

GENDER AND ROLES OF LUNAR DEITIES  
IN POSTCLASSIC CENTRAL MEXICO AND THEIR  
CORRELATIONS WITH THE MAYA AREA

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Study of colonial period sources, Precolumbian iconography, and ethnographic data provides insights about the different roles played by male and female lunar deities.<sup>1</sup> The multiplicity of lunar deities probably reflects the many "personalities" of the moon as it undergoes rapid transformation over the course of a month and disappears for a period of up to three days during conjunction with the sun (new moon phase).

Ethnographic data and colonial period dictionaries indicate that the moon's monthly transformation is a process of aging, with the period of the new moon to first crescent representing the newborn moon (Báez-Jorge 1988: 247; Lamb 1981: 246-47; Neuenswander 1981).<sup>2</sup> There is also evidence from some ethnographic accounts that different phases of the moon are associated with different sexes (Báez-Jorge 1988: 246; Jäcklein 1974: 285), and in some instances the moon may be visualized as changing gender over the course of the month (Tedlock 1985: 296-7, 328). This paper investigates whether the moon was assigned a different gender during different phases and studies the nature of the

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<sup>2</sup> The colonial period dictionaries confuse the new moon (moon in conjunction with the sun) and the first crescent, referring to the *hokzah u* ("to make appear the moon") as the new moon, when it clearly describes the first crescent; and they provide different interpretations about the lunar phase associated with the "mature moon," with some sources identifying it as the waning moon, while others say the mature moon is the full moon (Lamb 1981:246-47). A confusion about the "age" of the full moon is also evident in ethnographic accounts. The Zoques say that the full moon is a mature person after marriage and the waning moon is a person of 65 years or older (Báez-Jorge 1988:247). Nonetheless, the Tzotzil say the full moon is already old, and the waning moon is exhausted and worn out (Lamb 1984).

gender roles identified with male and female aspects of the moon during the Precolumbian and colonial epochs.

One of the most intriguing aspects of lunar imagery in ancient Mesoamerica is the bisexual nature of lunar deities. The most dramatic element of the bisexual lunar complex is the gender transformation of female lunar deities represented by females who were sacrificed and replaced by male impersonators who took the role of the goddess after the sacrifice. This role reversal is surprising because feminine roles in Aztec (Mexica) society were clearly defined, focusing on such activities as spinning, weaving, and childbirth. The lunar deities were able to change gender or gender roles because of their lunar nature. This is also evident in ethnographic accounts that describe bisexual lunar deities and lunar deities that crossover in their gender roles. Gender-role ambiguity may be intended to mirror the variable nature of the moon, which constantly changes its position and appearance when observed over the course of the month.

#### CENTRAL MEXICAN MOON GODS

Contemporary accounts from Central Mexico describe the moon as a being with both male and female aspects. The Huichol, Totonac, and Tepehua all believe that the moon is bisexual (Báez-Jorge 1988: 259). According to the Tepehua, the male aspect of the moon is linked to the pale light of the moon. The female aspect is the Red Siren who lives inside the moon and is responsible for menstruation (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986: 204). This seems to be an appropriate female role, however, menstruation is not always under the control of the feminine aspect of the moon. For example, among the Totonac menstruation and formation of the fetus are controlled by the Moon God (Ichon 1973: 108). Among the Tarascans, who also believe the moon is bisexual, the masculine aspect causes menstruation by having intercourse with women (Loo 1987: 146). A similar ambiguity in gender is evident in historic accounts of the Precolumbian Moon God known as Tecciztecatl.

#### *Tecciztecatl*

In the Aztec story of the creation of the sun and moon at Teotihuacan, Tecuciztecatl (Tecciztecatl), the future moon, threw himself into

the fire following the newly transformed sun (Sahagún 1950-82, vii: 4-7).<sup>3</sup> The Nahuatl text links his name directly to the moon (*metztli*). He wore the sleeveless jacket (*xicolli*) of a priest, indicating a masculine role. However, a parallel creation legend in the *Leyenda de los Soles* brings out a female quality in the description of the Moon God, Nahuictepatl (4 Knife), who sings and dances like a woman (Bierhorst 1992: 148; Thompson 1939: 128).

In colonial-period codices, Tecciztecatl (“conch shell lord”) usually wears a conch shell symbolizing the womb. *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (13r) says that he was named for a shell because it is like an image of a womb (Fig. 1). The gloss describing Tecciztecatl-Metzitli in the



Fig. 1. Tonatiuh, the Sun God, with Tecciztecatl, the Moon God (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 12v-13r, Nicholson 1971: Fig. 38)

<sup>3</sup> There are two versions of the creation of the sun and moon at Teotihuacan in the *Florentine Codex* (Sahagún 1950-82, 1:83-84, vii:4-7). Book One notes that the fire had already extinguished so that the moon fell into ashes, whereas Book Seven says the Moon God, Tecciztecatl (referred to as Tecuciztecatl) followed the sun into the fire.

*Codex Ríos* says they put a shell (*caracol marino*) on his head to indicate that "like a shellfish emerging from the folds of its shell, so man emerges from the womb of his mother" (Corona Núñez 1963: I, 198, III, 68). The conch shell represents the womb, giving Tecciztecatl a bisexual quality.

The Moon God's ambiguous gender is seen in the *Borgia* group codices of the late Postclassic period (A.D. 1200-1521). Most depict Tecciztecatl ("conch shell lord") with props appropriate to a masculine role, but with the womb-like conch shell that associates him with the feminine realm of childbirth. *Codex Fejérváry* (24) depicts him with a knife headdress, a conch shell on his headband, and a bone implement that typically appears in bloodletting scenes involving masculine figures (Paszatory 1983: Pls. 95, 119). In the *trecena* patron section of the *Borgia* group codices, the aged Moon God appears with a bundle of spears and a knife of the type used in a human sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> On *Codex Vaticanus B* 54 he also has the conch shell, but on *Codex Borgia* 66 he lacks the shell. Here his face painting identifies him as a priest (Seler 1902-03: 253). The emphasis is on his masculine persona as a warrior and a priest. He holds a peculiar wooden object that resembles a planting stick, which would indicate another masculine role. Nonetheless, Tecciztecatl's feminine quality is clearly brought out in another section of the *Codex Borgia*.

In the day patron section of the *Codex Borgia* (11), Tecciztecatl is represented as an old woman with a conch shell headdress (Fig. 2). Seler (1963, I: 83, II: 186-89) suggests that she represents the old moon (the waning moon), but neither he nor Nowotny (1976: 23) explain why Tecciztecatl is represented with a different gender in the two calendric sections, despite the fact that it is an unique occurrence without parallels in the other *Borgia* group manuscripts. The substitution of a female figure in the role of Tecciztecatl shows that the gender of lunar deities is variable. The gender may be determined by the assigned role. The female figure of Tecciztecatl is represented in the day patron section, which depicts the womb-shell aspect of Tecciztecatl, whereas in the *trecena* section, a male lunar deity appears in the masculine role with implements of warfare and priestly attributes.

<sup>4</sup> The *trecenas* are a set of thirteen-day periods that make up the 260-day (20 x 13) divination calendar, a calendar probably derived from the coincidence of periods relating to the moon, Venus, and the length of the human gestation period (Aveni 1992:79).



Fig. 2. Tecciztecatl in Female Form (*Codex Borgia* 11, after Seler 1963)

### *Pulque Gods*

A similar sexual ambiguity is seen in the imagery of the pulque gods, deities linked to the moon through the pulque cult. Seler (1960-61, III: 489) notes that the connection between the moon and the pulque gods is explained by their name—the “Four Hundred Rabbits”—for the rabbit was the animal seen on the surface of the moon (Fig. 3; Sahagún 1950-82, VII: 7). Nicholson (1991: 182) concurs with the Seler’s lunar interpretation of the cult. Visual imagery also provides support for identifying the pulque deities with the lunar cult. For example, in the *Codex Borgia*, Pahtecatl wears a rabbit skin crown, symbolizing the pulque god as one of the 400 Rabbits (Fig. 4). He also wears the *yacametzli* nose ornament—a horseshoe-shaped design with

scroll ends, one of the principal identifying features of the pulque gods.<sup>5</sup> This is the symbol of the moon, designated as the emblem of the pulque gods.

Deities representing the fermented beverage called pulque (*octli*) are almost always male and they often hold axes for cutting off the top of the maguey plant to tap the *aguamiel* used in making pulque. Mayahuel is connected with the pulque cult, but she is the plant itself and is not shown with the axe used in cutting maguey. However, sometimes a pulque god will wear a feminine headdress, showing that the gender boundaries in the pulque cult are blurred. On *Codex Borgia* 57, an axe-wielding pulque god wears the headdress of unspun cotton typical of Tlazolteotl (Fig. 3), suggesting a female attribute and a certain

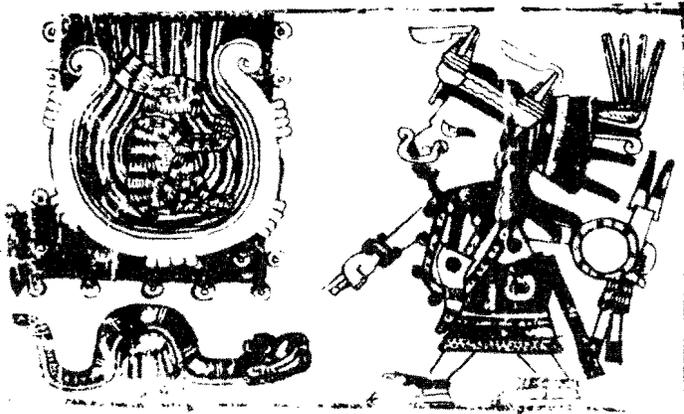


Fig. 3. Tlazolteotl with the Moon Symbol (*Codex Borgia* 55, after Seler 1963)

gender ambiguity. Furthermore, an actual gender change is evident in comparing two related calendar sections of the *Codex Borgia*. In the day patron series, Pahtecatl as a male (Fig. 4), whereas in the *trecena* patron series Pahtecatl is a female wearing the unspun cotton earrings characteristic of Tlazolteotl (*Codex Borgia* 70). This represents a gender change like that seen in images of Tecciztecatl in the same two sections of the *Codex Borgia*. Again, Seler and Nowotny do not discuss the meaning of the peculiar gender transformation. The gender crossover

<sup>5</sup> The *yacameztli* nose ornament indicates lunar affiliations, as does the relationship with rabbits, but the pulque gods are by no means primarily lunar deities. Their most important function is in the pulque cult, and their links with the moon may have to do with the way pulque harvesting is timed by the lunar phases (González de Lima 1990:37; González 1975:94).

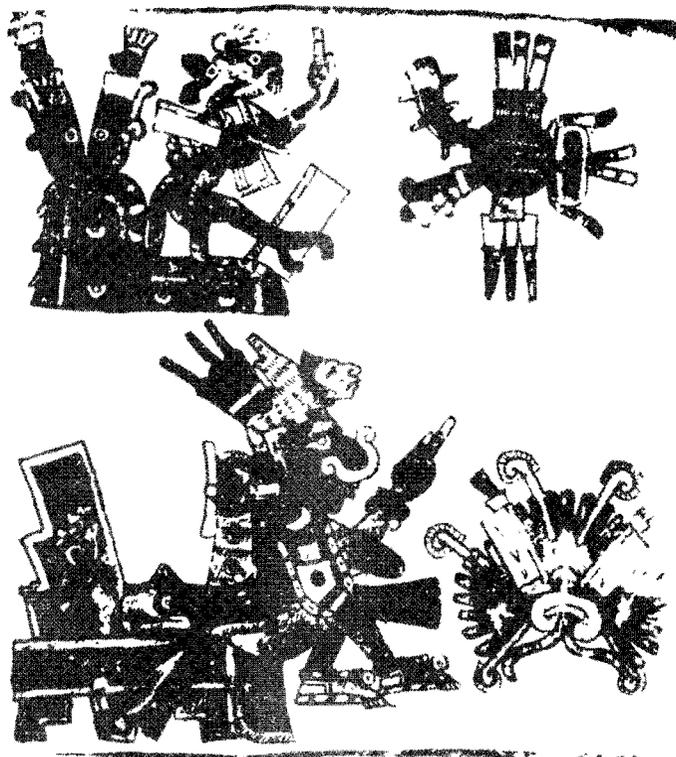


Fig. 4. Pahtecatli, the Pulque God with his Lunar Nose Ornament (*Codex Borgia* 13, after Seler 1963)

among the pulque deities reflects a link with the bisexual aspect of the lunar complex.

Pahtecatli and Tecciztecatli are both lunar gods who have female counterparts that reveal their bisexual nature. These deities are predominantly masculine, but they are sometimes transformed into a female counterparts, as in the *Codex Borgia*. It is important to point out that there are only two instances in the *Borgia* group where the deities change gender when comparing the calendar sections of the *trecena* and day patrons, and it seems significant that such gender transformations occur specifically with two male deities strongly connected to the moon. A similar gender ambivalence is evident in female lunar deities.

## CENTRAL MEXICAN MOON GODDESSES

Ethnographic data provide evidence of the bisexual nature of the Central Mexican Moon Goddess. Even in cults emphasizing the moon's association with Virgin Mary, the moon also has a male aspect. The Precolumbian Moon Goddess has many different manifestations in Central Mexico, most often reflecting female roles, but bisexual imagery is also evident.

The roles assigned to the lunar goddesses may determine their gender. Depicting the moon as wife of the sun, one way of representing lunar conjunction, emphasizes a feminine quality. Most of the lunar goddesses seem related to feminine roles, including spinning, weaving, and childbirth. The feminine principal in maize agriculture is represented in the role of the lunar goddess as the mother of maize, but sometimes a male impersonating a female takes this role. Some lunar goddesses can also be represented with a masculine attributes, especially when they are associated with a warlike nature. Explicit references to the bisexual nature of the moon appear in ceremonies dedicated to lunar goddesses who were sacrificed and transformed into male lunar deities. These symbolic transformations suggest that the feminine aspect of the moon died so that the moon could be transformed into a male, most probably representing a different lunar phase.

*Tlazolteotl*

Many scholars identify Tlazolteotl ("filth-deity") as a lunar goddess or the Moon Goddess (Blaquedano 1989a: 192-93; Coc 1975: Fig. 5; González 1975: 95-96; Seler 1963, II: 130; Thompson 1939: 130). Tlazolteotl is also an earth goddess (Seler 1960-61, III: 315-16). Sullivan (1982: 26-27) notes that she is the mother goddess and the earth goddess linked to the moon. Van Zantwijk (1985: 240) says that she is the mother goddess and the earth. Durand-Forest (1988: 191-2) believes she is a deity of fecundity, vegetation, and renewal, associated with childbirth, the earth, and the moon. Her association with both the earth and moon is natural because in the Huastec area, where her cult originated, the moon is also the goddess of the earth (Sullivan 1982: 26).



Fig. 5a. The Great Goddess of Tepantitla, Teotihuacan as a Lunar Goddess controlling Rain and the Tides (After Heyden 1976)

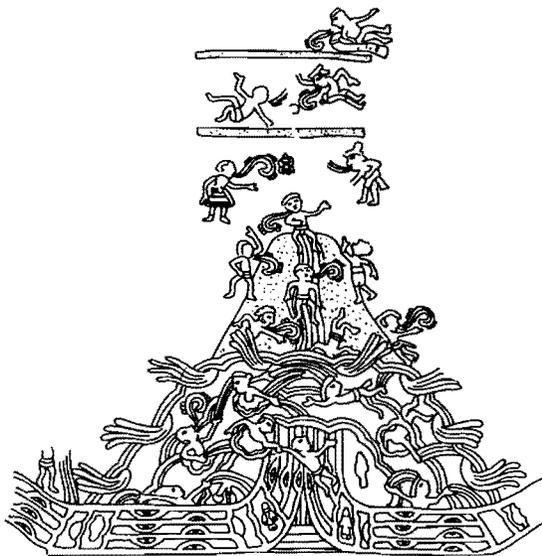


Fig. 5b. Mountain with Springs beneath the Great Goddess of Tepantitla, Teotihuacan (After Taube 1983: Fig. 40)

Tlazolteotl was also called Ixcuina, a Huastec word that Sullivan (1982: 12) translates as "lady cotton". Study of her iconography indicates that she is a goddess of spinning related to the spindle and the cotton yarn, rather than a weaving goddess (Milbrath 1993a). These implements of the weaving complex are clearly associated with a female role because newborn Aztec girls were given spindles, weaving battens, shuttles, and skeins of yarn, whereas boys were given a shield and a bow and arrows (Sahagún 1950-82, vi: 201).

As Sullivan (1982: 14-15) notes, Tlazolteotl's spindle may be a metaphor for coitus, and the thread as it winds around represented the growing fetus because spinning is metaphorically linked to pregnancy and childbirth. The act of spinning was equated with the child growing in the belly, and the spun cotton on the spindle may have been visualized as the child itself or perhaps the umbilical cord connecting the child and the mother. Her role as confessor may also relate to childbirth because adultery was considered to be the major cause of problems in childbirth, and women who were undergoing such difficulties were asked to confess their sexual sins for adultery was one of the greatest sins (Burkhart 1989: 172; Sahagún 1950-82, i: 27).

A connection between the moon and childbirth is quite ancient because the 17th-century chronicler Jacinto de la Serna notes that Aztec women used a lunar count to time their pregnancy (Nuttall 1904: 495). As the Moon Goddess, Tlazolteotl is closely associated with pregnancy and childbirth. She played a role in divination based on the birthday of a child in the sacred calendar because she was the patroness of newborns (Spranz 1973: 206). Tlazolteotl is the only goddess shown giving birth to a child in the Aztec codices (*Codex Borbonicus* 13). Tlazolteotl gives birth on a blanket of lunar crescents appropriate to her lunar nature.

Tlazolteotl is a goddess with four aspects, four sisters of different ages (the Ixcuinanme or Cihuapipiltin; Sahagún 1950-82, i: 23-26). Durand-Forest (1988-196) believes that she is the incarnation of the life cycle, representing youth, fecundity, old age, and death. Nonetheless, visual images and texts do not represent her as an old goddess, and even her aspect as the older sister (Tiacapan) does not indicate that she is an old woman.

Her links with motherhood and spinning express roles appropriate to the female aspect of the moon, but other images provide evidence that she has a bisexual nature, a trait she shares with earth deities such as Tlaltecuhli. For example, Spranz (1973: 209, Fig. 639c) identifies

a male figure wearing Tlazolteotl's cotton ear fillets on *Codex Laud* (40) as a variant of Tlazolteotl. Tlazolteotl's association with snakes may also refer to a bisexual nature because snakes symbolize the penis in contemporary Nahua accounts (Fig. 3; Taggart 1992: 84). In three *Borgia* Group codices, the serpent is positioned phallus-like between Tlazolteotl's legs (*Codex Fejérváry-Mayer* 4; *Vaticanus B* 22; *Codex Laud* 42). She is sometimes shown in a male role, carrying a war shield and taking war captives (*Codex Borgia* 55, 63, *Codex Cospi* 24). This gender ambiguity recalls the bisexual nature of the moon among some contemporary Mexican cultures (Bácz-Jorge 1988: 259; Loo 1987: 146).<sup>6</sup> Although the female aspect is predominant in her imagery, Tlazolteotl can be both a male and female name, and some chroniclers identify this deity as male (Sullivan 1982: 7). This sexual ambiguity parallels Huastec accounts that say the goddess of the earth and moon may be a man transformed into a woman (Sullivan 1982: 26).

### *Teteoinnan-Toci*

A number of scholars identify Teteoinnan-Toci as a lunar being (Baquedano 1989a: 193; Klein 1975: 72; Scler 1960-61, III: 315, 1963, I: 121). Toci ("our grandmother") is often recognized as an alter-ego of Tlazolteotl (Baquedano 1989: 193; González 1975: 95-96; Klein 1975: 72; Sullivan 1982: 7). Nonetheless, there are some important differences between the two. Whereas Tlazolteotl is of child-bearing age and is associated with spinning and motherhood, Toci is an aged goddess associated with weaving, midwifery, and the sweathouse (Durán 1971: 231-32; Sahagún 1950-82, I, 15-16). The *Florentine Codex* depicts Tlazolteotl wearing a spindle headdress with unspun cotton and holding vegetation in her hands, but Teteoinnan-Toci wears a crescent headdress with unspun cotton and a star-skirt, and she holds a broom and a warrior's shield (Sahagún 1950-82, I: 15-16, Pls. 9, 12). In Durán's (1971: 231) account, Toci holds the same objects and he says that she has a headdress of spindle whorls with their bunches of spun cotton and bundles of carded (unspun) cotton.

Sahagún (1950-82, I: 15) says that Teteoinnan ("mother of the gods") was also called as Tlalliyollo ("heart of the earth"). Townsend (1982: 59) notes that caves were means of communication with the

<sup>6</sup> The bisexual nature of the moon is also evident in syncretic Catholic beliefs. Among the Tarascans of Ihuatzio, the Moon Goddess, Xaratanga, has been replaced by a male saint, St. Francis the Moorish captain (Van Zantwijk 1967:174).

“heart of the earth”. This earth aspect of the goddess may represent an image of the moon within a cave. An Aztec hymn dedicated to Teteoinnan-Toci identifies her as Tonan (“our mother”) and as the “goddess of the earth” (Sahagún 1950-1982: II, 226), indicating a direct link with Tonantsi, the contemporary Nahuatl Moon Goddess who comes from the sky but lives in a cave (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986: 129).

Toci was worshipped by fortune-tellers, midwives and physicians, which indicates that she was the goddess of divination, childbirth, and medicine (Sahagún 1950-82, I: 15-16). All of these roles seem linked with those of the Yucatec Maya goddess, Ix Chel, who Thompson (1939, 1970, 1971, 1972) identified as the Moon Goddess. The role of the midwife is innately feminine, but Toci also had a masculine side. She was represented with both male and female “props”, holding the warrior’s shield in one hand and the broom in the other hand (Durán 1971: 231).

An Aztec ceremony dedicated to Teteoinnan-Toci indicates that the weaving goddess was transformed into the Moon God during a seasonal ceremony performed in September. In the Ochpaniztli festival, a woman of about 45 years of age impersonated Teteoinnan-Toci and was forced to weave maguey just before she was sacrificed by decapitation (Durán 1971: 231-33; Sahagún 1950-82: II, 118-26). Baquedano and Graulich (1993) note that the female slave impersonating the goddess was told she would marry the king, a form of ritual marriage to the sun; she was carried on the priest’s back, as in a wedding ceremony, and then she was decapitated and her skin was worn by a young priest who impersonated her for the remainder of the ceremony. He was called Tecciscuacuilli, a name that apparently refers to the Moon God, Tecciztecatl (González 1975: 96). This suggests that after decapitation, the goddess was transformed from a female into a male. In Sahagún’s account, the impersonator was referred to as if he were a female, even though he was male. “She” performed warlike acts, chasing the warriors with war cries. On the other hand, Durán (1971: 233) uses the masculine gender to describe the impersonator, saying that he donned the skin of the decapitated victim in order to represent the goddess again.<sup>7</sup> The notion of a male bearing the title of the Moon God while dressed as a female is entirely appropriate to the ambiguous gender of the moon.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholson (1971: Table 4) notes that the impersonators of Teteoinnan-Toci, Atlantonan, and Centeotl-Chichomecoatl were sacrificed by decapitation during Ochpaniztli, and their flayed skins were worn by male dancers. Atlantonan is related to Tonan, an earth-moon deity like Teteoinnan-Toci. Durán (1971:228)

Ochpaniztli, one of the 18 *veintenas* in the year, is a harvest ceremony that incorporated a wedding ritual involving the deities representing the solar and lunar cults. During the festival, the male impersonator of Teteoinnan-Toci raised his arms to Huitzilopochtli, the solar god, possibly indicating sexual union (Seler 1963, I:120; Brown 1984: 203). The child who was born as a result of this union was Centeotl (the maize god; Sahagún 1950-82, II:120-22). Durán (1971-: 226-27) notes that the day before the sacrifice of the female representing Toci, a girl impersonating the maize goddess, Chicomecoatl, was decapitated and flayed, and a male priest put on her skin and garments. This represents a direct parallel with Toci's sacrifice, and it is interesting that a female maize goddess dies just prior to the birth of the male maize god, suggesting another level of transformation that appears to be linked to lunar imagery.

Seler (1963, I:121) interprets Ochpaniztli as a ceremony dedicated to Teteoinnan as the mother of ripe maize who lives in Tamoanchan, the house of descent, where maize is born. However, it is her male impersonator who acts out the female role of becoming the "mother of maize." In this ceremony, the sacrifice of the Moon Goddess apparently represents the death of the moon as it disappears in conjunction with the sun (Milbrath 1993b). After her sacrifice, the Moon Goddess is transformed into a male with female qualities, indicating the bisexual nature of the moon during conjunction. Furthermore, maize undergoes a very similar transformation with added elements in the ritual that clearly show the transformation from female to male is the result of death and rebirth, perhaps indicating maize changed from female to male toward the end of the maize growing season.

### *Xochiquetzal*

Xochiquetzal is often identified as a lunar goddess (Nicholson 1971: 421; Nicholson and Quiñones Keber 1983:49; Klein 1975:73; Seler

says that on the first day they sacrificed Atlatonan, the goddess of the leprous and maimed, and on the second day they sacrificed Chicomecoatl, the maize goddess, and on the third day they sacrificed the Mother of the Gods (Teteoinnan-Toci). Atlatonan may be the earth-moon deity as a deity of disease or medicine. All three seem to be deities linked in some way to the moon. Sahagún (1950-82, II:191) says that the male impersonator worn the skin of the girl to represent Atlatonan and he notes that impersonators of both the Red Centeotl and the White Centeotl were also sacrificed. Here Centeotl replaces the maize goddess, Chicomecoatl, reflecting a gender ambivalence. The maize deities share the bisexual nature of the moon through the role of the moon in maize agriculture. The moon's connection with maize and medicine is explored further in the section on the Maya.

1960-61, v:188, 1963: II, 56; Thompson 1939: 130; 1971: 116). The chronicles say that she was the patroness of the craftspeople, including painters, embroiderers, weavers, silversmiths, and sculptors (Durán 1971: 239).

Whereas Tlazolteotl-Ixcuina is linked to spinning and cotton itself, Xochiquetzal is clearly associated with weaving and embroidery. Instead of the spindle, her attribute is the weaving batten (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 22v; Corona Núñez 1964-67, III:P1. 51). The gloss in *Codex Rios* notes that she invented weaving and embroidery (Corona Núñez 1964-67, III:118). In the *Primeros Memoriales* 254r), she is shown weaving in the Atamalqualiztli ceremony, which was performed every eight years (Sahagún 1974: 10, 65).<sup>8</sup>

Spranz (1973: 399) says that Xochiquetzal is the goddess of beauty and love, and patroness of women of pleasure, who were companions to the soldiers. She also had a reputation as a harlot (Durán 1971: 68). This identifies her as a licentious lover, a goddess with multiple sexual partners, like the moon in ethnographic accounts (Báez-Jorge 1983: 402, 404; Thompson 1939: 135-36; Ichon 1973: 65; Harvey and Kelly 1969: 671). Both male and female lunar deities take this role in contemporary accounts, indicating that licentious behavior is not linked to a specific gender. Rather, sexual intercourse with multiple partners seems to reflect an image of lunar conjunction, with the moon visiting many sexual partners as it moves rapidly through the sky (Thompson 1972: 47). The moon completes a circuit through the stars on the ecliptic in only 27 1/3 days, whereas the sun and planets take much longer (for example the sun's circuit is 365 1/4 days).

Xochiquetzal's feminine aspect is emphasized in her role as the wife of the sun (Thompson 1939: 129-30). The *Historie du Mechique* (*Historia de Mexico* 1973: 109) indicates that Xochiquetzal's union with Piltzintecuhtli produced Xochipilli. Both Xochipilli and Piltzintecuhtli are interpreted as solar gods (Nicholson 1971: 417). A similar tale appears in the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* (1973: 27, 33), but here her union with Piltzintecuhtli resulted in the birth of the maize god, Centeotl. This makes her the "mother of maize", like Teteoinnan-Toci in the Ochpaniztli festival.

<sup>8</sup> An eight-year cycle is evident in the *Dresden Codex* Venus tables, which coordinate the lunar, solar, and Venus cycles (Aveni 1992-104-7). This suggests a relationship with the timing of the Atamalqualiztli ceremony. The calendric nature of this ceremony probably can be traced back to Teotihuacan, where the Moon Goddess and Venus are apparently represented by the Great Goddess and the Feathered Serpent.

Like other lunar deities, Xochiquetzal's cult seems to have a bisexual nature. During October, in the month Hueypachtli (Tepeilhuitl), a woman representing Xochiquetzal was sacrificed and a man donned her skin and costume, and he was forced to weave, while all the mastercraftsmen—disguised as monkeys, ocelots, dogs, coyotes, mountain lions, and jaguars—danced with the insignia of their crafts in hand (Durán 1971: 244). This gender change and the peculiar act of forcing a man to do a woman's work relates to the gender ambiguity inherent in the cult of the lunar deities. Her decapitation was a major focus of the ceremony because Sahagún (1950-82, II, 132-34) notes that her skull was placed on the skull rack, along with the head of Mayahuel's impersonator and that of the mountain goddess, Matlalcueye (a water goddess representing the mountain Malinche; Torquemada 1943, II: 291; Durán 1971: 466, n. 1).

Xochiquetzal has a bisexual costume in some representations. She wears a skirt with a loin cloth in a relief from Ixtapalulca and in some representations she seems to be a butterfly warrior with a shield (Berlo 1984: Pls. 69, 130-31). The *Codex Cospi* (25) also shows Xochiquetzal with a war shield, holding spindles as if she were throwing spears with an *atlatl*. In one myth, Xochiquetzal is identified as the first mortal to die in war, making her the first "woman warrior" (Nicholson 1971: 402; Berlo 1984: 100-01). As ruler of the fourth world age or Sun, Xochiquetzal has twin headdress plumes and flowers, like conventional images of the goddess, but she also wears a loin cloth with a skirt (Corona Núñez 1964-67, III: Pl. 8). This bisexual image of Xochiquetzal substitutes for Tezcatlipoca or his jaguar counterpart, a god who ruled the world age associated with the earth (Graulich 1990: 84-85).

A hermaphrodite on *Codex Borgia* 60 may be an image of Xochiquetzal fused with the jaguar aspect of Tezcatlipoca. Seler (1963, II: 155) identifies the goddess as Cuaxolotl ("doublehead"), because she has two heads (the secondary head being male), but he notes that she is an image of Xochiquetzal with quetzal wings and tail feathers, and Xochiquetzal's *quechquemilt* and *cueitl*. Seler points out that other codices of the *Borgia* group depict Xochiquetzal in the parallel passages, confirming the identification. Her secondary head wears the headdress, beard, and face paint of Tepcyollotl (*Codex Borgia* 14), the jaguar aspect of Tezcatlipoca. Tezcatlipoca is sometimes identified as a lunar god (Caso 1958: 27; Genzález 1975: 81; Graulich 1990: 139, 406; León-Portilla 1963: 98; Seler 1963, II: 17, 30-31), as is his jaguar as-

pect, Tepcyollotl (Seler 1963, II: 182); and the jaguar itself is clearly a nocturnal image, most probably representing the moon (Graulich 1990: 135; Heyden 1976: 8; Kubler 1972: 41-42).<sup>9</sup> The double-headed Xochiquetzal indicates a bisexual nature and a link with a lunar aspect of the Tezcatlipoca complex.<sup>10</sup>

Torquemada (1943, II: 291) says that Xochiquetzal is a water deity, but Seler (1902-03: 186-87) points out that she may have originally been a mountain goddess who came to be associated with water because the run-off from the mountains was a source of terrestrial water. On *Codex Borgia* 44, Xochiquetzal wears a Tlaloc mask and a rayed disk that Seler (1963: II, 55-56) interprets as the moon disk. Here she may be playing the role of the moon as a water deity. Her bisexual nature is brought out by the fact that she wears the face mask of Tlaloc (the storm god), rather than his wife Chalchiuhtlicue (the water goddess), even though Xochiquetzal is more commonly related to Chalchiuhtlicue in other images. In general, Xochiquetzal is most closely linked with Chalchiuhtlicue in terms of costume detail in the *Borgia* group (Spranz 1973: 500).

The close relationship of Xochiquetzal and Chalchiuhtlicue is through the medium of water, reflecting the connection between the Moon Goddess and water. The Moon Goddess as a water goddess survives today in ethnographic accounts of the moon's link with water and the cult of the Virgin (Broda 1991; Tarn and Prechtel 1986; Sullivan 1982: 26; Thompson 1939: 143-44).

Pasztory (1974) points out that the figure in the Tepantitla murals at Teotihuacan is of ambiguous gender (Fig. 5). Originally Pasztory (1973: 151-52) identified the figure as an early aspect of Xochiquetzal. Now scholars refer to the Tepantitla figure as the Great Goddess to separate her cult from the Aztec goddess Xochiquetzal (*Codex Borbonicus* 19; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 22v). Rain drops fall from her outstretched hands, water gushes from beneath her body, and there is a fire symbol over her eyes, indicating that she incorporates both fire

<sup>9</sup> In the creation of the sun and moon, the jaguar takes a lunar role, following the solar eagle into the fire of creation, just as the Moon God followed the Sun God into the fire and was burned (Sahagún 1950-82, VII:1-6).

<sup>10</sup> A sexual relationship between Tezcatlipoca and Xochiquetzal is indicated in the chronicles. Sahagún (1950-82, II:70) describes how the impersonator of Tezcatlipoca was married to four women during a 20-day period, one of them being the representative of Xochiquetzal. The 16th-century chronicler, Muñoz Camargo (1984:202-3) identifies Xochiquetzal as the goddess of love (Venus) and says that she was married to Tlaloc until Tezcatlipoca kidnapped her and carried her to the nine heavens where she resided at Tamoanchan.

and water in her being. Her association with the symbols of fire and water link her to the Moon Goddess Coyolxauhqui (Pasztory 1983: Pls. 100, 101). She also is related to the lunar weaving complex because nature's weaver, the spider, dangles from a thread over her head (Pasztory 1973: 151; Milbrath 1993a). Pasztory (1993: 61) identifies the Great Goddess as a distant, ambivalent mother figure. The Great Goddess may be the Classic period Moon Goddess of Central Mexico, incorporating aspects of the lunar cult expressed in the Aztec deities Xochiquetzal and Coyolxauhqui.

Scholars have suggested that the Great Goddess sits on a cave represented as an inverted horseshoe-shape with streams of water gushing forth (Heyden 1976; Pasztory 1973: 150). More recently, Pasztory (1993: 55) says that the cavelike space, like her womb, is full of seeds. Analysis of this form in the larger context of Central Mexican art indicates that it is an early form of the *yacametzli*, the lunar insignnia common in the Postclassic period, which sometimes takes on a womb-like quality, issuing the blood of menstruation (*Codex Borgia* 16; Milbrath 1990). In the murals, waves of sea water filled with marine shells and starfish flow from the moon symbol, suggesting an image of the moon as ruler of the tides. The Great Goddess controls water from the sky and water from the sea, and the mountain water sources in the lower panel may also be under her control (Fig. 5b). Even today the Moon Goddess in the guise of the Virgin is identified with certain mountains and springs in Central Mexico (Broda 1991: 89-90; García 1992). Usually a female aspect of the moon controls water in contemporary accounts, just as it is a woman's role to carry water in Mexican villages today.<sup>11</sup>

Xochiquetzal is clearly feminine in the Postclassic period, but the Great Goddess, her Classic period predecessor, is represented as a bust, without apparent gender. Her female gender has been deduced from the fact that her priests wear female dress (Pasztory 1973: 151). The Teotihuacan murals indicate that she has another aspect linked with warfare and destruction, in addition to her role as a water deity (Pasztory 1988: 179, Figs. III.16, III.26). This warlike aspect may incorporate male attributes of her lunar being that give her masculine persona, in addition to the feminine aspect as a water deity.

<sup>11</sup> Durán (1971:408) records that Aztec men carried the water. This reversal of the normal role may be because drinking water came from an aqueduct and there was a busy trade of buying and selling water from the aqueduct.

*Coyolxauhqui*

Coyolxauhqui, another lunar female with male attributes, is the Moon Goddess as the sister of the sun. Coyolxauhqui is identified as the moon by many scholars (Gillespie 1989: 87; Graulich 1981: 48; Matos 1981: 51-52, 1991; Pasztory 1983: 49; Taggart 1983: 105; Van Zantwijk 1985: 238). A fragmentary monument depicting Coyolxauhqui confirms her identity with the moon (Milbrath 1993b). The water bordered by a shell and a jade symbol flows from the center of the lunar disk, recalling the treatment of the lunar symbol in tre *Codex Borgia* 18 (Fig. 6).

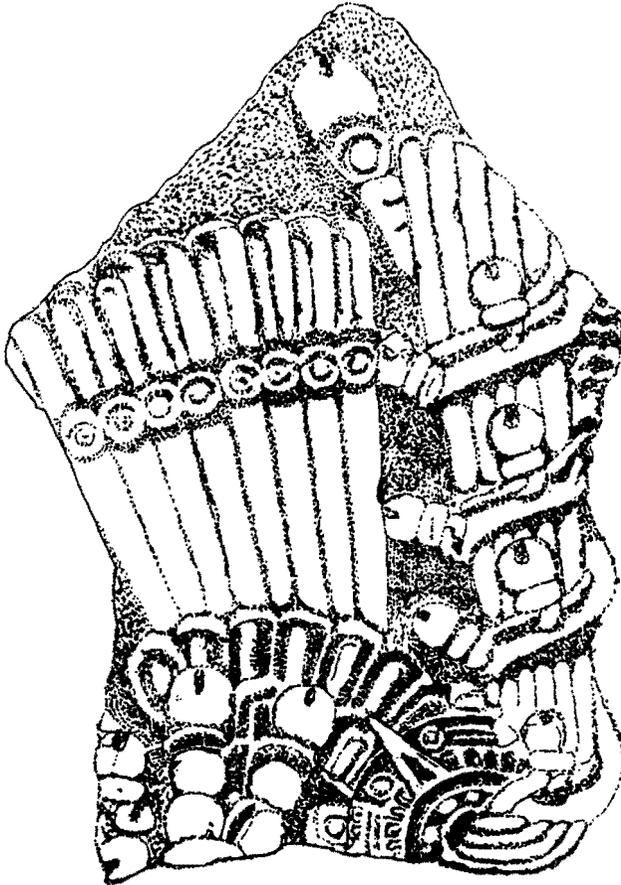


Fig. 6. Coyolxauhqui 5, showing the water band issuing from the center of the moon (drawing by Mark Brenner, after 1986 photo by author)

Coyolxauhqui seems warlike in myths that pit her against her brother, the Sun God, Huitzilopochtli. This suggests a masculine attribute reflecting the ambiguous gender of the moon. In the Aztec legend, the solar god Huitzilopochtli cuts off Coyolxauhqui's head (Sahagún 1950-82, III:1-5). Her decapitation has been interpreted as a reference to the gradual disappearance of the waning moon (Seler 1960-61, III:328). Nonetheless, some versions of the legend say that Huitzilopochtli ate Coyolxauhqui or her heart (Durán 1964: 21; Tezozómoc 1975: 34-35), imagery that suggests comparison with Aztec descriptions of the sun eating the moon during a lunar eclipse (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 42v). Furthermore, their fight relates to 16th century and modern Mesoamerican accounts of eclipses as fights between the sun and moon (Báez-Jorge 1983: 402, 404; Harvey and Kelly 1969: 671-72; Muñoz Camargo 1984: 190; Thompson 1971: 231, 1972: 47). A lunar eclipse can occur only at the full moon, therefore Coyolxauhqui may represent the full moon eclipsed by the sun.

The large Coyolxauhqui relief, discovered in the 1978 excavations of the Templo Mayor, depicts Coyolxauhqui as a decapitated figure with a twined serpent headdress and serpents knotted around her waist in the manner of a male loin cloth (Klein 1988: 242, Fig. 5b). The serpent-*maxtlatl* is a masculine costume element appropriate to her warlike nature. On the other hand, the flesh rolls on her belly indicate that she is a mature woman who has given birth (Broda 1987: 244). Her role as a mature lunar goddess could suggest an image of the full moon, which is described as a mature person in ethnographic accounts (Báez-Jorge 1988: 247).

Coyolxauhqui's iconography overlaps with Chantico ("In the house"), the goddess of the hearth fire (Fig. 7; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 21v). Coyolxauhqui is only represented in stone, whereas Chantico is only depicted in painted codices (*Codex Borgia* 63; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 21v; *Codex Borbonicus* 18). Nicholson (1971: 414, Table 3) places them together in the complex of fire deities. Seler (1960-61, III:328, v:192-94) interprets both as lunar deities. The two may simply be the same goddess represented in different media. Chantico's role as the goddess of the hearth fire would seem to be an essentially female role connected with cooking, but she has a bisexual aspect. Sometimes she wears a male loin cloth (*maxtlatl*) with a short skirt (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 21v). This parallels the bisexual costume is also seen on Coyolxauhqui.



Fig 7. Chantico with a Bisexual Costume in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 21v (after Nicholson 1971: Fig. 11)

### *Cihuacoatl*

Cihuacoatl is another warlike deity who is linked to the bisexual moon (Fig. 8). Cihuacoatl can mean “woman-serpent” (Nicholson 1971: Table 3) or “feminine twin” (León-Portilla 1989: 223). Cihuacoatl, Ilamatecuhtli, Quilaztli, and Tonan are aspects of the same being (Nicholson 1971: 421). The historic sources use their names interchangeably. For example, Sahagún (1950-82, II:31, 236, VI:160) says that the midwife called on the birthing woman to imitate the “brave woman Cihuacoatl, Quilaztli”, and he says that Cihuacoatl was called “the eagle Quilaztli”, and Ilamatecuhtli (“old lady”), and Tonan, meaning “our mother”. The feminine role of motherhood is countered by her masculine aspect as “war woman” (Sahagún 1950-82, II:236). One of Quilaztli’s aspects is Yaocihuatl, which means “warrior wo-

man” (Torquemada 1943, 1:81), indicating that she is associated with the masculine realm of warfare, like Coyolxauhqui.



Fig. 8. Cihuacoatl with a Weaving Batten and a Loin Cloth Headdress (*Codex Magliabechiano* 45r, after Boone 1983)

A number of scholars relate Cihuacoatl and her counterparts to the moon. Van Zantwijk (1985: 55, 238, 240) equates Cihuacoatl with Tetzauhteotl (“impressive god”), the Chichimec Moon God; and he notes that the moon deities are known by many names, the most common being Metztli, Tecciztecatl, Tetzauhteotl, Coyolxauhqui, and Ilamatecuhtli. Seler (1963, II:70-72) identifies Quilaztli, the warlike aspect of Cihuacoatl, as the moon in its role as an adversary of the sun. Báez-Jorge (1988: 135, Cuadro 2) links Cihuacoatl with mountains, birth, death, war, and the moon.

Ilamatecuhtli, Quilaztli, Tonan, and Cihuacoatl all are aspects of the mother goddess representing the moon. The moon was visualized as the mother of the Chichimec people, but those of Tetzaco said the earth was their mother (Torquemada 1943, I:147-48, 175). Tonan's name indicates that she was the mother of the Aztec people, and she is associated with both the earth and the moon. Tonan survives today in the Nahuatl goddess Tonantzi, who represents the moon living in a cave (Sandstrom and Sandstrom 1986: 129). Although nowhere explicitly stated, Tonantzi appears to represent the moon that has disappeared conjunction—the moon within the earth living in a cave. A similar notion is evident among the Maya who say that the moon in conjunction retires to a cave or a well here on earth (Thompson 1971: 111, 238). This strongly suggests that Tonan's alter-egos, Quilaztli, Cihuacoatl, and Ilamatecuhtli, are also aspects of the moon within the earth, representing a fusion of both the earth and moon that is best identified as the earth-moon, the image of the new moon.

When Cihuacoatl was hungry for human sacrifice she left a cradle with a sacrificial knife in the market as a warning (González 1979: 17). Rather than being her child, this knife was a malevolent sign calling for human sacrifice. Cihuacoatl's link with the knife of sacrifice suggests a relationship with the masculine role of the priests who performed human sacrifice, however, knives were also used by midwives to cut out the baby who had died in the womb (Sahagún 1950-82, vi: 160). Durán (1971: 392) notes that the knife was the symbol of the underworld, the realm of death. The knife is certainly a complex symbol that defies a simple explanation, but in the festival calendar it is most closely linked with death and sacrifice. The weaving batten, another of Cihuacoatl's attributes, was sometimes used as a knife in decapitation ceremonies, linking it with the priestly (masculine) cult of sacrifice (Sahagún 1950-82, II:153).

Cihuacoatl and her counterparts are represented with skeletal faces, indicating death symbolism appropriate to imagery of the new moon during conjunction, which is the dead moon according to Aztec beliefs (Fig. 8; Sahagún 1950-81, VII:40). In one account, Cihuacoatl is the wife of the lord of the underworld (*Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* 1973: 52), indicating her link with the realm of death.<sup>12</sup> Klein (1988: 249) relates Cihuacoatl to the skeletal Tzitzimil in the *Codex*

<sup>12</sup> The role of wife of the lord of death is assigned to Ixcuina in the *Codex Rios* (26v), indicating that Cihuacoatl can assume the same role as the Moon Goddess, Tlazolteotl-Ixcuina. Being married to the lord of the underworld may be another way of representing lunar conjunction.

*Magliabechiano* (76r), pointing out that she sometimes is represented with a spider in her headdress, the symbol par excellence the *tzitzimime*. The *Codex Magliabechiano* (75v) says that Tzitzimitl is rendered like a "dead man". In the *Codex Ríos* (2v), Tzitzimitl is clearly a male, identified as the "lord of the underworld". Apparently, Cihuacoatl takes on masculine qualities and an underworld persona in the role of a *tzitzimime*. As the new moon, she was sometimes transformed into a *tzitzimime*, a warlike monster threatening the sun during a solar eclipse (Milbrath 1993b).

Klein (1988: 242-45) equates Cihuacoatl-Ilamatecuhtli with Coyolxauhqui, but she identifies them as earth deities symbolizing conquered polities.<sup>13</sup> She notes that they are all decapitated figures, and she links them to the earth deity, Tlaltecuhli (Pasztory 1983: Pls. 91, 130; Klein 1976: Figs. 3-5). Her identification of the decapitated goddesses as the earth seems questionable. Cihuacoatl-Ilamatecuhtli is an image of the moon fused with the earth, rather than an earth deity per se. Myths and images of decapitated goddesses may represent conquered polities as decapitated women, as suggested by Klein, but they also seem to reflect metaphors for the death of the moon (Milbrath 1993b).

Coyolxauhqui and Cihuacoatl are conquered women symbolizing defeated political groups, as Klein (1988) notes, but they also represent the dead Moon Goddess, an image that uses astronomy to reinforce a political metaphor (Milbrath 1993b). It seems likely that these two deities are associated with different lunar phases. Whereas the middle-aged Coyolxauhqui may be the full moon suddenly eclipsed (killed) by the sun; Cihuacoatl is the dead moon during conjunction, which disappears into the earth, like Tonantzi, the moon within the earth-cave. Cihuacoatl is linked the moon in darkness and her temple, Tlillan ("blackness"), was the house of darkness (Durán 1964: 179); whereas Coyolxauhqui-Chantico symbolizes the light of the hearth fire, most probably associated with the light of the night sky-the full moon.

<sup>13</sup> Aguilera (1979) identifies Cihuacoatl, Ilamatecuhtli, and Coyolxauhqui as the Milky Way. Her primary argument seems to be that Ilamatecuhtli wears a star skirt, which suggests a link with Citlalicue ("star skirt"), who is widely recognized as the goddess of the Milky Way. Nonetheless, there are many different goddesses who wear star skirts, and not all the goddesses wearing star skirts are aspects of the same being. For example, Nicholson (1971: Table 3) groups Coyolxauhqui, Citlalicue, and Cihuacoatl-Ilamatecuhtli in different complexes. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Coyolxauhqui wears a star skirt, and her counterpart, Chantico, wears a down-covered skirt (Fig. 7).

Coyolxauhqui-Chantico and Cihuacoatl-Ilamatecuhtli share elements of male costuming, suggesting the gender ambiguity inherent among the lunar deities. Chantico wears a loin cloth with her short skirt (Fig. 7). In the *Codex Magliabechiano*, Cihuacoatl wears a headdress with knotted loin cloth (Fig. 8) like that worn by males in the same codex (66r, 67r, 70r, 86r). Such combinations are not that common. For example, in the *Codex Magliabechiano*, Cihuacoatl is the only female wearing a knotted loin cloth in her headdress. And in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (18v, 21v), only Chantico and Itzpapalotl wear a loin cloth with a skirt.

Cihuacoatl has an androgynous quality, because she is associated with serpents that represent phallic imagery, and she wears a male loin cloth (González 1979: 17). In one representation, Cihuacoatl wears the butterfly pendant typical of Xiuhtecuhtli, the fire god (Fig. 8; *Codex Magliabechiano* 46r), indicating another masculine costume element. This gender ambiguity is totally appropriate to imagery related to Cihuacoatl, who was often represented by a man (the prime minister) dressed up in women's clothing (Klein 1988: 246). A similar sexual ambivalence is seen in her alter-ego, Quilaztli, who says "I am forceful and manly" (Gingerich 1988: 22).

In the festival of Tititl, Cihuacoatl and her counterparts are weaving goddesses represented with a weaving batten (Fig. 8; *Codex Tudela* 27r; *Codex Borbonicus* 36). According to the Tovar Calendar, Tititl means "stretching", a name that may refer to stretching the warp cords on a loom (Klein 1982: 1). The link with weaving indicates a relationship with the lunar weaving complex that includes Toci and other goddesses of weaving. Like Toci, Cihuacoatl is also a patroness of midwives (Sahagún 1950-82, I: 15, VI: 160). Weaving and midwifery are characteristic of the feminine realm. In contemporary Mesoamerican society, midwives generally are older women (Báez-Jorge 1988: 246). One of Cihuacoatl's names means "old lady" (Ilamatecuhtli), indicating that Cihuacoatl represents an aged woman, like Toci. Both may be the aged moon, representing the moon as it disappears in conjunction.

Cihuacoatl, Ilamatecuhtli, and Tonanwere interchangeable as patroness of the month Tititl (Nicholson 1971: Table 4; *Codex Tudela* 27r). In the January festival of Tititl, the Aztecs decapitated a female representing Ilamatecuhtli, one of Cihuacoatl's counterparts (Sahagún 1950-82, II: 31, 155-56). They cut off her head in the temple of the sun. This brought her into the realm of the sun at the moment of

her decapitation, suggesting a metaphor for lunar conjunction. After she died, a male impersonating the goddess grabbed her head. He appeared to be an old man because he walked leaning on a cane. He was called the "likeness of Ilamatecuhtli". This female to male gender transformation also occurs in Ochpaniztli, the ceremony dedicated to Teteoinnan-Toci described above, featuring an aged male corresponding to the snaggle-toothed Tecciztecatl. In both ceremonies, the transformation indicates a form of gender ambiguity seen repeatedly among the lunar deities (Milbrath 1990). It seems that this imagery reflects a belief that the moon changes gender over the course of the month or at certain points in the seasonal cycle.

Sexual ambivalence is also evident in some representations of the patron goddess of Tititl. In addition to the weaving batten, she also carries a war shield. And in the *Codex Ríos* (Corona Núñez 1964-67, III: Pl. 71) and the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (6r) the patron goddess of Tititl is identified in the gloss as Mixcoatl, a god associated with war, sacrifice, and hunting (Nicholson 1971: Table 3). This is probably an error, but it may also express some relationship between Mixcoatl and Cihuacoatl, perhaps linked to her masculine qualities. Another unusual element is that both images of the goddess have a horizontal stripe through the eye and a grey chin, a face painting also typical of Itzpapalotl (Spranz 1973: 85). These representations may allude to Itzpapalotl's close connection with Tonan, Cihuacoatl, Quilaztli, and Ilamatecuhtli.<sup>14</sup> As will be seen below, Itzpapalotl shares their role as the moon fused with the earth during the new moon phase.

### *Itzpapalotl*

Itzpapalotl ("obsidian butterfly") belongs to the complex of earth and lunar goddesses that includes Tlazolteotl, Cihuacoatl, Ilamatecuhtli, Quilaztli, Tonan, Coatlicue, Toci and Teteoinnan (Fig. 9; Baquedano 1989a: 193; Burkhart 1986: 113; Heyden 1974: 3; Nicholson 1971: 421, Table 3). An Aztec hymn dedicated to Teteoinnan-Toci identifies her as Itzpapalotl. (Sahagún 1950-1982: II: 226). The also hymn suggests a direct link with Tonan and her modern counterpart, Tonantzi, the "earth" aspect of the moon living in a cave. Itzpapalotl is

<sup>14</sup> Images of Cihuacoatl-Ilamatecuhtli and her counterparts are not easy to find in the *Borgia* Group codices (Spranz 1973:473). This may be because she is merely a variant of Itzpapalotl, a goddess prominent in the *Borgia* group.

a goddess representing both the earth and moon, hence she is the earth-moon.

Van Zantwijk (1985: 238, 240) equates Itzpapalotl with the Moon God, Tetzauhteotl. This suggests that he believes that Itzpapalotl is also a lunar being, but elsewhere he says that she is the warlike aspect of the Earth Goddess and the counterpart of Teteoinnan-Toci (Van Zantwijk 1985: 44, 50). Heyden (1974) identifies Itzpapalotl as the personified obsidian knife and the mother goddess of the Chichimecs, who represents both the earth and the moon. The Central Mexican sources support identifying Itzpapalotl with the earth-moon, the new moon in conjunction with the sun, which seems to fuse with the earth for several days.

Spranz (1973: 85-86) describes Itzpapalotl as a Chichimec tribal goddess, a companion of Mixcoatl, and the goddess of Tamoanchan, where the seven tribes originated. He notes that the chronicles say that she was the first to be sacrificed, and she has some affiliation with the Cihuateteo because she rules the *trecena* beginning with 1 House, one of the days the goddesses descended (Spranz 1973:86). In comparing the deities of the *Borgia* group, Spranz (1973: 473) finds that Itzpapalotl most strongly resembles Xiuhtecuhtli and Mixcoatl. This relationship signals a connection with fire. Seler (1963, I: 140) notes that the goddess does not represent the fire itself, but rather the moth that moves around the flame.

Itzpapalotl may be a "night" butterfly—a moth flitting around the fire. Her name ("obsidian butterfly") may refer to a specific moth, the *Rothschildia orizaba*, which has a patterns on its wings resembling obsidian knives or points (Beutelspacher 1988: Fig. 81). Her wings are decorated with knives in the *Borgia* group and colonial period codices (*Codex Borgia* 11, 66; *Codex Vaticanus B* 29; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 18v; *Codex Borbonicus* 15). On *Codex Vaticanus B* 63 and 92, Itzpapalotl appears as a monstrous creature with insect traits (Spranz 1973: 86-87). In the colonial period codices, she wears a moth on her back represented as a butterfly with star-tipped antennae, indicating she is the "night butterfly"—the knife-winged moth (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 18v, *Codex Ríos* 31v). The moth, as a nocturnal creature, seems an appropriate image of the moon visualized as a moth flying around the solar flame.

Itzpapalotl sometimes takes the guise of an eagle, a solar animal (Sahagún 1950-83, VII: 1). Her role as an eagle woman recalls Quilaztli, the eagle woman (Sahagún 1950-82, II: 236). The commen-

tator of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (18v) notes that Itzpapalotl has eagle feet. In the accompanying painting, she has bird claws in place of her hands and feet. Her eagle feet indicate that she is merged with the solar eagle, an image that may show the moon in conjunction with the sun during the new moon phase.<sup>15</sup> Since the moon seems to move toward the sun during the waning phase, eventually disappearing in the sun's glare, it may have been visualized as an eagle woman as it disappears in conjunction.

A relief figure of Itzpapalotl wears a dually-sexed costume (Fig. 9). The deity has the gender ambiguity typical of deities representing the earth and those representing the moon. Baquedano (1989b: 202-204) identifies the Itzpapalotl sculpture as an Earth Monster paralleling Tlaloc-Tlaltecuhli. However, some of the deity's traits suggest affiliation with the complex of earth-moon deities, those representing the moon fused with the earth during conjunction (Milbrath 1993b). Itzpapalotl is depicted in a dorsal view with clawed-masks on her body joints and hands and feet, a braided *citlalcueitl* ("star-skirt"), and her head thrown back in the manner of a decapitated figure, traits that recall the relief representations of Cihuacoatl merged with the Earth Monster (Klein 1980: Fig. 2c, 1988: Fig. 6b). Itzpapalotl's image shows a number of parallels with the bisexual earth deity, for they share the same pose and a loin cloth (*maxtlatl*) that has the shell fringe typical of the "star skirt", the *citlalcueitl* (Fig. 9; Seler 1963, I: 137; Nicholson and Quiñones Keber 1983, Fig. 3a; Klein 1976: 55-57, Figs. 3-5; Pasztory 1983: Pls. 97, 130). Seler (1960-61, II: 829-32) notes that the relief figure of Itzpapalotl has female braids and the warrior's *aztaxelli* (a forked feather headdress), expressing her role as a warrior in the guise of a woman, symbolizing both the Cihuateteo and *tzitzimime*.

In the Central Mexican pantheon, bisexuality is not all that common and its presence may be related to images of fertility and creativity. A number of deities are represented in the form of divine couples or pairs, and among the creator deities these couples occasion-

<sup>15</sup> Itzpapalotl may be the wife of the sun in its aspect as an eagle. One legend describes Itzpapalotl as Wife of the Eagle. Van Zantwijk (1985:40-41) notes that Wife of the Eagle is actually the wife of the sun and a counterpart of Itzpapalotl, a conclusion supported by the fact that both Wife of Eagle and Itzpapalotl appear as enemies of the Mimixcoa. The *Codex Borbonicus* (15) represents her adorned with eagle wings and talons. The eagle wings may refer to Itzpapalotl's guise as "wife of the eagle." Similarly, Teteoinnan-Toci holds a bird foot and has a costume with eagle feathers (Sahagún 1950-82, I: 16), perhaps indicating that she plays the same role as the moon in conjunction married to the solar eagle.

ally appear to be a bisexual unity (Nicholson 1971: 410-11). Bisexuality is most common among earth deities and deities representing aspects of the moon. According to the *Histoire du Mechique Historia de México* 1973: 105), some said the earth had the figure of a woman, others said it was a man. Cihuacoatl and Itzpapalotl have bisexual costumes when they take the role of earth deities (Fig. 9; Klein 1980: Fig. 2c, 1988: Fig. 6b). Bisexual qualities may be associated with the frog-like pose characteristic of Tlaltecuhтли and earth-moon goddesses, like Itzpapalotl and Cihuacoatl. Although a bisexual nature is often associated with deities representing aspects of the earth, Central Mexican lunar deities exhibit innate bisexual



Fig. 9. Itzpapalotl merged with the Earth Monster (after Seler 1963, 1: Fig 365)

qualities that are apparent even when they are not connected with imagery of the earth.

#### PARALLELS WITH MAYA LUNAR DEITIES

Like the Central Mexican cultures, the Maya assigned appropriate gender roles to male and female lunar deities, while incorporating elements of gender ambiguity. There seem to be different patterns for lunar imagery in the highland and lowland Maya areas. In Post-classic codices and historical sources from the northern Maya lowlands of Yucatán, a female lunar deity is predominant. In the Guatemalan highland area to the south, the *Popol Vuh* describes moon as a male ballplayer, but one variant of the tale has a female performing the masculine role of a ballplayer.

#### *The Maya Moon God*

A Quiche text of the *Popol Vuh* recorded around 1700 indicates that the ballplayers Hunahpu and Xbalanque were transformed into the sun and moon. Tedlock (1985: 296-97, 328, 368-69) interprets Xbalanque as the male image of the full moon, called "little jaguar sun", and he notes that the Quiche Maya use the term "night sun" to identify the full moon, whereas other phases of the moon are probably represented by Xbalanque's mother, Blood Woman (Xquic). Tedlock assigns different genders to the lunar phases, apparently reflecting transformations the moon undergoes during the course of the month.

The *Popol Vuh* says that Hunahpu and Xbalanque became the sun and the moon, but it does not clarify which one was identified with the sun and which one with the moon.<sup>16</sup> The 16th century

<sup>16</sup> Coe (1989:180) points out that Hunahpu is always named before Xbalanque in the *Popol Vuh*, and because the sun is mentioned before the moon in the description of the celestial transformation, it is reasonable to suppose that Hunahpu is the sun and Xbalanque is the moon. The order of these events, with the moon transformed after the sun, is identical to the transformation of the sun and moon in Aztec legends (Sahagún 1950-82, vii:6). On the other hand, Thompson (1970: 364-69, 1971:218) rejected identifying Xbalanque with the moon because the moon is female in many Maya legends. He believed that because Xbalanque ("jaguar sun") is the name of the sun among the Kekchi, the same must hold true in the Quiche tale, and therefore the moon is Hunahpu rather than Xbalanque. But he argued that a male moon was not characteristic of the Maya, representing foreign influence from Central Mexico. He concluded that, in the original Maya

Quiche text of the *Titulo de Totonicapan* (7v) parallels aspects of *Popol Vuh* tale and confirms that Xbalanque is the moon. In this version, Junapu (Hunahpu) is associated with the sun and Xbalanquej (Xbalanque), the second sibling, is linked to the moon (Carmack and Mondloch 1983: 21, 28-29, 174, 213 n. 74). Most significantly, Xbalanquej is a woman. A similar sexual ambivalence may be inherent in the *Popol Vuh* text. Francisco Ximénez, the friar who recorded the *Popol Vuh* around 1700, notes that the first syllable “x” means “small” or “female” in Quiche (Lamb, personal communication). This indicates that Xbalanque could be read as “lady jaguar sun,” rather than “little jaguar sun,” suggesting another aspect of lunar imagery that is ambiguous in regard to gender.<sup>17</sup>

In the Postclassic codices, Xbalanque’s counterpart is the Chicchan God (God CH), who is the jaguar spotted god of the number nine and nineteen (Taube 1992: 60). Given his identification with Xbalanque, the Quiche ballplayer twin, God CH probably is a lunar deity. His role as a ballplayer is not evident in Postclassic codices, with the possible exception of an image on page 10 of the *Paris Codex*, which represents God CH with a wide belt that may be a ballplayer’s belt (Taube 1992: Fig. 28h). Occasionally he is merged with God E, the maize god (Taube 1992: 60, Fig. 28e). In Classic period vase painting, God CH appears as one of the Headband Twins, represented with his brother (Hunahpu) and his father, the Tonsured Maize God (Taube 1992: 60, 63). His jaguar-spotted mouth is like that of Tepeyollotl, a god with a lunar aspect discussed above. Jaguar traits suggest that God CH is the “jaguar sun”, representing the moon as the “night sun” —the twin of the daytime sun.

The Moon God as the jaguar ballplayer may also be found in Classic period sculpture. Bonampak Sculptured Panel 1 depicts the Moon God wearing a ballplayer’s belt and a cruller nose ornament, a trait that connects him with jaguar imagery, especially the Jaguar

form of the story, Hunahpu was probably Venus because his name means “1 Ahau”, a name for Venus in Yucatan. In Thompson’s interpretation, the moon and Venus are alternate forms of Hunahpu. On the other hand, Schele and Miller (1986-48, 60, n. 54) suggest that the sun and Venus are interchangeable in the role of Hunahpu, in contrast to Thompson. One tale recorded by Thompson (1970:355) mentions three brothers, with the eldest being Venus, the sun being the second brother, and the youngest “another planet”. Venus appears as both the morning star and sun’s older brother in a number of tales, but here the moon is sun’s wife, not his brother (Thompson 1970:366-67).

<sup>17</sup> The last syllable, *quej*, may be read as deer, rather than sun (Edmonson 1971).

God of the Underworld (Fig. 10; Schele and Miller 1986: Fig. 35). Like the Classic Maya Moon Goddess, he holds a lunar rabbit and he is framed by a moon symbol that probably depicts a lunar crescent.<sup>18</sup> Monument 18 from Quirigua also represents a male with a ballplayer's belt seated frontally within a moon symbol (Stone 1983: Fig. 134). However, here he is surrounded by a quatrefoil design representing a cave. This image may evoke the moon in the interior of the earth during conjunction, indicating that the earth-moon can also be represented by a male in Mesoamerica.

The Moon God in Classic Maya iconography sometimes has female traits, reflecting the gender ambiguity also seen in Central Mexican lunar iconography. Coe (1989: 180) identifies the lunar deity on the Pearlman trumpet as male, revising an earlier interpretation of the figure as female. He suggests that the figure depicts the Xbalanque with his twin brother, Hunahpu. Schele and Miller (1986: 309) note that the Moon God on the Pearlman trumpet wears a costume typical of Classic Maya women, but also worn by males undergoing bloodletting, and they conclude the figure is male because the torso lack breast. The Moon God is framed by a crescent-shaped lunar symbol and is enthroned like a ruler. He sits on a *po* seat formed by the logograph for the word moon in Kekchi, Pokomchi, and Pokoman. Taube (1992: 68, Fig. 31d) identifies the lattice skirt as typical of the Maize God, but he discusses the figure as an example of the Moon Goddess. Nonetheless, the glyphic name suggests that the figure is a male lunar deity. The glyphic name on the trumpet, "jaguar moon lord", indicates a masculine gender and a connection with Xbalanque, the "jaguar sun" who is sometimes replaced by a female. In fact, a number of deities identified as lunar goddesses by Taube (1992: fig. 31) are actually of ambiguous gender, suggesting artists purposefully obscured the gender of the lunar deities.

Gender ambiguity is also evident in a copulating figure in the Naj Tunich cave paintings. Stone (1985) originally interpreted this figure as the Moon Goddess, based on the feminine hairdo and the position copulating with a phallic figure, but more recently she points out that the headdress and body shape seems masculine, and

<sup>18</sup> The lunar rabbit is an insignia of both male and female lunar deities in the Classic Maya period, but the rabbit is not associated with lunar deities in Post-classic Maya art (Schele and Miller 1986: Fig. 49; Taube 1992: Figs. 30d, 31e). This seems surprising in light of the survival of the lunar rabbit in Maya ethnographic accounts of the Lacandon, Kekchi, Quiche, and Cakchiquel Maya (Thompson 1930:64; Schele 1977:55; Lamb, personal communication).



Fig. 10. Bonampak Sculptured Panel 1 with Moon God as a Ballplayer (after Schele and Miller 1983: Fig. 18c)

Fig. 11. The Moon Goddess on her Sky Band Throne (*Dresden Codex 49a*, after Villacorta and Villacorta 1977)



Fig. 12. Goddess O pouring water (*Dresden Codex 74*, after Villacorta and Villacorta 1977)

she proposes that the figure is a male impersonating a female as part of a ritual performance (Stone n.d.). In any case, the figure has both male and female characteristics, which suggests a bisexual quality appropriate to lunar imagery. The image of copulation may represent lunar conjunction, a period during which the moon disappears into a cave or a well according to the Maya beliefs (Thompson 1971: 238). Perhaps the moment of copulation is also the time of gender transformation, hence the ambivalent sexual qualities of the lunar deity in the cave painting.

### *The Maya Moon Goddess*

The most comprehensive work on the Maya Moon Goddess was published many years ago by Thompson (1939). He concluded that a number of characteristics were shared by the Moon Goddess in the Central Mexican and Mayan regions. The moon is associated with water and the earth, she is wife of the sun, a mother or a grandmother, and a patroness of weaving, divination, pregnancy, and childbirth. However, his analysis completely ignored the role of male lunar deities among the Maya, and he argued that the identification of the moon as male in the *Popol Vuh* reflected Central Mexican influence (Thompson 1970: 364-67).

There is widespread agreement that the enthroned female in the Postclassic *Dresden Codex* (49a) is the Moon Goddess "par excellence" (Fig. 11; Thompson 1971: 223; Kelley 1976: 69; Stone 1990). She is a voluptuous woman seated on a sky band throne. Despite the feminine traits, her position on a throne identifies her as a ruler, a role usually occupied by male figures in Maya dynastic imagery. A moon symbol frames her waist and she pours water from a vase joined with a conch shell. The link with a conch shell implies feminine imagery, based the evidence from Central Mexican iconography. The association with water-pouring may be related to the role of contemporary Yucatec women carrying water home in a jar. This role is clearly connected with the female gender in Yucatán, where the *Dresden Codex* originated. In fact, any male carrying water in a Yucatec village is subjected to a great deal of teasing (Allan Burns, personal communication).

The enthroned Moon Goddess in the *Dresden Codex* 49a is youthful, but her aged portrait glyph may signify she was called

“grandmother moon”, a name still used throughout the Maya area. Stone (1990) notes that the moon’s portrait glyph in *Dresden Codex* 49a is an aged face with a line around the mouth, a variant of the T1025 portrait head of the Moon Goddess (Kurbjuhn 1989: 133). Her portrait head is infixed with T181, a phonetic sign that is sometimes identified as a lunar symbol (Kurbjuhn 1989: 34). Thompson (1972: 68) says that the enthroned Moon Goddess is Goddess I, but her aged portrait glyph is clearly different from that of Goddess I.<sup>19</sup> The Moon Goddess sitting on a sky band throne is also represented in Classic Maya vase painting, indicating the idea of a female moon in a male role has considerable antiquity (Coe 1978: no. 7).

Goddess I is usually represented as youthful with her hair styled in a trailing curl resembling the T171 glyph. Thompson (1971: 231) notes that Goddess I wears a hairdo similar to the glyph T171 because the moon is connected with the earth, and he interprets T171 as the *kab* or earth sign. Nonetheless, more recent data suggests that the T171 glyph is the phonetic sign for *u*, which is Landa’s version of the word for moon (Justeson 1984: 328). The T171 glyph is used as a component in the earth sign, *Kaban*, indicating a link between the moon and the earth. Because the moon seems to disappear into the earth for a period of several days each month, the earth and the new moon are conceptually fused. This notion survives among the contemporary Tzotzil, who say that the moon is on the earth at the time of conjunction (Laughlin 1975: 222). Goddess I may be the earth aspect of the moon, and given her youth, she may be the moon during the transitional period when it moves from conjunction to first visibility, a time period identified with the young moon according to the Maya today (Báez-Jorge 1988: 247).

Goddess I often is sometimes shown embracing different male figures, an indication of her role as a licentious lover (*Dresden Codex* 20-22). In the same sequence, she sometimes carries a child, perhaps the result of these sexual unions. She also bears a variety of burdens, sometimes carried like children in a cloth tied around her back, making

<sup>19</sup> Thompson (1972:47-48, 51) identifies three names for the youthful Goddess I, all incorporating the youthful T1026 portrait head. In Thompson’s opinion, they are all aspects of the Moon Goddess. Taube (1992:69) also identifies goddess I as the Moon Goddess. Most often her T1026 name is prefixed by T171 (*kab*) or T58, meaning *sak* (white). The goddess with the *sak* prefix is identified by Knorosov (1982:23) as *sak-ch’up*, “maiden”, the Moon Goddess. This name (T58:T1026) may actually be read as *sak ixik* “white woman” (Lamb, personal communication). A Classic period counterpart is the Moon God covered with symbols for white (Taube 1992: Fig. 31a).

her a form of the "mother goddess". Thompson 1972: 49-52) identifies these burdens as diseases under the control of the Moon Goddess, which he notes confirms a link with the Yucatec Maya goddess Ix Chel, described by Friar Diego de Landa as the goddess of medicine, pregnancy, and divination in the 16th century (Tozzer 1941: 129, 154). Although Landa does not specifically identify Ix Chel as the moon, Thompson (1972: 47) points out that Acna is called Ixchel in her capacity as goddess of childbirth, and her name is related to the terms for moon and month (Ekna) among the contemporary Lacandon. The Moon Goddess is also the patroness of childbirth and pregnancy among other contemporary Maya cultures (Earle and Snow 1985: 243; Thompson 1939: 133-34; 1970: 243; 1972: 47; Schultze Jena 1945: 28-29).

Thompson (1971: 83; 1972: 47-48, 51, 88) identifies both Goddess O and Goddess I with the moon and Ix Chel. Taube (1992: 69, 105) equates Goddess I with the moon, but he says Ix Chel is Goddess O, the goddess of weaving, curing, and divination. In light of linguistic evidence linking Ix Chel with the glyphic name of Goddess O, the identification of Ix Chel as the moon has been reaffirmed by some (Schele and Freidel 1990: 366), and questioned by others (Taube 1992: 105; Stone 1990). The analysis presented below suggests that Goddess I and Goddess O are different aspects of the moon, perhaps representing different lunar phases. The youthful-aged dichotomy between Goddess I and Goddess O is similar to that seen with Tlazolteotl, the mother goddess, and Teteoinnan-Toci, the aged midwife who represents the moon in conjunction.

Representations of Goddess O pouring water that falls to earth suggests a connection with modern Maya beliefs linking the moon and rainfall (Fig. 12, *Dresden Codex* 39b; *Madrid Codex* 10b). Maya ethnographic accounts abound in data linking observation of the moon to predictions about rainfall (Fought 1972: 387; Neuenswander 1981; Remington 1977:80-81). The Tzutujil believe that the moon contains water that becomes rain, and they say that the moon picks up water and pours it over her body when it rains (Tarn and Prechtel 1986: 176). They believe that the moon is a goddess who wears serpent rainbows as a sign of rain. This suggests a direct connection with Goddess O's serpent headdress and her role as a water-pourer in the *Codex Dresden* 74 (Fig. 12).

Stone (1990) links Goddess O on *Dresden Codex* 74 with Francisca Bazt'bai of the contemporary Tzutujil Maya, an aged grand-

mother associated with weaving and witchcraft (Fig. 12). She also compares Goddess O with the Tzutujil "grandmother moon" divinity, noting a relationship between the ophidian rainbows of grandmother moon and Goddess O's knotted serpent headdress. She points out that the young Goddess I also wears the serpent headdress. This association with serpents recalls Tlazolteotl and Coyolxauhqui, the Central Mexican lunar goddesses, although the snake may not have the same masculine connotation in Yucatec iconography.

Goddess I and Goddess O are both related to the Marías, aspects of the Virgin of the Tzutujil, who are closely linked to the moon through the medium of water. All the Marías represent water in some form, and there is a direct association between the moon and water because the moon is called the "lady of the stored water." Furthermore, the Marías are described as lunar months that are born from the moon (Tarn and Prechtel 1986: 174, 176). This suggests that the Marías represent the moon in different seasons of the year. It is possible that the different variants of Goddess O and Goddess I eventually will be linked to different lunar months. Preliminary analysis of one section of the *Dresden Codex* (39b) indicates that the water-pouring aspect of Goddess O is associated with the rainy season (Milbrath 1993a).

Sometimes Goddess O is linked with activities related to weaving. Since weaving is traditionally a dry season activity among the Maya, these images of Goddess O could reflect a dry season aspect of the moon (Milbrath 1993a).

The moon is commonly linked with weaving in Maya ethnographic accounts. The Tzotzil say that the moon is the mother of the sun, a poor woman who spins and weaves in exchange for corn (Báez-Jorge 1988: 243). Among the Tzutujil, all things related to weaving are female and are linked directly to Grandmother Moon (Prechtel and Carlsen 1988: 123, 131). The Tzutujil say that the original María wove the earth's mantle and wove children, a metaphor that relates childbirth to weaving (Tarn and Prechtel 1986: 176). The link between the weaving and making children may be an important subsidiary theme of lunar imagery—all of which are appropriate female gender roles.

Some of the aged lunar goddesses representing aspects of Goddess O are shown performing female activities related to weaving, such as warping or brocading woven textiles (*Codex Madrid* 79c, 102c, 102d, Ciaramella 1990; Milbrath 1993a). These female roles, however, are

not without gender ambiguity because an aged goddess brocading with a bone pick on Madrid 79c has the T612 (the "I" in Goddess O's *chel* title), but her main sign is T1009, part of God D's name, a god normally considered to be masculine (Milbrath 1993a).

Taube (1992: 101, Fig. 51a) points out that a Postclassic image of the aged Goddess O in the Tulum murals has both a spindle and a knotted serpent in her headdress, recalling images of Goddess O in the codices. Although not noted by Taube, this figure also wears the tonsured element of God E, the maize god (Taube 1992: Figs. 17, 51a). This indicates that there is a fusion between the Moon Goddess and the maize god evident during the Postclassic period, just as in the Classic period (A. D. 250-900).

According to Taube (1992: 68, Figs. 31d, 31e), the Classic period Moon Goddess has attributes of the Tonsured Maize God, including his latticed skirt of jade beads, face markings and coiffure. As noted above, these images may be predominantly male or of ambiguous gender. By the Postclassic period, the moon-maize configuration is associated with both male and female deities (God CH and the Tulum goddess), but the association surviving today is predominantly female. The moon, earth, and maize are collectively known as "our mother" among the highland Mam, and similar connections may be evident with the Quiche Maya goddess, Xquic (Taube 1992: 68). The Virgin Mary, a guise of the Moon Goddess, is the "beautiful lady, embracer of maize" among the Yucatec Maya today (Thompson 1954: 28). A close relationship between the female moon and maize is also apparent in Postclassic Central Mexican chronicles, especially in the role of "mother of maize" assigned to Toci and Xochiquetzal.

Imagery of Goddess O is poorly developed in the Classic period, and we can assume that the Classic period Moon Goddess incorporates attributes that were later assigned to different lunar goddesses (I and O) in the Postclassic period. This parallels the situation in the Central Mexican area, where the Teotihuacan Great Goddess incorporated many lunar roles that were later separated into different lunar complexes during the Postclassic period.

Taube (1992: 103-5) believes that Goddess O's closest Central Mexican counterparts are Teteoinnan-Toci and Tlazolteotl, although he also notes overlaps with Cihuacoatl. Goddess O is sometimes shown with a spindle headdress, like Tlazolteotl (*Madrid Codex* 32b). However, the visual relationship is not well defined because Tlazolteotl is not an aged goddess like Goddess O, and the spindle headdress

is not typical of Goddess O, who more commonly wears a knotted snake headdress or a coil of unspun cotton (Milbrath 1993a). The unspun cotton headdress is typical of both Tlazolteotl and Teteoinnan-Toci, but goddess O's aged features link her more directly with Teteoinnan-Toci. The monstrous aspect of Goddess O in her role as an eclipse monster on *Dresden Codex* 74 suggests a direct overlap with Cihuacoatl (Milbrath 1993a). The serpent headdress worn by both Goddess O and Goddess I relates to Coyolxauhqui wearing an undulating serpent on her headdress. On the other hand, Goddess O's role as a water-pourer suggests links with Xochiquetzal as a water goddess. Comparison with the Central Mexican pantheon indicates that Goddess O incorporates traits from a number of Central Mexican lunar goddesses. Goddess I shares some of these traits, but her iconography does not form a clear correspondence to Central Mexican deities, although general parallels are evident in her relationship with motherhood, disease and imagery of the earth.

In the Postclassic Maya period, a feminine role in the lunar imagery evident in the weaving complex, including brocading and other functions related to weaving, but occasionally the old weaving goddess bears a masculine title. The feminine role of motherhood is implied in sections dealing with diseases that are carried like babies on the back of the Moon Goddess. Goddess O's role as an aged water-pourer may relate to the female task of collecting water. The gender ambiguity of lunar imagery in Postclassic Central Mexico is much less evident in Postclassic Maya iconography. Nonetheless, some lunar goddesses have a male title or wear male costume elements, such as the maize god's headdress.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The moon was a being with many faces and many personalities in ancient Mesoamérica, reflecting the moon's multiple aspects as it undergoes transformation. Female lunar imagery is predominant, but male moon deities can be recognized in both Maya and Central Mexican art, and occasionally the same deity will have both a male and female aspect. Most gender attributes of lunar deities clearly relate to gender roles. Female lunar deities are often linked to water-pouring, spinning, weaving, and childbirth, all feminine activities. Male lunar deities are shown in masculine roles, as warriors, priests

and ballplayers. Nonetheless, in some lunar images there is crossover between gender roles, such as the women warriors and the female ballplayer of the Quiche, and the male who was forced to weave while impersonating the Moon Goddess in the Aztec Hueypachtli ceremony. This gender-role crossover mirrors the variable gender of the moon.

Tedlock (1985) suggests that in the *Popol Vuh* the moon changes gender over the course of the month in relation to the changing lunar phases. At present, the Maya data is not sufficiently developed to confirm his position, but study of Central Mexican ceremonies involving lunar deities indicates that changes in gender take place with the death and decapitation of the Moon Goddess, an image that represents the transformation of the moon during conjunction. Such gender transformation reflects a pattern that is quite unique in the Aztec festival calendar and it seems to be invariably linked to lunar deities.<sup>20</sup> In other cases, the gender of the lunar deity is determined

<sup>20</sup> Surveying the other ceremonies that involve human sacrifice indicates that there are few festivals (Ochpaniztli, Hueypachtli and Tititl) in which there is an apparent gender transformation of the sacrificed individual. Lunar imagery is usually evident in the sacrificial ceremonies involving gender transformation or gender ambiguity, but the festival of Hueytozoztli may involve a Venus deity of ambiguous gender. During Hueytozoztli, a virgin fertility goddess was sacrificed by being thrown into a whirlpool in the center of the lake (Durán 1971:164, 425; Nicholson 1971: Table 4). The virgin impersonated the god Quetzalcoatl, and they cut her hair like that of a man and painted her face red like a woman destined for sacrifice (López-Austin 1993:243).

There are other sacrifices involving females that do not involve gender transformation. Among such ceremonies is the sacrifice during Etzalcualiztli in May, when a girl's throat was slit in the lake to honor Chalchiuhtlicue (Durán 1971: 265-66). In the next month, Tecuilhuitontli, the impersonator of the salt goddess, Huixtocihuatl, was decapitated with a swordfish snout, but no one wore the garments of the dead goddess (Sahagún 1950-82, II:91-94). During October, in Quecholli, three females (one called Yeuatlicue and two bearing the names of Coatllicue) were laid out on a stone and sacrificed like deer, just before the sacrifice of Mixcoatl and the other god impersonators representing their husbands (Sahagún 1950-82, II:138-39). Durán's (1971:146-48) description of the same month says that a woman representing the goddess Yoztlamiyahual was sacrificed by knocking her head against a stone called the *teocomitl* ("divine pot"). Her head was cut off and given to a man impersonating the god Mixcoatontli. Then he was sacrificed in "the usual manner" (heart excision) in honor of Camaxtli.

One the sacrifice ceremonies clearly merges the Moon Goddess and maize. In July, during Hueytecuilhuitl, the maize goddess, Xilonen, and an impersonator of Cihuacoatl were sacrificed (Nicholson 1971: Table 4; Sahagún 1974:37). In the *Florentine Codex* Sahagún (1950-82, II:103-5) says that Xilonen was sacrificed on the back of a fire priest at the temple of Centeotl, but he does not describe the sacrifice of Cihuacoatl's impersonator. According to the *Codex Magliabechiano* (35v), the ceremony was dedicated to the goddess of salt, Huixtocihuatl, but it was Xilonen who was sacrificed during this month (Boone 1983:195). Describing

by the assigned role, as noted above. Whether these gender roles are also related to different lunar phases cannot be determined based on the information available at present.

In the Mesoamerican pantheon there were a number of male-female couples, but the gender boundaries seem clearly represented in most cases. The greatest degree of gender ambiguity is in the lunar complex and representations of the earth or deities fused with the earth. The earth and moon are intimately linked as the earth-moon in imagery representing lunar conjunction. It seems that the fertility of the earth required a bisexual construct, so that the moon within the earth was similarly bisexual. But it is not only the association with the earth that leads to the bisexual lunar imagery, for it is clear that the moon is inherently bisexual, often appearing as a male with female attributes or a female with male attributes. When the moon plays a role requiring a female persona, such as giving birth or carrying a child, the representation seems to be clearly female. However, when the Moon Goddess takes on the role of a warrior, masculine traits are incorporated in her imagery. Images of the moon as a priest or ballplayer seem to be predominantly masculine, but even here there are indications of sexual ambiguity, reflecting the bisexual nature of the moon. Maize agriculture is related to both male and female images of the moon, sometimes clearly associated with gender ambiguity, reflecting the bisexual nature of agricultural fertility and the role of the bisexual moon in maize agriculture.

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the same month, Durán (1971:211-14) notes that a female was killed on the bodies of four men who had been sacrificed by throwing them in a fire. Her throat was slit and her heart torn out. In the chapter on Cihuacoatl, he says that female slave was dressed in the manner of "the goddess", but then he says that she was called Xilonen. In another chapter, Durán (1971:437-40) describes the impersonator as having three names: Xilonen, Chicomecoatl, and Chalchiuhcihuah (Chalchiuhtlicue), the first two being aspects of maize, and the last a goddess of water. The impersonator was associated with Cihuacoatl's cult because she was forced to run with a group of old "hags", women who were midwives and healers. She was taken to temple of Cihuacoatl, but she was kept separate from the image of goddess, which was hidden behind inside the temple. Then she was sacrificed and her heart was offered to the sun. It would seem that here the impersonator represented both Xilonen and Cihuacoatl. This is another example of a lunar deity merged with maize.

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