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Epilogue

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The annual solar cycle of the *veintenas*, composed of eighteen "months" of twenty days, to which five days were added, was an elaborate ritual construction. Each of the "months" was designated by one or more names, included a succession of complex rites, and mobilized a number of social groups in the sweeping ritual landscape of the Valley of Mexico. As the editors of this volume pointed out in the section of the introduction entitled "150 years of research on the *veintenas*," this cycle has been a controversial topic debated by historians of religion and anthropologists since the late nineteenth century, spawning both academic disputes and significant advances. Therefore, it is worth reassessing this history to offer a general panorama of its current status, because any researcher who approaches the subject should be aware of its extensive bibliography and the principal theoretical underpinnings.

On the other hand, the fact that 150 years of research have not been sufficient to elucidate the principles underlying the foundations of the *veintenas* shows we should not expect a simple explanation. Therefore, we cannot assume this volume will definitively resolve all the questions concerning this ritual cycle. So, what can we realistically expect from it? The very act of having brought together a diverse group of scholars and their contributions on the *veintenas* is of special interest, for it highlights what subjects are currently given priority and what questions are raised as a result of progress made in the disciplines of anthropology and ethnohistory. In other words, it should come as no surprise that certain lines of thought or inquiry arise from reading this volume. Stemming from this exercise, I have identified three of them.

The semantics of ritual acts. In the first place, the interest on the part of several contributors in ritual acts performed during the annual cycle drew my attention, particularly for their desire to understand the rituals from an *emic* perspective. We know this neologism was coined by linguist Kenneth L. Pike (1954–60), who contrasted *phonemics*, a subjective way of understanding the sounds in languages, with *phonetics*, which refers to the objective study of these sounds. Since that time, anthropologists have called their approach *emic* when they attempt to understand how diverse people thought about, categorized, and imagined the world. As Loïc Vauzelle has pointed out, this focus is congruent with that of historians who study their subject from within, in particular the branch of historical research known as the "history of representations" (Vauzelle 2018, 40–41). Given the importance of this type of study worldwide, unsurprisingly most of the contributors to this volume make an effort to shed light on the significance of the rites for their participants. Some examine flaying (Mazzetto), others the production and use of amaranth figurines (Schwaller), and the relationship between dance and sacrifice (Danilović): what does it mean to sacrifice, flay, and wear the skin of a god-impersonator, known as *ixiptla* in Nahuatl? Why make effigies with amaranth dough, ritually killing them and eating them? Why do the sacrificed victims die dancing? Why do the priests don the victims' skin or hold the decapitated heads by the hair and what is the significance of their dance? Another subject that has received little attention to date relates to conceptions and practices of the priesthood (Peperstraete): what were the different types of priests and what ritual practices were they responsible for? Others (Rodríguez, Cortiña, and Valiñas) question linguistic categories and analyze the terms used in Nahuatl to describe ritual acts.

The actors, objects, actions, and terms to name them: herein lies an entire semantics that we must parse to understand the constitution of the *veintena* ritual system. But, this is particularly difficult because these acts and objects are polysemous, in other words, their meanings differ depending on the context. Many researchers have demonstrated that a single ritual act can have numerous meanings. Some examples are Michel Graulich (2005) and Claude-François Baudez (2012) on bloodletting, Yólotl González Torres (1985) on the use of the skin of flayed individuals, Danièle Dehouve (2010) on the animals sacrificed, and Vauzelle (2018) on the materials utilized to make the gods' ornaments.

The structural principles of the rituals. One contributor, Johannes Neurath, stands out for his enumeration of the particular features of the ritual space. He applies various general principles to certain rituals of the contemporary Huichol and the Ochpaniztli *veintena*: the ritual is a transformer of ontology because its participants change their identity and become true ancestors or gods; the ritual expresses and condenses contradictory social relations; it involves ambiguous divinities and contradictory actions (such as alliance and depredation), so the key concept of ritual analysis is, in his opinion, antagonistic identification. Because Neurath looks

for the general properties of ritual, his perspectives clearly stand apart from the semantic concerns discussed above.

Myths and rites. The third approach chosen by the contributors is to probe the relationship of the rites to myths: the rituals would thus be re-enactments of mythical episodes (Olivier, Dupey García). The idea is not new and many scholars who have studied the *veintenas* have helped to establish connections between myths and rites. In this regard, we should mention the re-creation of the myth of the birth of Huitzilopochtli during the festival of Panquetzaliztli, initially highlighted by Eduard Seler (Seler and Seler-Sachs 1902–23). Later, Karl Nowotny (1968) established a list of correspondences between myths and rites. Some scholars have demonstrated other ties: for instance, Johanna Broda (1971, 275) between the myth of Quetzalxoch—which relates the transference of power from the Toltecs to the Aztecs—and the sacrifice of children in Atlcahualo, and Pedro Carrasco (1979, 54) between the sacrifice of dogs to the Sun and Atemoztli.

Of course, Graulich (in his diverse works) is known for having particularly explored the relationship between myths and rites. Following in his footsteps, researchers have continued to make new connections, such as Guilhem Olivier (2003, 386–88) for whom the celebration of Toxcatl speaks of the origin of music and Élodie Dupey García (2013) who discovers the myth of the creation of flowers in the Tlacaxipehualiztli, Tozoztontli, and Ochpaniztli *veintenas*. The contributions of Olivier and Dupey García in this volume are presented as a continuation of this focus, which although classic, has not yet exhausted its interpretational possibilities.

Finally, in this volume we find two comparisons with the Maya world (Chinchilla Mazariegos, Vail) and two chapters on the evolution of the *veintenas* after the conquest (Botta, Rovira-Morgado). The extremely rich totality makes it possible to trace paths and to formulate premises. Indeed, we should not forget we have yet to discover the fundamental principles that have permitted the overall construction of the cycle of the *veintenas* as a whole and that still elude us. Below I will propose two hypotheses that came to my mind when I read this volume, which could become perspectives for future research. However, in order to consolidate these hypotheses, it will be necessary to base them on *emic* conceptions that will have to be revealed in rituals and myths.

BIRTH AND CREATION

It is interesting to observe how the birth of the gods and cyclic renovation are the common thread in a number of contributions. In the first place, the two Mayanists (Chinchilla Mazariegos, Vail) repeatedly refer to birth (that of the Maize God, for the former) and to renovation (of temples, for the latter). The benefits of

comparison are evident here, because their chapters offer a new way of looking at the data for Central Mexico, as seen below.

Similarly, Olivier chooses to address the subject of the birth of the gods: in Ochpaniztli (for the birth of the Maize God), Teotl Eco (for the birth of all the gods), Quecholli and Panquetzaliztli (for the generation and birth of Huitzilopochtli). In turn, Dupey García speaks of the birth of Quetzalcoatl, a god involved in the origin of the other deities and the transition from one cosmic era to the next. Finally, various contributors have developed their reflections on ritual acts that might have been conceived of, on an *emic* level, as a birth or a ritual manipulation that enacts a birth. This is the case of the creation of amaranth effigies (Olivier, Schwaller) and of the rituals involving skin-wearing (Mazzetto, Danilović). Can the production of the effigy be conceived as the birth of the god? Can conceiving the act of dressing in a victim's skin be regarded as the god's rebirth?

Let's consider first the amaranth effigies discussed in this volume by Olivier and John Schwaller, and the subject of detailed scholarship (Bassett 2015; Mazzetto 2015, 2017; Reyes Equiguas 2005). These studies present the list of festivals when figures of amaranth dough were made (Mazzetto 2015, 410; Reyes Equiguas 2005, 109–44) as follows: the effigy of Huitzilopochtli in Toxcatl and of Tezcatlipoca and Tlacahuepan Cuexcotzin in Panquetzaliztli; of mountains and rain gods in Tepeilhuitl and Atemoztli; of Chicomecoatl in Huey Tozoztli; of *xocotl* in the shape of a bird, which perhaps represented Otontecuhtli, in Xocotl Huetzi, and of Xiuhtecuhtli in Izcalli. In addition to these effigies related to the *veintenas*, we might mention the production of the dough figurine of the goddess Tzapotlatena by the vendors of *oxitl* (an unguent made of turpentine), and that of Ome Acatl (2-Reed) during the renewal of the New Fire every fifty-two years.

Sixteenth-century sources are probably incomplete regarding the occasions when amaranth effigies were made and are not particularly detailed concerning their use in rituals. We have a fair understanding of the stages in their manufacture (studied here by Schwaller, and by Mazzetto 2017) and we know they were made to be destroyed. However, the significance of these two successive stages—their manufacture and then their destruction—is not well understood. As Olivier explains (this volume), the making of the dough figurine of Huitzilopochtli was conceived as the birth of the divinity it represented and personified. The use of the Nahuatl term *tlacati* (to be born) clearly shows the manufacture of the figurine was seen as a birth; the very god "had been born" at the end of the festival. But then, why did the ritual plan to sacrifice, dismember, and consume the effigy before the start of the following month? Olivier (this volume) points out the paradox for the celebration of Panquetzaliztli: "Instead of emphasizing the birth of the god, [the] sources insist on the ritual death of Huitzilopochtli through … a statue of the god made of amaranth dough and seeds."

I think that Chinchilla Mazariegos (this volume) offers an interpretation that can be amply applied to the sacrifices of gods in the *veintenas*. Concerning the sacrifice of the human impersonator of Tezcatlipoca in Toxcatl, he writes: "… the sacrifice at Tlacochcalco was immediately followed by the selection of a new impersonator that would embody Tezcatlipoca during the following year (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 2: 66). Arguably, this stage of the ritual amounted to a rebirth of the god …" The death and rebirth of Tezcatlipoca, enacted in this way, would constitute a ritual act comparable to the "Maize God's death and rebirth, known from artistic representations in Classic Maya ceramics."

To more broadly apply this reasoning, first we should bear in mind what we know about the god impersonators called *ixiptla*. As demonstrated by various scholars (Bassett 2015; Dehouve 2016; Hvidtfeldt 1958; López Luján and Chávez Balderas 2010), the gods were embodied in different forms, from human impersonators—priests or sacrificial victims—to stone or wood effigies and edible amaranth figures. In the case of Toxcatl, the human impersonator of Tezcatlipoca was chosen at the end of the festival; after having played the role of the god for a year, he was wed and sacrificed. So, the ritual was cyclic and every year a new *ixiptla* took the place of the impersonator who had just been sacrificed. Chinchilla's explanation in terms of annual rebirth is, therefore, compelling.

Turning to the *ixiptla* of Huitzilopochtli in the "month" of Panquetzaliztli, at the end of the festival a young man called Yopoch, attended by a group of youths, was chosen to be dedicated for a year to the veneration of Huitzilopochtli; it would be his responsibility to carry out severe, ongoing penitence until the next Panquetzaliztli (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 3: 1–5). At that time, a dough figurine representing Huitzilopochtli was made to be bathed, sacrificed, dismembered and ceremoniously divided amongst Motecuhzoma, the district leaders, and Yopoch's assistants, who were called "the eaters of the gods" (*teoquaque*). After taking the statue of the god to the temple summit, the group of young men was freed from their obligations and those who were to take their place were designated. The cyclic ritual of Panquetzaliztli, with an annual impersonator (Yopoch, flanked by various assistants) chosen after the festival, followed the same pattern as that of Toxcatl; the difference was that, in Toxcatl, the human *ixiptla* was sacrificed in person. Expanding on Chinchilla's analysis of Toxcatl, I would suggest that the two cycles, Toxcatl and Panquetzaliztli, were seen as an annual renewal of the god.

Let us now focus on applying the hypothesis of the god's rebirth to other rituals with impersonators. The first point to be considered is the dance with the victims' flayed skin—performed during the celebrations of Tlacaxipehualiztli, Tecuilhuitontli, Ochpaniztli, and Izcalli—which Danilović analyzes in this volume. In Tlacaxipehualiztli, the fresh skin of the victims flayed during this *veintena* was worn by warriors or their representatives. In Tecuilhuitontli, priests sacrificed the *ixiptla* of Xochipilli and donned his skin. In Ochpaniztli, the impersonators of

Atlatonan, Chicomecoatl, and Toci were sacrificed and flayed; a number of priests dressed in their skin. Finally, in Izcalli, two women were flayed in the upper part of the temple of Cuauhtitlan, a town near Tenochtitlan, and their skin was worn during a dance.

Danilović is interested in the skin-wearing dance to show the overlap between dance and sacrifice. For her part, Bassett (2015, 181) reflected on the role of skin in the embodiment of the god (*teotl*): "when a ritual actor donned the flayed skin of a sacrificial victim or the attire of a *teotl*, that person underwent a major ontological transformation from human to deity embodiment." Of course, it should be added that the act of wearing skin was a highly polysemous ritual expression (González Torres 1985, 274–75, cited by Mazzetto, this volume).

Without going into such a complex analysis, here the key point seems to be that transferring a victim's skin to the body of a warrior or priest gave new life to it and could be considered a rebirth and a renewal of the god. In fact, a first *ixiptla* (the sacrificial victim) was replaced by a second one (the skin's wearer), who acted in accord with the nature of the god represented, generally in mock combats. In the case of Ochpaniztli, the skin of the first sacrificed *ixiptla* of the goddess Toci was worn by a priest, who in turn was transformed into the active *ixiptla* of Toci; then, on the second-to-last day of the festival, the skin was removed and placed onto a frame of wood at Tocititlan (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 2: 120–25), where it was to remain on display for the rest of the year until the celebration of the next festival. Thus, transferring the skin from one support to another might have been considered an act of renovation that took place in accord with an annual cycle, in the same way as the manipulation of the dough figurines described above.

Olivier (this volume) analyzes other ritual acts, such as births. In his purview, the *veintena* of Teotl Eco, whose name means "The God Arrives" or "The Gods Arrive," represents the birth of the gods or the arrival of the gods on earth. His arguments are linguistic (it was said "they descend," *temo*, a verb that also means "to be born") and mythological (because the festival was celebrated after that of Ochpaniztli, when Toci-Teteo Innan, the Mother of the Gods, was impregnated). Olivier concludes that, "This arrival of the gods can be equated to a birth." The same author, following Graulich, analyzes some of the rituals of Ochpaniztli, such as the representation of the conception and then the birth of the Maize God. He also sees in Quecholli the celebration of the generation of Huitzilopochtli and, in the next festival, Panquetzaliztli, that of his birth. Therefore, he suggests that the re-enactment of the birth of a god is expressed in three different festivals by the representation of his conception followed by his birth.

If these observations are correct, the birth of a god could be ritually represented in different ways: by sacrificing a human *ixiptla* or a dough figurine included in a cycle that encompassed the annual succession of impersonators; by flaying a human *ixiptla* followed by the transfer of the skin to successive human or wood

supports, also included in an annual cycle; by the complex staging of the arrival of all the gods, or by the conception followed by the birth of some of them. I believe there were different ways of representing birth, which made it possible to repeat the same idea in different ways and on many occasions.

Maurice Godelier (2013, 420–26) has demonstrated that, given that the biological processes of conception and birth were not directly accessible for factual observation, societies had to develop interpretations and explanations that were imaginary to explain the process of making a child. Godelier distinguishes two of them in Oceania. On the one hand, among the Baruyas, descent is carried out by means of two agents: men (through sperm) and the Sun that gives the fetus human form. This representation is coherent with the patrilineal principle that structures their social relations. On the other hand, in the Trobriand Islands, where descent is matrilineal, the child is the product of an ancestor of the mother's clan who comes back to life in the body of a woman of her clan when mixing with her menstrual blood. These examples show how representations of conception and birth are cultural and social. Therefore, it is important to explore how the Mesoamerican imaginary represented these processes, because it would be an error to take it for granted. Myths and rites provide multiple versions, associated with notions of creation and renovation. A recent article by Patrick Johansson (2017) offers a timely discussion of this matter.

Considering only the few elements from the rituals of the *veintenas*, we see birth was represented in various ways.

- The model of "conception-birth" was expressed through the re-enactment of myths personified by the progenitors and their descendants. In this category, we find the union of Huitzilopochtli's parents in Quecholli, followed by the birth of their offspring in Panquetzaliztli, and the fertilization of the Earth Goddess Toci by the Mexica patron god in Ochpaniztli, from whom Cinteotl-Itztlacoliuhqui, the god of maize and frost, was born (according to Olivier's interpretation, this volume).
- The "descent-birth" model was expressed in the descent-arrival of the gods in Teotl Eco (according to Olivier's interpretation, this volume). Birth was thus seen as a descent.
- The cyclic model of renewal was expressed through the manipulation of impersonators or *ixiptla* in the form of dough figurines or through the act of wearing skin. Unlike the cases described earlier, this model was not based on a specific moment in the process of making the child, but rather in the death-rebirth cycle.
- Finally, another cyclic model was expressed in the process of making the dough figurine. In fact, shaping the figurine was conceived of as creating a living being based on its bones. We know (Schwaller, this volume; Mazzetto 2017) that dough figurines were made on wood frames and then were covered with

a dough made of amaranth and agave syrup. Reyes Equiguas (2005, 112–13) demonstrated how this process reproduced the mythical sequence of the birth of Huitzilopochtli, who was born "without flesh, only with bones" ("Historia de los Mexicanos por sus Pinturas" 1965, 23–24). This model, which can be described as mythical, is also found in diverse narratives of the creation of humanity, according to which Quetzalcoatl modeled the first human body from one or more bones (Brotherston 1994). Therefore, it is also based on the death-rebirth cycle.

These observations show that it would be worth distinguishing with greater precision between notions of birth, rebirth, creation, and renewal. Be that as it may, one can raise the question of why rituals repeatedly represented them or referred to them. For a greater understanding, it would probably be necessary to trace homologies between the human biological cycle and other natural cycles. The most important of these natural cycles is the course of the Sun, born at dawn, reaching its zenith to then wane and die at sunset. The maize cycle also includes the birth of the ear of corn, its destruction and its rebirth in the following generation. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the gods themselves follow a death-renewal cycle designed to reflect these natural cycles.

In the section of the *Florentine Codex* devoted to ritual speech and discourse (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 6), a series of verbs in Nahuatl expresses the emergence of a new being at the beginning of its development cycle. The list includes: childbirth, hatching of a bird, flower blossoming, sunrise, lighting of fire, lighting of a torch, and jewel drilling (for example, Sahagún 1950–82, bk 6: 17, 32). We find human birth (childbirth), animal birth (hatching of a bird), plant birth (flower blossoming), and dawn conceived as an image of these births (sunrise). It also includes the drilling of new fire, an act of prime importance in rituals of foundation and cyclic renewal (*cf.* Dehouve 2018) and its consequences: lighting of fire, lighting of a torch. Finally, drilling precious stone is included on this list for two reasons. The drilling operation carried out through rotating a cane to produce friction is the same when it comes to lighting a fire and to perforate a stone to make a jewel. This series of births is valuable for taking into account Mesoamerican representations of birth. However, of even greater interest is the context in which it was used. In fact, it served to describe the enthronement of a new sovereign (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 6: 17) and the purification of guilty individuals (Sahagún 1950–82, bk 6: 32). The notion of birth thus made it possible to represent a successful activity, as well as the cyclic purification of this activity, since to be young is to be pure.

If these hypotheses are correct, it could mean that the processes of birth and renewal were not dispersed elements in the construction of the cycle of the *veintenas*, but rather fundamental aspects providing a key to reading and ordering that should be examined systematically in the future, which would be consistent

with the demonstration of Gabrielle Vail (this volume), for whom renovation and renewal were at the core of Maya *veintena* celebrations.

LAYERS OF MEANING AND MULTITEMPORALITY

The following lines were inspired principally by reading the chapter by Dupey García (this volume). They address the fact that each of the *veintenas* contains a plurality of meanings—which might seem obvious—but above all a plurality of *types* of meanings—which gives rise to reflection. To show how these meanings could belong to different categories, I will briefly review the example of the festival of Etzalcualiztli.

- The agricultural rite. Following Broda, the celebration has been regarded as a group of farming rites by various scholars. According to Broda (2004, 45–47), Etzalcualiztli occurred at the start of the rainy season. It marked the end of the irrigation cycle and the start of the rainy cycle in Tenochtitlan, as shown by the combined use of the food of *etzalli* (maize with boiled beans) from the irrigation cycle and the green *milpas* (cornfields) that began to grow in newly sowed fields. I share the idea that Etzalcualiztli had a function related to the agricultural cycle (Dehouve 2008, 29–30). Based on a comparison with the festival celebrated by the Tlapanecs of Guerrero at the end of May and early June, I proposed that this celebration marked the transition between two cycles of corn agriculture. The maize boiled and combined with beans consumed by the Tlapanecs came from the earlier harvest, whereas the planting of new maize had just taken place.
- The myth of maize stolen at Tonacatepetl. According to Alfredo López Austin and Leonardo López Luján (2004), various episodes of Etzalcualiztli enact the myth described in the *Leyenda de los Soles*, according to which the Tlaloque gods stole maize of four colors and other foodstuffs from the "Mountain of Our Sustenance," Tonacatepetl, where they were stored ("Leyenda de los Soles" 2002, 181).
- The myth of the end of the Sun of Water. We know that, for the Mexica, prior to their era known as Nahui Ollin (Sun of Movement), there were four successive eras known as the "Four Suns" (Suns of Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water) that ended in cataclysms. The goddess Chalchiuhtlicue presided over the Sun of Water, destroyed by a cataclysmic flood, a myth that the festival of Etzalcualiztli would have commemorated (Dupey García, this volume). This interpretation is particularly credible, for it does not arise solely from scholarly analysis, but is also mentioned in a sixteenth-century document: "They made the festival to

this god [Tlaloc] in memory of when the world was destroyed by water" (*Códice Vaticano A*, 1996, fol. 45r, cited by Dupey García, this volume).

I am aware that these interpretations are not unanimously accepted by researchers. The first of them (Broda) differs from that of Graulich, who, based on his theory of the time lag between the duration of the vague Mexica year and the tropical year, thinks that Etzalcualiztli took place in the dry season. As for the second interpretation (López Austin and López Luján), Graulich believes the myth of stealing maize would have been commemorated during another *veintena*, Ochpaniztli (Mazzetto 2015, 108). However, what interests me here is to point out that these interpretations allude to different temporalities: an agricultural ritual celebrated to promote corn harvests in the future, a myth of the origin of maize, and the cosmological myth of the collapse of an earlier era. Independently of the specific debates that have arisen, I am profoundly convinced that a *veintena* articulated various types of meanings of a ritual and mythical character.

What are the methodological tools that can help us understand this situation? In my opinion, these are the hermeneutical levels or layers of meaning. Hermeneutics is a branch of the theory of discourse that seeks the interpretation and analysis of underlying layers of meaning that exceed the literal and obvious signification. Its tradition, which dates back to the exegesis of sacred texts in the religions of the Bible, was introduced in semiotics by Umberto Eco (1962). This author determined five levels of interpretation on which the Exodus episode could be read: the literal level, the moral level, the allegorical level, the mystical level, and the analogical level (Angenot 2011, 268). The method can be extended to the analysis of images (*ibid.*), art expressions, and ritual. To apply it to the case of Etzalcualiztli, we will say that the rite, the origin of maize myth, and the myth of the collapse of an earlier era constitute three layers of meaning. Of course, the list of hermeneutical levels is not closed and further research can reveal others.

In this case the layers of meaning also represent different temporalities. The first is the temporality of the agricultural ritual, which traces a connection between the ceremonies of the festival and the growth of maize in the following months; the second is the myth of the origin of maize; the third layer of meaning also refers to mythical time, but this has a cosmic dimension absent in the preceding layer. It seems to me that until now scholars have not considered that the simultaneous presence of several of these temporalities within the same *veintena* might be an intrinsic characteristic of the annual ritual cycle.

This preamble brings me to the hypotheses presented by Dupey García (this volume). Some experts who preceded her sought to associate a *veintena* with a myth in an "absolute correspondence between the festival sequence and the chronology of the mythical episodes," a correspondence that Dupey García questions, following in the footsteps of Alfredo López Austin. Indeed, this scholar

has stressed the dynamic relationship between myths and rituals and posited that the latter cannot be seen as mere and uninterrupted re-enactments of the former, but instead as pieces with proper functions and structures that sometimes recall the mythology for their actions, protagonists, and metaphorical meanings (López Austin 1998: 110–19; López Austin and López Luján 2004, cited by Dupey García, this volume). In turn, Dupey García's analysis of the role of Quetzalcoatl in the celebration of Huey Tecuilhuitl leads her to postulate that "a same mythical story could be evoked in diverse ritual contexts, which emphasized different aspects of a myth. Likewise, all the parts of a mythical narrative were not necessarily performed together in a particular festival; rather they may appear in different moments of the ritual sequence" (Dupey García, this volume). These observations pave the way for new paths of research on the relationship between myths and rites. In the first place, they invite us to explore the notion of myth to clarify what is understood by "myth," "mythical story," and "mythical motif." Furthermore, it has often been thought that myths refer to a temporality referred to as "mythical time." The preceding lines show that this expression is not specific enough, because myths refer to different cosmic eras that can overlap and constitute multiple layers of meaning.

In conclusion, after 150 years of research, whose principal lines of inquiry have been cited by the editors of this book, its contributors offer new analyses, above all on the meanings of a series of ritual acts. In this way, they show that we must not give up our efforts to elucidate the principles that govern the construction of the *veintena* cycle by Mesoamerican societies and to achieve this, to seek new lines of exploration that can be channeled in a true research program.

NOTES

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