

THE MYSTERIES OF IZAPA AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

It is now known that South American civilization preceded Mesoamerica. The first organized ceremonial centers were present along the Peruvian coast already in the third millennium BC. These are most likely the ones to which Grace Cooke refers. The leader of these Mysteries was called Menes, a term reminiscent of Manes and Manu, the high initiate who led mankind out of Atlantis. The process of initiation was divided into three stages. First, the pupil had to undergo seven years of training of the physical body. He would have to face severe tests of strength and endurance. It was a preparation, testing the courage of the neophyte.

In the second stage came instruction based on the observation of natural phenomena, studying and meditating on nature. The neophyte would learn to observe weather formations for entire days and nights. He was also taught the arts of agriculture and animal husbandry. At this time of human development humanity had more direct power over nature through its etheric body and could influence nature from within. Thus the second period was in all degrees a type of course in natural science as applied to the ordering of human existence.

At the final stage, the pupil was taken to a cave high on a mountain and left for a long time of silence and meditation. Grace Cooke, referring to her own previous incarnation, evokes:

This was the sharpest ordeal...I had to face legions of elementals and wrestle with them, to overcome or be overcome. Again and again these creatures of the underworld tempted me with all manner of bribes to put myself in their hands, to surrender my faith and trust in God or eternal good: in return for which they

would bestow on me power to work the strange magic of the Lucifers, great powers over earth itself and its people, over the people of the inner world even.⁽³⁵⁾

The third part of the initiation lasted two years and ended with tests experienced in two different temples. Here the disciple would be alternatively exposed to great heat and intense cold. The training protected the flesh from these extremes and taught the disciple how to use the power of thought in order to heal injuries and illnesses. In women, this initiation brought about the attainment of prophetic vision.

From the above, the Atlantean nature of this initiation process is apparent. In addition lingering Lemurian elements continue, particularly the differentiation of the role of women. The inner and outer aspects of initiation weave into each other at different times. As in the Hibernian Mysteries analyzed below (but here more literally), tests of heat and cold play an important part, and the development of prophetic vision also marks the last step of the process.

Preservation of Atlantean Knowledge in Hibernia

From Steiner we know that the Hibernian Mysteries played an important role for a long time before our era. The Mysteries of Hibernia existed in a place roughly equivalent to modern Ireland. These Mysteries were preserved by the succeeding culture of Druids and Bards in a different form. Through them they were still present in a pale reflection at the time of the foundation of Christianity.

The Hibernian Mysteries preserved most faithfully the ancient wisdom-teaching of the Atlantean peoples.⁽³⁶⁾ These Mysteries were some of the deeper mysteries of antiquity. Steiner expresses the difficulty of perceiving them even clairvoyantly. He also stresses that they could neither be

approached through ordinary historical research, nor with historical clairvoyance. He qualifies these Mysteries as Great Mysteries, the last Great Mysteries which expressed human and cosmic secrets.⁽³⁷⁾

In the context of this study, regarding these Mysteries we can say that the preparation of the pupil led him to a state of complete despair in his search for the truth. At the same time he could find no reality behind the phenomena of sense perception. The subsequent phases of initiation brought him in front of two statues of gigantic size: one male, the other female. In front of the male statue the aspiring initiate felt as if consumed by heat. He felt what it would be if the Sun alone worked in the cosmos. In front of the female statue he was filled with imaginations of the Earth in winter and acquired the feeling of what it would be if the Moon alone worked in the cosmos. This first phase of the ritual led the pupil to perceive that the male statue was conveying to him the idea of science, whereas the female statue was indicating the role of art. This meeting with science and art led to the pupil perceiving the form of Christ. The priest who directed him to the Christ-picture said to him: "Receive the Word and the Power of this Being into thy heart." Another priest said: "And receive from Him what the two images wished to give thee—Science and Art." Later in his initiation, the pupil could draw the two experiences together. What the pupil had achieved was a twofold process. On one hand he could reach outwardly into the farthest cosmic spaces. On the other he could plunge deeply into his soul. When he could master these processes and recognize them, a twofold set of experiences opened up to the candidate to initiation. When he learned to control his movement out into cosmic spaces, he was led into the past evolutionary stages of the Earth. When he learned to control his inner dreaming, outer physical heat was felt to be the same as soul heat. In his

consciousness he was transported into the future evolutionary stages of earth existence. This glimpse into the future was accompanied with the distressing experience of knowing that he had to overcome his lower ego, which could otherwise be the source of evil.

What became of the preservation of old Atlantean knowledge after the time of Christ? We know that on one side the Hibernian Mysteries partly continued in the Arthurian Stream founded by the initiate known as Merlin in 1100 BC, which continued roughly until the ninth century AD. However, the old atavistic clairvoyance was now dimmed.

Of the Mysteries of Hibernia and their offshoots Steiner further says that while the Mystery of Golgotha occurred on earth, on the island of Hibernia this event was experienced spiritually in the aura of the earth. The events of Golgotha were experienced in pictures at the same time in which they occurred historically. The same seems to have been the case in America, although with a qualitatively different experience. It is less surprising therefore that both Popol Vuh and Inca esotericism (through the chronicler Molina) associated the presence of the human-sun being with the event of the Dawning.

With the benefit of having explored other Mysteries that preserved the Atlantean knowledge we can now return to the Mysteries of Izapa.

Izapa and a Possible Initiation Path

We will now follow a possible initiation path into the mysteries of Izapa. Much of this exploration is made possible through the research work of J. M. Jenkins.⁽³⁸⁾

As we have seen previously, during the winter solstice the Milky Way crosses the sun's path on the ecliptic

in Sagittarius. This is the time of the celebration of the rebirth of the solar being and hero, Hunahpu. It is in Sagittarius that the Milky Way forms a dark rift, almost completely surrounded by the white light of the stars. This place, pointing to the center of the galaxy, was seen by the Maya as a womb of creation. This is a central theme of the new galactic astronomy that we will see abundantly used in Izapa. This new astronomy, based upon the observation of the Milky Way and the ecliptic, supersedes the two approaches of polar and zenith astronomy in Izapa. Let us see how.

Izapa has a particular geography. To its north are situated the two volcanoes Tacana and Tajumulco, to its south the ocean. In the polarity of heavens and underworld, the ocean represents the underworld. The ceremonial site is the symbolic middle ground between heights and depths. The north-south axis offers a first layer of meaning to the design of the city.

Izapa is located at $14^{\circ}15'$ latitude. The celestial pole is situated 14° above the horizon. In the northern direction, slightly to the east of it, is situated the volcano Tacana. A cleft closely situated to the east of the summit served as a marker for the rising of the Big Dipper, from around 300 BC to the beginning of our era. At the December solstice, the Big Dipper was visible for the whole night, when the sun was at its lowest. At the opposite time of year, during the summer solstice, the Big Dipper was not visible at night and the sun was at its highest. The winter solstice was the moment of the rebirth of the sun and of its representative, Hunahpu. The volcano Tacana, situated to the north, symbolizes the polar region. Consequently, the polar astronomy belongs to the region and direction of the north.

Let us now look closer at zenith astronomy. At first sight zenith astrology would have no directional quality,

since it points away from earth to the heavens above. However, in the Mesoamerican worldview there was a correspondence between the north-south axis and the zenith-nadir axis. The south is equivalent to the underworld, the north to the heavens. The north is equivalent to up, the south to down. Therefore, zenith astrology also referred to the north.

Finally, galactic astronomy looked symbolically to the sunrise of the December solstice, towards the southeast, perpendicularly to the northern direction: the Tacana volcano is situated at 23° east of north, the December sunrise horizon at 23° south of east. Most of the monuments in the site of Izapa are oriented in these directions. In December 100 BC, the Milky Way rose parallel over the horizon, two hours before the December solstice sun. What J. M. Jenkins has discovered through computer simulation is the fact that at Izapa, looking to the southeast, the sun will rise within the rift of the Milky Way in the year 2012, a very unique occurrence. On the December solstice, the sun will appear as if reborn from the center of the galaxy. The year 2012 is particularly significant in the Mayan calendar as the end-date of the present Great Cycle. Here is yet a further confirmation that Izapa has a central place in the origin of the Long Count. The dark rift of the Milky Way has still other symbolic associations. It is the place where the head of Hun Hunahpu stood on top of the cosmic tree, and it is also the place of the re-birth of the Twins. The Great Cycle that started in 3114 BC ends in 2012 BC. As already mentioned, this cycle is in close correspondence to the cycle of Kali Yuga, from the Indian esoteric tradition, which extends from 3101 BC to AD 1899. Here is a further possible indication that the Maya looked at the end of the cycle as an end of a time of darkness.

Modern day Quiché Maya still call the dark rift *Xibalba be*, or the “road to the underworld.” So the Mayan end-date of the present Great Cycle has many added meanings. The meeting of the sun in the dark rift of the Milky Way in 2012 indicates a future rebirth of the solar deity. It is also what the Maya define as the cosmic reunion of First Father and First Mother—the union of heaven and earth—that points to a movement of redemption of the underworld.

Two concepts face each other in the iconography of Izapa: the rebirth of the maize/sun deity during the agricultural cycle, and the rebirth of the sun god during the yearly and cosmic cycles. One refers to the earthly aspect of the sun deity, the other to the cosmic aspect. These twin concepts are represented in ways that may cause confusion at times. In Izapa, the Milky Way is represented in a variety of ways. A recurrent one is the caiman, with the mouth pointing towards Sagittarius and the tail towards the thinner part of the Milky Way in Taurus/Gemini. Stela 25 of Izapa portrays the heavens on the day of the December solstice (see figure 3, chapter 6, p. 146). At that time, the head of the caiman (the largest part of the Milky Way, the dark rift) looks to the nadir, and is situated under the horizon. The tail of the caiman (the thinnest part of the Milky Way in Taurus/Gemini) is overhead.⁽³⁹⁾

The dialogue between north and south summarizes the deeds of the Twins, their double confrontation with Vucub Caquix and the Lords of Xibalba. This theme of the Popol Vuh is woven within the iconographic content of the stelae. The Popol Vuh provided simultaneous contact with mythical realities and their astronomical counterparts. Let us now “walk” the Izapa ruins in chronological order, in what could have been the astronomical/cosmological initiation into the Mexican Mysteries.

The message of the transition from one form of astronomy to another one is sculpted in stone from group to group:

- Group A, built from 300 to 50 BC and thus the oldest, is the one that reveals the fall of Seven Macaw, the Polar God. By the year 300 BC, in effect Ursa Major had already considerably drifted away from its proximity to the heavenly north pole.
- Group B, used simultaneously and shortly after Group A, clearly treats the theme of zenith astronomy.
- Group E is an intermediate group of the same age as A and B, whose main theme is the Father/Mother polarity.
- Group F, dated 50 BC—AD 100, is the most recent and celebrates galactic astronomy. It is the only one with a ball court! Note here too the coincidence in time between the dating of the building and the timing of the Dawning as the transition into our era.

The imaginations of the Popol Vuh and the orientation of the stelae and monuments will allow us to decode the essential meaning of the groups. Although most of the monuments in one group point in one direction, a significant one may point to another, and complete the message of each particular group. The placement of a stela within a group offers other valuable indications: central stelae are often the most important ones. The final layer of interpretation resides in the Mayan hieroglyphs and symbolic representations. We have seen some of them with the moving cross or swastika, the two-headed serpent, the cosmic caiman, etc.

We will now envision an initiation path that moves from Group A, to group B, Group E and finally to group F. Keep in mind that there is only circumstantial evidence for

this progression. Nevertheless the path through the iconography of these groups will reveal the importance of Izapa, and the central place of the message of the Popol Vuh in the role of the sacred place.

Group A: The Fall of Seven Macaw

Group A is a group comprised of four platforms, three of which are oriented north-south, the northernmost towards the December Solstice sunrise. All of the carved monuments are north or south of the platforms, except for Stela 27, oriented towards the December Solstice horizon. Stela 5 is the most fully carved document of all Izapa stelae. V. Garth Norman calls it a “supernarrative.” It is understood to depict events from different world Ages that we have seen in part I of the Popol Vuh. It portrays a sky panel at the top, the sacred tree in the middle and water scrolls at the bottom. At the base of the tree there are seven human figures, and further up deities or spiritual beings. The iconography at the bottom is the same used in other places to indicate the flood. This is another reason for acknowledging the stela as a portrayal of Mayan creation. It is a fitting introduction to the esoteric content of the Popol Vuh that concerns the three previous ages. Stela 7 depicts Seven Macaw in upward flight and Stela 2 an early stage of the fall of Seven Macaw. Here he is depicted as standing above the sacred tree, but in a reversed position with head down. The Hero Twins appear on each side in a movement indicating with their arms a downward motion of the god. The same theme reappears in Stela 4, this time with a single being in the act of striking an inverted, falling Seven Macaw with a club (figure 2). Stelae 2 and 4 stand in the central positions of their respective north and south platforms.

To the east of Stela 4, Stela 25, already mentioned,

shows the Milky Way as the cosmic caiman and Hunahpu without the arm that has been torn by Seven Macaw. He holds a staff, with the polar god as a macaw sitting on top of it. The important Stela 27 is a representation of the galactic cosmic center of the dark rift of the Milky Way. Pointing as it does to the December solstice, it works as a final reminder that Seven Macaw is fallen, but there is a new astronomy and a new god. Stela 27 stands as an answer to all the other stelae. It points towards the Group B.

Of added interest to our analysis is the correspondence in time of Group A with the reality of Olmec decline. At the time in which Group A was built—around AD 300—the Olmec worldview was waning and most likely so was polar astronomy due to the “fall” of the Big Dipper, caused by the precession of the equinoxes.



Figure 2; Stela 4, Izapa

Group B: the Transition to Zenith Astronomy

Group B includes Mound 30A, which is facing north. Carved stelae are present on the northern and western platforms. What draws the visitor's attention is the central location of three pillars and three stelae. The three pillars are surmounted by a ball. We have in them a simple representation of the sphere of the sun on the cosmic zenith axis—in other words a ceremonial gnomon, referring to zenith astronomy. Throne I stands in alignment with the central gnomon. The throne symbolizes the cosmic center in which the priest enters in connection with the spiritual world. The glyphs carved on it are placed at the four cosmic directions (summer and winter solstice sunrises and sunsets). Additionally, the positions of rising and setting zenith sun (due east and due west) are clearly marked in the middle of each side, as well as the zenith sun itself, at the intersection of the cross-bands carved on the middle of the throne.

Stelae 8, 9 and 10 stand facing the three gnomons. Stela 9, the central one, represents a solar deity carrying a human being to the zenith. This is reminiscent of the episode of the resurrection of Hunahpu (figure 3). Stelae 8 and 10 both denote a vertical polarity. In Stela 8 we see a figure of a ruler or priest sitting on a throne, located in the underworld. Stela 10 depicts the cosmic tree (see figure 4, chapter 6, p. 137). At its base is Ixquic giving birth to the Twins. Above the tree are cloud scrolls and among them is Hun Hunahpu, father of the Twins. This is the best possible representation of the dual nature of Hunahpu and Ixbalamqué.

Stela 11, situated on the western platform and facing the December Solstice, completes the message of the three previous stelae (figure 4). There, we see the solar deity reborn from a frog's mouth, another possible symbol of the underworld and the dark rift. The outstretched hands of the

god, indicating the completion of a cycle, reinforce the message. Stela 11 indicates then a transition towards the galactic astronomy of Group F.

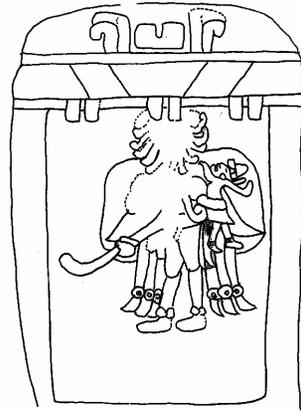


Figure 3: Stela 9, Izapa



Figure 4: Stela 11, Izapa

Group E: Cosmic Father / Cosmic Mother Union

Group E could form a prelude to Group F. The group's prominent features are Stelae 19 and 20, oriented towards the December Solstice sunrise. Stela 19 is a figurative representation of the female principle (figure 5) A v-shaped cleft bears in its center a circle with a rectangular indentation on the bottom, a representation of a womb. Stela 20 is what J. M. Jenkins calls a "phallic breechcloth" that possibly represents the male principle (figure 6). Stela 88, only partly preserved, may depict the fertilization of the female by the male principle on a cosmic level (figure 7). It is symbolized by the solar circle standing above the v-cleft, an image that could be pointing to the event of the December solstice of 2012. For the above reasons Group E could have been a prelude to the cosmic re-enactment performed during the ball game that we will see in the next group.

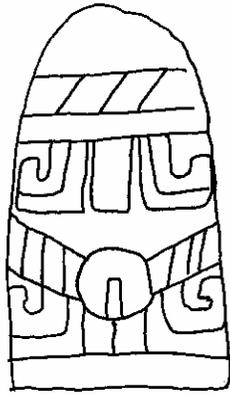


Figure 5: Stela 19, Izapa

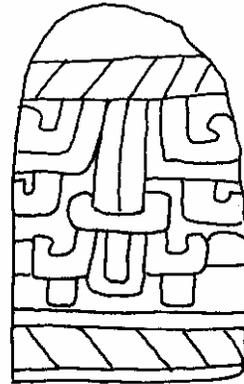


Figure 6: Stela 20, Izapa

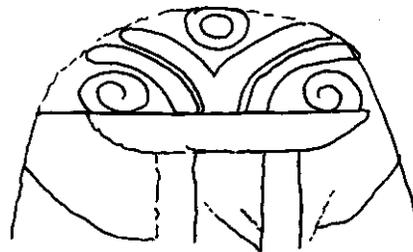


Figure 7: Stela 88, Izapa

Group F: The New Galactic Astronomy

Group F is oriented towards the December solstice sunrise, and its most prominent feature is the ball court. Group F was the one built latest in time and closest to the turning point of our era. It is significant that it was continuously used into the Classic Maya age and even into the Post-Classic, for thousand years after its building. The ball court introduces us to the solar deity's cosmic dimension.

Stela 60, prominently placed to the east of the ball court, facing the west, depicts a victorious ball player

dominating a fallen Vucub Caquix. It reconnects us to polar astronomy, but this time it states clearly that the era of Vucub Caquix has come to an end. Monument 4 is a zenith gnomon, the only monument reminding us of zenith astronomy. All the other carved monuments simply portray the new astronomy and the resurrection of the Sun God. In the ball court the candidates for initiation probably witnessed the re-enactment of the cosmic drama of the sun's resurrection. The end of the game, when the ball, representing the head of Hunahpu, went into the goal ring, indicated the death and rebirth of the sun god.

There are many other elements that complete the meaning of the ball court's cosmology. It is Stela 67, in the center of the northern wall of the court, which catches our interest and adds further food for thought (see figure 5, chapter 6, p. 147). It is quite unique among all the other carvings and deserves a closer look. What we see is a solar hero standing in a canoe. That he is human is further emphasized by the unequivocal presence of a beard. The canoe echoes the shape of the ball court, and points towards the rift of the Milky Way on the December 21, 2012 sunrise. This could correspond to the view that the Milky Way's Dark Rift moves in the heavens in relation to the precession of the equinoxes—a situation that is reflected on the horizon above, where the Milky Way progressively drifts towards the sunrise sun of the year 2012 (according to computer simulation enacted by J. M. Jenkins). V. G. Norman calls our attention to the two crosses that the figure holds in both hands, which are rarely portrayed anywhere else in Mesoamerican iconography. He equates them to the Egyptian ankh scepter, a symbol of life.⁽⁴⁰⁾ They actually more closely resemble the so-called Latin cross with a longer lower arm. This stela may give a hint of the solar hero, Ixbalamqué, and the reality of the two crucifixions: the

one in Golgotha and the one in Mesoamerica. This is confirmed in Mesoamerican legends, where the prophet sometimes appears with the sign of the cross in either hand. The outstretched hands indicate the end of a cycle in Mayan symbolism.

We can now compare what we have gleaned from Izapan statuary and history with the insights that Steiner has offered us from spiritual research.

The Nature of Izapan Initiation

We have brought forth two previous examples of survival of Atlantean mysteries in the post-Atlantean era. The first ones were the Hibernian mysteries. In America, more or less at the same time, there were the Mysteries of Menes, the ones described from previous life memories by G. Cooke. Many elements are common to the three streams of mysteries that we have described. In all of them, the inner path into the microcosm is accompanied by the outer path into the macrocosm. Knowledge of the past is accompanied with prophetic knowledge of the future. In its furthest implications Mystery knowledge affected the organization of social forms, agriculture, astronomy, and religious practices.

The initiation path of Izapa and the text of the Popol Vuh offer us various insights into the nature of the Mysteries. The Popol Vuh gives indications about the trials that preceded the final deeds of the Twins—trials that the highest initiate underwent. These are the trials of the six Caves, in some degree similar to what Grace Cooke describes of her initiation. These may have been part of the path of the disciples of the Izapa Mysteries, constituting the path into the microcosm. The other part is what remains engraved in the stelae: a grandiose survey of the path into

the macrocosm, a cosmic history in stone that provided the disciple with an instruction into the remote past and distant future of American cosmology, looking forward until AD 2012.

What is it then that makes the emerging Mayan Mysteries unique? A clue has been offered in the Izapan ball court. The deeds of Vitzliputzli have been performed in the world. The Popol Vuh offers to the adept, within the precinct of the Mysteries, a view of his task in the world. Ixbalamqué and the solar being represented by the Twins have to overcome the dangers of Vucub Caquix and of the Lords of Xibalba. The Popol Vuh speaks before that of all the previous ages of mankind and the temptations undergone by humanity of the First, Second, and Third Age. To all of these correspond a trial and a test. Humanity fails each time, only to start again with new forces. The human being has to learn to work in co-creation with the gods. Maize, with which the Twins are identified in the agricultural cycle of the year, depends on human efforts for its growth. Unique among other cereal seeds is its incapacity to reproduce on its own. Through this imagery and many of its aspects the Mexican Mysteries seem to point to humanity's present and future co-creative role in concert with the gods.

The end date defining the present Great Cycle of 13 baktuns is the year 2012. The Mayan Mysteries are mysteries of the future. An element of this vision of the future appeared in the Legend of the Popocatepetl. There we saw the Prophet beholding in a vision the destruction of Tula, the Golden City. This was his trial. His faith, sustaining him, allowed him to regain the gift of prophecy and to perceive further into the future the coming of the new era and the rebirth of the golden city of Tula.

With these elements in mind, it becomes easier to identify the meaning of the end date and the rebirth of the

Solar God. This we can only do with the help of spiritual science. The present time to which the Popol Vuh points is the time that Steiner defines as the time of the reappearance of the Christ in the etheric, the event that has also been called the Second Coming. Defined by Steiner, it is a progressively unfolding event that human beings will start experiencing from the year 1933. This point in time represents a growing aspect of modern spiritual co-creation. Precisely as humanity is able to bring the darkest horrors of unprecedented evil, so it is able to sustain the work of Christ in active co-creation. We will return to this aspect as we reach the conclusions of these studies.

Accompanying the ability to co-create with the gods is the risk of being led astray by alluring calls. The appeal of Vucub Caquix and the Lords of Xibalba is subtle and real. The Popol Vuh mentions almost as a surprise that the Lords of Xibalba are not real gods. Before that, it had led us to believe that they were. Whether they were or not does not cause great difference in the Native American soul. In effect, they were the tools of spiritual beings that their souls could perceive as clearly as physical reality. These retarding beings, acting through humans, posed a real threat to the progressive forces represented by the initiate and the Mysteries of Izapa.

The answers to the threats of Vucub Caquix and Xibalba survive to this day in the Mayan ritual year and its division between rainy season and dry season, Sacred Calendar and civil year. The iconographic message shows that the Twins have overcome the night god that Vucub Caquix's consciousness represents. The Twins' life accompanies the death and resurrection of maize, its life cycle. It is a new night consciousness that the priest of the agrarian god represents; we could call it a Christ-imbued night consciousness. The agrarian priest works with the

night exclusively in the realm of the natural cycle and does so in commemorating the deeds of the Twins. The threat of Vucub Caquix, the night god, has been overcome. The agrarian god, hearkening to the days of Atlantis, rules exclusively over nature in close cooperation with the Twins who accompany the cycle of maize with their life. Nature, penetrated by the Christ-imbued deeds of the initiate, offers new resources to the human being and to civilization. On the other hand the solar god ushers in the new age of historical consciousness and culture, sowing the seeds of individuality most clearly visible in the conduct of the solar priest.

After Izapa, the subsequent history of Mesoamerica is followed by the inner struggles and doubts of discerning between the different calls that have all the appearance of legitimacy. Teotihuacan and Aztec worldviews are based on an apparent continuation of the tradition of the Popol Vuh. What is it that makes Teotihuacan different from the Toltecs of Tula, from the League of Mayapan, or from the Aztecs? We will look now at history, following the threads of The Popol Vuh, cosmology, and astronomy that have already allowed us to find our way into the Mysteries of Izapa. Knowledge of these central Mysteries will give us an orientation into later American history.

Luigi Morelli, www.millenniumculmination.net, 2015