi' cha'leñob li k'iñijel li k'iñ krusi. Kolem k'iñ i cha'añ lak lumal, cha'añ chä'äch päsälob i cha'añ lak tyaty, lak ña'ob, wajali.

Che' jiñi, tax ki ujtyi li k'iñijel ya' tyi chañ bä krusi, ila ba' tyi päsä i bä, ba tzajñi tyi putz'el lak ch'uj tyaty wajali. Jiñi wä' tyi li barrio, cha'añ bä San Sebastián, ili jun tyemelob k'o' mi' majlelob ya' tyi chañ bä krus, yik'oty bajche li Centro, cha'añ San Nicolás. Mi' tyempañoob i bä, mi' melob jujum p'ejl k'iñ je'el, cha'añ chäch i kostumbre i chañoob bajche li barrio, wä' ba añoñ lojoñ.

Jinäch bä barrio San Sebastián, mi' melob li k'iñijel wä' tyi barrio San Sebastián, yik'oty jiñi Centro San Nicolás. I kostumbre jäch i cha'añoob che' tyi chäm p'ejlel tzik li mayo. Mi' lu' tyempañoob i bä lak pi'älob, chan jach ñaxañ mi' majlelob ya' tyi chañ bä krusi.

Che' jiñi, tyi jum p'ejl bä k'iñ, mi' tyempañoob i bä; mi' chajpañoob i bä, chañ bajche ora mi' lok'elob majlel, chañ bajche ora mi' päyob jubel tyilel li Señor de Tila, li saj chuty Señori. Much' i jubel tyilel je'el wä' tyi Centro San Nicolás, wä' tyi krus.

they get together and they take food; each cargo-holder, from the Great Lord's cargo to every cargo-holder who is in service there in the church.

And also the people, those who go to light candles, they take along food, too. They carry whatever they want to eat, whatever they want to drink, there to the cross. And so, very happily they play the guitar. There are violins. They play Western music.

And because of that, they are happy there where they light the candles. They celebrate the day of the Holy Cross. It is a great festival for our land, because thus our ancestors taught us, long ago.

So, they finish the festival there where the high cross is, there where he showed himself, where Our Holy Father went to escape long ago. Those here in the barrio, that of San Sebastián, those who are truly all together go there to the high cross, with those of the Center, of San Nicolás. They gather together, they make individual celebrations also, because thus is the custom of each barrio, here where we are.

Those of the barrio of San Sebastián celebrate the festival there in the barrio of San Sebastián, with those of the Center, San Nicolás. That's the custom of each of them, when it's the fourth of May. All the countrymen gather together, so that first they can go there to the high cross.

And so, on that very day, they gather together; they arrange among themselves as to just what time they will go out, just what time they will process the Lord of Tila, the smaller Christ. They also process here in the Center San Nicolás, here at

Mi' päyob; mi' kuchob tyilel li Señori. Mi' tyempañoob i bä.

Añoob i lajtye', añoobäch i kitara je'el, li barrio ba' mi' melob i k'iñijeli. Mi' pulob ñichim, mi' pulob pom. Añoobäch jiñi i trensipalob je'el. Añoobäch li xtzuk'ñichimob je'el; li xpekayosob je'eli, yik'ot wo bu tyi sub ñichim, yik'ot wo bu i subeñ pejtyelel li ñichim, yopom, tyi lak ch'uj tyaty.

Che' jiñi, che' mux i kuchob te jiñi Señori. Yax mi' k'otyel i yäk'ob ya' tyi ermita cha'añ San Nikolás, añoob i kojete, cha'añ tyijikñayob yubiñ je'el. Yäch mi' melob li k'iñijel ya' tyi ermita. Mik mel lojoñ li k'iñijel wä' tyi ermita cha'añ yäch chukuloñ lojoñ je'eli.

Wäch añoob wä' tyi barrio San Sebastián, yik'oty jiñi Centro San Nikolás. Chäch kostumbre i cha'añoob li barrio. Chäch kostumbre i cha'añoob bajche lak yum, laj ko'ob, ta bä ñumiyob wajali, wä tyi barrio. Mach kuxulobtyak, tax sajtyiyobtyak.

Che' tyi ñojo k'iñi, che' tyi chäm p'ejlel tzik li mayo, mi' jubel lak tyalay, i yäk' misa ya' tyi ermita. Mi' tyempañoob i bä pejtye lak pi'älob. ¿Chukoch che' mi' yujtyel li misa? ¿Chukoch mi' yäk misa lak tyalay? Cham pejtye lak pi'älob mi' k'ajtyiñoob i wa'tyäl, i kuxtyäl, cha'añ ma'añ i k'amäjel, cha'añ mi' weñ kolelob i päk'äbob, che' bajche i yixim, che' bajche i bu'ul. Jun teme mi' k'ajtyiñoob.

Che' jiñi, che' tax ujtyi li misa ba' kuchul jiñi li k'iñ krusi, cha'añ li chäm p'ejlel tzik li mayo, añoobäch juñ tyikil wa'al bä lak pi'äl, ba'añ li k'iñi. Mi' päyelob majlel pejtyel lak

the Cross. They process; they carry the Lord. They gather together.

There are drums; there are guitars, too, from the barrio that is celebrating the festival. They burn candles; they burn incense. And there also are the elders. There also are those who burn the candles, the ones who speak to God, along with those who offer candles, along with those who offer all the candles and flowers to our Holy Father.

And so, thus they carry the Lord. Then they arrive there at the hermitage of San Nicolás; there are fireworks, so that they will feel happy also. They really celebrate the festival there at the hermitage. We celebrate the festival here at the hermitage because we're really from there, too.

Here we are, here in the Barrio of San Sebastián, along with the Center, San Nicolás. That's the tradition of each barrio. That was the tradition of our ancestors, those who passed long ago, here in the barrio. They are no longer alive; they have already died.

When it's the big day, when it's the fourth of May, the priest comes, and says mass there at the hermitage. All the people gather together. Why then do they have a mass? Why does the priest say mass? So that all the people can ask for their pledges, so that there will be no sickness, so that their harvests will grow well, like their corn, like their beans. All together they ask.

And so, when the mass is finished there where the festival of the Cross is carried out, when it is the fourth of May, the people really do stand together, there

pi'älob, cha'añ mi' tz'ita' japob kajpe, mi' k'uxob bu'ul, jiñix chu'bä mi' chajpañob li barrio, cha'añ bä we'el, uch'el.

Che' jiñi, kabäl mi' k'otyel p'ejtyel lak pi'älob, mach bä ya' chukulob je'eli. Mi' k'otyel i yotzañob i promesa je'el ya'ya'i. Mi' k'otyel i tzuk'ob i ñichim.

Mach jiñob jach li barrio, mi' k'otyelob yantyak bä lak pi'älob, yantyak bä jiñi kixtyañajob tyilemob tyi yambä barrio, tyilemob tyi yambä lum. Mi' k'otyel i tzuk'ob i ñichim; mi' k'otyel i yotzañob i wa'tyäl, i kuxtyäl.

Tax ki ujtyi, tax ki ñumi li ñojol k'iñ, che' tyi chäm p'ejl tzik li mayo, yäx mi' wäyelob i kántyañob li lak Señor. Yäx mi' wäyelob ya' tyi ermita; yäx mi' k'ajob yoj. Mi' kántyañob li Señori.

Cha'añ jiñix tyi yäjk'älel, tyi ho' p'ejlel tzik li mayo, mux i cha' tyempañob i bä. Mi' cha' ujtyel ch'uyijel, mi' cha' cha'leñob resal, bajche ili añob bä i ye'tyel, bajche li katekistajob, che' bajche lak tyaty, lak ña'ob, mi' k'ajtyiñob i lok'el. Jiñix li k'ajtyiyaj lok'el bä i k'aba'.

Mux i cha' subob i bä, mux i melob li despedida bä mi' laj käl tyi español, cha'añ tyi lak ty'añ "mi' k'ajtyiñob i lok'el." Mi' lu' chajpañob je'el, baki mi' keje i kujche li k'iñi chañ bä yambä jabil, chañ mi' cha' lu' tyempañob i bä lak pi'älob, chañ mi' lu' ubiñob baki mi' keje li k'iñi. Mi' k'ajtyiñob majchki yom k'iñijel, mi' ma'añ majch yom k'iñijel.

where the festival is. All the people join the procession, so that they can drink a little coffee, they can eat some beans, whatever the barrio has arranged, for food and drink.

And so, many people come, not only those who live here. They come to make their vows there also. They come to burn their candles.

Not only those of the barrio, people from all over come, there are Christians who come from other barrios, who come from other lands. They come to burn their candles; they come to make their pledges.

When it's over, when the big day has passed, on the fourth of May, the ones who watch over Our Lord sleep. There they sleep, there at the hermitage; there they find their rest. They care for Our Lord.

And when it's barely light, on the fifth of May, they gather together again. They again hear mass; they pray again, those whose work it is, like the Catechist, like our ancestors, they ask for their blessing. It's called the blessing of departure.

They again pledge themselves, they make the "despedida" as it is called in Spanish, which in our language is "mi' k'ajtyiñob i lok'el." They make arrangements together, too, as to where they will hold the festival the next year; thus the people again gather together, so that they will all hear where the festival will be. They ask who wants the festival, if someone doesn't want the festival.

Tyi p'ejtyelel jabil, much' i sub i bä jun tyikil lak pi'äl, mu bu i mulañ k'iñijel, mu bu i mulañ k'iñ tyi yotyoty, mu bu i mulañ cha'añ mi' tyempañoob i bä lak pi'älob tyi yotyoty. Chä'äch mi' yujtyel jujum p'ejl jabil.

Che' tax i k'ajtyiyob li otyoty, che' tax i tyajayob li otyoty. Jiñi mux i cha' tyempañoob i bä, che' läk'älix tal li yambä k'iñ. Che' tyikilix tax ñumi majlel, bajche lujum p'ejl uj, che' bajche tyi mes de marzo, abril, mux i cha' tyempañoob i bä lak pi'älob, cha'añix mi' chajpañoob bajche mi' kejelob i yäsañoob i tyak'iñ, cha'añ chuki yes mi' ki mäñoob.

Chukoch che' mi' yäsañoob i tyak'iñ? Cha'añ mi' mäñe' tz'itya' we'el, uch'el, che' bajche mi añ k'iñil mi' mäñoob i chityam. Pejtyel ora much' i mäñoob i chityam, che' much' i yajlel i limosña, che' much' i yik'ot limosña lak pi'älob.

Ya' mi' k'äjñel li tyak'iñ ya'ya'i. Yik'ot je'el, mi' mäñe' jiñi majtyañältyak, chañ trensipalob, mu bu i keje i subob jiñ ñichim, yopom, ya' tyi krus. Mi' mäñelob i majtyañ je'el, bajche jiñi li xsubñichimob, li trensipalob mi' laj käl, li mas añobix bä i jabilel. Jiñi, mux i weñ cha'leñoob i respetar i bajñel, cha'añ añobix i jabilel.

I chukoch che' mi' chajpañoob i bä? Cha'añ weñ yom mejlel li k'iñ, cha'añ k'otyajax, cha'añ bi ma mi' sajtyel jiñ kostumbre. Cha'añ mach mi laj kilañ laj wokol, cha'añ k'amäjel, pejtyelel. Chañ jiñi li yos, mi yäk'eñoñla jiñi lak wa'tyäl, laj kuxtäl. Chañ li yos mi yäk'eñoñla lak bendisyon, mi laj k'ajtyiñ jiñi laj kixim, lak bu'ul, chañ mas k'ok'oñla tyi jajabil.

Jiñ cha'añ, mi' mejlel li k'iñi, yik'oty je'el chañ mi' k'ajtyiñoob ja'al. Mi laj k'el che' tyi

Every year, someone speaks out, that he wants the festival, that he wants the feast at his house, that he wants the people to gather together at his house. That's how it ends every year.

Thus the house is requested; thus the house is found. They will gather again when the next festival is near. When it is just about to come by, after about 10 months, during the month of March or April, the people again gather together, so that they can arrange how they will give their money or whatever it is they will buy.

Why do they give money? So that they can buy a little food or drink, so that when the festival comes they can buy a pig. They nearly always buy a pig, when they give their offering, when the people also give their offering.

They use the money right there. Together, they buy their gifts, because they are the elders, those who offer the candles, the flowers, there at the cross. They also buy their gifts, those who are the intercessors, the elders, we call them, the ones with the most years. They are well respected, because of their age.

And why do they prepare themselves? Because they really want to celebrate the festival, so that it will be happy, so that, they say, the tradition will not end. So that we will not have problems, like illnesses, whatever. So that God will give us our pledges. So that God will give us our blessing, we pray for our corn, our beans, so that it will be healthier every year.

That's why we celebrate the festival, and why we also ask for rain. We see when it's

yujulel li mayo. Jiñi añ k'iñil ma'añ ja'al. Añ k'iñil, jiñi mi' lu' chämel lak päk'äb; ma mi' kolel, cha'añ mi' wa'tyäl k'iñ.

Jiñ cha'añ, mi' melob li promesa pejtyel lak pi'älob, cha'añ mi' tyilel li ja'al, cha'añ weñ mi' kolelob i päk'äbob, mu bu i päk'ob, jujum p'ejl jabil. Jin cha'añ, che' mi yujtyel, che' mi' tyempañoob i bä wä' tyi barrio San Nicolás, ba'añ li ermita.

Chä'äch melbilob i cha'añ ñaxañoob, lak yum, laj ko'ob, wajali.

the end of May. There are years when there is no rain. There are years when all our crops die; there is no harvest, because the sun is standing.

That's why all our people make their vows, so that the rain will come, so that their crops will grow well, whatever they have planted, each year. That's why we do it thus, why we gather together here in the barrio of San Nicolás, where the hermitage is.

Thus it was done by those who came before, our grandfathers and our grandmothers, long, long ago.

Appendix III. Chol Bird Names

Lee Folmar

*Prospectus for a Senior Honors Thesis,
Department of Anthropology, Florida State University*

Taxonomic systems are a means of organizing, describing, and utilizing our surroundings. Western science, for example, uses a binomial system of nomenclature in naming and organizing species of plants and animals. The genus and species names given to organisms allow scientists to communicate about these organisms in a precise way, and allow them to group certain species together and fit them into a broader framework. The way this information is organized reflects the Western scientific perception of the natural world.

Other cultures have different ways of classifying reality. Non-Western cultures also use taxonomic systems to satisfy their needs to describe, utilize and organize knowledge about their surroundings. Unlike the Western scientific system of classification, many taxonomies have not been formalized. Use of such a taxonomy is often more unconscious than conscious. Although an individual may know the names of hundreds of plants and animals in his surroundings, he may be consciously unaware of the taxonomic system that underlies this knowledge.

Most Westerners would be unaware of their own taxonomic system had they not learned it in school. Even knowing such a system exists, we may not know the genus and species names of a given organism or how it is related to other organisms, or why it is so classified. In the sixties, anthropologists began to study non-Western classification systems using specific methodologies of elicitation and analysis of lexical forms. This sub-field of anthropology is called ethnoscience, folk science, or cognitive anthropology.

I propose to describe the taxonomic system for classifying birds used by the Chol Maya indians of southern México. During the summer of 1995, I had the opportunity to investigate the structure of this Maya system of taxonomy with a Chol speaker, Ausencio Cruz Guzmán, in Palenque, Chiapas. By using field techniques previously developed by Berlin, Breedlove and Raven (1972) in their investigation of Tzeltal Maya plant taxonomies, Cruz Guzmán and I collected the basic data of animal names and began trying to discover the Chol categories for these lifeforms. We focused our efforts on a corpus of about 200 bird names. In the thesis, I will describe the methodology and steps in analysis, present the Chol taxonomy for birds, and will complement the taxonomic study with an analysis of the lexical forms used by the Chol to name birds. On the following pages I present the preliminary groupings arrived at through my fieldwork with Ausencio Cruz.

Preliminary Ethno-Classification of Chol Birds

Data Analysis by Lee Folmar and Ausencio Cruz Guzmán

Research began with the slipping of animal names from major Chol sources, and elicitation of as many animal names as could otherwise be remembered. Following the compilation of this list and its registration on 3" × 5" slips, the names were sorted into major types by Cruz. Of the nearly 50 groups of animals, about half were birds, and about half were mammals, reptiles, and other life forms. After reviewing the groups and making some reassignment of slips, we were left with 25 groups of birds, on which we decided to concentrate. Future work will result in some reorganization of these groups; subgrouping within many of these groups is apparent, and will be investigated as research continues.

The existence of a group sometimes reminded Cruz of other members of the group, and it is likely that the following lists do not include all Chol bird names. Approximate correspondences to major bird families are suggested by the parenthetical notes to each Group. These suggestions are based on the membership of the groups as we understand them from descriptions, Spanish glosses, field identifications, and the use of published field guides to the birds of the region. These group identifications, like the Spanish and English glosses given in parentheses, are not to be taken as definitive and reliable zoological determinations, and this report is to be understood as a preliminary organization of the data.

Groups 1-21 were not birds.

Group 22 (Parrots)

alä tuyub (parrot)

tuyub (parrot)

tuyub (parakeet)

ujrich (parrot)

unix (perico)

Due to additions and multiple names for same bird, this group may be comprised of the following:

kej kex loro

kex k'ex loro

kolem loro

tyuyub

xtzinkilin

alä ujrich

Group 23 (Roadrunner)

aj k'untz'u (roadrunner)

Group 24 (Woodpeckers)

ch'ej kok
ch'ejku
aläx ch'ejku
tzelel
xch'aj k'u
xjuk' te'
xkarpinteru
xti'

Group 25 (Turkeys)

ch'iton mut
ch'al
kayu
na' ak'ach
na' mut
pipi (turkey chick)
tat ajtzo
tat mut
xwak che'e'
yäx ak'ach (peacock)
xkel

This group includes only five species; many of the terms here distinguish animals by sex and age. Xkel was added to this list during the folk key procedure, 07/01/95.

Group 26 (Partridges, Quail)

xkulukab (francolina)
xkel (chachalaca)
nakow (thicket tinamou)
kuluka' (partridge)
kukukab (perdiz)
chan wox
chäl (little tinamou)

Group 27 (Crows)

i'ik' mut (crow; belongs with wachins)

Group 28 (Toucans)

xch'aj pä'm (aracari listado de cuello)
wuk pik (mot mot)
kolem pä'm (toucan)
ch'ekek (un pájaro negro)
pixik' pä'm

päm
päntzik'
xpintzik

Group 29 k'uk' (Trogon)
xwukip (péndulo de corona)
xwukpik (guardabarranco)
peya' (brown jay)
k'än k'än xman k'uk' (citroline trogon)
chächäk xman k'uk' (slatey tailed trogon)
mank'uk' (see Group 43)
alä xwuk pik

Group 30 (Hawks, Owls, Vultures)
xunxulu' (gavilán)
xtutuy (lechuza chica)
xtow (gavilán, pájaro negro)
xta' jol (buzzard)
xlilik (hawk)
xiye' (águila)
tow (hawk)
ta' rik (buzzard)
pujyu' (tecolote)
kuy (owl)
kolem bä xiye' (eagle)
ik' bä jol (buzzard)
alä xiye'
kolem xije'
x'in
xta' jol

Group 31 (Ducks)
pech (duck, also kingfishers)
joj may (heron)
ja'al pech (garza)
säsäk pech
xkanso pech

Group 32 (Goatsuckers, Nighthawks, Nightjars, Whip-poor-will)
poyu'
x'joch (lechuza chica)
xpujyu' (tapacamino)

Group 33 (Blackbirds)
kuway
(x)buk sip (grossbeak?)

pij (xpijul?, xpijlul?)
wachin (grackle; 3 types)
xkuway
xwakway

Group 34 (Doves)

kulukab
pichon
tutz
tzunkay
ujkutz
xchäläl
xmukuy
xnakom
xpumuk
xpuruwok
xtutz

Group 35 (?)

ch'e'
xch'e' (small dark bird)
xtutuk (yellow head and tail, white below, white feet, solitary, high country)

Group 36 (Hummingbirds)

ak'ba tz'unun
säsäk tz'unun
tz'unun
chächäk tz'unun
yäyax tz'unun

Group 37 (General terms and odds and ends)

bi' ti mut (ACG: bik'ti mut)
ch'iriri mut (ch'ich'ip mut)
mate mut
mut (large birds)
stzijk (a kind of ch'ich'ip mut)
tat yalä mut (ch'ich'ip mut)
te'le mut (wild birds)

Group 38 (?)

xtoj kay (crested guan? Large ground bird; striped, black)

Group 39 (Tyrant Flycatchers)

xbochjol (tiamaría)
se lu'
xpasa'

Group 40 (Cuckoos)

x'ti'ja' (piscoy, Piaja cayana = cockoo?)

x'ti'ja' mut

Group 41 (Swallows)

x'alum (x'ajlum)

xwilis

wilis chan (swallow)

Group 42

k'ub (zácuá; Montezuma oropéndola?)

k'ubujl (zacuilla)

Group 43 (Quetzal, see Group 29)

k'uk'

mank'uk'

Group 44 (little birds)

xch'ij ch'ip

Group 45 (Oriole?)

yujyum