

## Rabinal Achi: Commentary

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The *Rabinal Achi* stands as the best example of the indigenous drama of the New World because it lacks the taint of the late medieval Spanish stage conventions found in extant versions of the other important pre-Columbian dramas, the Quechuan *Ollantay* of Peru and the Nahuatl *Güegüence* of Nicaragua. Although transcribed at a relatively late date, its purity is probably due to the isolation of the Queché Mayas of Rabinal in Guatemala and to the fortunate circumstances of its discovery and transcription by the sympathetic Brasseur.

Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg<sup>1</sup> was born in France in 1814. In the middle of the nineteenth century he was appointed Abbé of the small town of Rabinal in Guatemala. He was immediately fascinated by the strange civilization around him, and soon became one of its chief reporters and apologists.<sup>2</sup> For most of his life he studied the Queché-Mayas and reported his findings objectively. In 1859 the Indians performed the *Baile del Tun* (Dance of Tun); the work was published along with Brasseur's French translation in 1862 under the title *Rabinal Achi* (Warrior of Rabinal). It is to Brasseur's credit that he was able to convince his shy parishioners to reveal to a European priest the secrets of an art which traditionally had been handed down to them by their ancestors.

Much later in his life, confused and perplexed by the strange and complex customs and writings of a past civilization whose concepts he could not fathom, and plagued by doubt and cynicism, Brasseur wrote *Quatre Lettres* (Paris, 1868), denying all his previous writings and resolving all confusion by mystical relationships and supernatural solutions.

Freed of empirical requirements and the demands of science, he found answers readily enough, as do all mystics. . . . The pyramids of Egypt [and] . . . those of Mexico . . . must have descended from some common ancestral civilization—Atlantis!<sup>3</sup>

For Brasseur, Horus and Quetzalcoatl became one and the same, as did all cultural resemblances.

Brasseur was held in such high regard by Americanists and academicians that most archaeologists and historians, although in complete

disagreement and greatly disturbed, were unwilling to condemn him publicly. After ten years of being ignored and grieved by the silence, Brasseur died, a broken man.<sup>4</sup>

#### BACKGROUND

The *Rabinal Achí* was presented periodically during the three centuries of Spanish dominion over Guatemala. Possibly the ecclesiastical and civil authorities permitted and even stimulated these presentations. Native spectacles frequently formed part of the public entertainments and were repeated annually in each local festival on the day of the patron saint.

But almost thirty years had elapsed when Bartolo Ziz, the last repository of this oral tradition, recorded all of the speeches and the poems of his forefathers.<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of the work appears the following note:

The twenty-eighth day of October, 1850, I have transcribed the original of this Dance of Tun, property of our city of San Pablo of Rabinal, in order to leave my memories to my descendants, which will always endure with them. Amen.—Bartolo Ziz.<sup>6</sup>

Brasseur entitled it the *Rabinal Achí* in 1862; he included with it an "Essay on the Poetry and the Music, on the Dance and the Dramatic Art of the Ancient Mexican and Guatemalan Populations."<sup>7</sup>

According to the written notes of Bartolo Ziz, the work was previously known as the *Dance of Tun*. The gifted memory of that old man retained the text of the anonymous drama for some three decades, just as it was retained and transmitted orally by the ancient Mayan guardians of the tradition.

The play was performed before Brasseur on January 25 (the day of the Conversion of St. Paul), 1856, in the Queché language.<sup>8</sup> Brasseur, who had earned the confidence of the natives, translated it from Queché to French, helped by his indigenous servants, and because of the performance he was able to determine the movement and scenic characteristics of the drama.

Professor Georges Raynaud of the Sorbonne, who was director of studies on pre-Columbian religions, disagreed with Brasseur's version, noting that the "fairly defective" work was accompanied by a "Queché-Tzotzil-Spanish-French vocabulary sufficiently bad in itself and made

detestable by the foolishness of Brasseur.”<sup>9</sup> Raynaud subsequently developed another version in which he included notes which mark those points on which he disagrees with Brasseur’s interpretation.<sup>10</sup>

Raynaud speaks of “the only piece of the ancient American theatre that has come down to us”;<sup>11</sup> and states that he was unable to discover in it, either in form or in content, “the smallest trace of a word, of an idea, or of any event of European origin.”<sup>12</sup>

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*Rabinal Achí* has a large cast, although there are only five speaking parts. Large groups of supernumeraries appear during different moments in the play, which could conceivably run the cast close to a hundred; or possibly there was a large body of persons continually on stage in a convention similar to the presence of the Greek chorus. Another possibility is that the group represented various aspects of the body politic and social, and was simply addressed by different names at different times, exemplifying sacramental participation by the people.

The characters, in order of importance and number of lines are:

1. Queché Warrior (*Cavek-Queché-Achí*), a prince of the *Yaquis* (Nahuatl: Strangers) of Cunen and son of the Chief of the Quechés.
2. Rabinal Warrior (*Rabinal Achí*), son of Chief Hobtoh.
3. “Five-Rain” (*Ahau-Hobtoh*, after the day of his birth), governor-chief of Rabinal.
4. Ixok-Mun, favorite slave<sup>13</sup> of the Rabinal Warrior.
5. Mun, a slave of the Rabinal Warrior.
6. Precious Emerald, a princess, bride of the Rabinal Warrior.  
Non-speaking.
7. Xox Ahau, wife of Hobtah (possibly chief wife among several). Non-speaking.
8. Twelve yellow eagles (warriors of Rabinal).
9. Twelve yellow jaguars (warriors of Rabinal).
10. “A great number” of warriors and servants of both sexes who take part in the dances.

Only the first seven, plus the leader of the Jaguars and the leader of the Eagles, participate in the action. The others appear only in the many dances or in the ritual combat.

## SUBJECT AND PLOT

The subject of the drama deals with the capture, the questioning, and the death of a warrior who committed reprehensible acts. The past history of the warrior is gradually revealed through the dialogue between Queché Warrior and Rabinal Warrior.

Brasseur's title for the work—*Rabinal Achi* (Warrior of Rabinal), probably was determined by the place where it was performed. But the title is not completely appropriate, for Rabinal Warrior is not the true protagonist: he is only a victorious warrior, a fortunate conqueror of his enemy. Queché Warrior is the principal figure of the drama because the play moves around the vanquished one, as is evidenced by the fact that Rabinal Warrior has no lines in the second half of the work while Queché Warrior has the major portion of the lines in both acts. A more appropriate title would be *Prisoner of Rabinal*. The native title, *Dance of Tun*, seems to have little relevance to the subject matter; a *tun* was the Mayan year of 365 days and possibly indicated that the dance-drama was performed at an annual festival or ceremony. The *tun* is also a native drum which is indeed used in the play to accompany the music and dance, but it is hardly of sufficient importance to justify it as the title of the work.

The plot is a simple one: while half of the dancers dance in a circle simulating an attack, the two warriors insult each other and make arrogant allusions to the other's respective merits. The dance is then interrupted. Ensnared and subjugated by the lasso of Rabinal Warrior, and tied to a tree, Queché Warrior hears from the mouth of the enemy the account of his feats from the most recent to the most remote. Then the music plays once more and the dance is renewed, continuing until the end of the scene.

Rabinal Warrior reminds the captive how he provoked Rabinal's men when they were in their fortress; how he lured them out with deception in order to conduct them to arid lands where hunger would exhaust them. He reminds him, too, that he kidnapped the governor and his retinue, when they were at the baths, and detained them until the Rabinal Warrior liberated them. Finally he speaks of the grievances that caused Queché Warrior to destroy various towns. Queché Warrior tries to bribe him, but Rabinal Warrior refuses the offer and tells him that he is going to inform his governor so that the governor can decide

whether or not the captive may leave. On so doing he strips him of his weapons.

The governor, when he learns from Rabinal Warrior that Queché Warrior has fallen into his hands, agrees that Queché Warrior should appear before him if he is willing to surrender himself respectfully and to confess his wrongs before the governor.<sup>14</sup> Queché Warrior, on being informed of the governor's intention and freeing himself of his bonds, tries to hurl himself onto Rabinal Warrior, but Ixok-Mun restrains him.

He adopts the same stubborn attitude before the governor, and petitions him to grant him the honors that his rank merits. Once again Queché Warrior hears the retelling of his feats and again refuses to humble himself; he would prefer to go to the sacrifice with dignity. He continues his disdain and refuses the food and drinks which are offered him in accordance with the ritual. Briefly, he shows off the mantle that the governor's wife wove; he then dances among the court with the beautiful Precious Emerald and finally claims the privilege of pitting himself against the distinguished warriors, of whom he speaks sarcastically.

Queché Warrior disappears briefly; he has gone to say good-bye to his valleys and his mountains. On returning he speaks nostalgically of his land which he held so dear, and of the squirrel and the bird who, unlike himself, may die on the branch of the tree where they had lived. Thus he gives himself up to sacrificial death.

#### DIALOGUE AND POETRY

The single most noticeable and difficult characteristic of so much of the literature of indigenous Middle America is parallelism. The abundant reiterations hinder modern comprehension of the simplicity of the exchanges, and seem to prolong interminably the dialogue which, except for parallelism, develops the central theme quite simply.

Compounding this problem for the modern Anglo-American reader is a convention of formal courtesy. Each speech begins with a salutation and closes with a phrase of courteous leave-taking. Conventions of courtesy, whose true feeling or meaning is diluted by usage, are kept for their phonic enchantment. Each character replies in this form and repeats in part the speech which he just finished hearing. The speech continues with a question equivalent to "Is this not what you have just

said?”, as if trying to obtain a confirmation or establish a compromise. Or else the speaker confirms his long iteration with a ratification: “Thus you spoke.” Such repetitions lengthen the speeches without advancing the action and without adding much new information.

In analyzing the parallelism of Mayan poetry, Georges Raynaud contends that it is partly a result of the linguistic development of the language:

The base of all prosody is *repetition*. A word, a fragment of a phrase, a phrase, all of a series of phrases are repeated two, three, five, ten times; the repeated word might be without some significance, a simple shout; the phrase or the series of repeated phrases also might be repeated at more or less regular intervals and they end by becoming a refrain of a song.

Whatever the repetition was, its reappearance at increasingly regular vocalic intervals forms a harmony which produces a cadence, with the rhythm each time more complicated, each time more perfect—alliteration, assonance, rhyme. For various reasons, but generally linguistic causes, many peoples stopped in different phases of this science of metrical forms.<sup>15</sup>

Many languages use or have used parallelism. The Bible contains many examples, although less extreme than the Mayan, of how parallelism, the use of slightly varied repetition, gives subtle new meanings to some words and completes and clarifies others.

The Mayan was also greatly concerned with symmetry and balance in art, in society, and in religion. The equilibrium of symmetry, particularly as exemplified by constant pairs and quadruples, occurs throughout indigenous Middle America.<sup>16</sup> Gods, heroes, chiefs, insults, qualities, defects and phenomena of nature are represented in pairs, sometimes joining in the perfection of balance, a pair of pairs. Parallelism, too, is an expression of symmetry and balance.

In addition to the parallelism of single verbs, nouns, and adjectives, *Rabinal Achí* contains parallelism of phrases, of sentences, and indeed of whole paragraphs. One example will suffice. In the first scene Queché Warrior, after speaking the required courtesy and after repeating a part of the speech of Rabinal Warrior, says:

But here you also said: ‘Speak. Reveal the location of your mountains, your valleys.’ [parallelism of nouns] Thus you spoke. Come, come! Would I be courageous? Come, come! Would I be stalwart [parallelism of clause] and at the same time would I reveal the description of my moun-

tains, the description of my valleys? [parallelism of phrase] Isn't it clear that I was born on the side of a mountain, on the side of a valley? [parallelism of a *pair* of phrases]—I, the son of the clouds, the son of the mist? [again] Come, come! Would I tell, would I reveal [verb parallelism] my mountains, my valleys? Ah, how the skies overflow; how the earth overflows. [clause parallelism]

Considering that this speech is both preceded and followed by speeches of the Rabinal Warrior which reproduce long sections of it word for word, it is easy to see that, until the reader becomes accustomed to it, the reading would be tedious.

For an audience accustomed to this convention, however, it would sound no more strange than do many biblical passages:

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. . . .

(Genesis I: 26-27.)

It must be assumed that the spectator of the work was particularly charmed by that which, for the modern reader, is wearisome: the insistence on the convention of salutation or farewell, the themes and infinite variations of parallelism, and the way in which each speaker seemed to demonstrate his excellent memory of the other characters' words.

#### SPECTACLE AND MUSIC

Because of the nature and quantity of dance in *Rabinal Achí*, music and spectacle are inseparable. The play begins to the melancholy sound of the *tun*, the sacred drum; immediately there is a kind of round dance<sup>17</sup> in which Rabinal Warrior, Ixok-Mun, Eagles and Jaguars take part. Queché Warrior darts among them with threatening gestures while the tempo of the dance increases; then the drama continues vocally.

In 1856 the orchestra consisted of two trumpets and the sacred drum.<sup>18</sup> At various other performances they probably also used wood or clay flutes (*xul*) and hollow gourds filled with grain.<sup>19</sup> Several times during the play the dialogue is interrupted by a dance, each time accompanied by the martial music of the drum and trumpet.

The performance that Brasseur saw took place on a stage platform (*estrade*) which, after the morning mass, was constructed in the courtyard under the balcony of his parsonage. Brasseur mentions no formal scenery even though the first part takes place before the fortress and the second part takes place inside of it. All of the characters wore costumes and many wore masks,<sup>20</sup> which in the case of the noble personages and the Eagle and Jaguar warriors might indeed be spectacular.

The death of the Queché Warrior, although relatively unspectacular in Brasseur's text, gives a hint of having been more visually exciting in the past. Queché Warrior demands to be allowed to die by combat. Whether it would be true combat or the unequal conflict of the Aztec *Tlacaxipehualiztli* in which four Eagle and Jaguar warriors dispatched a tethered, weaponless victim, it would terminate in the victim's heart being torn out and raised to the four directions. Raynaud believes this omission indicates that the work is truncated out of Mayan obeisance to the new "civilized" rulers.<sup>21</sup>

#### FORM AND STRUCTURE

The form and structure of *Rabinal Achí* invite comparison with the ancient theatre of Athens. There are three main characters, Queché Warrior, Rabinal Warrior, and Hobtoh (Chief Five-Rain), the governor. Even though all three are distinct individuals, the work is essentially a two-actor play as was the theatre of Aeschylus. The two divisions of the play consist of dialogue between Rabinal and Queché in the first part, and between Queché and Hobtoh in the second, and the use of masks could allow the entire work to be done by two actors.<sup>22</sup> The number of lines and amount of business of the secondary characters approximate those of the leader of the Greek chorus.

Dance accompanied by music punctuates and separates the "episodes." For the most part it is of a sacramental nature, either general or by a specific group, as when the Jaguars and Eagles dance. The long alternating speeches of two characters compare easily with those of *The Suppliants* in length and complexity.

The "unity of time" is in effect in *Rabinal Achí* as it is in many of the Greek tragedies and as it is in so many plays from earliest times, due largely to the short, simple plots. The only difficulty of verisimili-



tude relative to real time is when Queché Warrior leaves to take one last look at his mountains and valleys. After a general dance by the other characters, he returns, possibly in less time than it took Oedipus' servants to find the shepherd he was seeking.

A theme of conflict with fate is suggested. The Queché Warrior, by not humbling himself or submitting to the will of his adversaries, challenges fate (represented by them), which implacably condemns him to death. Here, as in the Greek tragedies, the catastrophe was foreseen. More important was the development of the course by which Queché Warrior arrived at his end; it was the inexorable course attached to a ritual, invariably ending in the final act: the death of Queché Warrior.<sup>23</sup>

One noteworthy characteristic of the structure is a relatively modern technique, usually identified with Ibsen and Pirandello—retrospective exposition. The dialogue of *Rabinal Achí* continually discovers the deeds of the conquered one, and as the play progresses, the exposition reveals the increasingly more remote past.

#### A RECENT PRODUCTION

In 1955 the Dirección General de Bellas Artes arranged to celebrate the Primer Festival de Arte y Cultura in Antigua, Guatemala, and included, with the help of the Instituto Indigenista Nacional, the *Rabinal Achí*. Esteban Xolop Sucup, about fifty years old, was organizer and supervisor of all the props, costumes, and instruments. Xolop said that although the *Rabinal Achí* had not been performed for eighteen or twenty years, it would be given according to exact tradition.

The preparations, as reported by Francisco Rodríguez Rouanet<sup>24</sup> who witnessed them, were elaborate. A series of rites were performed in the twenty days preceding the performance, and sexual continence was required of everyone connected with the performance for thirty days before and thirty days after the performance.<sup>25</sup> Each performer, in order to get permission from "the spirit of the high land" to perform the dance had to take candles, chocolate, bread, fruit, *aguardiente* (an alcoholic beverage), and incense to offer, and pray at "Calvary" (the Catholic church) and to the five mountains mentioned in the dance. Within the principal mountain of the five it is believed that Chief Hobtoh still lives. Stories abound of people, some alive today, who

were given aid or great wealth by Chief Hobtoth who still lives in a cave in this mountain, along with the Princess and the Eagles and Jaguars. The cave is difficult to find and is guarded by a great snake and other animals which are tied up and "inoffensive." The myth still lives.<sup>26</sup>

The *dramatis personae* in this performance were somewhat reduced from Brasseur's list. The principal roles were of course the same; the princess Precious Emerald was still a non-speaking role; but Hobtoth's wife was eliminated, and Ixok-Mun and the servant were combined into one role. The twelve yellow eagles and twelve yellow jaguars were reduced to one symbolic representative (*cargador*) for each order. The many servants and warriors noted by Brasseur were eliminated.

The costumes, as reported by Rodríguez, were disappointingly unspectacular. A description of the three main characters will serve:

The Rabinal Warrior, the Queché Warrior and Chief Hobtoth wore masks, short pants of silk that reached a little lower than the knee, with adornments on the borders, a large blouse of the same material, with decorations on the sleeves, and kept down with a belt, and shoes. The head was covered with a handkerchief which hid the hair and the ears; then they put on the mask and a nightcap adorned with feathers. Rabinal Warrior used a white 'breastplate' that covered the shoulders and the breast. Queché Warrior had a gilded 'breastplate' a little shorter; and Chief Hobtoth wore a species of small white gorget. The colors of the garbs varied on each one. . . .

These three characters carried in the left hand a silver plate which simulated a coat of arms. . . . In the right hand they carried a small taper with a handkerchief tied to the end of the extremity.<sup>27</sup>

The Princess was dressed like any ten-year-old Queché girl. Muy (the character combining Ixok-Mun and the servant) was a man dressed as a quite ordinary woman except for a mask and a long handkerchief simulating long hair.

The Eagle and Jaguar were dressed in the same basic attire as were the three principals, including masks. The Eagle carried a shield engraved in the shape of an eagle. The Jaguar wore a breastplate of carved wood showing two jaguars; the plate was connected to a frame of wood from which hung a profusion of feathers.

The performance was in January during the festival of the town of Rabinal. Rehearsals began in September, however, principally because

most of the actors could not read, and the lines could not be memorized by individual study. Due to its sacred nature, the work could not be performed in part; thus the early "runthroughs" began early in the evening and lasted almost until dawn. Before each rehearsal each actor prayed before his house altar, took a ritual swallow of *aguardiente* in the patio, and crossed himself.<sup>28</sup>

The "Watch of the Masks" occurred the night before the performance. On an altar, in addition to its more conventional religious paraphernalia, were the costumes, masks, drum, and trumpets to be used in the performance; before it paraffin and fruit were burned, thus gaining from the god permission to perform, and protection against accidents. After the performers were costumed, but before the performance began, *aguardiente* was sprinkled on the inside of the mask in an individual ceremony accompanied by a prayer in Queché; after the prayer the actor took a drink, and put on the mask. Only the musicians drank during the performance (whenever there was unaccompanied dialogue), and they ended up quite drunk.<sup>29</sup>

The music was performed on a drum and two trumpets, which Xolop and the musicians agreed were 500 years old. The notes of the trumpets were long, and the rhythm was carried by the drum; the music was monotonous, simple and repetitious, such variety as there was being determined by which character was speaking.<sup>30</sup>

Rodríguez' brief article describes a modern production which seems to differ little from that described by Brasseur in 1850; the principal differences were in the reduction of the unwieldy number of "supers," and in the slightly more modest costumes.

The work, and the recent production, seem to be truly "native." But in spite of the confidence that Professor Raynaud had in the uncontaminated purity of this work, it is a little difficult to believe that it passed through more than 300 years of Spanish-dominated culture without the dialogue having been influenced in some way by the sensitivity of the "rememberers," the translators and the public, neither exclusively Mayan nor even Indian.<sup>31</sup>

In any human endeavor (and especially in theatre) if the work is preserved by oral tradition it becomes profoundly influenced by those who year after year interpret it. The least that can happen is that time erodes it little by little. Thus it probably was with *Rabinal Achí*.

Yet the reader of the complete work will be rewarded for his patience. Notwithstanding the annoying redundancies, there is, throughout the dialogue, a delicate poetry, not only in the rhythm that results from the reiteration of words, but in the similarity of phrases barely different one from another. The poetry is more suggestive than evocative for the present-day reader in the references to places with complicated and familiar names. The translator has tried to maintain, nonetheless, some of the tone of primitive vigor which occurs throughout the original play. The *Rabinal Achí* presents a new world for the contemporary reader, one seldom seen in the mists of a past which neither archaeology nor history have yet been able to explain adequately.

## Notes

1. Since most of Brasseur's works appear in Spanish and since he is most frequently written about by Spanish-writing authors, the Spanish version of his name, Carlos Esteban Brasseur, is more frequently seen.

2. His own bibliography contains eighteen major works by him. Brasseur, *Bibliothèque mexico-guatémaliennne* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1871), pp. 26ff.

3. Robert Wauchope, *Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 42.

4. Wauchope, p. 42.

5. Francisco Monterde, *Teatro indígena prehispánico. Rabinal Achí*. Preface by Georges Raynaud (México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1955), p. xiii.

6. Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, "Rabinal Achí ou le Drame-Ballet du Tun" in *Collection de documents dans les langues indigènes pour servir à l'étude de l'histoire et de la philologie de l'Amérique ancienne* (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1861-68). The volume is very rare in this country. Various translations from the French into Spanish exist along with several adaptations (also in Spanish) made more palatable to the modern ear. The most readily available and probably the best of the Spanish translations is Francisco Monterde's in *Teatro indígena prehispánico*.

7. Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Collection*, pp. 6-23.

8. Monterde, p. 15.

9. Georges Raynaud, "Preface to *Rabinal Achí*," in Monterde, *Teatro indígena prehispánico*, p. 124.

10. Georges Raynaud, "Rabinal Achí," in *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia* (Guatemala), VI, Nos. 1-4 (September 1929-June 1930).

11. Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 123. The present play, and two other examples of the drama of early America, can be found in José Cid Pérez and Dolores Martí de Cid, *Teatro indio precolombino* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1964).

12. Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 123.

13. Brasseur's term; Monterde (p. 4) lists him simply as a servant.

14. Willis Knapp Jones contends that the governor requires Queché Warrior to become one of the governor's Council of Twelve Eagles and Twelve Jaguars and to fight for him. Professor Jones cites no specific source for this contention. *Behind Spanish American Footlights* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), p. 12.

15. Monterde, pp. 131-32.

16. Gertrude P. Kurath and Samuel Martí, *Dances of Anáhuac* (Chicago: Aldine, 1964), p. 200. Also Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 134.

17. Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Collection*, p. 22.

18. Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 130.

19. Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 130.

20. Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Collection*, p. 20.

21. Raynaud, in Monterde, p. 137.

22. In actual practice, Brasseur reports, the roles were so demanding and the masks so heavy that two or three actors shared one role. Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Collection*, p. 23.

23. Monterde, p. xxvi.
24. Francisco Rodríguez Rouanet, "Notas sobre una representación actual del *Rabinal Achí* o *Baile del Tun*," *Guatemala indígena*, II, No. 1 (Guatemala: Instituto Indigenista Nacional, 1962), 25-55. All references to this recent production are drawn from this article.
25. Rodríguez Rouanet, p. 26. Similar abstinence before rituals among the Aztecs is reported by Bernardino de Sahagún in *General History of the Things of New Spain; Florentine Codex* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research, 1950), Book II, "The Ceremonies."
26. "Myth," not in its current popular usage, but as the twilight of reality and truth, where both history and collective needs and feelings are expressed through legendary heroes and deeds.
27. Rodríguez Rouanet, pp. 49-50.
28. Rodríguez Rouanet, pp. 51-52.
29. Rodríguez Rouanet, p. 53.
30. Rodríguez Rouanet, pp. 54-55.
31. Monterde, p. xxx.

## Rabinal Achi: English Translation

### PREFACE

The source for all subsequent translations and adaptations of this drama is Brasseur's "Rabinal Achí," with a text in Queché and his translation into French, contained in *Collection de documents dans les langues indigènes pour servir à l'étude de l'histoire et de la philologie de l'Amérique ancienne*.<sup>1</sup>

This first English version of the *Rabinal Achí* is translated from Brasseur's original with generous reference to Francisco Monterde's Spanish version contained in *Teatro indígena prehispánico*.<sup>2</sup> Monterde is a competent scholar and avails himself of modern studies which were unavailable to Brasseur.

Georges Raynaud made still another French translation, generally unavailable in this country; Luis Cardoza y Aragón's "El Varón de Rabinal" in *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia*, VI, Nos. 1-4 (Guatemala, 1929-30) is the first Spanish translation of Professor Raynaud's French version. The preface to this work is included as an appendix to the Monterde version, and many of Monterde's numerous footnotes and explanations seem to be derived from Raynaud. Various other translations and adaptations exist in Spanish, notably José Antonio Villacorta's "Rabinal Achí, pieza escénica de los antiguos quichés de Rabinal," *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia*, XVII, No. 5 (Guatemala, 1942), and Leonardo Montalban's "El Varón de Rabinal," *Historia de la literatura de la América Central* (San Salvador, 1929), republished later with an introduction by Francisco Monterde (Mexico, 1945).

A word of explanation about the footnotes is needed. Monterde includes 145 textual footnotes which follow the text on pages 95-120. Many of these notes derive from Brasseur and Raynaud with additions by Monterde. Many of them have interest only to the anthropologist, the linguist, or the Americanist. For this reason some have been eliminated from this translation and others have been shortened to include only the information necessary to the understanding of the work, and those notes dealing with theatrical or production elements. To the above, several original footnotes by the present translator have been added.

For purposes of identification and reference, after each footnote of this text the corresponding number of the source footnote will appear. The various sources will be identified as follows:

- (CB) Charles Brasseur de Bourbourg
- (GR) Georges Raynaud
- (FM) Francisco Monterde.

Although the number of footnotes is discouraging to a reading with any dramatic flow or continuity, particularly in the first scene, the notes are absolutely essential to an understanding of the work either dramatically or historically.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

- CHIEF FIVE-RAIN,<sup>3</sup> Governor of the town of Rabinal.<sup>4</sup>
- RABINAL WARRIOR,<sup>5</sup> highest dignitary among the warriors;<sup>6</sup> son of Five-Rain.
- QUECHÉ WARRIOR,<sup>7</sup> Governor of the Grand Council of Cunen and Chahul,<sup>8</sup> son of the Wizard of the Warriors,<sup>9</sup> Wizard of the Woven Bundle,<sup>10</sup> Governor of the Queché men.
- THE WIFE<sup>11</sup> of Chief Five-Rain.
- PRECIOUS EMERALD, Mother of the Green Feathers, Mother of the Green Birds, promised bride of the Rabinal Warrior.
- IXOK-MUN, servant.<sup>12</sup>
- A SERVANT of the Rabinal Warrior.
- Twelve yellow eagles, twelve yellow jaguars,<sup>13</sup> young warriors of the town of Rabinal.
- Numerous warriors, numerous servants.
- The action takes place in Cakyug-Zilic-Cakocaonic-Tepecanic.*<sup>14</sup>
- Scene I In front of the fortress
- Scene II Within the fortress
- Scene III In front of the fortress
- Scene IV Within the fortress<sup>15</sup>

## SCENE ONE

In front of the fortress

*(The Rabinal Warrior and his people dance in a circle.<sup>16</sup> The Queché Warrior suddenly arises and begins to dance in the middle of the circle moving his short spear as if he intends to wound the Rabinal Warrior in the head. With each revolution the movement of the circle becomes more rapid.)*

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Come here, odious chief, despicable chief!<sup>17</sup> Will you be the first whose very root, whose trunk, I cannot cut; that chief of the Chacach,<sup>18</sup> of the Zaman,<sup>19</sup> the Caük<sup>20</sup> of Rabinal! This I swear to do before heaven and earth; and for this reason I need say no more. Heaven and earth be with thee,<sup>21</sup> oh most remarkable of the stalwarts—Warrior of Rabinal.

## RABINAL WARRIOR

*(As he starts to dance he twirls a lasso with which he threatens to subdue his enemy.)*

Aha! Courageous warrior. Chief of the Cavek Queché. Thus you spoke before heaven and earth: “Come near, odious chief, despicable chief. Will you be the only one whose very root, whose trunk I cannot cut. I, chief of the Chacach, of the Zaman, the Caük of Rabinal.” Did you not say that?<sup>22</sup> Yes, by all means! Heaven and earth bear witness! Surrender to the son of my arrow, to the son of my shield,<sup>23</sup> to my mace, to my stranger’s axe,<sup>24</sup> my net, my accoutrements, to my sacrificial earth,<sup>25</sup> to my magic herbs,<sup>26</sup> to my vigor, to my courage. Be it thus or no, before heaven and earth will I bind you with my strong lasso. Heaven and earth be with thee, courageous warrior, my prisoner and my captive!

*(He snares him with the lasso which he pulls in order to bring his prisoner towards him. The music stops and the dance is interrupted. There is a prolonged silence during which both men, feigning anger, face each other, without musical accompaniment or dancing.)*

Now, valiant warrior, my prisoner and my captive. Already your heaven and earth wither! Truly the heaven and earth have delivered you to the son of my arrow, to the son of my shield, to my stranger’s mace, to my net, to my accoutrements, to my sacrificial earth, to my



magic herbs. Speak now. Reveal the location of your mountains and of your valleys;<sup>27</sup> and if you were born on the side of a mountain, at the back of a valley. Are you not a son of the clouds, a son of the mist?<sup>28</sup> Have you not come flying before spears, before war?<sup>29</sup> Thus speaks my voice before heaven and earth. For this reason I will speak briefly. Heaven and earth be with thee, prisoner and captive!

QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Ah, heaven and earth hear me! Is it true that you said that, that you threw such absurd words at heaven, at the earth, to my lips and my face?<sup>30</sup> That I am a courageous man, a stalwart man? Thus spoke your voice. Come, come! Would I be courageous? Come, come! Would I be a stalwart man and would I have come hurled by spears, by war? But here you also said: "Speak. Reveal the location of your mountains, your valleys." Thus you spoke. Come, come! Would I be courageous? Come, come! Would I be stalwart and at the same time would I tell, would I reveal the description of my mountains, the description of my valleys? Is it not clear as day that I was born on the side of a mountain, on the side of a valley, that I am the son of the clouds, the son of the mist? Come, come! Would I reveal, would I make known my mountains, my valleys? Rather that the skies and the earth disappear. For this reason I speak briefly, remarkable among the stalwarts, Warrior of Rabinal. Heaven and earth be with thee!

*(The dance is renewed—the music starts to play.)*

RABINAL WARRIOR

Wait! Valiant warrior! My prisoner, my captive. Does your voice speak thus to the face of heaven, to the face of the earth? "Come, come, would I be courageous? Come, come, would I be a stalwart one, by revealing my mountains, my valleys. Is it not clear as day that I was born on the side of a mountain, on the side of a valley—I, the son of the clouds, the son of the mists?" Did not your voice speak thus? Very well, if you will not reveal the description of your mountains, the description of your valleys—heaven and earth witness that I will make you go, dead or in chains, before my governor, before my ruler, to my vast walls, in my vast fortress. Thus do I speak before heaven and earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, my prisoner and my captive.

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Ah, heaven and earth hear me! Your voice spoke thus before heaven and earth: "You can change and destroy the voices, the words which I speak to you before heaven, before earth. Now I have something to compel the birth of these words, something to compel their departure, something to force you to reveal the description of your mountains, the description of your valleys. If you do not tell them—if you do not reveal them, witness the heavens and the earth that I will make you go, dead or in chains, before my governor, my ruler." Thus spoke your voice before heaven and earth. Ah, heaven! Ah, earth! Whom should I tell, to whom reveal the description of my mountains, the description of my valleys? To you, oh birds, who sing like nightingales, to you, eagles?<sup>31</sup> I, the courageous one, I, the stalwart man, chief of the Grand Council of Cunen, of the Grand Council of Chahull! I, the Wizard Chief of the Stalwart Ones, Wizard of the Woven Bundle, ten times have I come down the road from the clouds, from the mist, from my mountains, from my valleys to go to war. How to cause the words to descend, to cause the words to rise; the things that I would speak to you before heaven, before earth? Heaven and earth be with you, remarkable among the warriors of Rabinal.

## RABINAL WARRIOR

Courageous warrior of the Cavek Queché, are you my favorite? Are you my elder? Are you my younger brother? Wonderful! And how then could my heart have forgotten having seen you there in the vast walls, in the vast fortress! No doubt you were the one who imitated the bark of the coyote, the one who imitated the cry of the fox, the scream of the squirrel, of the jaguar<sup>32</sup> outside those immense walls, in the vast fortress, in order to bring us,<sup>33</sup> the white children, the white son,<sup>34</sup> to you; in order to take us from the vast walls, before the vast fortress; in order to feed us with wild yellow honey,<sup>35</sup> which our governor drinks, our ruler, our grandfather,<sup>36</sup> Five-Rain.

Therefore, why must you boast, as you have done, and provoke my determination, my bravery? Was it not those calls which provoked us, which brought us out, the twelve chiefs, each one chief of his rampart, of his fortress?<sup>37</sup> Truly, did you not tell us: "Come here, young men, you twelve valiant young men, you twelve heroes; come and hear that which you must do, because all your food, all your drink are dissolved,

consumed, destroyed, transformed into pumice stone.<sup>38</sup> Only the crickets, male and female, still make their song heard on the walls, in the fortress of those white children, of those white sons; for now almost nothing remains, only nine or ten of their houses and fortresses. There we have ceased feeding on the white children,<sup>39</sup> on the white sons, because now we eat the fried dish, the great bean, the plate of crabs, the plate of parrots, the mixed plates.<sup>40</sup> Was this not the advice that you gave to the chiefs, to the warriors? Was there not something in this which went beyond the desires of your bravery and boldness? And at Beleh Mokoh, Beleh Chumay,<sup>41</sup> with that bravery, that boldness, had they not become accustomed to defeat, become accustomed to burial by our warriors, by our chiefs, in the places called Qotom and Tikiram?<sup>42</sup> Behold you must atone for this calamity under heaven, above the earth.

Thus, you have said your last good-bye to your mountains, to your valleys; because here we will sever your root, your trunk, under heaven, above earth. Nevermore will you be able to descend either by day or by night to your mountains, to your valleys. Now you must die here, here you will disappear,<sup>43</sup> between the sky and the earth. That is why I will announce you to my governor, to my ruler in the vast walls, in the vast fortress. Thus speaks my voice to the face of the sky and of the earth. For this reason I speak briefly. Heaven and earth be with thee, man of the Cavek Queché!

#### QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Eh! Valiant warrior, most remarkable among the stalwarts, Warrior of Rabinal! Is it thus your voice spoke before heaven and earth? "Why boast of my courage, of my daring?" Thus you spoke. It was they who first called, first provoked my governor, my ruler. This was the only reason for my coming, for my departure from my mountains, from my valleys. From here came the summoning message, between the heavens and the earth, in front of the ramparts of the commander of Cakyug-Zilic-Cakocaonic-Tepecanic, the names of the mouth and the eye of this fortress and of this castle.<sup>44</sup> Was it not here that the ten loads of cacao were held, the five loads of perfect cacao<sup>45</sup> destined for my governor, my ruler, Wizard chief of the Warriors, Wizard of the Jaguar; names of the mouth and the eye of my fortress and my castle.<sup>46</sup>

Since that message was presented, the chief, Wizard chief, Wizard of the Jaguar, for that reason desired the death of the Chacachs, of the

Zaman, of the Caük of Rabinal, before the Uxab, before the Pokomames.<sup>47</sup> Let them say that you wish to see the courage, the daring, of the chief of the Queché mountains and valleys; to come and take possession of my beautiful mountains, of my beautiful valleys. Come, then, my brother and my elder.<sup>48</sup> Come and take possession here between the sky and the earth, of these beautiful mountains, of these smiling valleys. Come and sow your seeds, build your lairs, there where the sprouts of our cucumbers grow among our fine pumpkins and the sprouts of our bean plants. By this he confirmed your defiance, your cry of summons, before my governor, my ruler. In this way the defiance, the war cry of my governor, my ruler, was offered: "Ah! My courageous one! My warrior, go sound the alarm and return immediately because a message of summons has arrived, one which arrived beneath the heavens, above the earth. Raise your vigor, your bravery, son of my arrow, son of my shield; return as soon as possible to the mountainsides, to the valley's slope." Thus came the challenge—the war cry of my governor, of my ruler.

I quickly departed. I put the landmarks<sup>49</sup> there where the sun sets, where the night begins, where the cold tortures, where the ice tortures, in the place called Pan-Tzahaxak.<sup>50</sup> Then I brandished the son of my arrow, the son of my shield. I came back to the side of the mountain, to the side of the valley. There, for the first time, I hurled my challenge, my war cry, before Cholo chic-Huyu,<sup>51</sup> Cholo chic-Chah<sup>52</sup> called thus. I went from there and in the same manner I hurled my challenge, my war cry, for the second time, to Nimché Paraveno, to Cabrakan,<sup>53</sup> called thus. I went from there and hurled my challenge, my war cry, for the third time at a place named Panchalib.<sup>54</sup> I went from there. I was going to hurl for the fourth time my challenge, my war cry, to Xol-Chacach,<sup>55</sup> called thus. It was there I found the twelve yellow eagles,<sup>56</sup> the twelve yellow jaguars, sounding the great drum of blood,<sup>57</sup> the small drum of blood.<sup>58</sup> The heavens shook, the earth trembled with the great noise, the great excitement of the twelve yellow eagles, the twelve yellow jaguars, reunited with the servants of the great warriors. My song began there to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. "Come, come, odious and despicable chief!! Will you be the first whose root, whose trunk I will never sever; this chief of the Chacach, of the Zaman, the Caük of Rabinal?" Thus did I speak. What would you do, oh

chief, since I have not been able to annihilate or destroy you; since I have only been able to voice my thoughts, to sing before heaven, before earth, remarkable among the stalwarts, Warrior of Rabinal? Speak now in your turn. Heaven and earth be with thee, remarkable among stalwarts, Warrior of Rabinal!

## RABINAL WARRIOR

Ah! Valiant warrior; man of the Cavek Queché. Is it thus your voice spoke before heaven and earth? Are these words you have spoken truthful and without variance? "A message of summons truly departed from here; truly we were called to the Queché mountains, to the Queché valleys." But certainly it was no crime that we sent to hear him, the Wizard chief, the Jaguar Wizard, when he desired the death, the disappearance, of the chief of the Chacach, of the Zaman, of the Caük of Rabinal, by the Uxab, by the Pokomames, here under heaven, above earth. "Let us proceed so that the chief of the Queché mountains, of the Queché valleys, may come with his courage, with his daring. May he come and take possession of the beautiful mountains, of these rich valleys. May he come to plant, come to make his home." Well and good! Let us plant, let us make our homes, there where the sprouts of our fine cucumbers crowd among the sprouts of our good pumpkins and our good bean plants. Thus spoke our voice to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth.

That is why you provoked us needlessly, why you threatened us in vain, between the heavens and the earth. Thank heaven, thank earth, you have come to present yourself before our walls, our fortress. That is why we will accept the challenge: we will accept the strife; we will fight the Uxab and the Pokomames. Consequently I will instruct you as to the mission of the summons. Go. Run hard by the Royal Road where the bird drinks in the water;<sup>59</sup> to the place called Cholo chic-Zakchun.<sup>60</sup> But do not give in to those who would take you to the chiefs of the Uxab and the Pokomames. Do not allow them to return to their mountains, their valleys. Annihilate them! Destroy them! Here, between the heavens and the earth!

Thus spoke my voice. But in truth it was not necessary that you should see, that you should look at the Uxab, at the Pokomames, because they were transformed into flies, into butterflies, into an army of ants, large and small; and only their columns and files, showing

brightly, ascended the slopes of the mountain called Equempek Gana-hal.<sup>61</sup> Then I directed my eyes and my gaze toward the heavens and toward the earth; and in the very moment that I saw the Uxab, the Pokomames, my heart sank, my soul was hurt seeing you, observing that you had agreed to that which the Uxab, that which the Pokomames desired. Then I hurled my war cry, my challenge against you: Eh! Eh! valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché. Why do you move so easily among the Uxab and the Pokomames in their mountains, in their valleys? Heaven and earth hear me! Certainly they expected in our mountains, in our valleys, that you would hurl your challenge, your war cry, against the Uxab, against the Pokomames, those who had hurled back your challenge, your war cry? Ah! Ah! Let them return quickly, those chiefs of the Uxab, those chiefs of the Pokomames, to listen to my commands here between heaven and earth.”

Thus spoke your voice. Then the chiefs of the Uxab, the chiefs of the Pokomames, answered you: “Eh, valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché, abandon this struggle in our mountains, in our valleys. Were we not born here, with our children, our sons, where the black clouds, the white clouds, come down, where the cold tortures, where the ice tortures, where there is nothing to envy? Far away, with my children, my sons, are found the branches, the green branches, the yellow cacao for the market, the fine yellow cacao, the gold, the silver, the embroideries, the golden jewelry. Here are my children; here are my sons; there, if they want to work, suffering does not exist for them, real or relative; even while you stand there, a load of cacao is arriving to be purchased, a load of fine cacao.<sup>62</sup> For they are embroiderers, sculptors, and goldsmiths and it will be so forever. But consider your children, look at the sons of the most remarkable one among the stalwarts, of the Warrior of Rabinal. With great pain, with great suffering they can barely subsist, and it will be thus forever. One of their legs is in front, another leg behind; there are only cripples and the one-armed;<sup>63</sup> the nephews, the grandsons of the most remarkable among the stalwarts, of the Warrior of Rabinal, from dawn to dusk, forever.” Thus he answered to the challenge, the war cry, of the Uxab, of the Pokomames, because of the fury which devoured their hearts. And you replied to them: “Eh, eh! chiefs of the Uxab. Ah, chiefs of the Pokomames! Did your voices speak thus before heaven, before

earth? In that which concerns those children, those sons of the Warrior of Rabinal, they do not blush over the means of their existence, their subsistence and their living is under the wide sky, at the four corners of the earth, from the peaks of the earth, to the sides of the mountains; because they are vigorous, because they are brave and valorous. Your children, your sons, on the contrary, are lost, dispersed; they come and they go; they move in long lines, returning to their mountains, to their valleys. Perhaps from there only one or two may return to their walls, to their fortress, because they are annihilated, they are pursued while they search for their food, their source of living. Among the children, the sons of the valiant one, of the most remarkable warrior among the stalwarts, of the great Warrior of Rabinal, if one or two go away, then one or two come back to your walls, to your fortress." Thus spoke your voice to the chiefs of the Uxab and the Pokomames.

But this is what my voice said: Eh, eh! Courageous warrior, man of the Cavek Queché. The challenge, the war cry hurled by the Uxab, by the Pokomames, has been heard. Heaven and earth hear me! It was certain that they would be enraged on account of having to abandon their places between the heaven and the earth to our children, our sons. It was certain that they could not take possession of those beautiful mountains, of those smiling valleys. It is a miracle that you have come to end so many days and so many nights under heaven, above earth; that you have come to shatter the point of your arrow, the hardness of your shield; that you have come to break the force of your arms, the instrument of your power. You have obtained nothing and it is certain that you have taken possession of nothing under heaven, above earth. You know where the limits of your land are which form a junction at the sides of the mountains, at the start of the plains. It is also certain that *I* am the valiant one, the great warrior, remarkable among the stalwarts, the Warrior of Rabinal, who reigns constantly here with my children, with my sons, here between heaven and earth. Thus speaks my voice to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. Heaven and earth be with you, valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché!

#### QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Ah! Ah! Hear me, heaven and earth! It is certain that I have not managed to take possession here, under heaven, above earth, of these beautiful mountains, of these smiling valleys. Was it useless, in vain,

that I came here to conclude so many days, so many nights, under heaven, above earth? My courage, my bravery, therefore, have they served me naught? Heaven and earth hear me! Now let us go there, to my mountains, to my valleys. Thus speaks my voice before heaven, before earth. I walked along the sides of the mountain, at the start of the plain; there, on the point which is called Camba,<sup>64</sup> I placed my landmarks and here my voice spoke to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. Could I not call the chief of Camba to come out, in order to crush him under my sandals,<sup>65</sup> to place my sandals on the heads of the children, the heads of the sons of the most remarkable among the stalwarts, of the great Warrior of Rabinal? Thus my heart speaks its lament. But even if heaven and earth punished me, my voice would still say: I will go away from here again to place my landmarks at the peak of the mountain and at the plain of Zaktihel;<sup>66</sup> and I will hurl my challenge, my war cry. Ah, hear me, heaven and earth! Is it true that I have taken possession of nothing here under heaven, above earth? From there I came down immediately to the mouth of the river, and then I saw and considered the freshly-sown lands; the lands of the yellow corn, of the yellow beans, of the white beans, of the birds with talons. My voice then said this, before heaven, before earth: Can I not carry away a little of this freshly-sown earth, with the help of the son of my arrow, the son of my shield? Then I took possession by imprinting my sandals there in the freshly-sown earth. From there I went immediately to plant my markers over the Xtincurun point, in front of Ximbalha, called thus.<sup>67</sup> I went from there, too: I went to plant my markers at the point called Quezentun;<sup>68</sup> there I sang out because of the anguish in my heart, during thirteen-times-twenty days, thirteen-times-twenty nights,<sup>69</sup> because I had not succeeded in taking possession, of these beautiful mountains, of these smiling valleys. Thus spoke my voice before heaven and earth: Alas, heaven and earth! Hear me! Is it true that I have succeeded in taking possession of nothing here under heaven, above earth; that I came uselessly, in vain, to waste many days, many nights. Thus spoke my voice before heaven and earth. I came, consequently, to the end of my strength, the end of my energy; my valor, my daring, no longer served me. My voice said this to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. I headed for our mountains, our valleys. My heart now told me to run from mountainside to mountain-



side, to the side of the valleys; thus spoke my voice. Heaven and earth be with thee, most remarkable among stalwarts, Warrior of Rabinal!

#### RABINAL WARRIOR

Ah! Valiant one, warrior, man of the Cavek Queché. My children! Why did you carry off my children, my sons? You had nothing to do with them. Leave them in their mountains, in their valleys. If you do not leave them alone I will upset and overturn the earth and the sky. Thus said my challenge. For I had gone away; I was occupied with placing the landmarks of the earth there at the point called Mucutzuum,<sup>70</sup> when you kidnapped the white children, my noble sons, at the point of your arrow, by the force of your shield, without your heart caring to hear my challenge, my war cry. Then I ran from mountainside to mountainside, to the sides of the valleys and put my markers on the place called Panahachel.<sup>71</sup> There I hurled my challenge, my war cry against you. Only then and there did you release these beautiful children, the white sons, there at the Great Woods of Cabra-kan Paraveno, called thus, at just a short distance from the Queché mountains, from the Queché valleys. From there they returned, they ran from mountainside to mountainside, to the sides of the valleys; with empty bellies, with hollow stomachs, they returned. Nevertheless, they did not return to their walls, to their fortresses, but they settled near the place called Panamaka.<sup>72</sup> Then you encountered my governor, my ruler, there at the fountain called the Bath of Tohil.<sup>73</sup> Was I not absent, was I not on the point of placing the landmarks in the earth, there in Tzamha,<sup>74</sup> before the place called Qulavach-Abah?<sup>75</sup> Then once more I turned my eyes, my contemplation, toward the heavens and the earth. Great was the horizon over which the clouds ran, the horizon where the mists roll, before the high walls of the vast fortress. There I hurled my challenge, my war cry, to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth.

My voice spoke thusly: Eh, eh, valiant one, stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché! Why did you come inside the vast walls, inside the vast fortress, to kidnap my governor, my father? You had nothing to do with him. Permit him, then, to return inside his vast walls, inside his palace! Thus spoke my voice; but your heart was not touched by hearing my challenge, my war cry. My voice also said: If you do not

release my governor, my ruler, may heaven permit, may the earth permit, that I overturn and upset the earth and the sky. May the heavens run over, may the earth run over. Thus spoke my voice. But your heart was not disturbed hearing my challenge, my war cry. Then I climbed up and down the slopes of the mountains, to the flat plains, and I went to place my landmarks among the vast walls, within the vast fortress. But I saw only the horizon where the clouds moved, the horizon where the mists rolled by constantly rising to the vision of the vast walls of the palace. The cicada and the cricket alone sang; they alone interrupted the silence of those vast walls, of those abandoned buildings. But my soul grew desolate, my heart grew faint, and I ran anew along the sides of the mountains and the sides of the valleys until I arrived at the mountains and valleys of the Queché; until I succeeded in finding my governor, my ruler, walled up behind and in front with stone and lime. I hurled myself at it with the son of my arrow, and the strength of my shield, my stranger's mace, my stranger's axe, my valor, my daring. It was thus, alone, that I saw my governor again, my ruler, imprisoned completely alone in the stone and lime.<sup>76</sup> I carried him away from there in my arms by the son of my arrow, by the strength of my shield. For truly, if I had not been there, you would have severed the root, the trunk of my governor, my ruler, among the mountains and valleys of the Queché. That is how I came to see him again, with the help of the point of my arrow, by the force of my shield, and I led my governor, my ruler, inside the walls of the palace. Did you not destroy two, three towns; the cities with narrow streets of Balamvac<sup>77</sup> whose sandy soil resounds with footsteps; of Chi-Calcaraxah<sup>78</sup> of Chi-Cunu,<sup>79</sup> of Chi-Gozibal-Tagah-Tulul<sup>80</sup> called thus? When will your heart cease this mad drive toward valor and daring? But you will pay for it, under heaven, above earth. I will announce the news of your presence inside the high walls of the vast fortress, to my governor, to my ruler. That is why you have said your last good-bye to your mountains, to your valleys, because here your root and your trunk will be severed, here between the heavens and the earth. It will truly be thus. For this reason I will not speak abundant words. Heaven and earth be with thee, man of the Cavek Queché!

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Eh, valiant one, stalwart, Warrior of Rabinal! Is it thus that your

voice speaks to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth; I will not change the words you have spoken to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth, before my mouth and before my face. Without doubt it is I who have transgressed in obeying the orders of our governor, our ruler. "They provoked us, they challenged us," had said the voice of our governor, of our ruler, the chief of Teken-Toh,<sup>81</sup> the chief of Teken-Tihax,<sup>82</sup> Gumarmachi,<sup>83</sup> and Taktazib,<sup>84</sup> Taktazimah,<sup>85</sup> Cuxuma-Ah,<sup>86</sup> of Cuxuma-Cho,<sup>87</sup> of Cuxuma-Zivan,<sup>88</sup> of Cuxuma-Cab,<sup>89</sup> of Cuxuma-Tziquin.<sup>90</sup> These are the names, the lips, the eyes of our governor, of our ruler! "Come then, you others. The twelve bold ones, the warriors; come to listen to the orders." This was the voice which spoke to them at the beginning, and later to you. In truth this is the cause of the misery, the destruction, the disorder which existed in the rooms of the great fortress. Now on the vast walls, in the vast fortress, there are only nine or ten white sons inside the vast walls of the fortress.<sup>91</sup> This was the voice which spoke to them and to you. It is because I was unable to conquer anything here; because of the envy which raged in my heart, I forced the white children to come back, I forced the white sons to return while they were distracted in Iximché<sup>92</sup> looking for the beehives of yellow honey, of green honey. When I saw them, my voice said before heaven, before earth: Would I not be able to kidnap those white children, those white sons, in order to place them within my mountains, my valleys? My voice said: I will conduct them before my governor, my ruler, to the Queché mountains, to the Queché valley. And my voice replied: Here then is something of these freshly-plowed lands which have already born fruit of the white open ears, of the yellow beans, of the white beans.

From there I returned toward the place called Pan-Cakil<sup>93</sup> because my heart went out to the white children, to the white sons. For this reason, then, you hurled your challenge, your war cry. Then my heart, my heart groaned at hearing your challenge, your war cry. It was for this that you came to Panahachel, to hurl your cry. But immediately I let them go free, there in the Great Wood, in the place called Cabrakan Pan-Araveno. The white children, the white sons, had only a short way to go before they arrived at my mountains, at my valleys, at the Queché mountains, at the Queché valleys. Thus returned the white children, the white sons, with dry and swollen stomachs. They continued the

march by the sides of the mountains, by the sides of the valleys. Nevertheless, they did not get as far as their walls, their fortress; they approached, instead, the place called Panamaka. Truly it was I who transgressed when I kidnapped your governor, your ruler, there in the place of the Baths of Tohil; for while he was bathing himself I kidnapped him, by the strength of my arrow and of my shield. I brought him to my mountains, to my valleys, to the Queché mountains, Queché valleys, because of the envy that raged in my heart, because I had not been able to take possession of anything between the heavens and the earth. Thus did I confine him, then, in the walls of lime and stone; I buried him behind the lime, the stone. Without doubt it is I who transgressed; in your own words you said: "You destroyed two or three towns; the deeply-ravined cities of Balamvac, where the sandy soil resounds with footsteps; of Chi-Calcaraxah, of Chi-Cunu, of Chi-Gozibal-Tagah-Tulul, called thus." Certainly I transgressed then because of the envy that consumed my heart, and here I will pay for it now under heaven, above earth. There are no other words in my mouth, in my heart. Only the squirrel, only the bird, here before my eyes, will perhaps have something to sing, mighty chief! Did not your voice also say: "I will announce the news of your presence to the face of my governor, my ruler, within the high walls of the vast fortress? You have said your last goodbye to your mountains, to your valleys, because here we will sever your root, your trunk, here beneath the heavens, above the earth?" Thus spoke your voice.

But could we not proceed agreeably and honestly as brothers? I would adorn you; I would decorate you with my gold, with my silver, with the son of my arrow, with the strength of my shield, with my stranger's mace, with my stranger's axe, with all that I possess, even with my sandals. I would work here, I would serve you and your children as your son, here beneath the heavens, above earth, as supreme sign that you will let me return to my mountains, to my valleys. Thus speaks my voice before heaven and earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, valiant warrior, remarkable among the stalwarts, great Warrior of Rabinal!

#### RABINAL WARRIOR

Ah, valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché! Did not your voice say before heaven, before earth: "Could I not adorn you, and decorate

you, with my gold, with my silver, with the son of my arrow, with the son of my shield, with all that I possess, even with my sandals, to work here, to serve, under heaven, above earth?" Thus spoke your voice. But what then would I go to say to the face of my governor, of my ruler? That a valiant warrior had fought us behind the vast walls, the vast fortress, for thirteen-times-twenty days, thirteen-times-twenty nights; so that our sleep was without rest or repose. And then, suddenly, I am adorned, I am decorated, by his gold, with his silver, with his stranger's mace, with his stranger's axe, with all that he possessed, even his sandals. And I would say to the face of my governor, of my ruler, that I had then allowed this warrior, following this battle, to return to his mountains, to his valleys! Could I say this to the face of my governor, to the face of my ruler? I am already well provided for; I am heaped with gifts from my governor, my ruler; I already have gold and silver; I have the son of my arrow, the son of my shield, my stranger's mace, my stranger's axe; I am well provided for, I am already heaped with gifts from my governor, the ruler of those vast walls, of the vast fortress. For this reason I will announce the news of your presence inside the walls of his vast fortress, to the face of my governor, of my ruler.

If my governor, my ruler, tells me to let you depart to your mountains, to your valleys, yes, if my governor says it, then I will allow you to go to your mountains, to your valleys; I will permit you to leave. But if my governor, my ruler, says: "Bring him before my lips, before my eyes, in order that I may see that his face is that of a valiant one, of a warrior"; if my governor, my ruler, says that, I will take you to appear before him. Thus speaks my voice before heaven and earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, valiant one, stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché!

#### QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Very well, so be it, valiant one, stalwart, great Warrior of Rabinal! If you announce the news of my presence to the face of your governor inside the vast walls of his vast fortress, announce me now. Heaven and earth be with thee, most remarkable among the stalwart ones, Warrior of Rabinal!

## SCENE TWO

Within the fortress

*(Before Chief Five-Rain, who occupies a low seat, the back of which is adorned with ancient carving. Near him is his wife, and they are surrounded by slaves, servants, warriors, eagles and jaguars.)*

## RABINAL WARRIOR

I salute you, oh Chief. I salute you, oh Lady.<sup>94</sup> I give thanks to heaven, I give thanks to earth, that you are here, spreading the shadow of your protection, your shelter, under the awning of green feathers, within the vast walls of this vast fortress. Since I am a valiant one, a stalwart, and since I have come before your lips and before your face, inside the great buildings of the fortress; in the same manner I have captured another valiant one, a stalwart, who confronted us for thirteen-times-twenty days, for thirteen-times-twenty nights, behind the high walls of the fortress, where our sleep was without rest or repose. Heaven has delivered him to me, earth delivered him bound to me, cast down by the son of my arrow, by the force of my shield. I have tied him, I have bound him, with my strong cord, with my strong rope, with my stranger's mace, with my stranger's axe, with my net, with my manacles of chisled bone, with my magic herbs. Likewise, I forced him to declare himself without murmur or protest. Soon this valiant warrior spoke the names of his mountains, of his valleys, to my face, to me, the valiant hero.

It was this valiant one, this warrior, who imitated the cry of the coyote, who imitated the cry of the fox, who imitated the cry of the weasel, behind the vast walls of the fortress, in order to bring forth, in order to provoke, the white children, the white sons. It was this valiant one, this stalwart, who destroyed nine or ten white children, white sons. It was also this valiant one who kidnapped you in the baths. It was this valiant warrior who laid waste two or three towns; the deeply-ravined city called Balamvac, where the sandy soil resounds with footsteps. Does not your heart desire to put an end to this bravery, to this audacity? Have we not received messages from our governors, our rulers, each one the governor of his own walls, of his own fortress, saying that he must pay for his misdeeds: the chief of Teken-Toh, the chief of Teken-Tihax, Gumarmachi, Taktazib, Taktazimah, Cuxuma-Ah, Cuxuma-

Cho, Cuxuma-Zivan, Cuxuma-Cab, Cuxuma-Tziquin? These are their names, their lips, their faces. Now he comes to pay the penalty beneath the heavens, above the earth. Here we will sever his roots, his trunk; here between the heavens and the earth, oh, my governor, Chief Five-Rain.

CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

My valiant one, my stalwart! Thanks be to heaven, thanks be to earth, that you have arrived at the walls of the vast fortress, before my lips, before my face, before me, your governor, I, Chief Five-Rain. I give thanks to the heaven, thanks to earth, for what heaven has given you; that the earth has delivered to you this valiant one, this stalwart; that he was hurled onto the son of your arrow, before the force of your shield; that you have conquered him; that you have bound up this valiant one, this stalwart. Now let him be brought before my lips and my face that I may see just how brave, how heroic, are his lips, his face. But let him make no outcry, and let him make no commotion when he arrives at the entrance to the great fortress; that way he will be esteemed, he will be admired<sup>95</sup> within the vast walls of the fortress. For there will be found his twelve brothers, his twelve kinsmen, guardians of the treasures, guardians of the precious stones. Their lips, their faces, are not complete; something is missing. Perhaps he has come to complete their number in the vast walls, in the vast fortress. Here also there are twelve strong eagles and jaguars; their number, too, is not complete; perhaps this valiant one, perhaps this stalwart, has come to complete them. Here there are great benches of precious metals and silver thrones; there are some where one may be seated; there are others where one may not be seated; perhaps this valiant one, this stalwart, has come to seat himself in those. Here there are twelve drinks, twelve intoxicating liqueurs called Waiting-Hummingbird—sweet drinks, refreshing, light-hearted, pleasing, attractive, appealing; of which one drinks before sleeping, here in the vast walls of the fortress, the Chief's liqueurs; perhaps this valiant one came to drink *them*.<sup>96</sup> Here there are very fine and well-woven materials, brilliant, splendid, the work of my mother,<sup>97</sup> of my wife; for this splendid work of my mother, of my wife, perhaps this valiant one, this stalwart, intends to be the first wearer of its delicacy. Also here is Mother of the Feathers—Precious Emerald, brought from Tzam-Gam-Carchag; perhaps this valiant one,

perhaps this stalwart, intends to be the first to see her lips, her face; perhaps he came to dance with her, within the vast walls of this vast fortress. Perhaps this valiant one came in order to become the clan's son-in-law,<sup>98</sup> brother-in-law of the clan, in the vast walls in the vast fortress. Let us see then if he is obedient, if he is modest, if he humbles himself, if he bows his face on entering. Thus says my voice before heaven, before earth! Heaven and earth be with thee, remarkable among the stalwarts.

RABINAL WARRIOR

Chief Five-Rain, give me your blessing, before heaven, before earth. Here is my strength, my bravery, that you have given me, that you have affirmed to my lips, to my face. I will leave here my arrow, my shield. Keep them, then; guard them in your covered house, in your arsenal; let them rest there; I, too, will rest because when we should have been sleeping, there was no rest for us because of him. Consequently, I leave them with you, inside the walls of this vast fortress. Thus speaks my voice before heaven, before earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, my governor, my ruler, Chief Five-Rain!

CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

My valiant one, my warrior, did not your voice say before heaven, before earth, "Here is my strength, here is my daring; here is my arrow, here is my shield, that you have given me, that you had affirmed before my lips, to my face. I deliver them unto you, then, in order that you may keep them; in order that you may guard those in the vast walls, in the vast fortress, in your covered house, in your arsenal"? Is this not what your voice said? But how will I keep them, how will I guard, those in the covered house, in the arsenal? What weapons will you have, then, to protect us against those who might come and be seen at the head of the lands, at the feet of our lands?<sup>99</sup> What weapons, then, would you have to protect our children, our sons, when they go out from these lands to seek their nourishment in the four corners, in the four directions? Here, once again and one last time, you must take your valor, your daring, your arrow, your shield, that I here give to you, my valiant one, my stalwart, remarkable among warriors, great Warrior of Rabinal. Heaven and earth be with thee.



## RABINAL WARRIOR

Very well! Here, then, I will take back my vigor, my bravery, that you have given me; that you have entrusted to me before my lips, to my face. Thus I will take them once again and one last time. Thus speaks my voice to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. And now I will leave you for a moment inside the high walls of your palace. Heaven and earth be with thee, my governor, my ruler, Chief Five-Rain.

## CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

It is well, my valiant one, my stalwart! Be careful: do not fall into some trap or be wounded, my valiant one, my stalwart, remarkable among the warriors, great Warrior of Rabinal! Heaven and earth be with thee!

## SCENE THREE

In front of the fortress

## RABINAL WARRIOR

*(He frees the Queché Warrior of the ties that fastened him to the tree.)*

Greetings! Valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché. I have returned from having announced you within the walls of the vast fortress, before the face of my governor, my ruler.

My governor, my ruler, ordered me, brave warrior, to say to you: "Let him make no uproar and let him cause no commotion when he arrives at the entrance of the vast walls, of the vast fortress, here beneath heaven, above earth; but let him humble himself, let him bow his head; that way he will be esteemed, he will be admired within the walls of the vast fortress; for the interior of the vast walls, of the vast fortress, will already be crowded. Already there are twelve of his brothers, twelve of his kinsmen, guardians of the treasures, guardians of the precious stones. Their lips and their faces are not complete; perhaps that stalwart comes to complete this group. There are also twelve strong eagles and jaguars. Their number too is not complete; perhaps that valiant one, that stalwart, comes to complete one or the other. Also there are benches of precious metals and silver thrones; perhaps that valiant one, that stalwart, comes to sit on them. Here, also, is the Mother of the Feathers, Precious Emerald, who comes from Tzam-

Gam-Carchag. Her lips are inviolate; her face has not been touched; perhaps this valiant one, perhaps this stalwart, comes in order to take the first taste of her lips, her face. There are also twelve kinds of intoxicating liqueurs, twelve delicious poisons, cool and sparkling, drinks of the chieftain who rules within the walls of the vast fortress; perhaps this valiant one, perhaps this stalwart, comes to drink them. There are also very fine and well-woven materials, brilliant, resplendent, the work of my mother, of my wife; perhaps this valiant one, perhaps this stalwart, comes to use them first. Will he not also come as my people's son-in-law, brother-in-law of my people, here within the high building of the vast fortress?" Thus said the voice of my governor, my ruler.

I come, then, to warn you against making an uproar, from causing a commotion when you arrive at the entrance of the high walls, of the great palace; I come to warn you that you should bow down, that you should kneel, when you enter the presence of my governor, my ruler, the grandfather, the Chief Five-Rain. Thus speaks my voice before heaven, before earth. Our conversation need continue no further. Heaven and earth be with thee, man of the Cavek Queché!

#### QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Eh! Valiant one, stalwart, great Warrior of Rabinal! Does not your voice speak thusly before heaven and earth? "I have conveyed the news of your presence to my governor, before my ruler, in the vast walls of the vast fortress. For this reason I come to warn you, valiant one, stalwart." Did not your Chief say: "Bring him so that he may appear before my lips, before my face, on the vast walls, in the vast fortress; so that I can see in his lips, so that I can see on his face, if he is brave, if he is a valiant warrior. Go to warn him to make no uproar, to cause no commotion, when he comes before my lips, before my face; let him humble himself, let him bow his head; because if he is a valiant one, a stalwart, he should be submissive and humble. For here he will be esteemed and honored, here within the walls of the great fortress." Thus spoke your governor, your ruler.

Come, come! Would I be a hero, would I be a stalwart, if I were to humble myself, if I bowed my head? Here, you see how I will humble myself: here, with my arrow; here, with my shield; here, with my stranger's mace; here, with my stranger's axe; that is how I will be humble, how I will bow when I enter the gates of the fortress, of the

great palace. If heaven and earth permit I will demolish the grandeur and the majesty of your governor, your ruler. If heaven and earth permit, I will strike with my fist those lips and that mouth, within the great fortress and the great palace, and you, take some of those injuries first, you valiant warrior!

*(On saying these words he approaches and menaces the Warrior of Rabinal.)*

## IXOK-MUN

*(Interposing himself between them)*

Stop, valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché, do not kill my valiant one, my stalwart, the most remarkable among the warriors, the great Warrior of Rabinal!

## SCENE FOUR

Within the fortress

QUECHÉ WARRIOR

*(Advancing before Chief Five-Rain)*

I salute you, warrior! I am he who has just arrived at the entrance of the great fortress, at the entrance of the great palace, where you extend your shade<sup>100</sup> and your majesty over all. I am he whose coming was announced to your lips, to your face. I am the valiant warrior, the stalwart, to whom your valiant warrior, your stalwart, the great Warrior of Rabinal, came to hurl his challenge, his war cry, to my lips, to my face.

He said: "I have announced the news of your coming to the face of my governor, to my father, within the vast walls of the vast fortress. The voice of my governor, of my ruler, spoke thusly: Bring this valiant one, this stalwart, before my lips, before my face, in order that I may see on his lips, in order that I may see in his face, how valiant he is, how great a warrior he is. Advise this valiant one, this stalwart, that he must make no uproar, that he must not raise a commotion, that he should humble himself, that he should bow his head when he enters the great fortress, when he enters the great palace." This your great warrior said to my mouth, to my face.

Well then! I am the valiant one, I am the warrior, and if I must

humble myself, bow my head and bend my knee, then this is what I will humble myself with: here is my arrow, here is my shield, with which I will destroy your splendor and your glory; with which I will strike your mouth and your lips; that is how you will be tested, mighty chief!

*(Brandishing his weapon toward Five-Rain)*

IXOK-MUN

Valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché, do not attempt to kill my governor, my ruler, Chief Five-Rain, within the vast walls of his great fortress wherein we stand!

QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Command, then, that they prepare my seat, my throne, because thus it was in my mountains, in my valleys, that my destiny was celebrated, that the day of my birth was celebrated. There I have my bench, there I have my seat. It is not I who will be exposed to the wind; it is not I who will be exposed to the cold. Thus speaks my voice to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, Chief Five-Rain!

CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant one, stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché: I thank heaven and earth that you have come to the vast walls of the vast fortress where I extend forth my shade and my majesty, I, the grandfather, the Chief Five-Rain. Speak then. Reveal why you imitated the cry of the coyote, the cry of the fox, the cry of the weasel beyond the vast walls, beyond the vast fortress, in order to provoke, in order to bring forth my white children, my white sons, in order to bring them outside the vast walls, the vast fortress, in Iximché; in order to try to find, to discover, the yellow honey, the green honey of the bees, the nourishment that was mine, the grandfather, the Chief Five-Rain, on the vast walls, in the vast fortress?

You were also the one who kidnapped the nine or ten noble children, the white sons, who were about to be taken to the Queché mountains, to the Queché valleys, if my boldness, my bravery, had not been found vigilant; because there you would have severed the root, the trunk of these noble children, of these white sons.

You came also to kidnap me there at the Baths of Tohil. There I was seized by the son of your arrow, the strength of your shield. You shut me up among the stone and lime walls, among the Queché mountains, among the Queché valleys; there you would have ended by severing my root, my trunk, in the Queché mountains and valleys. But, my valiant one, my stalwart, the most remarkable among the stalwarts, the great Warrior of Rabinal, freed me from there, pulled me out of there, by the strength in his arrow and in his shield. Had it not been for my valiant one, my stalwart, you would have certainly severed my root, my trunk. Thus he again brought me to the vast walls, to the vast fortress.

You also laid waste two or three towns: the deeply-ravined cities of Balamvac, where the sandy soil resounds under the footsteps, of Calcaraxah, Cunu, Gozibal-Tagah-Tulul, called thus.

When will the unrestrained desire of your heart, your determination, your boldness, cease to dominate you? When will you allow them to act, when will you allow them to move? Did not this determination, this daring, remain buried, concealed, in Qotom, in Tikiram, in Beleh Mokoh, in Beleh Chumay? Was not this determination, this daring, buried, concealed, by us, the governors, by us, the rulers, in each of the walls of the fortress? But you will pay for these misdeeds here between heaven and earth. You have said your last good-bye to your mountains, to your valleys, because here you will die, you will perish, under heaven, above earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, man of the Cavek Queché!

#### QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Chief Five-Rain, with your permission before heaven, before earth. True are the words, the opinions, that you have expressed before heaven, before earth; for truly it is I who have transgressed. Your voice also said: "Have you not called to and provoked the white children, the white sons, in order to bring them out to seek, to discover, the yellow honey, the green honey, of the bees, nourishment for my table, the grandfather, Chief Five-Rain, inside the walls of the vast fortress?" Thus spoke your voice. Certainly it is I who am the transgressor because of the envy that eats at my heart, because I had not been able to obtain possession of these beautiful mountains, of these beautiful valleys, here between the heaven and the earth. Your voice has also said: "It was you who came to kidnap me; who seized me in the

baths of Tohil.” Again, in truth, it is I who am the transgressor, because of the envy which rends my heart. Your voice also said: “You laid waste two or three towns: the deeply-ravined cities of Balamvac, where the sandy soil resounds with footsteps, of Calcaraxah, of Cunu, of Gozibal-Tagah-Tulul.” Thus said your voice. Certainly it is I who am the transgressor, because of the envy that consumes my heart, because I have not been able to conquer the beautiful mountains, the smiling valleys, here between heaven, above earth. Your voice also said: “Say a last good-bye to your mountains, to your valleys; let your voice speak, because here you will die, here your life will end; here we will sever your root, your trunk; here between the sky and the earth.” Thus said your voice. Certainly, I disobeyed your laws, your commands, because of the envy that devours my heart.

If it is necessary that I end my life here, that I meet death here, then this is what I say to your lips, to your face: Now that you are well-provisioned, that you are so rich, here in the high walls of the great palace, I will borrow from you some of your table, the Chief’s drinks called Ixtatzunun; the twelve liqueurs that intoxicate, the twelve poisons so sweet, so refreshing, so lighthearted, that are drunk before going to bed, within the vast walls of this vast fortress; I will borrow from you the marvels of your mother, of your wife. I will taste them immediately, as supreme symbol of my death,<sup>101</sup> of my end, here between the sky and the land. Heaven and earth be with thee, Chief Five-Rain!

#### CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché! Thus spoke your voice before heaven, before earth: “Grant me your food, your drinks. I will borrow them and taste of them now, as the supreme sign of my death, of my end.” Then I give them to you. Then I grant them to you. Slaves, serving women, let my food, my drinks, be brought. Let them be given to this valiant one, this stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché, as the supreme sign of his death, of his end, between the sky and the earth.

#### A SERVANT

It is well, my governor, my ruler. I will give them to this valiant one, to this stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché.

*(The servants bring a table loaded with food and drinks.)*

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

*(Eats and drinks with disdain. Then he goes to dance before the court. Afterwards he returns and says:)*

Oh, Chief Five-Rain. Is this your nourishment, is this your drink? There is little to be said; there is nothing in any of them that tempts my lips or my eyes. If you could taste for an instant in my mountains and valleys the excellence of the beverages, the sweet, refreshing drinks that I taste in my mountains, in my valleys! My voice says this to the face of the sky, to the face of the earth! Is this your table and your foods?

But here is the goblet from which you drink. It is the skull of my ancestor, the skull of my father,<sup>102</sup> which I see, which I observe! Can you not do the same with *my* bones, with *my* skull; to engrave and paint my mouth and my face? In this way, when my children, my sons, leave my mountains, my valleys, to barter five loads of cacao, five loads of fine cacao from my mountains, my children, my sons, can say: "Here is the head of our ancestor, of our father." This will my children, my sons, repeat in my memory as long as the sun is in the sky.

Here is also the bone of my arm; let it be the handle of the gourd of precious metals that will resound, that will produce noise on the vast walls, in the vast fortress. Here is also the bone of my leg; let it be the drumstick of the great drum, of the little drum, that will make heaven and earth throb on the vast walls, in the vast fortress.

Here is that which my voice also says: I will borrow from you the splendid gold brocade, well-designed, the work of my mother, of my wife, in order that I may adorn myself within the vast walls of the vast fortress, to the four corners, to the four extremities, as the supreme sign of my death, of my end, here beneath the heavens, above the earth.

## CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché! What do you wish, then; what is it that you ask? No matter what, I will give it to you as the supreme sign of your death, of your end, here beneath the heavens, above the earth. Slaves, serving women, bring the golden brocade, the work that you have done in the vast walls, in the vast fortress; let it be given to this valiant one, to this stalwart, as a supreme sign of his death, of his end, here under the heavens, above the earth.

## A SERVANT

Very well, my governor, my ruler. I will give this valiant one, this stalwart, that which he asks. Valiant one, stalwart, here is the gold brocade you desire, which you asked for. I give it to you, but do not harm it. Do not mistreat it.

*(The servant gives Queché Warrior a mantle in which he wraps himself.)*

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

You, musicians and drummers, play now a song on my flute, on my drum. Let them play, then, the great melody, the brief melody. Let my stranger's flute, my stranger's drum, my Queché flute, my Queché drum, play the prisoner's dance, the captive's dance of my mountains, of my valleys, in order that it make the sky shake, in order that it make the earth tremble. May our foreheads, our heads, be bowed when the beating of our feet echoes off the sun, when we dance, keeping time to the music, beating the ground, with the slaves, with the serving women, here under heaven, above earth. Heaven and earth be with you, oh musicians, oh drummers!

*(He dances in a circle before the court and goes to each corner to hurl his war cry.)*

Oh, Chief Five-Rain. With your permission before heaven, before earth. Here you have that which you had lent me, that which you had given to me. I come to return it, to leave it at the entrance of the great fortress, of the vast palace; keep it, guard it in your shaded arch, within the vast walls of the vast palace.

You agreed to my petition, to my desires, before heaven, before earth; and I have worn and shown it in the vast walls, the vast fortress, in the four corners, at the four extremities, as the supreme sign of my death, of my end, here between heaven and earth. But if it is true that you are rich and wealthy, now grant that I borrow the Mother of the Feathers, the Mother of the Little Green Birds, Precious Emerald, brought from Tzam-Gam-Carchag, whose lips are as yet untasted, whose eyes have not yet been touched, in order that I might first taste her mouth, that I might first touch her face, that I might dance with her, that I might exhibit her in the vast walls, in the vast fortress, in the four corners, at the four sides, as the supreme symbol of my death, of



my end, here under heaven, above earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, Chief Five-Rain.

## CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant one, stalwart, man of the Cavek Queché! What do you wish, then; what is it that you seek? No matter what, I grant you that which you wish; here is the Mother of the Feathers, the Mother of the Little Green Birds, Precious Emerald, brought from Tzam-Gam-Carchag, whose lips are as yet untasted, whose eyes have not been touched; and I grant her to you, valiant warrior, as the supreme symbol of your death, of your end, here, under the sky, above the earth. Slaves, bring forth the Mother of the Feathers, the Mother of the Little Green Birds; give this valiant one, give this warrior, that which he desires, that which he entreats, as a supreme symbol of his death, of his end, under the sky, above the earth.

## IXOK-MUN

Very well, my governor, my ruler. I will give her to this valiant one, to this hero.

*(Precious Emerald is brought to Queché Warrior.)*

Here she is, valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché. I give you that which you desire, that which you request; but do not offend, do not harm the Mother of the Feathers, the Mother of the Little Green Birds, Precious Emerald. Content yourself only to dance with her within the walls of the vast fortress.

*(The Queché Warrior salutes Precious Emerald, who keeps herself separated from him while they dance, always turning her face toward him. He follows her in the same way, undulating before her, while rippling and flaring the mantle. In this way they do turns around the court, to the music of the trumpets, and afterwards they return to a place near Chief Five-Rain.)*

## QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Chief Five-Rain, with your permission before heaven, before earth. Here I return her whom you lent me, whom you granted me as a companion. Now I have exhibited her. I have danced with her face to face to the four corners, to the four extremities, within the buildings of the

great palace. Now take her back, guard her,<sup>103</sup> enclose her within the vast walls of the vast fortress.

My voice also says: Grant that I borrow the twelve yellow eagles and jaguars whom I met by day, by night, with their weapons, their arrows in hand. Lend them to me that I may amuse myself with them, at the point of my arrow, with the strength of my shield, in the four corners, at the four sides, within the vast walls, in the vast fortress, as a supreme symbol of my death, of my end, here between heaven and earth. Heaven and earth be with thee, Chief Five-Rain!

CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché! Your voice spoke thus before heaven, before earth!: "Grant that I borrow the twelve yellow eagles and jaguars." Thus says your voice. Very well, I grant you the twelve yellow eagles, the twelve yellow jaguars which you desire, which you request to my lips, to my face. Go then, oh my eagles, my jaguars! Proceed so that this valiant one, this stalwart, may amuse himself and his warrior's prowess with the point of his arrow, the strength of his shield, in the four corners, at the four sides.

QUECHÉ WARRIOR

*(Comes forth with the eagles and the jaguars, and performs with them a war dance around the court. Afterwards he returns to the royal platform where Chief Five-Rain is seated with his family.)*

Chief Five-Rain, with your permission before heaven, before earth. You have granted me that which I wished, that which I requested: the yellow eagles, the yellow jaguars. I have exercised with them the art of war with the son of my arrow, with the son of my shield. Are these, then, your eagles? Are these, then, your jaguars? They are almost nothing to speak of before my lips, before my face, because some of them can see; some of them do not see; they have neither the eagle's beak nor the jaguar's claws. If you could but see for a moment those of *my* mountains, of *my* valleys! What a magnificent sight is theirs, and they fight magnificently with teeth and claws.

CHIEF FIVE-RAIN

Valiant warrior, man of the Cavek Queché! We know well the teeth of the eagles, of the jaguars, that are in your mountains. What is,

then, *your* image, *your* picture, of the eagles and jaguars who are in your mountains, in your valleys?

QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Chief Five-Rain, with your permission before heaven, before earth. Thus speaks my voice one more time to your lips, to your face: Grant me, if you can, thirteen-times-twenty days, thirteen-times-twenty nights to say one last good-bye to the face of my mountains, to the face of my valleys, where I used to live, to the four corners, to the four directions, to see again my place of hunting, my place of rest and nourishment. (*No one answers Queché Warrior who dances and disappears for a minute.*<sup>104</sup> *Afterwards, without returning to the royal platform where Chief Five-Rain is sitting, he approaches the eagles and the jaguars who are arranged in the middle of the court around an altar.*)

And you eagles! You jaguars! "He has departed," you no doubt said. I had not departed; I went only to say good-bye to the vision of my mountains, to the image of my valleys, where I used to hunt something to nourish me, for my favorite game in the four corners, at the four extremities.

Ah, heaven and earth hear me! My courage, my daring, have served me nothing. I searched for my way under heaven, I searched for my road over the earth, crossing the grass, crossing the thistles. My determination, my daring, have served me nothing.

Ah, heaven and earth hear me! Must I really die, must it end here between the earth and the sky? And you now, my gold and my silver! You son of my arrow, son of my shield! My stranger's mace, my stranger's axe, my wreaths, my sandals—all will return to my mountains, to my valleys!<sup>105</sup> Carry the news of me to my governor, my ruler, because the voice of my governor, my ruler, said this: "It has already been too long that my determination, my bravery, have been on the hunt." Thus said the voice of my governor, my ruler; let him no longer say it since I await only my death, my end, my destruction, here between the earth and the sky! Heaven be my aid! Earth hear me! If it is true that I must die, that I meet death, here under heaven, above earth, why can I not change places with that happy squirrel, that bird, who dies on the limb of the tree, on the branch of the tree, on which he lived, on which he ate, under heaven, above earth?

And you eagles! You jaguars! Come now! Do what must be done!  
But let your teeth, your claws, kill me quickly, because I am a great  
warrior who comes from my mountains, my valleys. Heaven and earth  
be with all of you! Oh eagles! Oh jaguars!

*(The eagles and the jaguars encircle Queché Warrior, stretching him  
out on the sacrificial stone in order to open his breast.<sup>108</sup> After his death  
all the actors dance in a circle.)*

THE END

## Notes

1. Paris: A. Bertrand, 1861-68.
2. México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1955.
3. *Ahau-Hobtoh*: "Five-Rain," designating the day of the Chief's birth. *Ahau*: In all the tongues of the Maya family, does not indicate "king"; it plainly has the meaning of "chief" with all the inconsistency the term implies. (1, 5 GR; FM)
4. *Rahauul*: "Supreme chief, governor." *Rabinal*: Probably means "family" (or line, house) of *rab*. (2, 3 FM)
5. *Achi*: Warrior of nobility. Raynaud suggests the Spanish and French equivalent *varon*, which translates as noble man, not nobleman, even though *varon* (baron) has been for some time nobility *de facto*. Monterde suggests the Nahuatl equivalent is *tlacatl* which means ruling class (literally "speaker"). The only word in English which possibly corresponds to *Achi* is "knight," but this has such specific denotation that it would be both anachronistic and ludicrous as the title of a Mayan personage. If the reader will bear in mind the nobility and importance of *Rabinal Achi* and *Queché Achi*, the word "warrior" will then suffice.
6. *Galel-Achi*: Literally, "Standout among the Warriors," implying something closer to "the most equal of the equals"—indicating high rank.
7. *Queché*: This name designates the unity of three great tribes. The primitive name *quitze*, or better, *ah quitze*, "Those of the Woven Bundle" (mythological heroes), had its origin in a sacred object of great magic guarded by and almost always surrounded by its portable oracle which constituted its safeguard. (6 GR)
8. *Rahauul yaqui*: A title carried by those members of the Queché tribal Grand Council who were charged in a special manner with keeping watch over and protecting the people from the *yaqui*. *Yaqui*: This name has no relation to the actual tribe of the Yaquis of Northern Mexico. It designates "stranger"; literally, "men of things that are not of the place where we live." In all places, in all times, some peoples have despised their neighbors, applying extravagant epithets to them. In Queché this term had various secondary meanings: "frauds, vigilants," (in running away and spying) and *langosta*, a very small but very harmful animal. *Cunen*: "Medicine Men" or "Blood-letters." *Chahul*: "The Arrow's Hole." *Cunen* and *Chahul* still exist to the North of Santa Cruz de Queché, near Rebah. There are many ruins. (7, 8 GR; 9 FM)
9. *Balam Achi*: *Balam*, in all of the tongues of the Maya family, designates the jaguar and the magician, or wizard, since it is to them that the power of metamorphosis into the jaguar is attributed. (10 FM)
10. *Balam Queché*: "Wizard of the Woven Bundle" (*Hechicero del Envoltorio*) which is the name and title of the foremost among the four founding, mythical heroes of the Queché people. After their disappearance from the terrestrial world their descendants took their titles. (11 FM)
11. *Ixok'il*: This form of *Ixok*, "wife," seems to have a meaning of superiority. Polygamy was permitted among the great chiefs, chiefly for political reasons. One may translate *Ixok'il* as the principal wife. (14 FM) Brasseur lists her as the queen. (pp. 21ff.)
12. *Mun*: The frequent translation "slave" is excessive. In spite of the suggestion of femininity—*Ixok-Mun*—this character was a man, a strong likelihood considering the convention that women did not speak in the drama. (17 FM) "Favorite slave of Rabinal Achi." (CB)
13. *Cot* (Eagles) and *Balam* (Jaguars) are like the *quauhtli* (eagles) and the *ocelotl* (jaguars) of the Aztecs, titles which were carried by some warriors to demonstrate their valor and which gave them the right to wear the skins and heads of those animals. These warriors constituted the flower of the army. (18 FM)

14. As there is no known legend or myth which refers to this town, the translation "Red healing wounds, irritated and aggravated" suggests that it is excessively fanciful; but it nevertheless seems less strange than Brasseur's "fire guarded by the viper which is painfully, agitatedly ascending." The ruins found one league to the north of the actual Rabinal, situated above a high mound which dominates the prairie, are easily visible from the present town. (19 GR)

15. The play has been variously divided into acts and scenes, although in each case admittedly arbitrarily. Monterde's divisions are into Act I, scenes i, ii, and iii for the first three scenes, and his Act II is the final scene. The scene divisions of this translation correspond to Brasseur's. There is no mention of any performance having an intermission.

16. See musical score following the text.

17. *Vorom ahau, cañon ahau*: They have obscene meanings which Brasseur and Monterde decline to translate. Brasseur says they deal with sodomy and substitutes *infáme* (infamous) and *odieux* (odious). Monterde uses *violentador* (irascible) and *deshonesto* (dishonorable). (20 CB)

18. "Baskets."

19. "Fields." Chacach and Zaman were situated on the mountain of Xoy Abah, some ten leagues to the southwest of Rabinal. Their ruins may perhaps be those now known by the name of *Beleh Tzak*, "The nine walls," *Beleh Qoxun*, "The nine fortresses." (22 FM; CB)

20. *Cañk*: There are many possibilities as to the meaning of this word. According to other texts it is one of the forms of the name *Cavek*, one of the three tribes which constituted the Queché peoples. (23 FM)

21. "May the heaven, the earth, be with thee" is merely an expression of protocol. (25, 26 GR)

22. In Queché quotation marks do not exist. "He says," placed once before and once after the citation, are used instead. One and sometimes both of these are omitted in this translation.

23. *Chupam r'al nu chab, chupam r'al nu pocob*: Brasseur interprets "son of my arrow" as "point of my arrow," (31 CB); but why "point of my shield"? It is better to keep the Queché idiom in order that the style retain its color.

24. The mace and the axe are always treated as *yaqui* in this text. (32 GR)

25. *Zahcab*: The white earth, with which the victim was rubbed before the sacrifice. After sacrifice it was a symbol and a magic means of victory. (33 GR)

26. The exact meaning for *zalmet* is unknown, but Brasseur's native servant indicated the meaning of "magic herbs." In Sahagún the anointing with herbs preceded the sacrifice. (34 CB; FM)

27. To "reveal your mountains, your valleys, etc." Not only did the fact of knowing the civil state of his enemy give him magic power over him, but it was also a species of dishonor for a vanquished warrior (and for his people) to make this kind of revelation. "Mountains and valleys" means the entire country. (35 GR)

28. It seems that "son of the clouds, a son of the mist" has a double meaning: the one serious, "having come from the high mountains"; the other ironic, "without importance, imaginary." (36 GR)

29. Simple deserter, in flight or escape, coward. (37 GR)

30. To my lips, to my face (or to your mouth, your face): Queché expression which one is able to translate plainly by "to me," "to thee." (39 GR)

31. *Tziquin*: "Bird," has immediately the sense of "eagle" which could very well be used in the present case because the Queché Warrior says the word ironically. (42 GR)

32. One imitates the screams of the animals in order to cause the hunters to leave the walls of the fortresses and come outside. (44 GR)

33. The "call" of the men, like the call of the animals, means provocation. "To call" has the sense of "challenge," "provoke." (45 GR)

34. White (or good) children, white (or good) sons indicate the vassals, subordinates of the tribe, and also the warriors, subordinate to the great chiefs or to the supreme chief. (46 GR)

35. "Yellow, green" is to say "rich, excellent"; honey seems to have been a tribute (or a very esteemed gift); in consequence, the hunters hoped that by a good capture, they would merit this tidbit, or that they would consecutively permit them to offer it to the supreme chief of the town. (47 FM)

36. "Grandfather," "ancestor," "ancient," "father" are titles of respect. (48 CB)

37. Brasseur (pp. 36-37) indicates an omission here in both the Queché and French versions, by an ellipsis at the end of this line and at the beginning of the next. No explanation is given.

38. Disappeared, as a liquid in a porous stone. (51 GR)

39. "We have left the killing to our warriors because by dint of killing them one by one, no more remain." (53 GR)

40. This listing of dishes could signify: "We no longer kill, we no longer eat your warriors in the sacrificial meals partly because now there are no more; for another reason because our victory has left us rich and permits us other foods." (54 GR)

41. *Beleh Mo'okoh*: "Nine hillocks." *Beleh Chumay*: "Nine cubits"—the place of an important Queché defeat. (55 FM)
42. *Qotom*: "Sculptured, engraved" or "regulated, ordered." (56 FM) *Tikiram*: A chain of mountains to the north of the prairie of Rabinal; *Cakyug*, where *Rabinal Achí* took place, would be situated above one of the narrow passes. (CB)
43. Death is not a complete destruction, however immediate, but a kind of disappearance as is indicated in the feeling of: "Place of vanishment, of the disappearance" of the name Xibalbá, subterranean place beyond the tomb, illuminated during the night by the sun and by the moon in the day. (57 FM)
44. "The name of the mouth and of the eye," that is, of the ruler, the mouth through which one speaks and commands, the eye through which one sees and watches. (CB)
45. Tribute. (59 GR)
46. Ellipsis again in Brasseur's text. (p. 41)
47. The Uxab and the Pokomames pertain to the Maya group. These peoples dominated Verapaz before the arrival of the Ah Rabinal. Afterward they were separated or removed a great distance toward the North. Those that exist today founded Coban and its environs. (60 CB)
48. "Elder, brother" mean "kinsman"; in short, it is a simple convention of courtesy. (61 FM)
49. In those countries of intensive agriculture the boundaries of the land had great importance; in Middle America, territorial property or familial or individual ownership did not exist. (64 FM)
50. These places were to the west and over high snow-capped mountains. In effect, Pan-Tzahaxak, "in the leaf-insects," would be, according to Brasseur, the name of the highest summit of the Cuchumatanes, and was the actual hamlet of Soloma, to the west of the Queché. (65 CB)
51. "Row of Hills." (66 GR)
52. "Row of Pines." (67 GR)
53. *Nimché*: "Great forest." It has been impossible to find an interpretation of *Paraveno*, a word that does not seem to be Queché. *Cabra'kan*: "Great giant of the earth," serves to designate the earthquakes or the gods who cause them. (68 GR)
54. *Panchalib*: "In the river bend," of the river of the mountain. Perhaps it was an ancient town of the Oga, "the nocturnals" (or lonely ones). A river bank town of the Chixsoy or of the Lacandón to the west. (69 FM)
55. "Between the giant reeds" (uncertain translation, 70 FM).
56. The names of the colors are frequently employed as superlatives. A passage from the *Anales de los Xahil* makes me believe that in the present case "yellow" signifies the relationship between the high dignitaries and their inferiors. Brasseur, who is never moderate in epithets, here translates it as "enraged, passionate, or hotheaded." (73 FM)
57. *Lotzo tun*, the great *tun* of war. The much-used *tun* (*tunkul* in Yucatan, *teponaztlil* in Mexico) is the great sacred drum. (71 GR)
58. *Lotzo gohom*: the small war drum. The *gohom* (*ilapamhueuetl* of the Mexicans) is the small drum. (72 GR)
59. Here, probably, the bird is the eagle. A place where the eagle drinks meant a very high place, crossed only by a mountain road. (75 GR)
60. "Prepared white lime." (76 GR)
61. "Beneath the cavern of the dry yellow earth." (78 FM)
62. "My administrators, my subjects, have a life so much easier and happier, containing so much that the country gives them (plants and minerals), they must add up the great commercial profits of their artistic industries; fortune comes while they sleep." (80 GR)
63. "Your officials, your subjects, have no industry, they are very poor; they are always ready to leave, to migrate, no matter where, to escape their misery." (82 GR)
64. *Camba*: Neighboring place to the prairie of Rabinal. (CB)
65. "To conquer, to force to surrender, to subdue to vassalage, to receive tribute." (85 FM)
66. *Zak'ihel*: "Limestone." Near the plain of Rabinal. (CB)
67. Neighboring localities near the plain of Rabinal. (CB)
68. A terrace covered with ruins less than two leagues from Rabinal, cited in the Quezentun legends. (CB; 91 FM)
69. The ritual period of the moveable feasts. Although the text does not give the reason the activity lasted this long, it is an interesting fact: it shows the intimate relationship of religion and magic with war. (92 GR)
70. Buried "hummingbirds or hidden spears." Further off from the city of Salamá. (94 CB; FM)
71. It is still actually called the town of Panahachel, in the *matazanas* (possibly "place of magic"); it is near the lake of the same name, also called Lake Atitlán (more precisely *Atitán* "place of the magic ancestral grandmother"). (95 CB; FM)

72. Perhaps this was the actual Tzacualpa, the Pamaka of the *Popol Vuh*, in the mountains to the northeast, that Ximénez translated as "In the hot water." (97 CB)
73. Tohil, principal tribal god of the Queché. There are thermal fountains, six leagues to the southwest of Cubulco. (CB)
74. "Home of the Point." (99 GR)
75. *Rocas enfrentadas*: "Facing the cliffs." Near the town of San Raimundo, eight leagues from Guatemala. (CB)
76. Captive. It does not seem that Middle America knew our prisons, or places of punishment and of long detention. In the buildings to which one can apply this name the captives were only confined until the day on which they were to be sacrificed. (102 FM)
77. "The Sparrow-hawk Wizard." *Vac*, the Sparrow-hawk, is the messenger of the *Hurakan*, "Giant Masters," great gods of the lightning, of the fire, of the sky. (104 GR)
78. "On the shore of the green reeds." (105 GR)
79. "The doctors" or "the obscenities" (or male organs). (106 GR; FM)
80. Valley full of herbs and of red *zapillos* (fruit). (107 GR)
81. "Angry rains." (108 FM)
82. "Heaped flints." (109 FM)
83. "Carved gourds." (110 FM)
84. "Young forests." (111 FM)
85. "Rows of pillars." (112 FM)
86. "Clusters of reeds." (113 FM)
87. "Clusters of lakes." (114 FM)
88. "Clusters of narrow valleys." (115 FM)
89. "Clusters of soil." (116 FM)
90. "Clusters of birds (eagles)." (117 FM)
91. Bad administration had caused the ruin; the vassals dispersed to great distances and the faithful and loyal departed. (119 GR)
92. *Iximché*: "Bamboo of the big kind." (CB) Species of tree called "Ramón," possibly *brasimium*, according to Brinton. *Iximché* is also the name of the city of the Cakchiqueles, Antigua, Guatemala. (120 FM)
93. "In the red," or "in the fire." (121 FM)
94. Brasseur uses *Roi* and *Reine* (king and queen); Monterde uses *Jefe* (chief) and *Señora* (Mrs.).
95. The dignified and heroic attitude of a captive who was to be sacrificed was much admired. (126 GR)
96. Probably this contains an ironic threat. In effect, these liqueurs were reserved for the stalwarts of the tribe; but they were not denied to the conquered enemies before they were executed. (129 CB; GR)
97. "Mother," a title of great respect without the meaning of any true filial relationship, (130 GR) as are other blood titles; Queché and Rabinal call each other "brother" and "father."
98. In Guatemala, as in Mexico and in many other regions of Middle America and the New World, a captive warrior, if of great bravery, at times was able to escape death when the tribe which had captured him adopted him. It is evident that one of the major reasons, even conditions, of this adoption was his marriage with someone of the tribe. By being married into one of the clans one became son-in-law or father-in-law of the different age groups of the clans. (132 GR)
99. "At the head of the lands, at the feet of the lands" is to say, at the limits of the lands. In all of the countries whose principal wealth is agriculture, the well-marked borders of the cultivatable lands are necessary and are frequently referred to in various texts. To show oneself at the foot or the head of the land of a tribe, without previous authorization, constituted a violation of territory—a *casus belli*. (133 FM)
100. In tropical countries one of the principal symbols of the chiefs who were obliged to sit in the open air was the parasol or sunshade. The number of their "shade carriers" matched the rank or degree of their dignity. (136 GR)
101. These concessions from then on became the symbols of impending sacrifice. (137 FM)
102. As with other peoples, the Queché had goblets made of the skulls of famous defeated enemies. The more noble the warrior had been, the more adorned and highly esteemed was the goblet. It was, then, a sign of glory for a captive to know that his skull would be a goblet, and it is this that Queché Warrior ardently demands. He petitions that the bones of his arms be made the handle of the instruments of religious and military music formed of a gourd; he demands that the bones of his legs serve as drumsticks to play the war drum. In order to support his high pretensions, he refers to an antecedent or hereditary right, seeming to recognize the skulls of his forefathers in the goblets that are presented to him. (138 GR)
103. Of all the favors that they granted him, the only one that the stalwart of the Queché has not taken contemptuously is the dance with Precious Emerald. Nor does he pretend to

have in his country someone more beautiful. Gallantry? More probably, religion. (GR) Neither did he scorn the mantle. (142 FM)

104. Brasseur (pp. 116-17) contends that Queché Warrior could actually see his far-off mountains from the high walls of Cakyug.

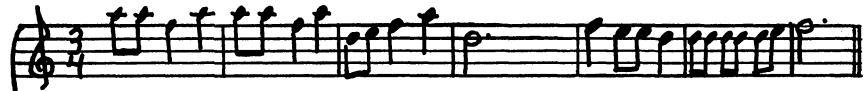
105. The "effects" of the victim, especially his weapons, were sent to the city of his origin. (143 GR)

106. Brasseur omitted saying whether or not the eagles and the jaguars made a gesture which symbolized the act of pulling the heart out by the roots and presenting it to the sun and to the four cardinal points. This took place before the Conquest. (145 FM)

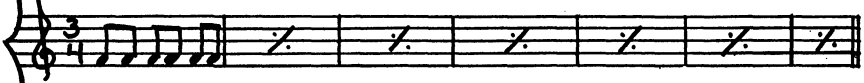
MUSICAL SCORE TO RABINAL ACHI <sup>107</sup>

OPENING DANCE

MODERATO. 1ST TRUMPET



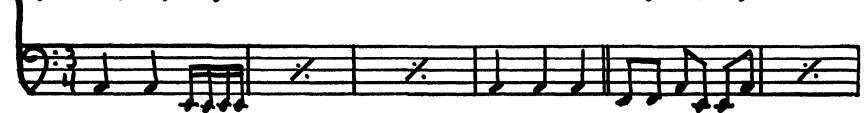
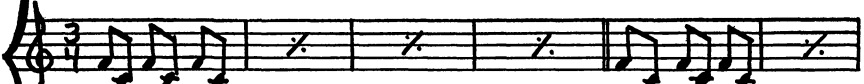
2ND TRUMPET



DRUM



ANDANTE



<sup>107</sup> Brasseur de Bourbourg, pp. 1-7. The pagination of this volume of the *Collection de documents* is rather complicated: some 170 pages of the *Grammaire* are followed by a second sequence of pagination, pp. 1-119, comprising Brasseur's *Essai sur la Poésie et la Musique* and the *Rabinal Achi*. A third sequence, pp. 1-7, comprises the above music.



ENTRANCE OF RABINAL WARRIOR

Musical score for 'ENTRANCE OF RABINAL WARRIOR' in 3/4 time. The score consists of three staves: a vocal line in the upper staff, a piano accompaniment in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff. The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase, followed by a rest. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

SONG OF THE QUECHÉ WARRIOR

Musical score for 'SONG OF THE QUECHÉ WARRIOR' in 3/4 time. The score consists of three staves: a vocal line in the upper staff, a piano accompaniment in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff. The vocal line features a melodic line with a long note at the end. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line with a long note and a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes and rests.

PRESENTATION OF QUECHÉ WARRIOR TO THE KING

Musical score for 'PRESENTATION OF QUECHÉ WARRIOR TO THE KING'. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of three staves. The top staff is the melody, featuring a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with some grace notes. The middle and bottom staves provide accompaniment, with the bottom staff showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

ALLEGRO

WAR SONG

Musical score for 'WAR SONG'. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of three staves. The tempo is marked 'ALLEGRO'. The top staff is the melody, characterized by a driving eighth-note rhythm. The middle and bottom staves provide accompaniment, with the bottom staff featuring a prominent eighth-note accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

THE DEATH OF QUECHÉ WARRIOR

DRUM SOLO

Musical score for the Drum Solo section. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single treble clef staff. The grand staff is mostly empty, with some notes in the bass clef staff in the first measure. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line in the first measure, followed by three measures with a double bar line and a slash, indicating a drum solo.

1ST TRUMPET

Musical score for the 1st Trumpet section. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single treble clef staff. The grand staff contains a melodic line in the treble clef staff and a bass line in the bass clef staff. The single treble clef staff contains a melodic line. The score is divided into four measures, with the second and third measures containing a double bar line and a slash, indicating a drum solo.