

## Documenting the Maya Textile Tradition: Recent Work in Venustiano Carranza & Alta Verapaz

### *Footnote References*

(1) **Morris, Jr., Walter F.**, A Millennium of Weaving in Chiapas, An Introduction to the Pellizzi Collection of Chiapas Textiles, Litográfica Turmex, Méx., D.F., 1984, p. 9.

(2) **Uriarte, Maria Teresa**, "Dressed Lords and Ladies, New Discoveries and Personal Accounts in the Maya West," in Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya, by Mary Miller and Simon Martin, Thames and Hudson, New York, 2004, pp. 242-243.

(3) The following sources:

**Chocooj, Mario**, unpublished Transcription from Q'eqchi' to Spanish of interviews filmed with *pikb'il* weavers in Samintacá and Samac, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, April 12, 2007, Endangered Threads Documentaries (ETD).

**Knoke de Arathoon, Barbara**, unpublished Summary Con Las Notas Transcritas. Investigacion de Campo Sobre El Pik'bil en Cuatro Comunidades de Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, Enero 17-23, 2010, Endangered Thread Documentaries (ETD).

**Morris, Walter F., Jr.**, unpublished manuscript Guía Textil de los Altos de Chiapas, 2010, pp. 120-125.

**Quirín Dieseldorff, Dr. Herbert**, X Balam Q'ué, El Pájaro Sol: El Traje Regional de Cobán, Ediciones del Museo Ixchel, 1984, pp. 10-11.

**Vitale, Kathleen Mossman**, unpublished Field Work Logs: Guatemala/2004, 3-6-04 meeting with Desiree Shaeffer de Cevallos, Casa de Art, Antigua, in which she shared her contact in San Juan Chamelco for *pikb'il* huipils. Guatemala/2005, 2-18-05 to 2-23-05, Alta Verapaz, visited markets and interviewed/filmed weavers in San Cristóbal Verapaz, Samac, San Pedro Carchá and San Juan Chamelco.

Guatemala/2006, 3-15-06 to 3-17-06, Alta Verapaz, interviewed and filmed *pikb'il* textile collector Doña Leslie Dieseldoff Hemstead, viuda de Fairhurst, in Cobán; also interviewed/filmed weavers in Samac and Tactic. Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-17-10 to 1-23-10, Alta Verapaz, interviewed/filmed weavers in Samac and Sanimtacá (municipality of Cobán), and the aldeas of San Luis, Santa Cecilia and Se'b'ob' (municipality of San Juan Chamelco).

(4) The following sources:

**Ardren, Traci**, Flowers for the Earth Lord, Guatemalan Textiles from the Permanent Collection, University of Miami, Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, Fla, 2006, pp. 1-2.

**Deuss, Krystyna**, Indian Costumes from Guatemala, CTD Printers Ltd., Twickenham, Great Britian, 1981, pp. 23-24.

**Miller, Mary, and Simon Martin**, Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Thames & Hudson, New York, 2004, p. 94.

**Sayer, Chloe**, Mexican Textiles, British Museum Publications, London, 1985, p. 31.

**Schevill, Margot Blum, ed.**, The Maya Textile Tradition, Jeffrey Jay Foxx, photographs, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 132.

(5) The following sources:

**Adams, Richard E. W.**, "Rio Azul: Archeologists Explore Guatemala's Lost City of the Maya," National Geographic Magazine, Vol. 169, No. 4, April 1986, p. 445 refers to Robert Carlson's analysis of textile fiber fragments and the similarities to current weaving style in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

**Carlsen, Robert S.**, "Analysis of the Early Classic Period Textile Remains from Tomb 23, Rio Azul, Guatemala," Rio Azul Reports Number 3, The 1985 Season, R. E. W. Adams, editor, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1987.

(6) **Morris**, A Millennium of Weaving in Chiapas, 1984:8-9.

(7) The following sources:

**Vitale** unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-26-10 conversation in Antigua with Raymond Senuk, in which he described early 20<sup>th</sup> Century plain weave textiles with fine thread from Comalapa (Chimaltenango) and Almotenango (Quetzaltenango).

**Senuk, Raymond**, Maya textile collector and scholar, e-mails 10-25-10 and 10-26-10 in which he added a textile from Palin (Esquintla) to the list of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century plain weave textiles of Guatemala; and e-mail 10-25-10 in which he sent photos of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century sheer, plain weave textile with rows of small brocaded designs from Santa Lucia Utatlán, (Sololá).

(8) **Schevill, Margot Blum**, Evolution in textile design from the highlands of Guatemala: Seventeen male tzutes or headdresses from Chichicastenango in the collections of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 1985, Fig. 17, p. 15.

(9) The following sources:

**Carter, Ed**, (a British-trained anthropologist living in Guatemala) stated in a phone conversation, Antigua, 02-13-05, that there was no continuity of designs used over the centuries, though there was continuity of technique and materials. He also said *pikb'il*-style weaving had once been widespread throughout the area settled by the Maya, but only remote pockets of the style remain today.

**Chocooj**, unpublished Transcription, 2007, p. 3, Sanimtacá weaver Rosa María Coy (in answer to a question about the brocaded designs) said, "*Usamos lo que acaba de mencionar y también a veces usamos estrellas y los animalitos. Todos, congrijos, los otros diseños, tales como las patas de perro. Usamos esos diseños pero no sabemos exactamente lo que significan. Hay muchos otros diseños pero solo los aplicamos porque así los hemos aprendido sin saber su significado. Y así resultan muchos diseños.*" (Translation by the author: "We use what you have just mentioned, and also sometimes we use stars and small animal. All of them--crabs, the other designs, like the footprint of dogs. We use these designs but we don't know exactly what they mean. There are many other designs but we just use them because that's what

we've learned to do without knowing their meaning. And thus there are many designs.")

**Looper, Matthew G.**, Gifts of the Moon: Huipil Designs of the Ancient Maya, San Diego Museum Papers, San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego, Calif., 2000, pp. 35-36.  
**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Logs: Guatemala/2006, 3-16-06, in an interview with *pikb'il* weaver Concepción Poou Coy, Samac, she said it was her school teacher who taught her the meanings of the locally used brocade designs. She did not know the meanings before the teacher taught her. Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-15-10, conversation with Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, Guatemala City, she said, "Weavers no longer know the legend of the hummingbird and the tobacco plant. It's just a bird on a plant, though they continue to use the design."

<sup>(10)</sup> The following sources:

**Scheler, Linda, and Mary Ellen Miller**, The Blood of Kings, Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art, George Braziller, Inc, New York in association with the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, 1986, pp. 9-10.

**Knoke de Arathoon**, unpublished Summary, 2010: 3.

**Knoke de Arathoon, Barbara**, unpublished Reporte Con Las Notas Transcritas: Investigacion de Campo Sobre El Pik'bil en Cuatro Comunidades de Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, Enero 17-23, 2010, Endangered Thread Documentaries (ETD).

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-15-10, meeting in Guatemala City in which ETD intern Callie Vandewiele said that Rosario Tot Coy, 24, told her that even though she didn't sell any *pikb'il* in a year, she will still teach her own children the weaving style because her mother had taught her. (Vandewiele lived in San Juan Chamelco for a year, and volunteered with ETD to do field work among *pikb'il* weavers in her spare time.)

<sup>(11)</sup> The following sources:

**Sharer, Robert J., with Loa P. Traxler**, The Ancient Maya, Sixth Edition, Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 2006, pp 39-40.

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Logs: Guatemala/2005, 2-22-05, discussion with Peace Corps Volunteer Michelle Berardi Bonham on extensive karst cave systems in Alta Verapaz that the Maya considered sacred, and that draw many tourists. Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 2-2-10, Venustiano Carranza weaver Rosario Gomez Espinoza offered to take us to the limestone cave on the back of the volcano where as a child she left her first weaving as an offering to "La Virgincita" to ask that her weaving skills be blessed.

<sup>(12)</sup> **Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Logs: Guatemala/2005, 1-21-05, San Rafael Petzal; 1-21/24-05, Nebaj; 1-23-05, Aguacatán and San Juan Cotzal; 2-22-05, Tactic; 2-18/19-05, San Cristóbal Verapaz. Guatemala/2006, 3-17-06, San Cristóbal Verapaz. Guatemala/2008, 3-26/31-08, Nebaj; 3-28/29-08, San Juan Cotzal. Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-17-10, Tactic and San Cristóbal Verapaz;

<sup>(13)</sup> This section on Venustiano Carranza is based on the following, unless otherwise noted:

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 1-31-10/2-6-10.

(14) **Morris, Walter F., Jr.**, unpublished manuscript, Guia Textil, 2010:125.

(15) **Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 2-2-10, Janet Schwartz (ETD's guide in Venustiano Carranza, a long time resident of Chiapas, and a journalist and photographer) described land disputes among various groups in Venustiano Carranza.

(16) **Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico/2010, 2-2-10, Janet Schwartz described state and national folk art contests available to the weavers of *petete*.

(17) This section on Alta Verapaz is based on the following, unless otherwise noted:  
**Chocooj**, unpublished Transcription, 2007.

**Knoke de Arathoon**, unpublished Summary 2010.

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Logs: Guatemala/2004, /2005, /2006 and /2010.

(18) **Deuss, Krystyna**, Indian Costumes from Guatemala, 1981:10-11.

(19) The following sources:

**Knoke de Arathoon**, unpublished Summary, 2010.

**Pancake, Cherri M., and Suzanne Baizerman**, "Guatemalan Gauze Weaves: A Description and Key to Identification," Textile Museum Journal 20 & 21, 1980-1981, pp. 1-26.

**Quirín Dieseldorff**, X Balam Q'ué, El Pájaro Sol: El Traje Regional de Cobán, 1984.

(20) **Knoke de Arathoon**, unpublished Reporte, 2010, 1-19-10 (pp. 17-18), notes that on a visit to weaver Amanda Gue in Samac, we were shown a manual made by JICA (the Japanese Agency of International Cooperation), with detailed instructions on how to weave textile products for the Japanese market. JICA works through the Guatemalan agencies of AGEXPORT and INGUATE in Alta Verapaz.

(21) The following sources, given in chronological rather than alphabetical order, to illuminate the discussion:

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala/2005, 2-19-05, quoted Peace Corps Volunteer Jonathan Tharin (who lived and worked with the Samac weavers for two years and subsequently married *pikb'il* weaver Concepción Coou Coy) as saying that the thread used for *pikb'il* is pure cotton. Field Work Log, 2010, 1-16-10, noted that after a day of researching thread vendors near the Guatemala City central market, ETD ordered 40 pounds of 100% pure unmercerized, unpolished, unaltered, cotton thread, size 20/1, from Mario A. Batz, Tienda San Luis, 16 calle, 2.69, zona 1. The owner guaranteed that the ordered thread was the exact kind used for *pikb'il* weaving in Alta Verapaz. ETD distributed a skein of the thread to each *pikb'il* weaver who cooperated with interview and filming sessions (as well as small bags of beans, rice, salt and sugar). The weavers who received the thread acknowledged

that it was exactly what they used, and said they normally had to travel to San Pedro Carchá or San Juan Chamelco to purchase it, as there was no longer a thread store in Cobán.

**Tharin, Jonathan**, e-mail, 3-12-10, from Florida where he and his wife Concepción Coou Coy now live, acknowledged receipt of a skein of the thread purchased on 1-16-10, and confirmed that the thread was what was used for *pikb'il* weaving.

**Knoke de Arathoon**, Reporte, 2010, and Summary, 2010, described the thread used for *pikb'il* as "fine, white, 100% mercerized cotton (20/1)."

**Senuk**, e-mail 10-20-10, confirmed that *pik'bil* thread is unmercerized, 100% fine cotton thread.

**Frey, Liz**, Centralia College fiber arts professor, e-mail 10-29-10, also confirmed that *pik'bil* thread is unmercerized.

(Author's note: Miesch (an old brand of thread in Guatemala with the image of a cat on the label), and other locally-made mercerized, polished and/or blended threads tend to be thicker and stiffer when woven, and do not provide the sheer, soft, elegant weave of the classic *pikb'il huipil* when not starched and ironed. The word *mercerize*, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, Mass., 1993, is defined as follows: "to give (cotton yarn or cloth) luster, strength, and receptiveness to dyes by treatment under tension with caustic soda solution.")

<sup>(22)</sup> The following sources:

**Coe, Michael D.**, The Maya, Tames & Hudson, New York, Sixth edition, 1999, pp. 240-241.

**Knoke de Arathoon**, unpublished Reporte, 2010, pp. 15-23.

**REMHI**, Guatemala Never Again! Recovery of Historical Memory Project, The Official Report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1999, pp. 132-151.

**Vitale**, unpublished Field Work Log: Guatemala & Mexico, 2010, 1-18-10, on Sanimtacá, (pp. 13-14), and 1-19-10 on Samac (pp. 14-18).