

HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE IN THE HOUSE OF COLD³⁸⁷

AND so they now entered the House of Cold. The cold here was immeasurable. The interior of the House of Cold was thick with hail.

But straightaway the boys caused the cold to dissipate.³⁸⁸ They did it in. They ruined and destroyed the cold. Thus they did not die, but rather were alive when it dawned again. The Xibalbans had wanted them to die there, but this was not to be. Instead they were just fine when the dawn came.

So then their guardians came again to summon them.

“What is this? Haven’t they died?” asked the lords of Xibalba.

And again they marveled at the deeds of the boys, Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE IN THE HOUSE OF JAGUARS³⁸⁹

NEXT they entered into Jaguar House, which was crowded inside with jaguars:

“Do not eat us. We will give you what is yours,” the jaguars were told.

Then they scattered bones before the beasts, who voraciously crunched them.³⁹⁰

The hearts of the night watchmen found this sweet, saying, “They are finished. They have given themselves up. They have eaten their hearts, and now these are their skeletons that are being gnawed upon.”

³⁸⁷ lines 3994-4017

³⁸⁸ *Tzaj* is to “evaporate, dry up, dissipate, exhaust.”

³⁸⁹ lines 4018-4037

³⁹⁰ *Paq'aq'ik* refers to the sound of crunching, gnawing, or eating rapidly. It is also used to describe the sound of walking over dry leaves. Alternatively it may also refer to the sound of something being rent or split.

But they didn't die. They were just fine when they came out again from Jaguar House.

“What kind of people are these? Where have they come from?” asked all the Xibalbans.

HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE IN THE HOUSE OF FIRE³⁹¹

NEXT they went into the fire, for there was a House of Fire. There was nothing but fire inside. But they were not burned. They were to have been roasted and set aflame. Instead they were just fine when dawn came. It had been desired that they would straightaway die when they passed through there, but it was not so. Thus all the Xibalbans lost heart as a result.

HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE IN THE HOUSE OF BATS³⁹²

NEXT they were put inside Bat House, which had only bats inside. It was a house of death bats. These were great beasts with snouts like blades that they used as murderous weapons.

When they arrived there, they were to be finished off. They had to crawl inside their blowguns to sleep so that they would not be eaten there in this house.

Nevertheless, it was because of a single death bat that they gave themselves up in defeat. It came swooping down. But this was merely a way to manifest themselves when it occurred.

³⁹¹ lines 4038-4051

³⁹² lines 4052-4177

Thus they pleaded for wisdom all that night as the bats made a din with their flapping wings.

“Keeleetz! Keeleetz!” they said all night long.

At length things quieted a little, and the bats became motionless.

Thus one of the boys crawled to the end of his blowgun. Xbalanque said, “Hunahpu, do you see the dawn yet?”

“I will go and see for certain if has happened,” he replied.

Hunahpu truly wanted to look out of the mouth of his blowgun to see the dawn. But when he did so, his head was cut off by the death bat,³⁹³ leaving the greater part of his body behind.

“What? Hasn’t it dawned yet?” asked Xbalanque. But Hunahpu did not move.

“What is going on? Hunahpu wouldn’t have left. What then has he done?”

But nothing moved; only the rustling of wings was heard. Thus Xbalanque was ashamed:

“Alas,³⁹⁴ we have given in already,” he said.

At the word of One Death and Seven Death, the head was placed atop the ballcourt. Thus all the Xibalbans rejoiced because of the head of Hunahpu.

Then Xbalanque summoned all of the animals—the coati and the peccary, and all the animals both small and great—while it was still dark, early in the morning. He then entreated them for their food:

³⁹³ The ability of bats to cut down fruit from trees while in flight associated them in the mind of the ancient Maya with decapitation sacrifice. Bats are often seen painted on ancient Maya vessels as underworld denizens of death, decorated with crossed bones and extruded eyeballs that have their optic nerves still dangling from them.

³⁹⁴ Ximénez translates *akarok* as “Ay! Ay!” In English the more common expression of lament would be “Alas!”

“I send each of you to bring the food that belongs to you,” said Xbalanque to them.

“Very well,” they said.

Then they all went to obtain what was theirs. When they returned they were many. One brought back rotten things, another brought leaves, another brought stones, and yet another brought dirt. Thus the animals, both small and great, each brought their various foods.

Now after many had come, the coati arrived last of all bringing a chilacayote squash. She³⁹⁵ came rolling it along with her nose. This was to be transformed into the head of Hunahpu. Immediately its eyes were carved upon it. Numerous sages came down from the sky. For Heart of Sky, he who is Huracan, appeared here. He arrived here in Bat House.

But the face wasn't completed successfully in time. Only its beautiful covering had appeared. It only had the ability to speak by the time the horizon of the sky began to redden, for it was about to dawn.

“Blacken it again with soot, old man,”³⁹⁶ the possum³⁹⁷ was told.

³⁹⁵ The coati is consistently associated with females in the text, just as the peccary is associated with males. They are particularly identified as the grandmother and grandfather deities respectively (pp. 60-61, 80, 98; lines 22-23, 559-560, 1055-1056). Akkeren cites a possible ethnographic survival of this association between the coati and gourds. In the Yucatec village of Xcocal, a ceiba tree is cut down in the forest and re-erected as a “tree of abundance” in the center of the main plaza. An actor dressed as a coati climbs the tree and scatters squash seeds while tying fruit to its branches (Akkeren 2000, 296).

³⁹⁶ *Ama'* is a general term for “male,” whether human or animal. In this case, it is used as a nickname for the aged possum deity. Because of the possum's gray coat, awkward gait, and snaggly teeth, the Maya associated this animal with old age (Miller and Taube 1993, 128).

³⁹⁷ Father Coto lists under the Spanish word *Escuridad*, that *vuch* (possum) is the darkness of night just prior to the dawn (Coto 1983, 207-8). This is perhaps a manifestation of the creator deity Xpiyacoc, one of whose principal titles is Hunahpu Possum (Karen Bassie-Sweet, personal communication; see pp. 60, 79-80; lines 20, 500, 555). In the Tzotzil area, a grandfather possum, called “Old Man Possum,” is associated

“Fine,” replied the Grandfather.

And he blackened the sky with soot until it was dark again. Four times the Grandfather blackened it with soot. Thus today people say, “The possum blackens it with soot.”

Finally the sky succeeded in turning red, and then blue when it began its existence.

“Is it not good?” Hunahpu was asked.

“Yes, it is good,” he replied.

For his head was well supported. It became just like a true head. Then they planned a deception;³⁹⁸ they took counsel together:

“Don’t play ball. Just look threatening. I will surely be the one to accomplish it,” said Xbalanque to him.

Then he instructed a rabbit:

“Be there at the head of the ballcourt in the tomato patch,”³⁹⁹ the rabbit was told by Xbalanque. “And when the rubber ball comes your way, hop away until I accomplish my task,” the rabbit was told. Thus he was given his instructions there in the night.

with the dawn at the beginning of the planting season, and that the red light of the east is said to be one of his manifestations: “Uch [Possum] is greatly respected, because it has fire, because at dawn it lights up the hills. It is not the sunlight, for the sun rises later.... 'Uch is as God because it has light, a red light, that later disappears to give place to the God, the sun. Neither 'Okinahual nor 'Uch are evil, but they must be respected as a God. God must be respected, but he is not bad. Perhaps he punishes when he is overlooked” (Guiteras-Holmes 1961, 195-197; cf. 33, 206, 292). Akkeren compares this passage with the New Years pages of the Dresden Codex in which a possum deity presides over the five days of the Wayeb at the close of the annual cycle. In the *Popol Vuh* account, however, the possum is associated not with the annual change of the solar year, but “the moment of the new Sun-era” (Akkeren 2000, 290).

³⁹⁸ *Xkib'an ki tzij* (they made their words). To “make” words is to deceive or to lie.

³⁹⁹ There is some confusion as to where the rabbit was told to be. The manuscript here reads *pixc*, which Tedlock reads as *pixik'* (acorn or oak). This is contradicted, however, by lines 4197 and 4217, which read *pix* (tomatoes, or tomato patch), a reading given by most translators. The confusion may be due to a play on

And when it dawned, the both of them were well.⁴⁰⁰

THE HEAD OF HUNAHPU IS RESTORED⁴⁰¹

SO the ball was again dropped into play. The head of Hunahpu was first placed atop the ballcourt.

“We have already triumphed. You are finished. You gave in, so give it up,” they were told.

But Hunahpu just called out:

“Strike⁴⁰² the head as if it were a rubber ball,” they were told. “No harm will come to us now, for we are holding our own.”

Thus the lords of Xibalba threw down⁴⁰³ the ball where it was met by Xbalanque. The ball landed before his yoke and bounced away. It sailed clear over the ballcourt. It just bounced once, then twice, landing in the tomatoes. Then the rabbit came out, hopping along.⁴⁰⁴ All the Xibalbans thus went after him. The Xibalbans all went after the rabbit, shouting and rushing about.

words, a practice beloved by the Maya. *Pixk'onik* is the verb for “to hop (like a rabbit or flea),” while the rabbit is *pixab'ax* (instructed) in lines 4164 and 4174.

⁴⁰⁰ Literally “good their faces both of them,” the standard way of saying that they were “fine,” but also in this context a clever play on words considering the newly-made “face” of Hunahpu.

⁴⁰¹ lines 4178-4241

⁴⁰² The action referred to is, unfortunately, not clear. According to Coto, *k'aqa* may be “to strike, to throw,” or even generally “to play ball.”

⁴⁰³ This is a case where the limitations of the Latin alphabet in which the manuscript was written are apparent. The text reads *xetzacou*. If this is to be read as *xetzaqow*, it would mean that the Xibalbans “threw out” the ball into play. Alternatively, if it is to be read as *xetzak'ow*, it would mean that the Xibalbans “struck” the ball. It is impossible to know which of these alternatives is correct, although it would be helpful to our understanding of how the game was played.

⁴⁰⁴ The hopping of the rabbit thus confuses the lords of Xibalba into thinking it is the bouncing ball.

Thus the twins were able to retrieve the head of Hunahpu, replacing it where the chilacayote squash had been. They then placed the chilacayote squash on the ballcourt, while the true head of Hunahpu was his once more. Therefore they both rejoiced again. While the Xibalbans were out searching for their rubber ball, the twins retrieved it from the tomato patch. And when they had done so, they called out:

“Come on! We found our rubber ball!” they said. Thus they were carrying the round ball⁴⁰⁵ when the Xibalbans returned.

“What was it that we saw?” they asked.

And so they began again to play ball, both teams making equal plays until at last Xbalanque struck the chilacayote squash, strewing it all over the ballcourt. Thus its seeds were scattered before them.⁴⁰⁶

“What is this that has been brought here? Where is he that brought it?” asked the Xibalbans.

Thus the lords of Xibalba were defeated by Hunahpu and Xbalanque. They had passed through great affliction, but despite everything that had been done to them, they did not die.

THE DEATHS OF HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE⁴⁰⁷

THIS, then, is the memorial to the deaths of Hunahpu and Xbalanque. We shall now tell it in memory of their death.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ki k'olem* (they were carrying a round thing). This is undoubtedly a reference to the ball, although it is not specified (James Mondloch, personal communication).

⁴⁰⁶ A play on words is made here between *saqiram* (scattered) and *saqilal* (squash seeds). If one did not recognize the pun in the original Quiché, the choice of words would be confusing.

⁴⁰⁷ lines 4242-4365

What they had planned to do, they had done despite all their afflictions and misfortunes. Thus they did not die in the trials of Xibalba. Neither were they defeated by all the ravenous beasts that lived there.

And then they summoned two seers. Visionary persons they were. The names of these sages were Descended⁴⁰⁸ and Ascended:

“The lords of Xibalba may inquire of you concerning our death. They are even now putting together their thoughts on the matter, because we have not yet died. We have not been defeated. We confounded their trials. Nor have the animals seized us. This, therefore, is the sign that is in our hearts. Heated stones will be the means by which our murder will be accomplished. Thus when all Xibalba has gathered together to determine how to ensure our death, this shall be the idea that you will propose. If you are asked about our death when we are burned, this is what you shall tell them, you, Descended and you, Ascended, if they should speak to you about it:

“‘Wouldn’t it perhaps be good if we scatter their bones in the canyon?’

“Then you are to say, ‘This would not be good, for they would merely arise again to new life.’⁴⁰⁹

“Then they will say to you, ‘Perhaps it would be good to merely hang them in the top of a tree?’

⁴⁰⁸ The Colonial period Varea dictionary lists *Xulu* (Descended) as “[spirit] familiars appearing alongside rivers.” Basseta lists *ah xulu* as “a diviner,” consistent with the statement in the *Popol Vuh* that he is a visionary seer. The paired figures “Descended” and “Ascended” likely refer to the common modern expression “to go down and up,” which means to “go all over, or everywhere” (Jim Mondloch, personal communication).

⁴⁰⁹ Literally “would be revived their faces.”

“You will then reply, ‘Certainly that would not be good, for you would see their faces before you.’

“Then the third time they will say, ‘Would it be a good thing if we merely scatter their bones in the course of the river?’

“If then you are asked this, you will reply, ‘It is good that they should die. And it would be good if their bones were ground upon the face of a stone like finely ground maize flour. Each one of them should be ground separately. Then these should be scattered there in the course of the river. They should be sprinkled on the river that winds among the small and great mountains.’

“This, then, is what you will say. Thus will be made manifest what we have said to you in counsel,” said Hunahpu⁴¹⁰ and Xbalanque.

For when they had thus counseled them, they already knew of their death. The Xibalbans were even then putting together the great heated stones in the form of a pit oven,⁴¹¹ placing large hot coals within it.

Then came the messengers of One Death and Seven Death to accompany them:

“The lords say to us: ‘May they come! Bring them so that they may see what we have cooked up for them.’⁴¹² This is the word of the lords unto you, boys,” they were told.

“Very well,” they replied.

⁴¹⁰ The manuscript reads Xhunahpu (Little Hunahpu) which is the diminutive form of Hunahpu. It is perhaps used in this section to distinguish him from his father One Hunahpu, who had also died in Xibalba.

⁴¹¹ *Chojib'al* (pit oven) is dug into the ground and filled with hot stones or coals to roast meat.

⁴¹² This is a play on words. *Chojij* means “to cook, broil, or set fire to something”; but it also means “to straighten out, take a direct route, or rectify something.” Thus the Xibalbans were trying to trick the twins by saying that they were going to settle things, while at the same time hinting at the means by which they intended to kill them.

Thus they went quickly to the mouth of the pit oven. There the Xibalbans wanted to force them into playing with them:

“Let us jump over this our sweet drink. Four times each of us will go across it, boys,” they were told by One Death.⁴¹³

“You cannot trick us with this. Do we not already know the means of our death, O lords? You shall surely see it,” they said.

Then they turned to face one another, spread out their arms and together they went into the pit oven. Thus both of them died there. Then all the Xibalbans rejoiced at this. They contentedly shouted and whistled:

“We have defeated them. None too soon have they given themselves up,” they said.

Then they summoned Descended and Ascended, with whom word had been left by the boys. And the Xibalbans divined of them what was to be done with their bones. Thus according to their word, the bones were ground up and strewn along the course of the river. But they did not go far away; they just straightaway sank there beneath the water. And when they appeared again, it was as chosen boys, for thus they had become.

⁴¹³ The Xibalbans are lying about the purpose of the pit. They are suggesting that it is an underground vat for making some intoxicating drink, whereas in reality it is a pit oven into which they hope to trick the twins into falling.

THE RESURRECTION OF HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE⁴¹⁴

ON the fifth day they appeared again. People saw them in the river, for the two of them appeared like people-fish. Now when their faces were seen by the Xibalbans, they made a search for them in the rivers.

And on the very next day, they appeared again as two poor orphans.⁴¹⁵ They wore rags in front and rags on their backs. Rags were thus all they had to cover themselves. But they did not act according to their appearance when they were seen by the Xibalbans. For they did the Dance of the Whippoorwill and the Dance of the Weasel. They danced the Armadillo and the Centipede.⁴¹⁶ They danced the Injury, for many marvels they did then. They set fire to a house as if it were truly burning, then immediately recreated it again as the Xibalbans watched with admiration.

Then again they sacrificed themselves. One of them would die, surely throwing himself down in death. Then having been killed, he would immediately be revived. And the Xibalbans simply watched them while they did it. Now all of this was merely the groundwork for the defeat of the Xibalbans at their hands.

⁴¹⁴ lines 4366-4398

⁴¹⁵ *Meb'a'* literally means “poor,” but it may also apply to one who has met with misfortune, such as an orphan, widow, or beggar. The twins reappear as youths that have no parents (p. 182; lines 4459-4468), suggesting that “orphan” may be an appropriate translation. On the other hand, they are obviously poor (p. 182; line 4428-4430), dressed in rags (p. 180; lines 4373-4375), and in need of resources (p. 182; lines 4489-4490). I have chosen “poor orphans” because it includes both meanings.

⁴¹⁶ *Xtz'ul* is a centipede. The Varea dictionary lists *xtz'ul* as “a dance with small masks and macaw tail feathers.” During this dance, participants put sticks down their throats (like sword swallows), bones in their noses, and give themselves hard blows on their chests with a large stone. Basseta also defines this as a dance, in which masked performers with tortoiseshell rattles put sticks or daggers in their mouths (like sword-swallowers). A variant name for centipede is *Q'uq'kumatz* (Feathered Serpent), indicating that this may be a dance in honor of that creator deity (Coto 1983, 128).

THE SUMMONS OF HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE BEFORE THE LORDS⁴¹⁷

AT length the news of their dances came to the ears of the lords One Death and Seven Death. And when they had heard of it, they said:

“Who are these two poor orphans? Is it truly delightful? Is it true that their dancing and all that they do is beautiful?”

For the lords were delighted with the account when they heard it. Thus they entreated their messengers to summon them to come:

“Say this to them: ‘May they come so that we may watch them, for we marvel at them,’ say the lords.”

Thus the messengers went to the dancers and repeated the words of the lords to them.

“We don’t want to, for in truth we are timid. We would be ashamed to enter into such a lordly house! Our faces are truly ugly,⁴¹⁸ and our eyes are just wide in poverty. Don’t they see that we are merely dancers? What then would we say to our fellow orphans? We have responsibilities. They also desire our dances, for they revive their faces with us. It is not right that we should do the same with the lords. Therefore we do not want to do this, O messengers,” said Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

But they were pestered, threatened with misfortune and pain. And so they went with apprehension,⁴¹⁹ for they didn’t want to be going any too soon. Many times they had

⁴¹⁷ lines 4399-4447

⁴¹⁸ Literally “evil/bad/filthy our faces,” a common expression for “ugly” among modern Quichés as well.

⁴¹⁹ Literally “red misfortune they went.”

to be prodded because they just walked along slowly, making little progress, while the messengers who brought them led the way to the lords.

HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE DANCE BEFORE THE LORDS OF XIBALBA⁴²⁰

AT length they arrived before the lords. They pretended to be humble,⁴²¹ prostrating themselves⁴²² when they came. They humbled themselves, stooping over and bowing. They hid themselves with rags, giving the appearance that they were truly just poor orphans when they arrived. Then they were asked where their home mountain was⁴²³ and who their people were. They were also asked about their mother and their father:

“Where do you come from?” they were asked.

“We do not know, O lord. Neither do we know the faces of our mother or our father. We were still small when they died,” they just said. They didn’t tell them anything.

“Very well then. On with the spectacle. What do you want us to give you as payment?” they were asked.

“We don’t want anything. Truly we are frightened,” they said again to the lord.

“Do not be afraid or timid. Dance! First you will do that dance in which you sacrifice yourselves. Then burn down my home. Do everything that you know. We would

⁴²⁰ lines 4448-4573

⁴²¹ *Moch'och'ik* is “to humble one’s self hypocritically” (Basseta).

⁴²² “To throw one’s face on the ground” (Basseta).

⁴²³ The Quichés still give directions by indicating which mountain is located nearby the destination. It is not uncommon to ask the location of a town or a person’s house and be told, “go two mountains to the west and one to the north.”

watch this, for it was the desire of our hearts that you be summoned. Because you are poor orphans, we will pay whatever you ask as your price,” they were told.

Thus they began their songs and their dances, and all the Xibalbans came until the place was overflowing with spectators.⁴²⁴ They danced everything. They danced the Weasel. They danced the Whippoorwill. They danced the Armadillo.

Then the lord spoke to them:

“Sacrifice my dog, then revive him again,” they were told.

“All right,” they replied.

So they sacrificed his dog and then revived him once more. The dog was truly happy when they revived him. He vigorously wagged his tail when they brought him back to life.

Then the lord spoke again to them:

“Now you must surely burn my home,” they were told.

So then they burned the home of the lord. The house was overflowing with all the lords, yet none were burned. Immediately it was restored again. Thus the home of One Death was not lost after all.

All the lords marveled, therefore, and greatly rejoiced at their dances. The lord thus spoke again to them:

⁴²⁴ The *Título Pedro Velasco* records that prior to the Spanish conquest, the highland Maya of Guatemala conducted dances in special “guest houses” in which their rulers danced in honor of their gods: “Each of the lineages had a house to hear the word and to administer judgment. There the lords danced the Junajpu C’oy and the Wukub Cak’ix, the Awata Tun, and the Jolom Tun. Each lineage had divisions, each with a house” (Carmack and Mondloch 1989, 178). Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta wrote that “one of the principal things which existed in this land were the songs and dances, to solemnize the festivals of their demons which they honored as gods, as well as to rejoice and find solace. The house of each principal lord thus had a chapel for singers and a place for dances. The great dances were held in the plazas or in the house patios of the great lords, for all had large plazas” (Mendieta 1993, 140). These special houses are likely analogous to confraternity houses today, where traditionalist Maya continue to conduct dances in honor of deity.

“Now kill a person. Sacrifice him, but not so that he really dies,” they were told.

“Very well,” they said.

So they grabbed a person and sacrificed him. They extracted the heart of one of them and placed it before the lords. Now One Death and Seven Death marveled at this, for immediately that person was revived again by them. When he had been revived, his heart greatly rejoiced. And again the lords marveled at it:

“Now sacrifice yourselves. We would see this. Truly it is the desire of our hearts that you dance,” said again the lords.

“Very well then, O lord,” they replied.

So then they sacrificed themselves. Hunahpu was sacrificed by Xbalanque. Each of his legs and arms was severed. His head was cut off and placed far away. His heart was dug out and placed on a leaf.⁴²⁵ Now all these lords of Xibalba were drunk at the sight, as Xbalanque went on dancing.

“Arise!” he said, and immediately he was brought back to life again. Now the lords rejoiced greatly. One Death and Seven Death rejoiced as if they were the ones doing it. They were so involved that it was as if they themselves were dancing.

THE DEFEAT OF THE LORDS OF XIBALBA⁴²⁶

FOR it was the desire of the lords to abandon their hearts to the dances of Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Then came the words of One Death and Seven Death:

“Do it to us! Sacrifice us!” they said.

⁴²⁵ *Tz'alik* is a leaf used for wrapping maize tamales. The implication is that the heart was placed on a leaf prior to wrapping it as an offering. An alternative reading would have this word derived from *tz'alam* a flat stone or altar.

⁴²⁶ lines 4574-4639

“Sacrifice us in the same way,”⁴²⁷ said One Death and Seven Death to Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

“Very well then. Surely you will be revived. Are you not death? For we are here to gladden you, O lords, along with your vassals and your servants,”⁴²⁸ they said therefore to the lords.

The first to be sacrificed was the very head of all the lords, One Death by name, the lord of Xibalba. He was dead then, this One Death. Next they grabbed Seven Death. But they didn’t revive them. Thus the Xibalbans took to their heels when they saw that the lords had died. Their hearts were now taken from their chests. Both of them had been torn open as punishment for what they had done. Straightaway the one lord was executed and not revived. The other lord had then begged humbly, weeping before the dancers. He would not accept it, for he had become disoriented:

“Take pity on me,” he said in his regret.

Then all of their vassals and servants fled into the great canyon. They packed themselves into the great ravine until they were piled up one on top of the other. Then innumerable ants swarmed into the canyon, as if they had been driven there. And when the ants came, the Xibalbans all bowed themselves down, giving themselves up. They approached begging humbly and weeping. For the lords of Xibalba were defeated. It was just a miracle, for the boys had transformed themselves before them.

⁴²⁷ The manuscript reads *junal taj* (“the same way” or possibly “one by one”). The particular form of this word is somewhat odd. It seems to be a play on words with *junalik/junelik* (forever), thus hinting that the sacrifice would not be so much “the same” as was done before, but would be permanent. A further pun is seen in the phrase at the beginning of this section, “it was the desire of the lords to abandon their hearts,” thus foreshadowing the means of their death.

⁴²⁸ Literally your “child of mother” and your “sons of men.” In this case, these are metaphors that are used frequently in the text for vassals and servants.

And then they declared their names. They revealed their names before all Xibalba.

THE MIRACULOUS MAIZE OF HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE⁴²⁹

“HEAR our names!⁴³⁰ We shall now declare them. We shall also declare the names of our fathers to you. We are they whose names are Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Our fathers are they who you killed, One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu by name. We are the avengers of the misfortune and affliction of our fathers. For this reason, we have endured all the tribulations that you have caused us. Thus we shall now destroy you all. We will kill you, for none among you shall now be saved,” they were told.

Then all Xibalba begged humbly, weeping.

“Take pity on us, you, Hunahpu and Xbalanque. Truly we have wronged your fathers that you have named—they who are buried at Crushing Ballcourt,” they said.

“Very well. Here then is our word that we declare to you. Harken all you of Xibalba; for never again will you or your posterity be great. Your offerings also will never again be great. They will henceforth be reduced to croton sap.⁴³¹ No longer will clean blood be yours.⁴³² Unto you will be given only worn-out griddles and pots,⁴³³ only flimsy⁴³⁴ and brittle things.

⁴²⁹ lines 4640-4772

⁴³⁰ It was traditional in Mesoamerican societies to declare one’s name when a victory has been won in battle or when superiority has been established.

⁴³¹ This fulfills the prophecy of Lady Blood, in which she declared that the lords of Xibalba would no longer be allowed to receive human hearts in sacrifice but rather would have to accept the red sap of the croton tree (pp. 132-133; lines 2444-2445).

⁴³² The ancient Maya offered their own blood to the gods to give them a portion of their life force. This would be fresh, clean blood. Tedlock’s collaborator, Andrés Xiloj, commented that the Xibalbans are