

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Society: Cakchiquel, or Kaqchikel

Language: Kaqchikel

Language Family Mayan

Language family Tree:

Mayan

-Quichean-Mamean

-Greater Quichean

-Quichean

-Kaqchikel

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaqchikel_language)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

CAK

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Guatemala, Chimaltenango Department.

14°38'N 90°30'W

(http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=cak)

1.4 Brief history:

At their height the Cakchiquels were a very powerful society, mostly due to them being a part of a very large confederation that encompassed the other neighboring cultures. Together this confederation dominated all the other societies in the area, but they quickly underwent a rapid decline with the entrance of the Spanish. Like with all the other Indian societies, the Spanish completely destroyed the Cakchiquels through warfare and disease. By the 1750s the Cakchiquels, who were at the top of the food chain a century previously, were reduced to the very bottom by becoming indentured farmers for the Spanish government and the missionaries.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

Originally the Cakchiquel aligned themselves with the Spanish in hopes of defeating their enemy the K'iche, but they eventually turned on the Spanish and tried fighting them. Unsurprisingly the Spanish were no match for the Indians, and the remaining Cakchiquel fled to the mountains in defeat. It was here where they worked as farmers under the Spanish missionaries and government. (<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Kaqchikel.html>)

1.6 Ecology:

The land was very mountainous with just as many canyons. It was colder than most of the region, with it being mostly cloudy. There were a lot of poisonous animals, but lacked some of the noxious insects that plague other areas in this region. It was good land for agriculture, which was lucky for these people because there weren't really any large game around. (Carmack, 92)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

Most of the population lived throughout the mountains in houses numbering 10,000 to 15,000. A typical town would have 200 to 1000 houses. (Nance, 65)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Beans, peppers, maize (Arana, 17).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Their main protein source was whatever meat they bought at the marketplace. There wasn't any large animals around, so they were dependent on whatever they could trade for their agriculture goods. (Carmack, 49)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

These people were extremely warlike. They had a variety of weapons, including the bow and arrow and the blowguns. They also had arrows made of obsidian, stone, and bone; they also used lances and wooden clubs. (Arana, 18)

2.4 Food storage:

Yes, they had complex house structures where they had a special storage area for food. (Hill, 145)

2.5 Sexual division of production:

The men typically did the farming, while the women did the crafting and house work. (Hill, 147)

2.6 Land tenure:

Yes, there was land tenure. (Hill, 147)

2.7 Ceramics:

Yes, they made a lot of their tools (pots, etc.) out of stone and wood. (Arana, 18)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce was allowed, but it wasn't common. (Borg, 129)

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Most people lived with monogamous relationships, though men were allowed to marry polygynously. (Borg, 128)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

Yes, there was a bride price. (Henderson, 61)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

Inheritance would follow a patrilineal pattern. The father would pass his belongings to his children, most commonly to his son. Also, this was sometimes the case with noble titles. (Carmack, 95)

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

Not much was said on homosexual activities, however, they did have a couple of gods and goddesses that participated in bisexual behaviors. (Arana, 43-44)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

The nobles had a pattern of exogamy, while the commoners had a pattern of endogamy. (Henderson, 61)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

There weren't really any preferential category for the people's spouses. The only real rules that must be followed was that the nobles had to marry outside of the society, and that you can't have any incestual relationships. (Henderson, 61)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

This culture's pattern of descent was patrilineal. (Nance, 44)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

Yes, they had a lot of incest avoidance rules. One cannot get with immediate family members, but cousins were sometimes okay. (Henderson, 61)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

Yes, there was a formal marriage ceremony, especially for the nobles. The nobles' marriages were a great festival that sometimes lasted days, while the commoners' weddings were very much more low key. (Henderson, 56)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

Everybody has two names: the first is his individual name, the second his family name. The first name was always that of the day they were born on. The family name either came from the location they lived, or an astrological motive, or just a peculiarity that family has. (Arana, 32-33)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

There was a double standard within this society. The nobles were expected to marry outside the community, while the commoners were allowed to marry within their local community. (Henderson, 61)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

It was the person's lineage groups that regulated marriage among the family, so it was up to them if they wanted to undergo an arrange marriage or not. (Henderson, 62)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

Some causes of out-group killing were when they needed slaves for their human sacrifices. Before a large festival the men would partake in large raids capturing slaves from neighboring societies, and it is these slaves that they would sacrifice to their gods. (Nance, 44)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

Between the years 1425 and 1475 AD the Cakchiquel were part of the quadripartite Quichean confederacy, which was more focused on warfare than leadership. Through this relationship, the Cakchiquel viewed themselves as fearless warriors, who gave much help to the Quiche kingdom. (Borg, 7)

4.18 Cannibalism?

Yes, they did perform cannibalism during the human sacrifice ritual. (See below) (Arana, 45)

The human sacrifice would be cooked, with the hands and feet going to the priest and the kings, and the rest of it was distributed to the other priests and ministers of the altar. No commoners were allowed any meat. (Nance, 38)

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

A typical village size had anywhere from 200 to a 1000 people. (Nance, 65)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

No, this society was very sedentary.

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

The Cakchiquel were an aristocrat society. There was a head chief, who acted more like a king, and his power was determined by a royal blood line. Interestingly though there were two royal blood lines in this society: the Zothils and the Xahils. There were never two kings at one time, so instead they families alternated power each generation. The families' authority were kept in check by a counsel of the most influential people in the society, though not much more was recorded about this counsel. (Maxwell, 7)

5.4 Post marital residence:

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Yes they had an active defense system. They had an active duty military that walked around the territory, making sure everything was okay.

(Nance, 38)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

The houses were centered around the specialized houses, which were usually the temples and the nobles houses. (Nance, 40)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

Yes, they had a lot of specialized houses. There were temples, places for where the gods were worshipped, and royal houses. (Nance, 40)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

They slept on mats in their houses. (Nance, 41)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

The society was organized according to family lineages. If a family was a commoner then their children were also commoners, and this was also the case for the noble and slave classes. (Nance, 40)

5.12 Trade:

The Cakchiquel had very extensive trade networks. They had an open market where local traders and traders from a multitude of societies, near and far, would come together to sell and buy their goods. Archaeologists have uncovered artifacts (shell ornaments, achiote seeds) that originated hundreds of miles away from this society. (Nance, 47)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Yes, this culture had some very complex social hierarchies. The three main class systems were the royal people, the commoners, and then the slaves at the bottom. (Nance, 42)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Medicine was a very complex thing in this society. They had doctors who specialized in the actual medicine part of healing, while they also had priests who dealt with the spiritual side of the healing process. The doctors would treat the sick with herbs, while the priests would treat the sick by performing sacrifices on behalf of the ill. (Nance, 48)

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

Birth:

Births were celebrated with sacrifices and feasts for relatives and friends. The newborn was washed in a river or spring, while “they offered sacrifice of incense and parrots.” (Nance, 48)

Death:

“The body was laid in state for two days, after which it was placed in a large jar and interred, a mound being erected over the remains.” The burial ceremonies typically lasted around fifteen days. (Arana, 48)

6.4 Other rituals:

Farming rituals:

Before seeding the men would stay away from their wives for a couple of days.

Before weeding the crops, the people would burn incense at the four corners of the field plot, each corner a tribute to one of the wind and rain gods. Then the first fruits were sacrificed to their gods. (Arana, 14)

Succession rituals:

To propagate new respect and support for the new king, an elaborate ritual would take place when the king-to-be became king. This ritual was recorded by the Cakchiquel. They described it by saying “He (the new king) was bathed by the attendants in a large painted vessels; he was clad in flowing robes; a sacred girdle or fillet was tied upon him; he was painted with the holy colors, was anointed, and jewels were placed upon his person.” (Arana, 20)

Human sacrifice rituals:

“The victim was immolated by fire...to burn, and then cut in pieces and eaten. When it was, as usual, a male captive, the genital organs were given to one of the old women who were prophetesses, to be eaten by her, as a reward for her supplications for their future success in battle.”

Though it was not uncommon for men to be sacrificed, most of the times it was children who were sacrificed. Their heart was ripped out, with their blood sprinkled towards the four cardinal directions. These sacrifice rituals were usually done before a large battle or were accompanied with the internments of chiefs. (Arana, 45)

Another source described it as:

“The slaves slated for sacrifice were dragged forward by their hair to the priest-executioner. They removed the victim’s heart with a knife and offered it to the idol...The heads were then severed from the corpses and placed on poles at a certain altar...then the skulls were buried. (Nance, 51)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

They had extremely complex art and music and dances. They would do elaborate dances at festivals and ceremonies, while performing equally complex music. Also some people were able to specialize just in art. Art was so popular that the artisans were pretty wealthy. (Henderson, 62)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

Their religion was a form of deism. Their chief god was called Chamalcan, whose image was a bat. The chief god over saw all the other gods and goddesses. A bunch of these gods and myths were borrowed from Aztec mythology. (Arana, 43-44)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

The Cakchiquel cultivated a lot of cotton, and the women became very skilled in weaving clothes out of the cotton. (Arana, 15)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

1. One thing that really impressed me about this society was that they accurately came to the conclusion that there were 365 days in the year with one extra day every four years. (Arana, 28)

Numbered references

1.

Hill, Robert M., and John Monaghan. *Continuities in Highland Maya Social Organization: Ethnohistory in Sacapulas, Guatemala*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1987.

"Kaqchikel Language." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 18 Nov. 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaqchikel_language>.

"Ethnologue Report for Language Code: Cak." *Ethnologue, Languages of the World*. Web. 20 Nov. 2011. <http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=cak>.

"Kaqchikel." *Countries and Their Cultures*. Web. 20 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Kaqchikel.html>>.

Arana, Francisco. *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1953. Print.

Henderson, John S. *The World of the Ancient Maya*. Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1981.

Borg, Barbara. *Ethnohistory of the Sactepequez Maya*. 1-2. Print. Dissertaion.

Carmack, Robert M. *The Quiché Mayas of Uatatlán*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1981. Print.

Carmack, Robert M. *Quichean Civilization; the Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Sources*. Berkeley: University of California, 1973. Print.

Nance, Charles Roger, Stephen L. Whittington, and Barbara E. Jones-Borg. *Archaeology and Ethnohistory of Iximche*. Gainesville: University of Florida, 2003. Print.

Maxwell, Judith M., and Robert M. Hill. *Kaqchikel Chronicles: the Definitive Edition*. Austin: University of Texas, 2006. Print.