

OUT OF THE UNDERWORLD: THE RESURRECTION OF THE MAIZE GOD AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

The resurrection of the Maya Maize God must have been one of the most important mythological events, given its connection with both the culmination of the ruler's destiny and the appearance of new cobs of maize at the end of the agricultural cycle. This paper explores the possibility that rituals performed to recreate that event were linked to Triadic Groups. These architectural assemblages not only conform to the spatial organization of resurrection scenes known from iconography, but also bear stucco decorations that evoke the concept of the Flower Mountain, a mythic location where this scene took place.

Keywords: Maize God, Triadic Group, Resurrection, Flower Mountain

Resumen

La resurrección del Dios de Maíz Maya ha sido uno de los eventos míticos más importantes, dado a la conexión con la culminación del destino de un gobernante, tanto como con la aparición de los nuevos elotes al final del ciclo agrícola. Este contribución explora la posibilidad de que los rituales realizados para recrear este evento eran vinculados con los Grupos Triádicos. Estos ensamblajes arquitectónicos no solo conforman con la organización espacial de las escenas de resurrección conocidas en iconografía, pero también evocan el concepto de la Montaña Florida, un lugar mítico en el cual este escena sucedió.

Palabras clave: Dios de Maíz, Grupo Triádico, Montaña Florida, Resurrección

INTRODUCTION

The Maize God, with his many appearances and attributes, is certainly one of the major deities in Maya pantheon. He frequently assumes a central role in many mythological concepts, as well as in the iconographic record, at least since the Late Preclassic period. This ubiquity and antiquity has often been explained by an assumption that the ancient Maya diet consisted mostly of maize. That assumption is based on the fact that among contemporary indigenous populations of the Highlands of Guatemala and northern Yucatan maize constitutes up to 86 % of the diet (White and Schwarcz 1989:466). However, isotopic studies have shown that back in the pre-Columbian times this amount was far lower, perhaps