

libro – de una claridad expositiva y una fluidez encomiables – bien podría considerarse prácticamente imprescindible para acceder a una mirada comprensiva, detallada y pertinente de buena parte de las discusiones actuales en la disciplina.

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**Hull, Kerry:** A Dictionary of Ch'orti' Mayan-Spanish-English. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2016. 525 pp. ISBN 978-1-60781-489-4. Price: \$ 80.00

The languages of the Mayan family have received wide attention from linguists and anthropologists ever since the 19th century, and count among the better-described Amerindian languages. This not the least is the case because of the general interest in this part of the world and the access these languages provide to ancient and modern Maya culture. Although significant progress has been made in producing dictionaries and grammars of Mayan languages, many of which have been published by native speakers in Guatemala, comprehensive reference sources are often still a research desideratum. The book under review here responds to this desideratum and provides a state-of-the-art dictionary of modern Ch'orti'.

Ch'orti' is a Mayan language in the departments of Chiquimula and Zacapa in eastern Guatemala and was formerly also spoken in the border regions of Honduras and El Salvador, where it has become extinct in the later part of the 20th century. With less than 12,000 speakers and a steady decrease of children who still learn the language, Ch'orti' can be considered to be one of the endangered Mayan languages. Any linguistic work that documents and preserves the language knowledge of present-day Ch'orti' speakers has to be considered invaluable.

Kerry Hull presents a comprehensive trilingual dictionary of Ch'orti' that comprises nearly 9,000 lexical entries with translations into Spanish and English. The entries were collected in many years of linguistic and anthropological field research in the town of Jocotán, where Hull began working in 1999. All forms were elicited and documented by the author who clearly states in the introduction to the dictionary, that “nothing was borrowed from any other linguistic source” (5). Accordingly, Hull does not include recent neologisms into the dictionary. Instead he paid particular attention to eliciting lexical data that relates to Ch'orti' religious practice. The Ch'orti' have been noticed by earlier researchers for their rich ceremonial repertoire and Hull spent several field seasons specifically focusing on Ch'orti' ritual language and poetics. This allowed him to document the vocabulary that is exclusively confined to the ceremonial registers and not used in other cultural domains. This makes Hull's dictionary a particularly valuable source for researchers interested in Maya religion and its linguistic reproduction.

Many of these entries will also be of relevance to the study of precolonial Maya culture. Ch'orti' forms – together with Ch'ol and Chontal – the Ch'olan subbranch of the Western Mayan language family, and of the Mayan languages spoken today, it is the one that is closest to the ancient Maya hieroglyphic script, as Hull points out (4). Dictionaries and grammatical descriptions of Ch'orti'

have served in the decipherment of ancient Maya writing and the reconstruction of the Classic Maya language. Hull's “Dictionary of Ch'orti'” will be a source of particular value in this process, as it provides ample lexical entries not found in any of the other available dictionaries and vocabularies that are more concise.

The dictionary is preceded by a systematic introduction, which includes a description of the language history. Hull lists the relevant historical sources and describes the historically known geographical distribution of Ch'orti'. In a separate section, he provides a survey of the most relevant linguistic sources available on Ch'orti', starting with the earliest documentation of 19th-century word lists to the most recent publications by Mayan linguists from the “Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala” (ALMG) and “Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín” (PLFM). Hull surveys the 19th-century records, pointing out whenever early scholars confused Ch'orti' with other Mayan languages spoken in southeast Guatemala and analysing the intertextualities with Girard's later work. He devotes time to critically assessing the contribution by Charles Wisdom, emphasising the value of Wisdom's lexicographic work from the 1930s which includes abundant lexical entries that have been lost in modern Ch'orti'. In his chronological treatment of the history of Ch'orti' linguistic documentation, Hull briefly revisits the existing descriptions of Ch'orti' grammar, while assessing in more detail the more recent lexicographic work produced by PLFM and ALMG.

The introduction is followed by an extensive “User's Guide” to the dictionary, which provides an explanation of the orthography used and the format of dictionary entries. Hull uses the official standard orthography for Ch'orti' and organises the entries based on the order of the Spanish alphabet. There is a special section on pronunciation of some phonemes, which also addresses some specifics of allophonic variation.

The entries of the dictionary are organised with Ch'orti' as matrix language followed by Spanish and English translations, with the Spanish forms given in italics. Lemmas are given as stem forms without inflectional morphology. Hull calls these roots, which is not entirely precise, as he lists derivational stems as separate entries. The exact grammatical category of the stem is identified by an abbreviation following the lemma. The abbreviations are listed in a long “grammatical index” that precedes the dictionary and explains the classification of the form. This is the only part in the dictionary that is not very accessible to user. Rather than simply listing the functional categories of the stems (e.g., “ADJ. adjective,” “CAUS. causative verb,” “IV. intransitive verb,” “NOM. Nominal,” “PPART. perfect participle,” or “VN. verbal noun”), Hull decides to subclassify all forms that fall into the category, giving a separate number to each derivational form (e.g., “VN1. verbal noun from antipassive in *-m-(a) + -ar*”; “VN2. verbal noun from passive in *-n-(a) + -ar*”; “VN3. verbal noun from antipassive in *-o + -ar*”; “VN20. verbal noun in *-ar* derived from *afv<sub>3</sub>* [affective verb with *-re* and *-ma*]”). Accordingly, the entry “*jarma'r* ... weaving, braiding” is given in the dictionary as VN1., even though

the suffixes *-m-ar* are visually part of the entry and the classification as VN. would have been sufficient. While the numbering system was probably chosen to avoid the necessity of including a short grammatical overview in the introduction, such an overview might have been more helpful for the non-specialist reader.

Each entry includes sample sentences that illustrate the use of a particular lemma in context, with different syntactic contexts being individually numbered. This is a very useful feature of this new dictionary, which does not only serve the language learner and linguist, but also provides ample cultural information. Several entries include supplementary annotations in square brackets that comment on linguistic form or provide the cultural, mythological, or ritual background of a term, expression, or syntactic example. Moreover, information on dialectal variation of forms are indicated in the entries.

This comprehensive and detailed dictionary will not only be a valuable resource for all those who study Ch'orti', Mayan linguistics, culture, religion, or Classic Maya writing. The inclusion of Spanish makes it also accessible to the speakers in Jocotán, which allows its use in the context of language and cultural revitalisation in Guatemala.

Frauke Sachse

**Jansen, Maarten, and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez:** *Time and the Ancestors. Aztec and Mixtec Ritual Art.* Leiden: Brill, 2017. 615 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-34051-0. (The Early Americas – History and Culture, 5) Price: € 164,00

This monumental work of 615 pages, written by two prominent scholars specialized in Mixtec culture of whom Pérez Jiménez is a native one, contributes significantly to better understand pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican religious practices and cultural heritage. In particular, they focus on two important topics that underline indigenous worldview: “Time and the Ancestor” – an allusion to Johannes Fabian’s critical work “Time and the Other” (1983), where he examined the encounter between the dominant and the colonized, that is, the “Other” in terms of “a *denial of coevalness*” (1). Their desire and attempt is to make accessible and give back to the indigenous people their cultural memory rather than making their past a “mere *object*” for the leisure of others including researchers and scholars one should add (532).

The remains of the famous Tomb 7 from Monte Albán in the valley of Oaxaca, Mexico excavated in 1932 by the Mexican archaeologist Alfonso Caso, and re-analyzed by the authors in this book exemplify the process of cultural denial through material misunderstanding. As the authors underline, Caso – although a careful excavator – did not grasp in “message and meaning” what he had found. Instead, he treated everything as a “mere collection of loose archaeological objects” as reflected in his later monograph and in the museum exhibition. Hence, it was difficult to see “significant patterns and relationships” for a long time and “Tomb 7 became an example of the fragmentation of indigenous religious heritage” (539). Thus, more than just to document ancient rituals and belief sys-

tems, Maarten Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez see their contribution as part of an ongoing process to give back to the indigenous people their rights on history and culture. That is, they understand their endeavor as forming part of a process of decolonization in a debate about “the meanings, functions and values of this religious heritage” and “the relationships between the past and the present” (xi).

Their approach to tackle with these issues is to turn to different methods and disciplines, among them archaeology, epigraphy, ethnohistory, linguistics, orality, and visual arts. In particular, after a short introduction into Mesoamerican culture and history, they devote to death and ancestor cult in Part 1 (entitled as “Offering to the Sacred Bundles”) while examining the New Fire, a ritual that marks the beginning of a New Year in the indigenous solar calendar in Part 2 of the book. They use primarily Mixtec sources of different kind like archaeological artefacts or codices (painted screenfold books) enriched by information from the Aztec and other related Mesoamerican people from the Postclassic, the period preceding the Spanish conquest (in the 16th century). Last but not least, to illustrate their arguments and to make Mesoamerica properly understood, they compare it to ancient European patterns.

Part 1 can be seen as the most important one, as Jansen and Pérez Jiménez re-analyze the treasure – artefacts and visual art – from Tomb 7 Monte Albán as well as those from other tombs of surrounding sites such as Zaachila (Tomb 1 and Tomb 2). This allows to show in chap. 1 how Mixtec and Zapotec history and dynasties echoed by the secondary remains in Tomb 7 from Monte Albán and by the so-called Xipe from Zaachila are not only intermingled by marriage relations but also crosscutting ethnic frontiers. This explains long-noticed stylistic and iconic resemblances between the cited tombs and enables to re-date the secondary burial of Tomb 7 from Monte Albán into the first half of the 14th century or more precisely, based on the human remains and the individuals behind them, between 1177 and 1435 A.D. (81, 84). By this the authors argue that the Postclassic Tomb 7 from Monte Albán had been re-entered from the roof (rather than through the ancient entrance) and that a ritual practice had converted the original tomb into a shrine (89).

In chap. 2 the authors focus on the death and ancestor cult mirrored in Tomb 7 not only from an ancient religious perspective but from a broader Mesoamerican worldview and from the viewpoint of cultural memory, as certain aspects have survived until these days (92). In particular, the authors consider important the relation between Mother Earth and the ancestors and transfer this idea to the tomb under consideration and its archaeological remains (humans and artefacts). They identify, along with other authors, the equivalent of the archetypical mother that had died in childbirth and who became the deity called Cihuacoatl (Woman Serpent) in Nahuatl, as being Lady 9 Grass represented in Tomb 7 by different artefacts and symbols (113). However, Jansen and Pérez Jiménez reject the idea that the tomb itself may have been the main seat of Lady 9 Grass, the guardian of the dead ancestors referred to in pre-Hispanic codices. Nevertheless, com-