5-2022

Women's Influence in Cerén's Architecture: Weaving Patterns in Classic Maya Art

Nicole Rosalia Lazo

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN CERÉN'S ARCHITECTURE: WEAVING PATTERNS IN CLASSIC MAYA ART

by
Nicole Rosalia Lazo

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Art History & Visual Culture
at
Lindenwood University

Nicole Rosalia Lazo_____
Author
Dr. Khristin Landry-Montes_____
Committee chair
Dr. Jeanette Nicewinter_____
Committee member
Dr. James Hutson_____
Committee member

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE IN CERÉN'S ARCHITECTURE: WEAVING PATTERNS IN CLASSIC MAYA ART

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Art and Design Department
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
at
Lindenwood University

By

Nicole Rosalia Lazo

Saint Charles, Missouri
May 2022

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Women's Influence in Cerén's Architecture: Weaving Patterns in Classic Maya Art

Nicole Rosalia Lazo, Master of Arts/Music Education, 2022

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Khristin Landry-Montes, Adjunct Professor of Art History

This study aims to disclose how Classic Maya commoners utilized weaving patterns in small village architecture to highlight female power and status in the highlands of Mesoamerica. There are two primary goals for this project: first, to demonstrate how the weaving patterns in Maya highlands architecture stood as a symbol for female authority; second, to add equity and diversity to the field of art history by studying the Maya with a feminist lens, which is typically an underrepresented culture and gender in comparison to other civilizations, such as those from Europe and the United States. Furthermore, the Classic Maya farming village of Cerén is used as a primary case study to examine how Cerén's surviving architecture uses weaving patterns.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my husband and son who have supported me through this journey of research and study leading me to complete my thesis project. They have selflessly shared me with the world of academics for the past seven years and encouraged me through the late nights, non-stop research, and constant writing that has gotten me to this point. I would also like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Khristin Landry-Montes, for guiding me through the process of picking a topic, finding appropriate sources, and many draft edits. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Jeanette Nicewinter and Dr. James Hutson, for their advice and assistance with my research.

Table of Contents

Page

List of Figures

Introduction

The ancestral Maya, an indigenous culture from Mesoamerica, used artistic creations to exhibit political influence, authoritative status, and religious power since their earliest known existence in 2000 BCE.[1] Mesoamerica spans portions of present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras.[2] Scholars in the twentieth century labeled this region Mesoamerica after finding that the original inhabitants shared similar worldviews, customs, and art within this geographic region.[3] Artistic creations, including architecture, murals, jewelry, ceramics, and textiles have demonstrated the visual culture of the ancestral Maya throughout Mesoamerica.[4] Visual culture "is a term that refers to the tangible, or visible, expressions by a people, a state or a civilization, and collectively describes the characteristics of that body as a whole."[5] It is understood that by focusing on a civilization's visual culture, Mayanists can interpret varying aspects of the everyday lives of the Maya as a whole. Women's creations through textiles and weaving patterns are examples of visual culture, and they reveal how women held authority in

---

[1] Simon Martin, and Nikolai Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of The Ancient Maya*, second edition, (Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2008), 8-9.

[2] Michael D. Coe, and Stephen Houston, *The Maya*, ninth edition, (Thames & Hudson, 2015), 11.

[3] Merideth Paxton, and Leticia Staines Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica: Pre-Hispanic Paintings from Three Regions*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 1-2.

[4] Martin and Grube, *Chronicle Of The Maya Kings And Queens: Deciphering The Dynasties Of The Ancient* Maya, 8.

[5] "Visual Culture," Brown. Edu, 2022, https://www.brown.edu/Department/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/artinantiquity/7158.html.

Classic Maya communities, as weaving patterns were displayed on buildings of power and influence.

Studies of Mesoamerican art, and particularly women's contributions to art in the ancestral past, are underrepresented fields of study within art history in comparison to other cultures, regions, and time periods. Art created by Mesoamerican women have been underrepresented partly due to the European origins of art history, which first established a criterion for art that in many ways excluded women's creation, such as textiles, as art. However, textile creations of Maya women can express both ancestral and later contemporary Maya culture, making textiles examples of visual culture. Ancestral Maya women throughout Mesoamerica also used textiles in a way that enabled scholars to further understand their everyday lives and the authority gained from textile weaving patterns used on architecture. For example, the Maya female-gendered practice of weaving used weaving patterns that were later depicted on buildings and structures of authority throughout Mesoamerica, exposing the magnitude of women's influence within Maya culture. Art historian Virginia Miller has found that women's creations were very influential in the adornment of elite palace facades of the Classic Maya, the lowland region of Mesoamerica.[6] One can juxtapose Miller's argument of how the Classic Maya elites in northern Mesoamerica reinforced women's power by including weaving patterns on palace façades with how commoners of the Classic Maya also did this on their buildings of authority on a smaller scale. This study examines how Classic Maya commoners utilized weaving patterns in small village architecture to highlight female power and status in the highlands of Mesoamerica. Non-elite Classic Maya village architecture showcases

[6] Virginia E. Miller, *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding In Mesoamerica- Textile Designs in The Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture*, Barnardsville, N.C.: Boundary End Archeology Research Center, 2006.

weaving patterns that symbolize prestige and influence, such as *petate*, woven reed mats, created by women.

The ancestral Maya are a culture that span over 4,000 years and many geographic regions. Scholars describe different geographical regions, time periods, kingdoms, and dynasties in many ways, including natural regions, areas, and dates. They break up and label natural regions created by climate and landscape into highlands and lowlands. The Maya highlands cover the southern region of Mesoamerica, present day southern Chiapas, Guatemala, parts of El Salvador, and Honduras, which were crafted by volcano eruptions, torrential rain pour, and water erosion that created elevations above 1,000 ft.[7] Maya lowlands cover the northern part of Mesoamerica, including northern Guatemala, Belize, and the whole Yucatán peninsula. The lowlands utilized their natural limestone resources to build up their empire.[8] Scholars also separate Mesoamerica in terms of area: Northern, Central and Southern. Central and Northern areas are both in the Maya lowlands and have many similarities because of the lack of natural barriers or borders to stop "cultural exchange or movements of peoples between the two."[9] It was the Southern area, running from the highlands of Guatemala and Chiapas down along the Pacific into El Salvador, which exhibited the most differences from the other Maya areas.[10] For example, notable architecture traits of ancestral Maya, such as corbel vaults, were not commonly found in the Southern area.[11] Furthermore, time periods are another way that scholars separate

[7] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 14-15.

[8] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 16.

[9] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 24.

[10] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 24.

[11] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 24.

the ancestral Maya periods. There are three main chronological periods: the Preclassic (2000 BCE – 250 CE), the Classic (250 – c.900), and the Postclassic (c.900-1697).[12] The conclusion of the Postclassic Maya marks the end of the ancestral Maya when the Spanish colonized Mesoamerica and present-day Mexico starting in the early 16th century.

The colonization of Mesoamerica by the Spanish inflected great hardships on the ancestral Maya. Spanish military attacks and advancement through regions populated by indigenous cultures resulted in the Maya and other cultures relinquishing their self-governance. Continued contact with the Spanish brought deadly European diseases and new customs to the Maya. Spanish contact negatively affected the Maya but did not completely cause them to disappear as a culture.[13] In fact, they are not "a vanished people. . . [they are] the largest single block of American Indians north of Peru." The Maya maintain traditional ways of life, such as ancestral weaving, food preparation, and language, dating to the Preclassic.[14] Because the Maya are still a people and culture that exists in modern times, this study utilizes the terms ancient Maya to classify the Preclassic, Classic, and Postclassic Maya, and contemporary or modern Maya to address the present-day Maya.

Women in Maya Art

Weaving is an activity of the Maya, traceable throughout their entire existence. As a typically female-gendered undertaking, weaving helps scholars understand details of women's lives that pertain to her family background through their textiles and weaving patterns.[15]

---

[12] Martin and Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens*, 8-9.

[13] Coe and Houston, *The Maya*, 11.

[14] Martin and Grube, *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens*, 8-9.

[15] Margarita de Orellana, et al, "Textiles from Oaxaca," *Artes de México*, no. 35 (2000): 81, Accessed November 7, 2021, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24326687.

Archaeologist Elizabeth M. Brumfiel has shown how status can also be determined by knowing what types of weaving tools were used.[16] Ancestral Maya sites and their artifacts disclose information about ancestral Maya women and how they used weaving to contribute to their society. Women's art of weaving distinguished female power, including religious and social status, within the common Classic Maya population. of the Classic Maya (250 – 800 C.E.). The humid climate of Mesoamerica has destroyed most evidence of cloth textiles from the Classic Maya, leaving the majority of textile examples on more permanent materials, such as stone stelae or painted murals.[17]

Art by Maya Women Through a Lens of Decolonization

This project helps to decolonize the topic of Mesoamerican studies in two ways. In general, this study decolonizes female studies of the ancestral Maya by analyzing the art without a European lens. By conducting research to clarify how women's creations through weaving held influence within the Classic Maya, scholars need to look at the Maya without the guise of European criteria. Further study of women's creations and artistic practices help to reverse European colonial effects of imposing European gender practices and views on the Maya. Through examples of weaving patterns on influential buildings, this study argues that the female commoners' creations of the Classic Maya implied power and authority through their visual culture. More specifically, this study decolonizes female art of the Classic Maya by utilizing

[16] Margarita de Orellana, et al, "Textiles from Oaxaca," 81.

[17] Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change: Fabricating Unity in Anthropology," 864.

evidence of influence through women's creations as an innovative project to democratize knowledge through accessibility.

Cerén

This study uses the Classic Maya city of Cerén, in present-day El Salvador, as a case study because Cerén incapsulates how a typical farming village from the year 600 CE would have operated. Cerén is located on the outskirts of Mesoamerica and is not thought of as a political or military powerhouse because of its small population of low status farmers. but did have an established community that built structures, planted and harvested crops, held religious ceremonies, and created art. The site of Cerén is also relevant within Mesoamerican studies because it is unlike most of the topics discussed in Mesoamerican studies that mostly showcase royalty and the upper class. There were no elite members of Classic Maya society living at Cerén. As only commoners inhabited the village, Cerén helps to close the knowledge gap between what is already known about upper class and the rest of ancestral Maya society.[18] Cerén's population of non-elites helps to focus on the everyday lives of women and how they were influential in their communities within the framework of art history and visual culture.

Cerén is a Classic Maya farming village that enables a unique view into how common women incorporated weaving into their lives because of a volcanic eruption around the year 600 C.E. (fig. 1). Volcanic ash preserved the village, giving it the nickname of "the Pompeii of the Americas." Other ancestral Maya sites have housed weaving tools in burials or depicted elite women with elaborate jewelry as they operated a traditional weaving loom in ceramic figurines, but Cerén offers new discoveries about how weaving influenced the commoners of the Classic

[18] Linda A. Brown, "From Discard to Divination: Demarcating the Sacred Through the Collection and Curation of Discarded Objects," *Latin American Antiquity* 11, no. 4 (2000): 320, https://doi.org/10.2307/972000.

Maya. Cerén's archeological findings of weaving tools at the shaman's religious structure imply that Classic Maya religion and authority incorporated weaving and its tools and patterns.

Religious activities and structures are indicative of female gender roles at Cerén through shamanism.[19] Shamanism has played a crucial religious role in the lives of the ancestral and contemporary Maya, with many forms of services provided to those in need.[20] The Maya see shamans as diviners who can provide information about the future, offer protection from evil spirits, or physically heal their customers.[21] The shaman usually provides guidance and assistance in exchange for an agreed upon payment. In the case of Cerén, the customers mainly left offerings of female items on the posts of the local shaman's workplace, designated by archaeologists as Structure #12[22](fig. 2). Details such as these payments in the form of offerings assisted archaeologists to conclude that there was a local shaman at Cerén and that she was a woman.[23]

Cerén's female shaman could be of significance in relation to gender studies that indicate whether women held influence within the Classic Maya because female shamans could have

[19] Linda A. Brown and Payson Sheets. *Fleeting Identities: Perishable Material Culture in Archeological Research,* Center For Archeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 2001, 120-123.

[20] Krystyna Deuss, *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*, Guatemalan Maya Centre, (2007): 73-76.

[21] Deuss, *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*.

[22] Payson Sheets, *The Ceren Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2006, 103.

[23] Payson Sheets, *The Ceren Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, 103.

been rare in comparison to male shamans of the Maya.[24] Archaeologist Christina T. Halperin expresses how women religious leaders of Mesoamerica are not commonly studied by saying "[R]eligious cults in the ancient world often implicitly privilege the actions and perspectives of elite male whose perspectives appear universal in so far as they dominate most ancient texts and imagery."[25] The uncertain number of how many women religious leaders who practiced shamanism in the Classic Maya might be better understood by comparing known numbers of women shamans in the ancestral Maya to those of the contemporary Maya. Currently, the contemporary Maya have many male shamans who contain the religious authority to conduct rituals and actives.[26] The contemporary Maya females who conduct religious rituals are not labeled as shamans but as witches that utilize black magic.[27] The comparison of current Maya religious roles to the female shaman's role at Cerén could be of special interest to determine that the female shaman and structure #12 held distinguished authority. Structure #12 also signifies gender roles through its architecture. The religious structure displays weaving patterns found on traditional sleeping mats, as well as on royal dress. The evidence of weaving through weaving tools and weaving patterns found at Cerén indicates the activity of weaving and suggests women's power as a prominent focus of the site, as well as for the common women of the Classic Maya.

---

[24] Krystyna Deuss, *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*.

[25] Christina T. Halperin, "Ancient Cosmopolitanism: Feminism and the Rethinking of Maya Inter-Regional Interactions During the Late Classic to Postclassic Periods (Ca. 600–1521 CE)", 350.

[26] Krystyna Deuss, *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*, 217-223.

[27] Krystyna Deuss, *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*, 217-223.

Moreover, previous research done on Cerén focuses mostly on anthropological studies and archaeological evidence. What is missing in the study of Cerén is a close analysis in the field of art history to contribute to the study of visual culture, which would lead to a further understanding of the villagers' use of women's creations among the Classic Maya. An innovative art historical study of Cerén is imperative to demonstrate how visual culture connects to Classic Maya women's artistic aspects of weaving patterns on architecture to symbols of power and prestige. An art historical analysis is helpful to understand how structure #12 at Cerén fits into Classic Maya visual culture. By building off the previous findings of anthropologists and archeologists, art historians can further study this site to demonstrate how women in commoner villages of the Classic Maya, such as Cerén, conducted art and visual culture. The field of art history can help to explain the motivation behind why women created and used specific weaving patterns. These motivations reveal the impact architecture and artwork had at Cerén and how it affected the farming community that lived there.

The scope of this project focuses on including Mesoamerican visual culture to art history classes and therefore bringing equity to art history. Two problems are exposed in this research. First, there are not enough art history classes being taught with broad ranges of diversity in higher education. It is important to add diversity to lower division classes to allow students to be exposed to a variety of information in art history classes that include topics of women's studies and visual culture. I intend to utilize information about the Classic Maya, and their artwork to add equity to Art History. The second problem shows that women's productions and involvement within Mesoamerica have not had extensive research, in comparison to men's productions. Women's productions deserve to gain the knowledge to better understand women's significance within their society.

This paper first presents the current state of the research regarding weaving and textiles of Mesoamerica to explain the importance of women's creations in the ancestral Maya. Then, it explains the methodologies used within the research to conduct the final analysis to convey how structure #12 at Cerén used weaving patterns on the façade to demonstrate women's importance to their community as weavers. This study's conclusion explores female gender influence within the Classic Maya as well as their use of a specific weaving pattern called *petate* to indicate importance and authority to the Classic Maya.

Literature Review

The Ancestral Maya

Mesoamerica is a relatively new concept inside the field of art history. In the early twentieth century, anthropologists decided on the geographical boundaries of Mesoamerica while conducting research about its original inhabitants. Mesoamerican studies have grown to become more of a sought-after subject, with scholars from many disciplines researching this area, including modern scholars of "archeology, art history, astronomy, ethnography, ethnohistory, history, language analysis, and natural science."[28] There are also scholars who have contributed specifically to the study of Mesoamerican women, including Traci Ardren, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, Rosemary A. Joyce, Susan Kellogg, and Virginia E. Miller. These scholars have cleared the way for current studies to be done, furthering the understanding of women in Mesoamerica.

Scholars found that the people who lived within those areas during the years of the Spanish conquest, and before, all shared similar practices and traits that set them apart from the

[28] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 2.

native peoples of other parts of Northern or Southern America.[29] Similarities included visual characteristics, such as architecture with stepped pyramids and ball courts with rings, certain agricultural plants used to create typical foods and clothing, and the importance of hieroglyphic writing.[30] The Maya also lived off a 365-day calendar cycle and a 260-day cycle and had specific deities with an emphasis on rituals, sacrifice, and ceremonies.[31] Scholars published this new concept of Mesoamerica in 1943 to give a name and specific qualifications in the professional realm to help future research of the Maya culture to be more specialized.[32]

Cerén

Most of the surviving evidence about culture and Maya life comes from elite buildings and palaces built with permanent materials that have remained standing through the centuries. Cerén offers a rare look into the lives of how the Maya lived during the Classic period through its surviving architecture. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cerén is thought to have "universal value, demonstrating international significance."[33] Payson Sheets was one of the main archeologists who helped to excavate this site in 1978.[34] Sheets and others have published their

[29] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 1.

[30] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 2.

[31] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 2.

[32] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 2.

[33] UNESCO, Centre, "Joya De Cerén Archaeological Site", Whc.Unesco.Org, 2022, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/675.

[34] Linda A. Brown, Scott E. Simmons and Payson Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archeology, 2002, 83.

findings through the University of Colorado.[35] Sheets and Linda A. Brown explained how most archaeological sites in tropical climates, such as El Salvador, do not allow for "preservation of fragile perishable remains, [but because Cerén] was suddenly buried under 4 to 6 m of ash by a nearby volcano" Cerén was mostly preserved[36] (fig. 3). Brown and Sheets noted that two of these preserved structures at Cerén were set apart from the other structures, structure #10 and structure #12, labeling them as "special use building[s], which served a nonresidential function."[37] These were the two structures used for divination and religious ceremonies at Cerén and contained items such as a deer-skull headdress and ceramic jars.[38]

Architectural elements also set these structures apart from the rest of Cerén. Sheets explains these architectural qualities in his book *The Ceren Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, saying, "[T]hey are the only two buildings to not follow the 30 degrees east of north orientation, probably to indicate their specialness."[39] Structure #10 and #12 also "had unusual numbers of earthen columns with special properties, and their walls were painted white with some red decoration."[40] They were the only two structures that were painted

[35] Payson Sheets, *Before the Volcano Erupted: The Ancient Cerén Village in Central America,* Austin: University of Texas, 2022, preface.

[36] Linda A. Brown and Payson Sheets. *Fleeting Identities: Perishable Material Culture in Archeological Research,* 114.

[37] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities,* 117.

[38] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities,* 117-118.

[39] Payson Sheets, *The Cerén Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, 101.

[40] Sheets, *The Cerén Site,* 107.

at Cerén.[41] Moreover, what separates these two religious structures from each other are the two windows in structure #12's façade, making it the only structure with windows at Cerén. Brown and Sheets describe these windows in structure #12 as "two *bajareque* (wattle and daub) latticework windows with the lattice forming a crosshatched pattern"[42] (fig. 4). The meaning of the simple lattice weaving pattern on the windows of structure #12 of Cerén is unknown; nonetheless, Sheets brings up the lattice windows in many of his reports as he notes their "symbolic importance."[43] Miller writes about this simple lattice pattern in excess and demonstrates how it is the pattern commonly found on woven mats.[44]

Sheets and others have established that a female shaman used structure #12 for divination at Cerén,[45] determining this based on the type of items found within the structure.[46] According to their findings, Cerén village women went to structure #12 and made offerings of common female tools in exchange for divine interaction.[47] Offering objects found at the site included two spindle whorls, carved greenstone disk, and obsidian artifacts.[48] These objects were gifted to the shaman in return for spiritual assistance and fortune telling. Archaeologists determined that the shaman

---

[41] Linda A. Brown, Scott E. Simmons and Payson Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 91.

[42] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities*, 120.

[43] Sheets, *The Cerén Site*, 105.

[44] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*, 146-147.

[45] Sheets, *The Cerén* Site, 105.

[46] Sheets, *The Cerén* Site, 105.

[47] Sheets, *The Cerén* Site, 104.

[48] Sheets, *The Cerén* Site, 104.

used the three piles of found items on the floor to read women's fortunes.[49] Structure #12 exemplifies Miller's argument of a building holding authority as it displays women's creation through weaving patterns.

Women in Maya Art- Textiles

The information in this section focuses on what has already been studied in the field of Mesoamerican art from the Classic and Postclassic (c.900-1697) Maya surrounding the female activity of weaving. To do this, there is an examination of palace reliefs, ceramics, images from manuscripts, and figurines from both highland and lowland Maya regions to show how scholars have classified the importance of women's productions through weaving.

Women in Maya Art- Dress in Politics and Royalty

Surviving artifacts help support the idea that that people should view women's creations should be considered as artistic work, rather than utilitarian objects. Clothing was used in Classic Maya culture to display individual importance and social status and was the focus of some royal ceremonies. Dressing scenes were popular motifs in Classic Maya art that were painted on ceramic vases. These polychrome images show the men and women of the royal court in the act of ceremonial "complex rituals of dressing the ruler."[50] One of these famous scenes (K7258) shows the Corn God being adorned with clothes after his resurrection (fig. 5).[51] The dressers in this image are nude women. They are shown in profile, with exposed breasts and stomach rolls, as they face the Corn God. Even though the women are nude, the emphasis remains on clothing. The Corn God is the focal point, as he is faced in a frontal direction towards the viewer and is the

[49] Sheets, *The Cerén* Site, 103.

[50] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in* Mesoamerica, 156.

[51] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in* Mesoamerica, 156.

one being dressed by others in the scene. By indicating that dressing a God or ruler is important through ceramics and paintings, Classic Maya culture implies that clothing is a valued part of their lives, ceremonies, religion, and politics.

Highly-decorated huipiles (tunic-like dresses worn by women) of Lady Xok from structure 23 at Yaxchilán illustrate the importance of royal clothing.[52] Claudia Brittenham highlights the significance of Lady Xok as the patron of structure 23 by stating that structure 23 is "one of the few examples of female patronage surviving from ancient Mesoamerica."[53] Reliefs from the Late Classic Maya city of Yaxchilán show Lady Xok with her husband, "the powerful eighth century king of Yaxchilán, Bird Jaguar."[54] J. Kathryn Josserand describes the striking image of Lady Xok kneeling below her husband as she is conducting a bloodletting ritual on lintel 24 (fig. 6).[55] In *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica,* Rosemary A. Joyce characterized this image as being female-focused, with Lady Xok as the focal point, even though she is beneath her husband because she is shown frontally, and the king is shown in profile.[56] Joyce indicates that dress comes into context in this lintel because it shows the king as mostly nude, while wearing limited elements of royal hunting attire and jaguar motifs to signal his

[52] Claudia Brittenham. "Architecture, Vision, and Ritual: Seeing Maya Lintels at Yaxchilán Structure 23," *Art Bulletin* 101, (3): 2019, 8, doi: 10.1080/00043079.2019.1564175.

[53] Claudia Brittenham. "Architecture, Vision, and Ritual: Seeing Maya Lintels at Yaxchilán Structure 23," *Art Bulletin* 101, (3): 2019, 8.

[54] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*, 151.

[55] J. Kathryn Josserand, *Ancient Maya Women: Women in Classic Maya Hieroglyphic Texts*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002, 134.

[56] Rosemary A. Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010, 62.

strength and power.[57] Lady Xok is fully engulfed in her huipil, only exposing her hands and face.[58] Lintel 24 establishes the royal's power to rule and conduct this bloodletting ceremony through their garments and elaborate decorations.

Virginia Miller also uses this image to demonstrate how royals valued the creations of women by adorning themselves with elaborate patterns: "[Lady Xok] wears a long woven huipil completely covered with reticulated design consisting of repeated diamonds with serrated or zigzag sides. Inside each diamond is a small cross-shaped motif…"[59] Miller goes on to show how politically influential buildings within the Maya elite utilized weaving patterns. Her focus on complex lattice patterns within the huipiles of Lady Xok and other royal wives from Yaxchilán indicates how the dress of royals was [60]OBJ If dress, costume, and the weaving of these decorative huipiles were not important, royalty would have been clothed in plain solid colors instead of their creations that made a statement of power and prestige. This brings up the question of whether all pieces of clothing are important or not.

The garments of royalty were not the only textiles of importance; other social status groups, such as those of the royal court, displayed their social status through clothing as well. In another ceramic vase (K764) we see a different dressing scene, where a Classic Maya ruler is being ordained with red pigment by members of the court and his attendants (fig. 7). In this polychrome painting, there are multiple women, but now they are shown in elaborate huipiles with varying patterns and colors to imply their high status and connection to the ruler. Merideth

---

[57] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 62.

[58] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 62.

[59] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*,151.

[60] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*,152.

Paxton and Leticia Staines Cicero write about women's creations through weaving and high status in *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica: Pre-Hispanic Paintings from Three Regions,* saying "[T]his social level is indicated by their elegant dress and ornaments."[61] This example exhibits how the Classic Maya valued clothing and saw it in symbolic terms. The follow-up question is if the creators of this important and symbolic item also held economic value. Miller has "reference[d] to the important role that cloth played in the political economy of the northern Maya, and by extension, to the economic value of women as producers of such goods."[62] As the producers of such goods, women did hold economic value as creators of royal garments that transcended into the religious realm as well.

Women in Maya Art- Dress in Religion

Weaving is also connected to the Classic Maya through religion. Gabrielle Vail and Andrea Stone address how weaving is seen as a spiritual and religious act connected to the cycle of life.[63] Vail and Stone use examples from the Classic and Postclassic (c.900-1697) Maya lowlands to show how weaving allows the rebirth of fibrous plants to be made into cloth and end with the creation of a new substance.[64] This mimics the process of creating a new human life. Note both creations, childbirth and weaving, are done by women; the Goddess of weaving, Chak

[61] Paxton and Cicero, *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica*, 157.

[62] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*, 153.

[63] Gabrielle Vail and Andrea Stone, *Ancient Maya Women: Representations of Women in Postclassic and Colonial Maya Literature and Art*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002, 203-228.

[64] Vail and Stone, *Ancient Maya Women*, 203-228.

Chel, was also the Goddess of fertility and midwives.[65] Chak Chel is an elderly figure who is shown weaving multiple times in the Madrid Codex (fig. 8).[66] Artistic rendering of this Goddess is typically show her with a snake headdress and as an old woman because midwifery and "[w]eaving [were] typically done by old women," who had the experience, knowledge, and trust from the community to do so.[67] The Madrid codex, named after the city it was housed in after conquest, is a surviving hieroglyphic manuscript from the Postclassic Maya (c.1000 C.E. - 1520 C.E.) and exemplifies how the Maya paired weaving and fertility into one central figure and goddess. This connection of weaving and reproduction is a Maya commonality frequently expressed through art and surviving manuscripts. Vail has shown how "[s]pinning and weaving, two other female activities pictured in the codices, are also metaphorically linked to conception and childbirth in modern Maya communities."[68] Fertility and childbirth are shown throughout Maya visual culture as common female duties. These two gender roles indicate how women played a critical role in their communities through weaving and reproduction.

Women in Maya Art- Weaving and its Tools in Burial Sites

In *Ancient Maya Women*, Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett and Sharisse McCafferty demonstrate how the site of Cerén indicates that the women of Cerén were weavers, as previously thought, but this site also implies that weaving enforced social roles as evinced by the tools used.[69]

---

[65] Vail and Stone, *Ancient Maya Women*, 210-211.

[66] Vail and Stone, *Ancient Maya Women*, 205-206.

[67] Vail and Stone, *Ancient Maya Women*, 218.

[68] Vail and Stone, *Ancient Maya Women*, 219.

[69] Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett and Sharisse McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women: Spindle Whorls: Household Specialization at Cerén*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002, 55.

Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty explain that modern-day techniques, such as casting, have allowed archaeologists to unearth items with evidence of seeds and plants needed for weaving.[70] After cotton or maguey was harvested from local plants, it needed to be soaked and beaten to be transformed into a material ready to be spun and woven into a wearable garment.[71] Spinning tools found at Cerén show that women used both cotton and maguey plants to create thread, each with a different level of intensity and with specific tools for its preparation.[72] Beaudry-Corbett explains how a commoner would have transformed maguey into a weaving material by stating, "[t]ools of the female commoner related to maguey processing and included fiber, a stone for scrapping, an instrument for beating, a board on which maguey leaves were prepared for combing and cleaning fibers, and a palm leaf basket."[73] This implies that there was a hierarchical standard within weavers that determined what types of weaving materials women could use, making the distinction between common and elite women.

Common women to worked with more difficult substances than women of a higher status did, which indicates that weaving was a specialized craft, or a task dictated by Classic Maya society. If highly decorated and elaborate clothing represented a higher status and position within Maya society, the creators of these garments would have wanted to use the best tools in the preparation process. Noblewomen were not exempt from spinning and weaving, but they did get to use the best quality materials to have a better product.[74]

---

[70] Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women*, 53-55.

[71] Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women*, 53.

[72] Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women*, 53-55.

[73] Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women*, 54.

[74] Beaudry-Corbett and McCafferty, *Ancient Maya Women*, 54-55.

In the article “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record: Gender, Power, and Status in Classic Period Caracol, Belize,” (2008), Arlen F. Chase et al. show how one could interpret these tools, not just the textile products produced by them, as status symbols. The researchers explain explain that textile creations were a significant part of Maya culture because they were used in long distance trade, seen in marketplaces of other Mesoamerican cultures, and used as a “key form of tribute[75][76][77] The Classic Maya site of Caracol, with evidence of high-quality tools in the burial sites of noble women, further demonstrates that status is connoted through weaving. Chase et al. establish [78] Because of permanent materials, such as stone, documentation that noblewomen were also weavers had been used as evidence that implies that noblewomen found value in specific weaving tools. They were buried with their tools which further signify their status through weaving. [79] Burial tombs from across Mesoamerica provided important anecdotes of how the Classic and Postclassic Maya viewed weaving.

Looking specifically at the figurines from Jaina Island, we find more evidence of how weaving was a powerful and symbolic part of Maya life and death. Rosemary A. Joyce includes information from burial sites off the coast of Campeche, Mexico, on Jaina Island, that contain figures of women in a state of action while undertaking traditional female roles: cooking,

---

[75] Arlen F. Chase et al., “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record: Gender, Power, and Status in Classic Period Caracol, Belize,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 19, no. 1 (2008): 130, accessed December 15, 2021. https//www.jstor.org/stable/26309221.

[76] Chase et al., “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record,” 127.

[77] Chase et al., “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record,” 128.

[78] Chase et al., “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record,” 128.

[79] Chase et al., “Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record,” 138.

weaving, and caring for children (fig. 9 & 10).[80] Other scholars, such as Lilia Taboada, have linked Jaina figures both to Goddesses, because of the iconography associated with each figure, and to humans, because they are involved in everyday acts.[81] Joyce indicates that because "[d]epictions of weavers are particularly prominent in the western lowlands," we know that the Maya people of these regions considered the act of weaving as well as the Goddess of weaving to be crucial parts of their culture.[82] Figures nine and ten show two different seated female Jaina figures weaving on an ancient-style loom. Figure number nine is identified as using a backstrap loom. Taboada explains how a backstrap loom works: "[A] backstrap loom functions by looping one end around the hips of the weaver, with the other end attached to a tree or post. Weavers then create tension in the wrap (vertical threads) by leaning backward or forward, as they insert the weft (horizontal threads) to create cloth, used in clothing like huipils."[83] Each of these images show the women in huipiles of their own as they create new cloth, showing a cycle of creation. Elizabeth Brumfiel suggests in her article "Cloth, Gender, Continuity and Change: Fabricating Unity in Anthropology" that these weaving Jaina figures represent not Goddesses but women of a high status.[84] Brumfiel argues, "[T]he elite nature of cloth production is suggested by the Jaina figurine; the large ear flares, chunky necklace, and decorated cuffs worn by the Jaina weaver

---

[80] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*, 68.

[81] Lilia Taboada, "Exploring the Collection: Maya Then and Now | Unframed," *Unframed.Lacma.Org*, 2016, accessed December 15, 2021. https://unframed.lacma.org/2016/09/06/exploring-collection-maya-then-and-now.

[82] Joyce, *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica,* 68.

[83] Taboada, "Exploring the Collection," np.

[84] Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change: Fabricating Unity in Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 108, no. 4, 2006, 863.

mark her as elite."[85] Scholars do not all agree if the Jaina figures are of Gods or mortals, but the figures indicate that the Classic Maya considered women and their weaving essential parts of life which they presented in the afterlife.

Women in Maya Art- Weaving in Modern Maya Communities

Weaving did not lose its importance in after the Spanish conquest and still plays a role in the contemporary Maya. Currently, Southern Mexico and Guatemala, as well as other parts of ancient Mesoamerica, still have communities of Maya who practice ancestral weaving techniques and participate in traditional activities that showcase their culture. Surviving artifacts of Mesoamerica help to bridge the gap from ancient Mesoamerica to present-day Maya communities. One of these artifacts are the Jaina figurines discussed above. Miller states that the same backstrap loom seen in the Jaina figurines are "still used by many indigenous weavers of Mexico and Guatemala, dates back centuries."[86] From 1000 BCE onwards, the use of backstrap looms was one of the main ways the Maya created cloth; this changed when the Spanish introduced the fixed frame and pedal loom.[87] New inventions have also changed weaving creations, including the use of mass-produced cloth. "These days not all fabric for clothing is woven at home; many garments are created from mass-produced cloth, personalized by various kinds of ornamental addition."[88] Scholars have found that the type of garment created by the Maya changed after Spanish conquest as well. "Huipils, wrap skirts and belts are descendants of a pre-Hispanic tradition, while blouses and waisted skirts became popular after the Spanish

[85] Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change," 863.

[86] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*, 153.

[87] Orellana et al., "Textiles from Oaxaca," 81.

[88] Orellana et al., "Textiles from Oaxaca."

Conquest."[89] This evolution of Maya weaving, caused by colonialism and the inevitable mixing of cultures, has resulted in different types of garments and processes for making garments, but it has not stopped the Maya from creating them. Elizabeth Brumfiel's comparison study of weaving from ancestral Maya to present day indicated that "weaving among the Classic Maya defined class and weaving in Aztec Mexico defined gender, then weaving in 20th-century Mesoamerica defined ethnicity."[90] She claims weaving is used as a sign of ethnicity by the modern-day Maya in order to "signify their community membership and … their willingness to participate in community forms of reciprocity."[91] One example Brumfiel uses to show women's willingness to participate in their culture starts at birth. She states, "the presentation of weaving tools to a baby girl shortly after birth anticipates her willingness to sustain reciprocal relationships at both the household and community levels."[92] This focus on ethnicity and devotion to community shows how important weaving continues to be in the lives of the modern-day Maya. The fact that Maya women are still choosing to weave with ancient style looms and create similar clothing of their ancestors from thousands of years ago continues to show how women's creations of the Maya are essential to keeping their culture and traditions alive.

Maya women used the act of weaving to produce textiles and a variety of weaving patterns throughout their existence in Mesoamerica to influence different sections of their communities. By fulfilling this important role, women's work through weaving is seen in political, religious, and economical areas.

---

[89] Orellana et al., "Textiles from Oaxaca."

[90] Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change," 868.

[91] Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change," 868.

[92] Brumfiel, "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change," 868.

Methodology

Feminism in Mesoamerican Studies

Feminist studies within this research use a feminist lens to demonstrate how women's productions within Mesoamerica held significance and power within the Classic Maya. The use of a feminist methodology work to help validate women's creations, such as weaving and weaving patterns, by including them in studies of art history and visual culture.

Art historical studies from Mesoamerica also exhibited these shortcomings when it came to researching women's productions. Demonstrating that indigenous art made by women held the same value as men's art was a difficult feat because it did not get the same attention. For centuries, research has focused on topics centered around men, with women not being equal in the research but merely an afterthought.[93] Feminist studies have allowed there to be options in fields such as art history. Scholars, such as Traci Ardren, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, Rosemary A. Joyce, and Virginia E. Miller have chosen to highlight art that represents women's artistic creations or images that depict ancestral Maya women lives in narrative scenes. The inclusion of women because of feminist studies allows for a more well-rounded understanding of the Classic Maya.

The past few decades have granted access to certain arts that had not always been seen as important works, such as weaving and textiles. Halperin uses a feminist perspective to analyze the merchant class women of the Classic to Postclassic Maya to understand women's roles in cosmopolitan centers through inter-regional relations that include weaving.[94] Her study

---

[93] Halperin, "Ancient Cosmopolitanism: Feminism and the Rethinking of Maya Inter-Regional Interactions During the Late Classic to Postclassic Periods (Ca. 600–1521 CE)", pp. 349.

[94] Halperin, "Ancient Cosmopolitanism: Feminism and the Rethinking of Maya Inter-Regional Interactions During the Late Classic to Postclassic Periods (Ca. 600–1521 CE)", 349.

acknowledges that pervious scholarship of Mesoamerican cultures is typically centered on elite men, rather than commoner women.[95] As previously mentioned, traditionally accepted art included painting and sculpture, not the creation of clothing. But for Mesoamerica, weaving was so much more than just clothing. Margarita de Orellana expresses how patterns and designs are symbolic of ancestral and contemporary Maya culture and how they communicate important aspects of identity and ancestral family information.[96] The ancestral Maya are a good example of this theory because now we realize that the art of weaving was not only an important part of Mesoamerican culture, but it was also a driving force that incorporated certain political, economic, and religious areas of Maya life.

Previous studies by feminist scholars have laid the groundwork for current research on gender roles of the Classic Maya. This study is based on and follows Virginia Miller's methodology and feminist perspective to understand how common Maya highland communities, rather than the elite of the north, also highlighted women's creations by displaying weaving patterns on their buildings, as seen on structure #12 at Cerén. Miller does not argue that the elite were the only group who valued women's creations enough to have them shown on their buildings, but instead she uses the elite and their powerful buildings as an example of women's influence on the Maya. The elite were able to create buildings with permanent materials, unlike most commoners' buildings. Cerén's preservation includes weaving patterns on its architecture in a smaller scale because of their use of perishable materials. The similarities of weaving patterns on the architecture of the Classic Maya lowland elites, in Miller's study, and highland

[95] Halperin, "Ancient Cosmopolitanism: Feminism and the Rethinking of Maya Inter-Regional Interactions During the Late Classic to Postclassic Periods (Ca. 600–1521 CE)", 349.

[96] Orellana, "Textiles from Oaxaca," 81.

commoners of Cerén allows this research to be based in a previous study of visual culture to prove how structure #12 should be studied under a feminist lens.

Going forward in the study of ancestral Classic Maya women's creations, scholars need to continue to further reappreciate women's work without the lenses of androcentric studies, colonialism, and traditional art history that could have excluded women. This topic poses a major challenge to scholars, in that is does not provide a good representation of all women. Surviving artifacts, such as reliefs from royal palaces, show the kings' wives in their elaborate dress; ceramic vases have paintings of noblewomen in multi-patterned huipiles; burial sites contain the tools designated to upper class women and figurines show elite women wearing large jewelry while weaving. Common women from the Classic Maya are only studied in unique sites like Cerén. The scholarship explained above has proven that clothing and weaving were symbolic expressions and tasks of the ancestral Maya that produced images of authority in both religious and status arenas. Connections to creation, rebirth, and divine Goddesses are evident within the ancestral Maya, which imply significant prominence to keep their culture alive through creation. Women participated in politics and religion through their clothing and even chose to be buried with their weaving tools. Feminist studies grants further understanding of women's importance through the ancestral weaving examples above and the weaving patterns on architectural buildings like structure #12.

Gender Studies in Mesoamerican Studies

In addition to feminism, gender studies have also added new elements to how Mesoamerican art and visual culture should be understood. Theories that focus on representations of mixed gender in ancestral Maya and Aztec art are used by current gender studies scholars, rather than only using feminism, to think outside of a conservative narrative that

only incorporates male or female explanations.[97] Elisa C. Mandell analyzes a mural from Teotihuacan in Central Mexico to ague how the main figure in the mural who is usually labeled as the Great Goddess has more non-binary gender elements than those of a female Goddess.[98] Mandell claims that the Great Goddess does not process what is needed to fully be labeled as female because this image lacks images of its physical anatomy that would prove gender through the genitalia, breasts, or pregnant stomachs for females.[99] Ideas of non-binary gender representations in Mesoamerican art are also supported by Archaeologist, Miranda K. Stockett, who question gender theories that rely on gender binary imagery in Mesoamerican art.[100] Stockett argues that if scholars switch their focus from gender hierarchy ”towards a broader emphasis on exploring identities ...we may be better positioned to understand social norms” of Mesoamerican cultures.[101] Moreover, gender studies do have an important part to play in relation to Cerén. Mandell explains that “gender is performed” to express whether people are female,

[97] Elisa C. Mandell, “A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the "Great Goddess" Teotihuacan”. *Ancient Mesoamerica*, vol 26, no. 1, 2015, pp. 29. *Cambridge University Press (CUP)*, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0956536115000024. Accessed 27 Apr 2022.

[98] Mandell, “A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the "Great Goddess" Teotihuacan”. 29.

[99] Mandell, “A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the ”Great Goddess" Teotihuacan”. 29-30.

[100] Miranda K. Stockett, “On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica.” *World Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2005): 566. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025092. Accessed 28 Apr 2022.

[101] Miranda K. Stockett, “On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica.” 567.

male, or non-binary.[102] One example that Mandell uses is how dress can imply gender.[103] The female gendered objects that imply that the shaman at Cerén was a female are representations of gender performance through weaving at Cerén. With the information about feminist and gender studies theories in mind, this study will take both into consideration when analyzing the weaving pattern on structure #12 at Cerén.

Analysis

Weaving patterns were utilized in other ways than on woven textiles, such as the lattice pattern on structure #12 at Cerén. The lattice pattern on the windows of structure #12 can be classified as lattice patterns because they create an X-shape crosshatch pattern without any extra designs. An X-shape crosshatch motif is an understandable weaving pattern for the farming community at Cerén. Cerén was not a city of elite society members who fashioned royalty or those of the royal court. Instead, they would have created more humble weaving patterns, such as the X-shape design. Lintel 24, studied by Miller from a palace at Yaxchilán, showing Lady Xok in an elaborate huipil, offers a stark contrast to what the commoners of Cerén would have probably spun for themselves. Nevertheless, if Miller's theory of how the Maya used women's weaving powers on structures of importance is correct, Cerén architecture designs may have also reflected weaving patterns on their important structures.

Even though the patterns seen on structure #12 at Cerén are of a simplistic design compared to royal designs on palaces, Structure #12 held value to Cerén villagers. In Miller's study she indicates how weaving patterns are used on elite buildings in the Classic Maya

[102] Mandell, "A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the "Great Goddess" Teotihuacan". 30.

[103] Mandell, "A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the "Great Goddess" Teotihuacan". 30.

lowlands to show "an indication of the importance of women's labor in the political economy of the Maya of northern Yucatán."[104] The combination of an art historical perspective with archeological and anthropological findings, similar to Miller's study, demonstrates how Cerén's architecture reflects powerful leadership roles. Connections of the architectural designs of structure #12 and items found inside the structure show the linkage between gender and religious power roles among the Classic Maya. Structure #12 holds not only political but religious authority through the simple lattice pattern, indicating the power of not only the weaving pattern, made by women, but the work and authority of the female shaman herself. By further indicating that lattice patterns on buildings connect them to authority, it can be said that structure #12, belonging to the female shaman, held authority in Cerén as well.

The lattice pattern on structure #12 recalls the cross-stitch pattern of woven grass or dried palm mats seen in many Mesoamerican and contemporary Latin American items. Latin America still uses these types of woven mats, and people refer to them as *petate.* Examples of *petate* found in classic Maya burial sites signify rulership or elite status.[105] Miller writes about simple lattice pattern, saying, "[T]here is ample evidence that the 'simple lattice' represents the strand-over-strand composition of a woven reed mat, and thus has broad associations with rulership and political authority."[106] The windows of the shaman's workplace enforce influence through its

---

[104] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*,145.

[105] Thomas H. Guderjan, *The Nature of an Ancient Maya City: Resources, Interaction, and Power at Blue Creek, Belize,* Caribbean Archaeology and Ethnohistory, Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=nlebk&AN=279766&site=ehost-live, 2007, 79.

[106] Miller, *Sacred Bundles*, 146.

architectural elements that incorporate women's creations on its façade. Structure #12 was elevated in significance for simply having windows. As stated above, there are no other buildings at Cerén with windows; thus structure #12's *petate* weaving pattern may have been a sign of power to all those who witnessed this structure every day. Those who walked up to these windows to communicate and request religious divination would have noticed the *petate* weaving pattern as they spoke through the X-shaped simple lattice pattern.

Other scholars have used the findings of *petate* to determine the status of a certain location in an ancestral Maya context. Archaeologists found a *petate* mat at tomb #7 in the Maya city of Blue Creek in Northern Belize, which allowed them to decipher that the person lying on the sleeping mat was an elite member of society.[107] Another meaning of *petate* in connection to the ancestral Maya is the implication that a location with a *petate* pattern refers to where important ritual events are held.[108] Scholar Thomas H. Guderjan explains the symbol of *petate* in the form of mats by showing that the Yucatec Maya "mat house, was a place for the rulers of community to meet and perform ritual acts."[109] By connecting personal power and authority of those surrounded by *petate* patterns and locational status to places that incorporate *petate* into architecture, structure #12 and the female shaman would have held high social status and responsibility for the village of Cerén.

Recent research suggests that weaving patterns such as *petate* have continued to enforce a state of importance as Mexican artist continue to use *petate* in their art. Painted ceramics from the early twentieth century show examples of *petate*. Famous Mexican artists, labeled as Tonalá

---

[107] Guderjan, *The Nature of an Ancient Maya* City, 79.

[108] Guderjan, *The Nature of an Ancient Maya* City, 79.

[109] Guderjan, *The Nature of an Ancient Maya City*, 79.

potters, began to reestablish their native pride for their indigeneity and ancestors as they incorporated "drawings and motifs from pre-Hispanic cultures" of Mesoamerica.[110] These artists chose to fill in the empty space around painted images on clay ceramics with crisscross geometric lines to represent *petate*.[111] Redware jugs and pots produced as early as the 1920s reflect this technique.[112] Later artists and instructors coined the term *petatillo* in published drawing editorials in 1964 to explain that this design is indeed representing a *petate*.[113] It seems that weaving patterns from Mesoamerican visual culture such as *petate* hold a special importance to modern day Latin American artists as they incorporate long-established motifs first used by Mesoamerican cultures. The windows at structure #12 may have played a part in foretelling the artistic use of *petate* in modern Latin American art.

The application of a woven simple lattice design that symbolizes *petate* used both in the year 600 and 1920 C.E. on artistic creations demands attention. The fact that creators are still choosing to include X-shapes to represent *petate* from the ancestral Maya implies that this common design did not lose its worth in 1300 years. *Petate* mats and designs illustrated social status and authority in grave sites and architecture of the ancestral Maya, but it also was a familiar object to all people because they are still used as sleeping mats. The comforting

[110] Margarita de Orellana, Michelle Suderman, Lance Aaron, Gutierre Aceves Piña, Daniel C. Schechter, Rubén Páez Kano, Lenore Hoag Mulryan, Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, et al. "The Ceramics of Tlaquepaque 1920-1945." Artes de México, no. 87 (2007): 79. http://www.jsotr.org/stable/24316418.

[111] Orellana, et al., "The Ceramics of Tlaquepaque 1920-1945," 79.

[112] Orellana, et al., "The Ceramics of Tlaquepaque 1920-1945." 79.

[113] Orellana, et al., "The Ceramics of Tlaquepaque 1920-1945." 79.

household item of *petate* and objects that use its weaving design could be what still drives artists to incorporate it as *petate* presents cultural worth and authority.

Cerén is a very rare site that grants access to the lives and work of commoners of the Classic Maya. Cerén gives a unique view into a farming village from around the year 600 that would have been long destroyed by the elements had not undergone the preservation of the volcanic eruption in the early 7th century. These adobe structures are significant to the study of art history because they expose information about the commoner. Cerén's surviving structures answers question about how the Classica Maya villagers lived, grew and stored food, worshipped, in addition to other facets of their lives.

The two religious structures, structure #10 and structure #12, at Cerén are among the most symbolically and architecturally important structures of the village because they are the only structures with any decoration. Both were the only two structures to be painted in the whole village.[114] Archaeologists found white and red color pigment visible on the exterior and interior of these structures.[115] However, the two religious structures had their own separating differences concerning architectural and functional elements. Structure #10 was used as a gathering place for the villagers that held group ceremonial events.[116] In contrast, structure #12 was the workplace of the village shaman.[117] Structure #12 was also the only structure with windows, making it stand out further from the other structures at Cerén.

The architects created the windows at structure #12 were created for customers to speak through while asking the female shaman to tell their fortune or to request a blessing from her. Villagers would walk up to the north-facing window to lay down their payment in the form of an

---

[114] Sheets. *The Cerén Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, 101-112.

[115] Sheets, *The Cerén Site*, 101.

[116] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities*, 117.

[117] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities*, 116.

offering to receive the divine work of the shaman.[118] The shaman would perform the fortune telling or blessing inside the structure, out of sight of the customer.[119] While the shaman worked, the customer walked around the outside of structure #12 to the west window to wait for an answer from the shaman.[120] These two windows functioned as critical pieces to the religious service performed by the shaman, acting as barriers of religious space that separated the shaman from the villagers. The windows helped to elevate the shaman to a place of religious and social authority. All the villagers who practiced the local religion were halted and forced to remain on the outside of the windows.

The design of structure #12's windows also helped convey the structures importance and power. As explained in detail in the analysis section above, the windows displayed a crisscross X-shaped pattern which scholars have labeled as a simple lattice pattern. This pattern reflects the same pattern of a common yet prominent household item of the ancestral Maya, a woven reed mat or *petate*. The *petate* weaving pattern transforms the shaman's windows from open rectangular spaces created solely for air flow into a symbolic religious barrier of prestige. This weaving pattern symbolized power as it is often used by those in authoritative positions throughout Mesoamerica. What stands out in this study is how a female gendered creation through weaving patterns is implemented on structures of importance. Choosing to include weaving patterns gave religious and social authority to both structure #12 and the female shaman who worked within it.

Future Project Details

The information from this research will be used in a project as a presented to students and educators of higher education to equip them with current information and ideas surrounding Mesoamerican cultures with feminist studies focus. As a guest speaker I will first provide an

---

[118] Brown, Simmons and Payson Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

[119] Brown, Simmons and Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

[120] Brown, Simmons and Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

instructional overview of Mesoamerican cultures in my lesson plan as background, then speak on women in Maya art, and lastly use Cerén as a case study to illustrate my argument that women gained power and status through art as their weaving patterns were used on buildings of authority within commoner villages of the Maya. This will give educators a background of what the study of art history within Mesoamerican cultures consists of and assist them in developing diverse topics. A narrow and in-depth case study of Cerén will be beneficial in furthering students and educators' interests and understanding of women's contributions to everyday life of the ancestral Maya. Cerén exhibits how gendered roles of weaving shows the connection of female gender within religion, status, and authority through art.

A feminist study of weaving patterns seen on structures of authority and power at Cerén will be presented. Information on how Classic Maya women used visual culture to display their creations on powerful structures will be beneficial in helping to decolonize the study of the ancestral Maya in art history. According to my findings, this will be the first art-historical study of Cerén. This project will be structured with information from the Cerén case study as the most current research around the studies of gendered visual culture of the Classic Maya. Presenting educators with innovative topics of study helps to democratize education further as they will hopefully incorporate women's productions of the Classic Maya into their curriculum.

Spreading knowledge is one segment of this project that establishes a base for further research, learning, and awareness of female representation in Mesoamerican art. Accessibility to knowledge is what this project is trying to accomplish. A Story Map is a substantial item that will be used to achieve this goal of accessibility in higher education and all others who are interested in this topic. By using ArcGIS this study is assisting democratic learning to provide more accessible information to all people with internet access. The information within this

research will be accessible to the contemporary indigenous weaving community in a novel way as well, allowing them further information and connection to their ancestral past.

Workshop material will include an ArcGIS Story Map created from my research and personal visit to Cerén, El Salvador. This visual documentation will generate a lasting element from guest speaking engagements, as there will be a digitally based creation for others to use. A Story Map is an innovative way to intergrade information about women's creations of the Classic Maya by using a digital humanities tool that will be published to the public upon creation. Educators can use the Story Map within their classes by copying and pasting the provided link into their class page, such as Google Classroom or Canvas.

Gender in the Classica Maya

Research in art history that focuses on gender studies and feminism at times conveys specific need to indicate feminine power through artistic creations of varying cultures. However, with further analysis, my research has led me to believe that what is more important than presenting women's worth through their artistic creations is to give them a platform, through cognitive awareness and study, to let their creations speak for themselves. Art history as a discipline is rooted in European tradition and context that has slowly started to evolve in relation to how women are viewed in art history within the last century. The origin of not studying women and their creations stems from centuries of patriarchal societies that traditionally held men's creations and opinions higher than those of their female counterparts. Therefore, there has been the need for feminist movements over the past century and a half that demanded women's rights in democracy, the workplace, etc. Changing views on gender proves helpful when studying cultures and allows one to leave out their preconceived ideas, thoughts, or cultural

biases. As difficult as leaving behind cultural and gender preconceptions can be, it can lead to fully understanding the power behind women's creations.

Leaving out preconceived cultural and gender biases is important in the study of art history to determine women's initial purpose of their artistic productions. I agree with feminist scholars who have chosen to return to cultures that have been originally represented with a male dominated focus and offer the whole picture that includes both sexes. The scholars listed in the methodology section above are notable examples of this feminist scholarships that have brought women and their contributions front and center. Hopefully going forward, scholars can continue to work towards studying a culture without their preconceived thoughts in relation to gender and culture to allow for a more well-rounded study.

Having an open mind when studying underrepresented cultures in art history is especially important to understand representations of visual culture as these types of artistic creations do not completely fall under a black and white definition of art. The Maya and their everyday objects that signify how impactful women were through their artistic creations fall in the category of visual culture through textile creations. People outside of ancestral Maya time-period, geographical region, and civilization might not always interpret Maya creations as art but can maybe understand it as visual culture. Allowing a culture to present their creations and its motivation to a viewer who has an open mind is key in being able to grasp its meaning and cultural significance.

In addition, equality through understanding the whole culture, not just through feminism, could aid in establishing the importance of women's creations in order to effectively understand cultures that have been around for millennia. The ancestral Maya would be the perfect example of variation throughout a culture's existence because they present a type of living that has

changed so much. The evolution of traditions and modern technologies throughout the centuries has affected the way the Maya community lives today. The contemporary Maya are extremely helpful in many ways to help better understand the origins of Maya culture in terms of customs and traditions, even though they do not fully give an unbridled explanation about how the ancestral Maya conducted their lives. Differences in how the contemporary Maya have conformed from the ancestral Maya derived from centuries of colonization and cultural mixing that produced a more modern culture. The Maya's lengthy past could be best understood through the impartiality of scholars.

Cerén and the ancestral Maya offer many architectural elements, religious and political traditions, and artistic creations that could symbolize different things to different people, but the open mindedness of scholars might be what is needed to understand what was originally intended with their creations. Motifs such as weaving patterns and *petate* are prime examples of the differing symbols to showcase how women's creations entered the realm of authority. Through the creation of a common household object and everyday use of *petate* and weaving patterns came the symbol of prestige and power displayed for all to see on architecture.

Conclusion

Weaving patterns, and the *petate* weaving pattern specifically, were used on structures of authority in small villages populated by commoners in the Classic Maya lowland as indicators of women's significance and importance.

Mesoamerican art comprises architecture, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and textiles that are unique to Mesoamerica. The study of Mesoamerican culture has assisted scholars who have worked to understand and learn more about the culture that occupied Mesoamerica prior to

Spanish conquest. However, art historical research of the ancestral Maya is an underrepresented topic within art history in comparison to traditional Euro-American art. Additionally, ancestral Maya art reveals that the study of women and their artwork are even more underrepresented within art history. The reasoning for this lack in feminist studies within ancestral Maya art is an effect stemming from patriarchal systems and their academic interests that have excluded female artist creations that did not fall within the hierarchy of art which was established in European schools. This study works towards fixing the current lack of equity within art historical studies, starting with reaching educators with examples of a diverse curriculum to include ancestral Maya art that focuses on women's gender roles within Mesoamerican cultures.[121] To reduce the problem of the traditional exclusion of women's creations and influence within art history, the information in the sections above about the Classic highland Maya site of Cerén is used as a case study to reveal how women's art impacted everyday life in a Classic Maya village.

Gender roles within Mesoamerican cultures demonstrate that women of the Classic Maya were the main creators of textiles and weaving patterns. Maya art shown on palace carvings and murals demonstrate examples of how weaving and textiles raised the status for the elite members of society. Elite women are displayed in highly-decorated *huipiles* in images throughout Mesoamerica. Artifacts found in grave sites, such as the Jaina figures, indicate that upper class women did contribute to their communities through weaving. Scholars have previously studied these artistic creations and elements of visual culture to offer different arguments about the elite Maya women. Their work has been very valuable to art history, but what is now needed in the

[121] Equity is a term used to include and allow students with a broad range of backgrounds, including ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, disabilities, and socioeconomic differences access to the same resources and guidance as all other students. Equity can also include incorporating a diverse set of topics into class curriculum for students to get a wider range of learning that encompasses studies of all cultures.

study of women in the ancestral Maya is more work centered around the lower class or commoner women.

Cerén

Cerén is a very rare site that grants access to the lives and work of commoners of the Classic Maya. Cerén gives a unique view into a farming village from around the year 600 that would have been long destroyed by the elements had not undergone the preservation of the volcanic eruption in the early 7th century. These adobe structures are significant to the study of art history because they expose information about the commoner. The question of how the Classica Maya villagers lived, grew and stored food, worshipped, and more can be answered when looking at Cerén's surviving structures.

The two religious structures, structure #10 and structure #12, at Cerén are among the most symbolically and architecturally important structures of the village because they are the only structures with any decoration. Both were the only two structures to be painted in the whole village.[122] Archaeologists found white and red color pigment visible on the exterior and interior of these structures.[123] However, the two religious structures had their own separating differences concerning architectural and functional elements. Structure #10 was used as a gathering place for the villagers that held group ceremonial events.[124] In contrast, structure #12 was the workplace of

[122] Sheets. *The Cerén Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*, 101-112

[123] Sheets, *The Cerén Site*, 101.

[124] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities*, 117.

the village shaman.[125] Structure #12 was also the only structure with windows, making it stand out further from the other structures at Cerén.

The windows at structure #12 were created for customers to speak through while asking the female shaman to tell their fortune or request a blessing from her. Villagers would walk up to the north facing window to lay down their payment in the form of an offering to receive the divine work of the shaman.[126] The shaman would conduct whatever religious work was needed to perform the fortune telling or blessing inside the structure, out of sight of the customer.[127] While the shaman worked, the customer walked around the outside of structure #12 to the west window to wait for an answer from the shaman.[128] These two windows were critical pieces to the religious service performed by the shaman. They acted as barriers of religious space that separated the shaman from the villagers. The windows helped to elevate the shaman to a place of religious and social authority. All the villagers who practiced the local religion were halted and forced to remain on the outside of the windows.

In connection to the importance and power of structure #12's windows was the design on them. As explained in detail in the analysis section above, the windows displayed a crisscross X-shaped pattern which scholars have labeled as a simple lattice pattern. This pattern reflects the same pattern of a common yet prominent household item of the ancestral Maya, a woven reed mat, *petate*. The *petate* weaving pattern is what transforms the shaman's windows from open rectangular spaces created solely for air flow into a symbolic religious barrier of prestige. This

---

[125] Brown and Sheets, *Fleeting Identities*, 116.

[126] Brown, Simmons and Payson Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

[127] Brown, Simmons and Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

[128] Brown, Simmons and Sheets, *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*, 90.

weaving pattern has been found to symbolize power as it is often used by those in authoritative positions throughout Mesoamerica. What stands out in this study is how a female gendered creation through weaving patterns is implemented on structures of importance. Choosing to include weaving patterns gave religious and social authority to both structure #12 and the female shaman that worked within it.

Providing change and advancement to art history with this information the academic level is not enough. This research will only benefit education if it reaches as many people as possible. Further steps will allow this knowledge to be more accessible through innovative teaching tools.

Future Directions

Accessibility to knowledge will positively change art history as a discipline in the future. One strategy that could be effective in building diversity is to incorporate advanced technology to showcase research and its findings. Platforms such as ArcGIS and Story Maps are exceptional ways to utilize innovative technologies for learning purposes. For example, Geographic Informational Systems (GIS) has enabled educators to offer visual and engaging resources to teach varying topics.[129] Sarah Fayen Scarlett et al. argues specifically for the discipline of history that GIS "make[s] history immediately relevant and accessible and promote[s] the cultural value of history in the daily lives of students and their communities" in an article from 2019.[130] This type of learning through connection and relevance is also very important for understanding the Classic Maya. Cerén, El Salvador is a place that most people will probably never get to see with

[129] Sarah Fayen Scarlett, Don Lafreniere, Daniel J. Trepal, John D. M. Arnold, and Yichun Xie, "Out of the Classroom and Into History: Mobile Historical GIS and Community-Engaged Teaching," *The History Teacher* 53, no. 1 (2019): 11. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27058561.

[130] Scarlett, Lafreniere, Trepal, Arnold, and Xie, "Out of the Classroom and Into History," 12.

their own eyes and might never learn about. That being the case, this research could be lost at the top of academia without ever reaching the student. But GIS is able to help give access to this information about Cerén and the crucial information that was preserved by a volcanic eruption to expose how women's weaving patterns expose authority and power on their architecture.

Culture in the twenty-first century has been focused on smartphones, social media, and the more recent advances in online learning. Technologies' impact on younger generations has allowed them to live and learn by using new resources available to them through online sources. Story Maps is an interactive web map that could be used in the future to expose students to the information in this study, highlighting diverse and underrepresented cultures, such as the Classic Maya. As a digital humanities platform and resource, Story Maps has helped to reach people in innovative ways. Nicola Walshe explains how GIS is used within ArcGIS online, a website that allows people to display their own research or topic by creating a Story Map.[131] She states that "creating your own story maps is a powerful tool for engaging students in the geography of your lesson; publishing your story maps makes them accessible to students both in school and at home, so they can interact with the content in their own time."[132] The interactive qualities of Story Maps is a user-friendly program that supports learning. The use of ArcGIS Story Maps as a methodology will transform this information into a sustainable digital humanities project, allowing others to benefit from the study of women's creations at Cerén and to understand the Classic Maya in a more realistic manner through a new postcolonial lens.

---

[131] Nicola Walshe, "Using ArcGIS Online Story Maps," *Teaching Geography* 41, no. 3, 2016, 115–17, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26383226.

[132] Walshe, "Using ArcGIS Online Story Maps," 117.

In addition to my research of the Classic Maya site at Cerén, I am planning to create a project with a lasting digital element to propose change at the college level. College is typically the time when students are exposed to the latest ideas and innovative studies as they take classes in different disciplines. Current focuses on diversity within different disciplines to include ethnic and gender studies are helping to break from former Eurocentric thinking and teaching to help students understand diverse cultures, complete histories, and the world around them more. College campuses, especially diverse community colleges, are important places to include this information.

Closing Thoughts

Mesoamerica and its cultures have many noteworthy aspects of artistic creations, evident in centuries of paintings, ceramics, and architecture. Representations of Mesoamerica's visual culture help to further explain the lives and culture of groups such as the Maya. The Maya have been an underrepresented study within art history in comparison to other cultures, and women's creations within the Maya are even less studied by art historians. Nevertheless, scholarship in the recent past has worked to change the uneven representations of men and women studied within art history. This study has aimed to continue the understanding of how women's creations in the Classic Maya brought worth to their communities, specifically in villages of Classic Maya commoners. The farming village of Cerén shows how structures of great influence use visual culture. The incorporation of weaving patterns on Cerén's architecture indicates female power and authoritative status in the Classic Maya. By choosing a weaving pattern to be displayed on the only two windows in the village of Cerén, the authorities evidently praised and honored women's creations.

Images

Figure 1: View of Cerén archeological site. Front left: sauna. Middle: storeroom. Back center: residential household. Photo taken by Nicole Lazo December 2021

Figure 2: Structure #12. Female Shaman's workplace. Lattice pattern window on the right of building. Photo taken by Nicole Lazo December 2021

Figure 3: Layers of volcanic ash marked by multiple colors to show different eruptions on Cerén structure. Photo taken by Nicole Lazo December 2021.

Figure 4: Structure #12 on right and Structure #10 on left. Photo taken by Nicole Lazo December 2021.

Figure 5: K7258, A Dressing scene. The Young Corn God is dressed by naked young ladies. His sons Hunahpú and Xbalanqué. Height: 24.5 cm, Diameter: 17.5 cm, Circumference 53.7 cm. Courtesy of Justin Kerr.

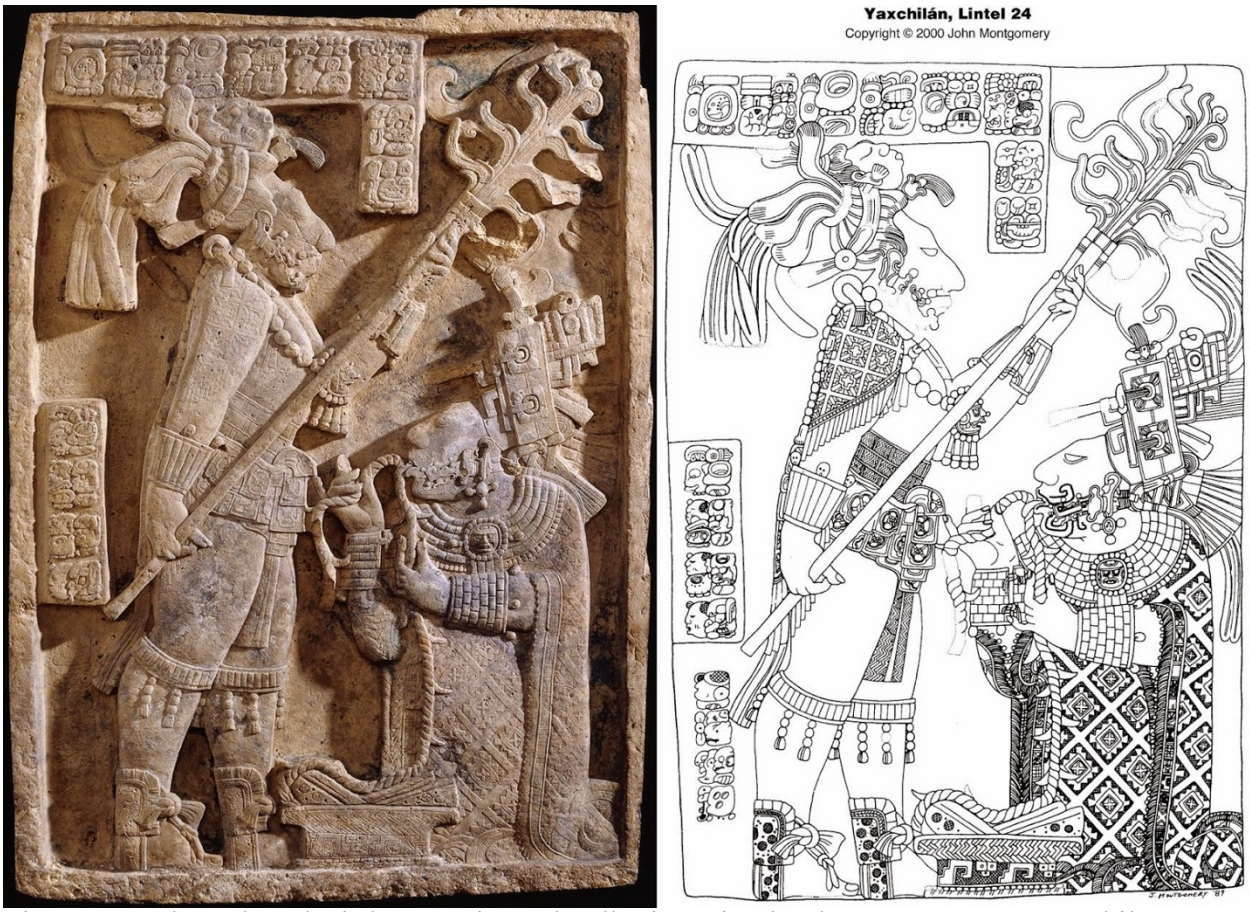

Figure 6: Lady Xok and Bird Jaguar in a Bloodletting Ritual, 8th century Maya, Yaxchilan archeological site, Chiapas, Mexico. Relief from lintel 24.

Figure 7: K764. Classic Period Maya, ceramic. King and his Royal court. Ruler being painted on the backside while looking into a mirror held by an attendant. One woman holds a mask or trophy head, and the second woman looks on. If the ruler is holding a death mask, then it is possible that the ruler is dead and being prepared for his burial. Height: 17.2 cm, Diameter: 11.7 cm, Circumference 36.6 cm. Courtesy of Justin Kerr.

Figure 8: Chak Chel from Madrid Codex 79c, Postclassic lowland Maya

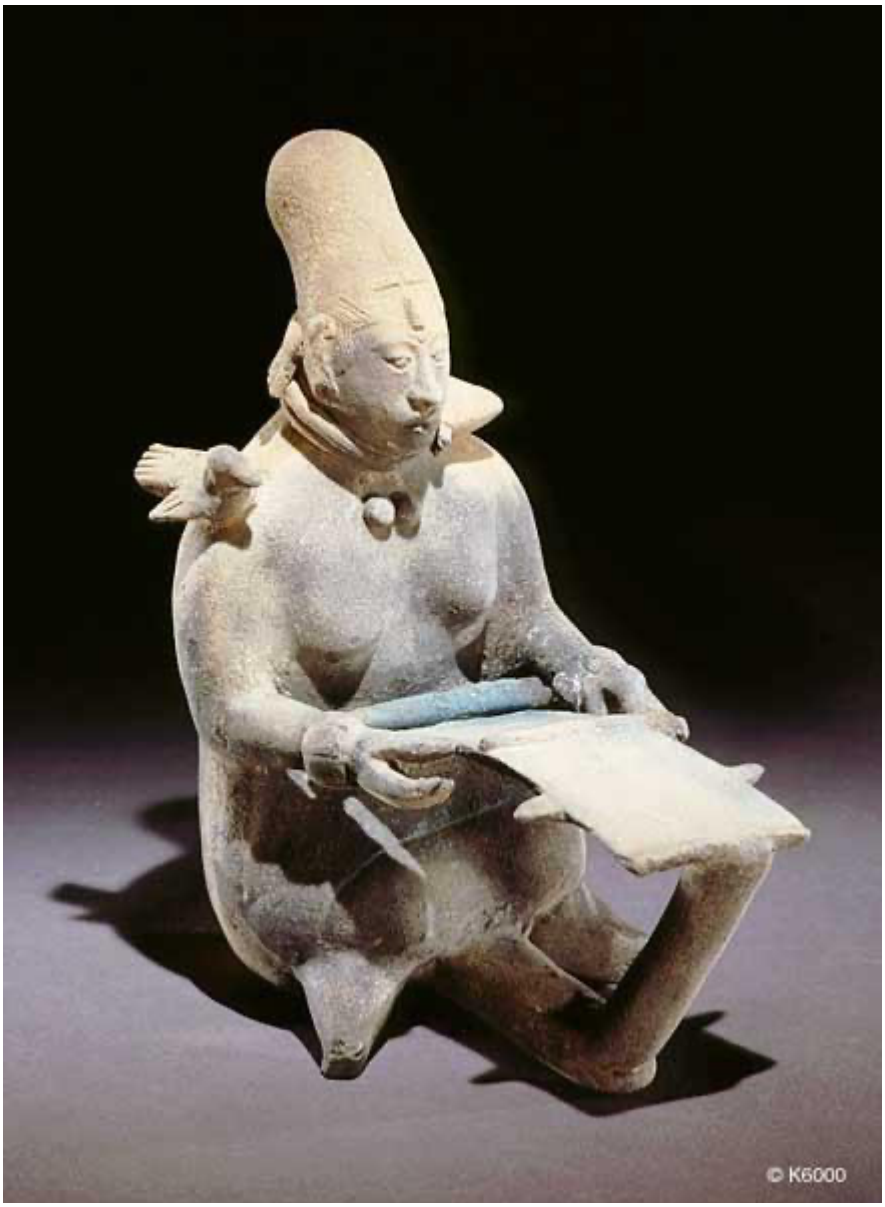

Figure 9: *Female Figure with Loom*, Mexico, Campeche, Jaina Island or vicinity, Maya, 650-850, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, anonymous gift, photograph © Justin Kerr

Figure 10: Figure of a woman weaving, AD 400-800, 9.2 x 15.9 x 15 cm, Isla Jaina (Jaina Island); Hecelchakán Municipality; Campeche State; Mexico, Collection history unknown; acquired by MAI through an exchange with the Stolper Galleries (Switzerland, owned and operated by Robert L. Stolper) in 1964. Catalog number 23/2865

Bibliography

Ardren, Traci. *Ancient Maya Women*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002.

Beaudry-Corbett, Marilyn and Sharisse McCafferty. *Ancient Maya Women: Spindle Whorls: Household Specialization at Cerén.* Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002. 52-67.

Brittenham, Claudia. "Architecture, Vision, and Ritual: Seeing Maya Lintels at Yaxchilan Structure 23." *Art Bulletin* 101, (3): 2019 8-36. doi: 10.1080/00043079.2019.1564175.

Brown, Linda A. "From Discard to Divination: Demarcating the Sacred Through the Collection and Curation of Discarded Objects." *Latin American Antiquity* 11, no. 4 (2000): 319–33. https://doi.org/10.2307/972000.

Brown, Linda A. and Payson Sheets. *Fleeting Identities: Perishable Material Culture in Archeological Research*. Center For Archeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, 2001, pp. 114-134.

Brown, Linda A., Scott E. Simmons and Payson Sheets. *Domestic Ritual in Ancient Mesoamerica*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archeology, 2002, pp. 83-92.

Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. "Cloth, Gender, Continuity, and Change: Fabricating Unity in Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 108 no. 4 (2006): 862–877.

Centre, UNESCO. "Joya De Cerén Archaeological Site". Whc.Unesco.Org, 2022, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/675.

Chase, Arlen F, Diane Z. Chase, Elayne Zorn, Wendy Teeter. "Textiles and the Maya Archeological Record: Gender, Power, and Status in Classic Period Caracol, Belize." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 19 no. 1 (2008): 127–142. Accessed December 15, 2021. https//www.jstor.org/stable/26309221.

Coe, Michael D, and Stephen D Houston. *The Maya*, ninth edition. Thames & Hudson, 2015.

Deuss, Krystyna. *Shamans, Witches, and Maya Priests: Native Religion and Ritual in Highland Guatemala*, Guatemalan Maya Centre, 2007

Guderjan, Thomas H. 2007. *The Nature of an Ancient Maya City: Resources, Interaction, and Power at Blue Creek, Belize*. Caribbean Archaeology and Ethnohistory. Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=nlebk&AN=279766&site=ehost-live.

Halperin, Christina T. "Ancient Cosmopolitanism: Feminism And The Rethinking Of Maya Inter-Regional Interactions During The Late Classic To Postclassic Periods (Ca. 600–1521 CE)". *Journal Of Social Archaeology*, vol 17, no. 3, 2017, pp. 349-375. *SAGE Publications*, https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605317730628. Accessed 27 Apr 2022.

J. Kathryn Josserand. *Ancient Maya Women: Women in Classic Maya Hieroglyphic Texts.* Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002, 134.

Joyce, Rosemary A. *Gender and Power in Prehispanic Mesoamerica*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

Mandell, Elisa C. "A New Analysis of the Gender Attribution of the "Great Goddess" Teotihuacan". *Ancient Mesoamerica*, vol 26, no. 1, 2015, pp. 29-49. *Cambridge University Press (CUP)*, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0956536115000024. Accessed 27 Apr 2022.

Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube. *Chronicle Of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of The Ancient Maya*, second edition. Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2008.

Miller, Virginia E. *Sacred Bundles: Ritual Acts of Wrapping and Binding In Mesoamerica-Textile Designs in The Sculptured Facades of Northern Maya Architecture*. Barnardsville, N.C.: Boundary End Archeology Research Center, 2006.

Orellana, Margarita de, Susan Briante, Ruth Lechuga, Lorna Scott Fox, Irmgard Weitlaner Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Alejandro de Ávila, et al. "Textiles From Oaxaca." Artes de México, no. 35 (2000): 81–96. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24326687.

Orellana, Margarita de, Michelle Suderman, Lance Aaron, Gutierre Aceves Piña, Daniel C. Schechter, Rubén Páez Kano, Lenore Hoag Mulryan, Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, et al. "The Ceramics of Tlaquepaque 1920-1945." Artes de México, no. 87 (2007): 75-96. http://www.jsotr.org/stable/24316418.

Palka, Joel W. *The A to Z of Ancient Mesoamerica*. The A to Z Guide Series. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2010. Accessed November 7, 2021. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=nlebk&AN=550004&site=ehost-live.

Paxton, Merideth, Leticia Staines Cicero. *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica: Pre-Hispanic Paintings from Three Regions*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=nlebk&AN=1532128&site=ehost-live.

Scarlett, Sarah Fayen, Don Lafreniere, Daniel J. Trepal, John D. M. Arnold, and Yichun Xie. "Out of the Classroom and Into History: Mobile Historical GIS and Community-Engaged Teaching." *The History Teacher* 53, no. 1, 2019, 11–35. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27058561.

Sheets, Payson. *The Ceren Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2006, pp.101-112.

Sheets, Payson. *Before the Volcano Erupted: The Ancient Cerén Village in Central America*. Austin: University of Texas, 2022.

Stockett, Miranda K. "On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica." *World Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2005): 566–78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025092. Accessed 28 Apr 2022.

Taboada, Lilia. "Exploring The Collection: Maya Then and Now | Unframed". *Unframed.Lacma.Org*, 2016, accessed December 15, 2021. https://unframed.lacma.org/2016/09/06/exploring-collection-maya-then-and-now.

Vail, Gabrielle, and Andrea Stone. *Ancient Maya Women: Representations of Women in Postclassic and Colonial Maya Literature and Art.* Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002. 203-228.

"Visual Culture." Brown. Edu, 2022. https://www.brown.edu/Department/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/artinantiquity/7158.html.

Walshe, Nicola. "Using ArcGIS Online Story Maps." *Teaching Geography* 41, no. 3 ,2016, 115–17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26383226.