L. Czarnecki

CHA'A'CHÁAK IN HUHÍ AT THE YUCATAN PENINSULA

The objective of this article is to analyze the *cha'a'cháak* – an agricultural ceremony at the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. The *cha'a'cháak* is considered for some as the veneration of the “supposed” or “invisible” divinity stemming from the Mayan ancient times. It shows the special ritual of the Mayans on the *milpa*, a cropping field. Religious practices were intrinsically related to agricultural life, especially honoring the Rain God (*Chac Mool*). The fruits of sowing and harvesting in the *milpa* depended on rain. Hence, the henequen agroindustry attracted development in the region, activity for the farmers and indirectly also the support of the practices of religious ceremonies. However, nowadays the agroindustrial development of henequen disappears in Yucatan and the *cha'a'cháak* ceremony also gets disappeared.

Keywords: *cha'a'cháak*, henequen agroindustry, Yucatán, Mexico

For Hilaria Máas Colli, my Mayan language teacher, with gratitude

Introduction

Why does the agricultural ceremony called *cha'a'cháak* in Yucatán disappear? It is the question of this research that revolves around the problems of development in Yucatan, and more specifically of Huhí. This town was marked by the boom of the henequen¹ agroindustry in the XIX century. Moreover, the important festivities were developed until the complete disappearance of the *milpa* and the religious practice. In the XIX century, the festivities and fairs in the town of Huhí, in addition to its religious dimension to venerate Saint Peter, were also samples of the abundance and wealth of the region where railways full of wagons with bales of henequen crossed.

However, before entering the *cha'a'cháak* in Huhí, it is necessary to reflect on shamanism, its origin among the Asian peoples of Siberia. What is the role of the shaman in the Mayan religious ceremony? This question will help to understand the meaning of the *cha'a'cháak* and its theoretical contribution in the study of shamanism in this essay which is divided into four parts: 1) Shamanism at the Yucatan peninsula, 2) Joyful festivals in Huhí, and 3) *Cha'a'cháak* ceremony, and 4) Neoliberal paradigm of development. In addition, the glossary of the *cha'a'cháak* ceremony used in this essay is elaborated.

1) Shamanism at the Yucatan peninsula

“The Chac Mool, soft and elegant, almost golden, seemed to indicate to me that he was a God by now lax, with less tense knees than before, with the most benevolent smile”

Carlos Fuentes (2008: 14)

Shamanism is a concept that refers to a set of beliefs, ritual practices, and social relationships (Morris, 2005: 14). The term shaman is taken from the language of the Evenki (Tungus), a people of reindeer hunters and shepherds from eastern Siberia, and was used to refer to their spiritual mediums (*saman*). It has been suggested that the word is derived from the Indo-European verb with the root “sa”, which means “to know”. Rozwadowski & Koško (2002) showed the great importance of shamanism and rock art in Central Asia and Siberia.

¹ Henequen is a plant native to Yucatán, Mexico. It is impossible to understand history of Yucatan without history of henequen. It is processed as a textile in various forms to obtain a range of products for domestic and industrial use.

Mircea Eliade offered the first complete study of shamanism in the 1950s. For Eliade, shamanism was a pre-eminently religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia, and virtually equated shamanism with the “ecstasy techniques” and the “magic flight” of the shaman. The shaman was thus interpreted as an inspired priest who “specializes in a trance during which it is believed that the soul abandons its body and ascends to heaven or descends into the underworld” (Eliade, 1972: 5).

Vitebsky considers, unlike Eliade, that shamanism is more complex and less transcendental, because it has external pressures and influences. Shamanism adapts to the reality of constant change. Shamanism is “fluid rather than doctrinal (...) as there is no unifying ideology, we must speak of shamanism in the plural” (Vitebsky, 1995: 188). Shamanism is not an eternal and immutable social phenomenon and is expressed in some archetypal essence.

For the study of shamanism in Mexico, one must agree with Eliade who said that “the problem of 'origin' of shamanism in both Americas is still far from being solved” (Eliade, 1972: 333). One of the first studies on the subject was *The teachings of Don Juan*. Don Juan recommends: “You have to be a strong man, and your life has to be true. (...) A life lived with the clear certainty of being alive; a good, strong life (Castañeda, 1999: 132).

In the Yucatan region, the presence of the shaman developed in its particular form, but not so isolated from the Central Asia's people. We found it related to the cult of the multiple deities, of which the cult of the God of Rain stands out: “we find it in all Mesoamerican peoples since ancient times, approaching sedentary lifestyles during the Pre-Classic, Classic and Post-Classic Periods” (Ríos, 1976: 9).

In the Mayan religious worldview, the Chac Mool and his sculptures were guardians of the ceremonial: “they have also been attributed the role of intermediaries between human beings and the gods” (INAH, 2017: 216). Chac was a God of Rain but also “a god of wind, thunder and lightning; from here, by extension, he was considered the god of fertility and agriculture (...), following the idea of growth and germination, and, ultimately, by the god of corn sowing” (Morley, 1972: 252).

Chac represented the four gods according to the four cardinal points: “Chac Xib Chac, the Red Man Eastern Chac; Sac Xib Chac, the White Man Chac del Norte; Ek Xib Chac, the Black Man Chac of the West and Kan Xib Chac, the Yellow Man Chac of the South” (Morley, 1972: 252–253).

The God of Rain was considered as one in four his presences. According to Morley, Chac was the most important of the deities. Chac Mool was a god and a shaman who “might be at the same time a priest, a mystic and a poet” (Eliade, 1972: 3). The sculpture of Chac presents the dynamic position, reflects movement and expression. He possesses the dynamism of a shaman. Chac has the figure of a human being “with serpentine stylizations on the face, mainly in the mouth and in the eyes; that among his trappings he shows human-serpentine or purely serpent faces, among which a set of two opposed snakes stands out” (Quesada, 2009: 29). But also in the image there is a presence of bird: “Feathers, wings, beaks and claws of three fingers, among others, are frequent motifs in the Classic Maya art that accompany the image of Chaac” (Quesada, 2009: 29).

After the conquest, the Chac-chaman acquired satanic and idolatrous characteristics. Fray Diego de Landa, Bishop of the Diocese of Yucatan between 1572 and 1579, says that “the vices of the Indians were idolatries and drunkenness, selling and buying slaves” (Landa, 1938: 99).

Bishop Diego Vázquez de Mercado issues the license for Dr. Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar to “reduce” the number of idolaters. They are persecuted: “who are and live outside the guild of our holy mother Roman Church a lot of Indians with their women and family who, being baptized Christians the most, have turned to the idolatries and rites of their ancestors with other infidel Indians who live there, as of all we are informed of people who have and walked their sides” (Solis and Peniche, 1996: 29).

In the seventeenth century, Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar considered: “(...) and they have relapsed into their idolatry not for lack of preachers, but, it must be said, for their insolence, pertinacity and laziness, living without coercion or punishment; allowing them to reside anywhere, to move

from one town to another to live, to choose governors similar to them, and to drink the Ealche wine” (Sánchez de Aguilar, 1639: 245).

The inhabitants dance pagan dances and sacrifice dogs: “I notice that the Indians of the island of Cozumel are great idolaters on the day of oy, in which Cortes put the first Cross, of which Chi Lancabal spoke; and they use a dance of their kindness, and they shoot dancing the dog they have to sacrifice; and when they have to go to the town of Ppole, which is the mainland, they use many superstitions before embarking” (Sánchez de Aguilar, 1639: 277). The savages are violent, and “they kill by drowning the priests” (Sánchez de Aguilar, 1639: 277).

For Sanchez de Aguilar, the idolaters are worse than the Sodomites “because although they are content to subvert the natural order, the idolaters alter the divine order and deprive God of the honor that corresponds to assign it to multiple gods”; and the gods among Mayans: “they may be both masculine and feminine, young and old, animal and human, creative and destructive, like the very nature from which they took their models” (INAH, 2017: 189).

Among the “idolatrous” and “diabolic” practices there is a ceremony of the rain (*cha'a'cháak*) described by Fray Piña y Mazo in his “Reasoning According to the Order of the Most Illustrious Lord Prelate”, in chapter 2: “From the nature, customs, decadence of Religion and that of Indians”:

In their *milpas* they tend to exercise many superstitious and idolatrous acts because many are persuaded that if they touch the cornfield without making their offerings, they will not have a good harvest in the coming year; to touch it they season a barbecue in which they put some offering bread called *tuti uah*, serve them as vintage a rooster of the land whose accretion is ceremonial. First they stick their tongues out and put it in a heat that they form from two *jicaras* attached to two seats and they fill it with *pitarilla* so that the offeror like the others participate giving a thousand laps and superstitious circles to the barbecue singing this song: Hetikuloi, hetichacai, hetickai, hetickai, hetikinai, hetihalai, hetilumai, or they either do this or another diabolical sacrifice that they call Tich and this they do or already hanging some of the best that the *milpa* produces or already hanging from *jicaras* and singing and singing those songs underneath, they drink it being drunk until the next day that the harvest begins.

In these sacrifices the neighbors of low sphere can attend who regularly ignore the doctrine, politics, and religion of which there are many in these towns, and they are worse than the Indians, because with their bad examples they open to these the jealousy; when the priest wants to put some remedy to so many evils, induce them to make slanderous offenses against their spiritual fathers, and if they are such love it is worse because they take for it thus forming the writings, and representations with a thousand lies to obscure the truth, and in this way the irremediable evils remain” (AHAY, 1784, caja 621, exp. 16: folio ff.43v)².

² In original: “en sus milpas suelen ejercer muchos actos supersticiosos e idolátricos porque están muchos persuadidos que si tocan la milpa sin hacer sus ofrendas, no tendrán buena cosecha el año venidero; para tocarla aderezan una barbacoa en que ponen unos panes de ofrenda llamado *tuti uah*, sírveles de vendimia un gallo de la tierra cuya acreción es ceremonial. Pues primero le sacan la lengua y la ponen en un calor que ellos forman de dos jícaras pegadas a dos asientos y lo llenan de pitarilla de que así el oferente como los demás participan dando mil vueltas y círculos supersticiosos a la barbacoa cantando esta canción: Hetikuloi, hetichacai, hetickai, hetickai, hetikinai, hetihalai, hetilumai, o ya bien hacen esto o ya otro sacrificio diabólico que ellos llaman Tich y esto hacen o ya colgando unas cañas de las mejores que produce la milpa o ya colgando de jícaras caldos de maíces y pitarilla y cantando dichas canciones debajo, lo beben quedando borrachos hasta el otro día que comienzan la cosecha.

En estos sacrificios pueden concurrir los vecinos de baja esfera que regularmente ignoran la doctrina, política, y religión de que hay muchos en estos pueblos, y son peores que los indios, porque con sus malos ejemplos abren a estos los celos; cuando el cura quiere poner algún remedio a tantos males, les induzcan para hacer ofensas calumniosas contra sus padres espirituales, y si son ellos amor de los tales es peor porque toman para así la cosa formando los escritos, y representaciones con mil mentiras para obscurecer la verdad, y de este modo se quedan los males irremediables”.

Pacheco Cruz in the XX century describes this ceremony in the chapter entitled “Superstitions” and considers it as a practice with an “idolatrous aspect of superstitious character”. According to him: “The rain ceremony is a cult of idolatrous aspect of superstitious character that they celebrate generally in cases of emergency; demonstration of a faith for the sake of a supposed divinity to which they render fervent veneration that they perform in moments of tribulation to achieve a purpose according to them” (Cruz Pacheco, 1960: 175).

Shamanism in the Mayan region is linked to the god Chac Mol who has his “human-serpentine” face. Shamanism did not disappear despite the inquisitions in the Yucatan peninsula. Yucatan in the XIX century experienced its development boom, which will be analyzed in the following section, taking as an example of the Huhí town.

2) Joyful festivals in Huhí

Huhí, “place of the iguanas” is 62 kilometers east of the city of Mérida and 30 kilometers south of Izamal by railroad. The population is limited to the north by the population of Sahnacat, to the south by Sotuta, to the west by Homún and to the east by Kantunil. The foundation of Huhí was made in the XVI century. It belonged to the town Hocabá during the XVIII century. Until 1821 Huhí was part of the *encomienda* of Don Joaquin de Cardenas y Diaz, then depended on Sotuta. In 1900 it was recognized as a free municipality (Huhí, 1998: 9).

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by progress and development. The first railroad that was built in Yucatan connected Merida city with Progreso at the seaside. The *Revista de Mérida* of the year 1877 invites on its cover to participate in the railroad lottery of ticket from Merida to Progreso, to promote the new transport: “There are 90 prizes. The prizes to presentations of the ticket will be paid in this General Direction (...)”. The *Revista de Mérida* concludes (December 30, 1877: 1): “New railways are prepared; the great project of the interoceanic railway will be carried out”.

The stations and railroads began to connect more towns in Yucatan. The train from Mérida to Izamal was built, passing through the Cacalchén station (*Leyes de concesión*, 1892: 87–88). The henequen is the crop that brought richness for the region. In total, in three years from 1888 to 1890, 22.7 tons of henequen were transported mainly from the stations of Izamal to Mérida (Table 1). The number of passengers transported between Mérida and Izamal in the same period was 293,852.

Table 1. Load Movement of the Mérida-Izamal train, by Tixpeual, Tixkokob, Euan, Cacalchén and Tekanto, between 1888 and 1890. Tons accumulated per year

Years	From outside stations to Mérida, tons	From Mérida to stations, tons	Total, tons
1888	5.3	2.5	7.8
1889	8.3	3.4	11.7
1890	9	1.9	11
Total	22.7	7.9	30.6

Source: own extrapolation based on *Leyes de Concesión* (1892: 87–88).

The result of the exchange of merchandise soon caught the attention of the peasants. The world of commerce opened up for the cities. The population began to buy, sell and exchange things and — as a result — to celebrate.

On February 20, 1873, the documents raised by the residents of Huhí jurisdiction to Hocabá was forwarded for the approval of His Excellency Honorable contracted to the commitment to create a fund destined for the festivities of the Saint Patron. The objective was: “to attend the expenses of the party and other objectives that are dedicated to that Saint in making each neighbor a rope of

corn for free, and another rope to pay it with the alms of the Saint and this will be done in the present year and will continue annually (...)" (AHAY, 1873, box 448, exp 11: ff.15v.) On February 28, 1873 the bishop approved the creation of the fund.

The *Revista de Mérida* published on June 12, 1890, two years after the inauguration of the station of Cacalchén, an announcement with the attentive invitation to the great festive day:

Festival of Huhí, 1890

Those who subscribe, on behalf of the residents of this town, have the honor of inviting all the inhabitants of the State, in particular the appreciable neighbors of the Capital, to serve us with their assistance on the days of the party that will begin the 24 of the present under the following

PROGRAM

Day 24. At night, it will start with the animated and traditional dance of cowboys.

Day 25. This cowboy dance will be repeated in which the pretty cowherd girls will wear their angelic beauties. They will repeat themselves the delicious *pukbikeyen*. The bullfight will begin and for that purpose the bravest and most arrogant bugs of the region have been chosen. At night the splendid dance of labels will begin in the wide, elegant and luxurious salons prepared for this purpose.

Day 26. Dance of etiquette for the day and night and bullfights

Everything pointed out on the 26th will be repeated on days 27, 28 and 29.

We repeat our invitation to the Yucatecans in general and particularly to our friends to honor them with their assistance, confident that they will be well cared for. Huhi, June 5, 1890 Genaro P. Cuadeño, Manuel D. Ferraez, José León Valencia

The festive days were clear signs of development and abundance. Although they had a religious dimension, they also talked about the development of the country. The train connected the center of Mexico with the other places. The reason for celebrating was to enjoy the wealth and well-being of the community. Dances accompanied by the traditional *pukbikeyen* drink (also known as *puk keyem*) as well as bullfighting were signs of great joy. Eight years after the party of 1890, another one was organized (*La Revista de Mérida*, June 4, 1898: 2).

The main difference between the festive day of 1890 and that of 1898 is that the all neighbors are responsible for organizing it, a sign that the party involves more inhabitants. A year later, in 1899 a fair is organized (*La Revista de Mérida*, June 25, 1899: 1).

The wealth in the henequen area multiplied. On May 1, 1910, a contract was signed between *Compañía Ferrocarriles Unidos de Yucatán S. A.* represented by its general director Mr. Federico W. Blake and Mr. Ramon Mon y Rodríguez "for the construction of thirteen kilometers of dirt roads in the extension of the railway line from Huhí to Sotuta" (AGEY, 1910: folio 254). It should be noted that the revolution that broke out in Mexico in 1910 did not interrupt the plans and the new station was built south of Huhí.

Henequen transformed the region. One could have breathed wealth. Economic and political life develops around henequen. The newspaper *El Correo* reports on the first page in the note entitled "The mayor of Huhí seriously injured. His State is of Gravity" of December 7, 1921: "Mr. Mayor Rivas, has declared before the judicial authorities, the following thing: That last Monday was in the Railway station when the platforms arrived from the San Antonio farm bringing several bales of henequen, and that after that they unloaded, when they were about to leave for that farm (...) was forced by Bobadilla to get off the platform (...)" (*El Correo*, 1921, section: 1).

In the early eighties the main source of work in Huhí came from henequen: "dedicating a large percentage to the work of the schools (80%) that consists of cleaning the land by means of the *chapeo* and later when the henequen pads are large enough, they are cut for industrial use (...) a part of them it is dedicated to agriculture (sowing corn, beans, jicamas)" (Díaz, 1982: 38).

The abundance of wealth caused by henequen's agroindustry and the religious official signs of joyful celebrations nourished the ancestral religious rituals such as *ch'a'cháak*. A need for rain to have good crops was accompanied by this ritual described below.

3) *Cha'a'cháak ceremony*

"If they are bricklayers, they will not do the ch'a'cháak ceremony for rain; their work no longer needs this ceremony. They don't want it rains anymore..."
Hilaria Máas Colli³

"He scrubs you if you do not give him his food from the mountain. If you do not do it, it will blow wind into your body (...). They do not do it right now, that's why the rain does not come"
Don Beto⁴

Don Beto lives in the town of Cuzamá. He is the *hméen* for the nearby towns, because in Huhí the ceremony was stopped. "I go from one village to another, because right now it is not done" -says Don Beto and emphasizes the meaning of the *cha'a'cháak* as a non-individual ceremony, but as a groupal one:

"You have to prepare people and food. You have to gather persons, when the earth is dry. You have to prepare chicken and bread with *pepita*. It has to be on ground, so it will be more delicious. It is for the *milpas* where corns are sown when the rain does not arrive. You have to tell the comrades of the town to gather their merchandise and do their deed of grace. That's just not possible. Alone, a little cup, no more, little food; but you have to do with sixty or eighty people, then, in this case, it will be organized".

Don Beto explains that before there were agreements to gather people: "small agreements for people to gather money and food; but not now anymore". *Ch'a'cháak* is organized every two, sometimes every three or five years. First you must bring people together — Don Beto insists — and then the products to give away. "Right now people have almost no beliefs, that's why they're *jodidos*. God does not give, what one deserves".

According to Don Beto, of the food for the ceremony, the special value has a *pozole*: "You have to prepare *pozole*. This meal is the one which speaks the most, and has the most responsibilities, because it presents more to God, since the *pozole* carries the corn, cabbage, meat and radish". Previously they should hunt deer, now they do it with sheep:

You must catch a sheep. The sheep smoke goes away to the kingdom of God. *Hmèen* is the one who speaks with God. The sheep is prepared to come out just like deer. There are times when they kill 10 or 20 deer, enough to do the action of grace. This is done for all the people who have their *milpas*. You have to dig a large hole in the ground and put the deer inside for a *piib*, a hole in the ground with deer, other meals and *tortillas*. Right now, they do not do it, that's why the rain does not come; so dry.

Don Beto says that he also goes to ranchers "so that everything goes well, so that his cattle do not die". This practice is new, since originally the *cha'a'cháak* was only for agricultural activity.

³ Hilaria Máas Colli, anthropologist and linguist. She is working as a teacher of Maya language at the Autonomous University of Yucatan (UADY), personal interview conducted in Mérida, Yucatán. January 2018.

⁴ Don Beto, *hmèen* from Cuzamá town, Yucatán, personal interview. Don Beto was born on 6 June. He is 80 years old, but he didn't know to mention the birthyear. He started to be a *hmèen* when he was 15 years old. Interview conducted in January 2018.

Don Beto's new tasks mean a transformation and adaptation for the reality in which the *milpa* is no longer the main activity.

The peasants perform the *ch'a'cháak* ceremonies without the participation of women. Hilaria Máas Collí points out that the peasants are “who know and transmit to their children everything related to the intervention of the *yuumtsilo'ob* (owners, masters) and of the patron saints, in the life of the members of the population” (Máas, 2004: 40–41). Although women are responsible for the family, “for the Maya of Yucatan, women are ritually impure, so that men are the only ones who can prepare *tamales* for offerings” (Grube, 2000: 81). *Hméen* controls the process of making the *tamales*. Hilaria Máas Collí originally from the Huhí town, was the first and only woman to participate in the *cha'a'cháak*. Describe that first is organized a *kéeh*. With this meat it becomes *piib*. On the day of the ceremony, *kéeh* is boiled with *kàax* meat. The food is made by men.

On the last day the food is made. In the soup mass is added so it makes thick what is called *k'ool*. In addition, *noh wàah* is made and in the middle lies *muxbil sikil*.

Thus, prepared the food is given as an offering to the *hméen* who puts it in *ka'anche*. The altar must be made of wood. Then the priest does the *payalchi'*. *Hméen* sings and invokes all the deities, the gods of wind and age in his four *kanti'its ka'an*: *xaman ìik*, *nohol ìik*, *lak'in ìik*, *chik'in ìik*.

Hméen invokes *tuláakal yumtsilio'ob*: *yùum k'áax*, *yùum tùm*, *yùum yìik*, also to the lords of *tuláakal ts'ono'oto'ob*. There must be a permission to these owners of the field, the mountain, the wind and all the cenotes, as well as the Christian saints.

The four virgins are also invoked in their four cardinal points: a virgin of Sotuta, a virgin of Izamal (of Nativity), a virgin of Mani (Candelaria) and a virgin of Totis (the Poor of God). *Hméen* says creed in Latin, Mayan and Spanish.

While *payalchi' le hméeno*, four children crouch below the altar and imitate the sound of *mùuch*. Another group of children sing the sound of *bàach*. A group of men ride sticks simulating horses; they imitate the guardians.

After the ritual, the *hméen* lowers the food of the *ka'anche*. *Hanalo* is divided among the participants. The *cha'a'cháak* ends and the rain is expected soon.

There are different deities and gods – including Christians – invoked in the ritual. Don Beto mentions:

“Saint Estaquío, is the owner of the deer, while San Nicolás and San Héctor are owners of the mountains. The *balanes* are the other strong wind. They have workers. There are also *kakaas* that are smaller but very powerful. The *hoyab* are gods that are asked for rain to come. They have a lot of power. They scrub you if you do not give him his food from the mountain, there is a wind in your body. *Yuumtsil* is a wind, they are persons, but they are invisible”.

During the ceremony there is a syncretism because the *hméen* invokes the saints of the catholic religion. “*Hméen* puts the green cross on the altar” according to Hilaria Máas Collí. To the question “if Chac Mool is angry?”, Don Beto responds:

“Yes, he is very angry. He, in particular, is the owner of the cenotes where there is crystal clear water. (...) The wind comes from the cenote, which is called the whirlpool. He leaves, where he arrives, there are times when he returns at two or three in the afternoon; It's a big swirl up to one hundred leagues he runs, then he returns to his house between two and three. There are good and bad cenotes. There are times when you enter and there is a good cenote, do not get hurt, but there are also bad cenotes. Cenotes are good when before you enter weeds for the ceremony. The bad ones charge you wind, they are going to scrub your body, so painful”.

Chac Mool is a powerful god. Don Beto explains: “they are like the king who takes care of the people. If you do grace every year, it does not hurt you”.

Don Beto also does “cleanings” and “grasshealer”: “I also do the cleanings. It is called *sib-che*, it is to remove the wind that is charged in your body. There is a cenote, then it goes in the mountains, it is swirling, a very strong wind, it has strength”.

In Huhí there are no ceremonies. Don Beto says: “Almost I go alone, also to Sotuta, which is 10 leagues from there. There are no grasshealers anymore; there are no longer in Huhí”.⁵ What did cause the disappearance of *cha'a'cháak*?

4) Neoliberal paradigm of development

In the 1990s, economic transformations diminished the presence of the state in the economy and society. This caused changes in the reality of agriculture. The arrival of neoliberal policies consisted of massive privatization, liberalization of markets and openness to competition, which caused the poverty (Czarnecki, 2013). As a result, these policies prompted the dismantling of the henequen industry. In 1984, the state and federal governments announced the Program for the Reorganization of the Henequen Zone and Integral Development of Yucatan, where it was recognized that henequen could no longer serve as a lever for the development of Yucatán. On April 9, 1991, Cordemex concluded its work. As Canto (2001: 67–68) points out: “in 1992 more than 30 thousand *ejidatarios* and retirees were liquidated, another 12 thousand (...). In March of 1990 the disincorporation of the 14 defibrators of the parastatal began and 1,750 workers were liquidated”.

The National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy reports that by 2015, 84.5 % of the inhabitants of Huhí were in poverty, the percentage that rose from 5.5 % in 2010 (Table 2). Of every 10 people in the town, almost nine are poor, according to official figures; 4479 poor people live in Huhí. A paradox is observed. Analyzing the social deficiencies, namely: educational lag, lack of access to health services, lack of access to social security, lack of quality and spaces of housing, lack of access to basic services in housing, as well as lack of access to food, between 2010 and 2015 there was a minimal improvement in access to these services, since the indicators decreased over five years. However, the situation is worsened by the lack of work and hence the lack of income to survive. The percentage of the population with income below the minimum well-being line grows between 2010 and 2015 from 29.6 % (1433 people) to 48.8 % (2587 people) (CONEVAL, 2015).

Table 2. Comparison of data on poverty for Huhí, 2010 and 2015.

	2010		2015	
	%	No.	%	No.
Habitants		4837		5297
Percentage of the population living in poverty	79	3823	84.5	4479
Percentage of population in a situation of moderate poverty	57.1	2761	59.3	3140
Percentage of the population living in extreme poverty	22	1062	25.3	1339
Percentage of the population lacking due to educational lag	40.9	1978	35.5	1883
Percentage of population with lack of access to health services	36.7	1774	7.5	399
Percentage of the population lacking access to social security	74	3580	73.6	3898

5 Don Beto, personal interview, Cuzamá, Yucatan, January 2018.

	2010		2015	
	%	No.	%	No.
Percentage of population with lack of quality and spaces of housing	31.8	1538	24.2	1280
Percentage of the population with lack of access to basic services in housing	82	3968	78.1	4137
Percentage of population with lack of access to food	31.8	1540	17.8	944
Percentage of population with income below the welfare line	80.2	3877	87.3	4627
Percentage of population with income below the minimum welfare line	29.6	1433	48.8	2587
Gini Index		0.31		0.35

Source: own extrapolation based on CONEVAL 2015.

The genesis of poverty is partly explained by structural changes, which meant the disappearance of the henequen agroindustry:

Huhi based its economy on monoculture and henequen processing. After the decline of the agave, the henequen renewal in 1984 and the liberation of the ejido in 1990, the peasants abandoned henequen work and continued to perform the *milpa* activity for their subsistence and wage labor (Máas, 2004: 33).

On the other hand, Fernando Benítez pointed out, in the eighties, that there were great inequalities between landowners and peasants, in addition to the miserable situation of the latter:

The Yucatecan peasants are still one of the poorest in the world. A mere producer of *pencas* — as it was at the time of Don Olegario Molina — subject to being assigned a task, without intervention in the maquila or in administrative operations, his situation, outside the personal freedom that he enjoys today and the advantage of free medical services is the same as in 1900 (Benítez, 1985: 235).

In addition to omnipresent poverty, the disappearance of *milpa* practices also led to the disappearance of the *cha'a'cháak*.

Conclusions

The essay revolved around shamanism, *cha'a'cháak* and the problems of Yucatan development taking the example of the Huhí town. In the first part, shamanism was analyzed from the historical experiences in the Mayan region as a sui generis phenomenon, although with aspects similar to those of Siberia and Central Asia. The shaman in the Asian towns has the same role as the *hmèen*, the Mayan priest. He is the *spiritus movens* of the *cha'a'cháak*, an agricultural ceremony.

Hmèen is intermediary between worlds: of the gods and the earth. After the arrival of the conquerors, the Mayans hid the ceremony. They made it on the mountain. The agricultural practice became for the Spaniards the idolatry, the diabolic practice, that still some consider it like this. However, the *cha'a'cháak* survived thanks to the cultivation of the land, the *milpa*, the cultivation of corn, beans, as well as henequen.

People asked gods, especially Chac Mool to make it rain because they were agricultural societies. The agricultural natural cycle marked the times of sowing and harvesting. The rain was demanded. During the conquest, the Mayans were persecuted, but they survived.

Mayan shamanism is characterized by syncretism with the Catholic religion and the appearance of the saints and Christian rites within the ceremony; with time *hméen* began praying creed in Latin, using the cross, invoking the saints. The presence of the Christian saints was added to the traditional agricultural ceremony.

In the 19th century, the ceremonies survived and boomed because “it gave them the milpa”. The town of Huhí is an example of the development boom; thanks to the ferrovia and agro-industry infrastructure of henequen, the festive mood came to the province to offer “thanksgiving to God”. The parties and fairs of Huhí were particularly full of activities such as cowboy dances, etiquette, bullfighting and although dedicated to the patron saint, these can not be detached from the veneration practices of the deities. In the second half of the twentieth century, Huhí manifested the great change, where the milpa ceased to be the source of work and wealth. The deep transformation that consists of the disappearance of agricultural ceremonies, among which the rain one, also occurs. Paradoxically, it is not the 300 years of brutal conquest that ended the practices of the *cha'a'cháak*. The henequen, sources that well-being, disappeared from the face of the earth, because the Mayas stopped doing the milpa. According to local habitants: milpa no longer gives. Peasants stopped producing in the countryside and began to migrate to the interior of the country, as well as to the outside, mainly to the United States of America. Those who stayed, became small producers of synthetic bags. In Huhí there are more than 14 factories of synthetic bags. That is the main work activity instead of *milpa*. The town of Huhí became a ghost small city of the glorious past.

Fernando Benítez once wrote that “the extinction of Mayan — *la maya*, as people from peninsula like to say — is a matter of years” (Benítez, 1985: 188-189). Mayans stop preparing *cha'a'cháak* religious ceremony because they no longer need it. They no longer do the economic activity that in the previous times. The *hméen* now has the other obligations. He works as a healer, herbalist and does cleaning. Chac Mool and other deities are abandoned, however Chac Mool, as Carlos Fuentes reminds us (2008: 18) “is used to being obeyed, forever”. Hope he will not get so mad.

References:

- AGEY, Ferrocarriles Unidos de Yucatán, Caja 254, 1910, (sin folio). “Contrato entre FUY y Ramon Mon para la construcción del kilómetro 13 del ramal Huhí a Sotuta”.
- AHAY, Sección Gobierno, Serie Obispos, caja 448, 1873, exp. 11, folios ff.15v. “Acta levantada por los vecinos de Huhí jurisdicción a Hocabá remitida para la aprobación de Su Señoría Ilustrísima contraída al compromiso que han contraído para crear un fondo destinado para las festividades del Santo Patrón San Pedro”.
- AHAY, Sección Gobierno, Serie Visitas Pastorales, caja 620, 1782, vol. 13, exp. 3, folios ff.31v-32v. Razonamiento de Fray Pedro Marín, doctrinero del pueblo de Teabo dirigida al obispo fray Luis de Piña y Mazo, en relación a visita pastoral efectuada en el curato el 13 enero 1782.
- AHAY, Sección Gobierno, Serie Visitas Pastorales, caja 621, 1784, exp. 16. Folios ff.43v; Visita realizada por el obispo fray Luis Piña y Mazo, a Hocabá, “Razonamiento Según el Orden de Señor Ilustrísimo Prelado”, el capítulo 2: “De la naturaleza, costumbres, decadencia de la Religión y de aquello de Indios”.
- AHAY, sección gobierno, serie obispos, 1903, caja 465, (sin folios). Queja contra el sacerdote, 2 de octubre de 1903
- Bartolomé, Miguel y Alicia M. Barabas** (coords.) 2014. *Los sueños y los días. Chamanismo y nahualismo en el México actual*. México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
- Benítez, Fernando**. 1985. *Ki: el drama de un pueblo y una planta*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Canto Sáenz, Rodolfo**. 2001. *Del henequén a las maquiladoras. La política industrial en Yucatán, 1984-2001*. México: Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
- Castañeda, Carlos**. 1999. *Las enseñanzas de Don Juan*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL). 2015. Pobreza a nivel municipio 2010 y 2015. México: CONEVAL <www.coneval.org.mx> [2.01.2019]
- Cruz Pacheco, Santiago**. 1960. *Usos, costumbres, religión i supersticiones de los mayas*, 2da ed. Mérida, Yucatán: Editorial desconocida.

- Czarnecki, Lukasz.** 2013. "La concepción de la pobreza en el modelo neoliberal. ¿Cómo entender la lucha contra la pobreza en México?", *Frontera Norte*. 49 (25): 179-191.
- Díaz Mendoza, Roger Armando.** 1982. "Estudio médico social de la comunidad de Huhí, Yuc.", trabajo de investigación médica. Mérida: Universidad de Yucatán, Facultad de Medicina.
- Eliade, Mircea.** 1972. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fuentes, Carlos.** 2008. "Chac Mool", *Dos cuentos. Selección y nota de Antonio Puertas*, pp. 8-18. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Difusión Cultural, Dirección de Literatura.
- Grube, Marta.** 2000. "Tortillas y tamales: el alimento de los hombres de maíz y de sus dioses", *Los mayas: una civilización milenaria*, pp. 81-84, Nikolai Grube (ed.). Colonia, Alemania: Konemann.
- Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. 2017. *Mayas: el lenguaje de la belleza. Miradas cruzadas*. México: Secretaría de Cultura, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Secretaría de Cultura del Gobierno del Estado de Campeche.
- Irabien Rosado, Manuel de.** 1928. *Historia de los ferrocarriles de Yucatán*. Mérida: Gobierno del Estado.
- Landa, Diego de.** 1938. *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, 7ª. ed. México: Editorial Pedro Robredo.
- Máas Colli, Hilaria.** 2004. *La reorganización de los gremios en Huhí, Yucatán*. Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
- Morley, Sylvanus G.** 1972. *La civilización maya*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Morris, Brian.** 2005. *Religion and Anthropology: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quesada García, Octavio.** 2009. *La imagen de Chaac: naturaleza y signos durante el Periodo Clásico*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades.
- Ríos Meneses, Miriam Beatriz.** 1976. *Relación de los dioses mayas con algunas ceremonias que aún se practican en Yucatán*. Mérida, Yucatán: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
- Rozwadowski, Andrzej and Koško, Maria.** 2002. *Spirits and stones: Shamanism and Rock Art in Central Asia and Siberia*, Poznań: Instytut Wschodni.
- Sánchez de Aguilar, Pedro.** 1639. "Informe contra los adoradores de ídolos del obispado de Yucatán", *Tratado de las idolatrías, supersticiones, dioses, ritos, hechicerías y otras*, pp. 181-339. México: Ediciones Fuente Cultural.
- Solis Robleda, Gabriela y Paola, Peniche.** 1996. "Licencia del obispo don Diego Vázquez de Mercado para que el doctor Pedro Sánchez de Aguilar reduzca a los ídolatras. Mérida, 6 de noviembre de 1604. AGI, México 299, f.f.2r-3r.", *Idolatría y sublevación. Documentos para la historia indígena de Yucatán*, pp. 29-40. Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
- Vitebsky, Piers.** 1995. "From Cosmology to Environmentalism: shamanism as local knowledge in a global setting", Fardon, Richard, *Counterworks: managing the diversity of knowledge*, pp. 182-203, ed. London: Routledge.
- H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional. 1998. Huhí "lugar de las iguanas". Huhí, Yucatán: H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional.
- Irabien Rosado, Manuel de.** 1928. *Historia de los ferrocarriles de Yucatán*. Folio 1921-1937-1/2-06.
- Leyes de concesión, estatutos, documentos importantes relativos a la compañía de los ferrocarriles Mérida a Progreso e Izamal*, 1892 Mérida: Folio 1861 -14.
- Anónimo.** 1921. "El alcalde municipal de Huhí gravemente herido. Su Estado es de Gravedad", *El Correo: diario independiente de la información general*, Mérida, Yucatán, 7 de diciembre, sección: general, página 1. Archivo Biblioteca Yucatanense.
- Anónimo.** 1877. "Lotería", *Revista de Mérida*. Mérida, Yucatán, 30 de diciembre, Portada. Archivo Biblioteca Yucatanense,
- Cuadeño, Genaro P., Ferraez, Manuel D., Valencia, José León.** 1890. "Fiesta de Huhí, 1890". *Revista de Mérida*. Mérida, Yucatán, 12 de junio. Archivo Diario de Yucatán.
- Vecinos.** 1898. "Ruidosa y popular fiesta en Huhí", *La Revista de Mérida*. Mérida, Yucatán, 4 de junio. Archivo Diario de Yucatán.
- Vecinos.** 1899. "Gran feria en el pueblo de Huhí", *La Revista de Mérida*. Mérida, Yucatán, 25 de junio. Archivo Diario de Yucatán.

Glossary:

<i>bàach</i>	chachalaca
<i>balché</i>	sacred drink with the tree bark
<i>balan</i>	Guardian
<i>cha'a'cháak</i>	Agricultural ceremony
<i>cha'a</i>	Offering
<i>cháak</i>	Rain
<i>chik'in iik</i>	West
<i>hanalo</i>	food
<i>hmèen</i>	shaman, maker, mayan priest; the expression "h-men" is also used; he is not a weed healer, nor an orthopedist (kaxbak)
<i>hoyab</i>	to water; the one who waters
<i>Huh</i>	iguana
<i>ka'anche</i>	altar for the ceremony of hmèen
<i>kakaas iik</i>	bad wind
<i>kàax</i>	chicken
<i>Kéeh</i>	deer
<i>k'ool</i>	thick food like atole
<i>kanti'its ka'an</i>	four cardinal points
<i>lak'in iik</i>	East
<i>mùuch</i>	Frog
<i>muxbil sikil</i>	ground nugget
<i>xaman iik</i>	North
<i>nohol iik</i>	South
<i>noh wàah</i>	cha'a cháak cake composed of 13 layers
<i>payalchi'</i>	pray
<i>Píib</i>	oven to cook the meat under the ground
<i>Saká</i>	corn drink with shell (unlike the process of nixtamalization of corn to prepare tortilla, where lime is used) is prepared for ch'a'cháak
<i>sib-che</i>	branch to cross; a tree to eliminate bad energy
<i>Sikil</i>	nugget
<i>ts'ono'oto</i>	cenote ts'ono'oto'ob (plural form); "Very deep freshwater lakes or wells; abyss, depth" according to Fray Diego de Landa (1938: 225).
<i>tuláakal</i>	everyone
<i>yùum k'áax</i>	Owner / God of the mountain
<i>Yuumsil</i>	Owner, sir
<i>yuumsilo'ob</i>	Owners, gentlemen (plural form)
<i>yùum tùm</i>	Owner / God of the sow and of the era
<i>yùum yìik</i>	Owner / God of the wind

Source: own elaboration.

Czarnecki Lukasz, Prof. Dr in law and sociology.

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Institute of Law and Economy.

Ul. Podchorążych 2, 30-084 Kraków, Poland.

National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Mexico, Mexico City.

E-mail: lukasz.czarnecki@up.krakow.pl

Материал поступил в редакцию 19 марта 2020 г.

Л. Чарнецки

ЧААЧАК В ХУХИ НА ПОЛУОСТРОВЕ ЮКАТАН

Цель данной статьи — проанализировать чаачак, сельскохозяйственную церемонию на полуострове Юкатан в Мексике. Некоторые считают чаачак почитанием «предполагаемой» или «невидимой» божественности, восходящей к древним временам майя. Он показывает особый ритуал майя на милпе, посевном поле. Религиозные обычаи были неразрывно связаны с сельскохозяйственной жизнью, особенно с почитанием Бога дождя (Чак Мул). Плоды посева и сбора урожая в милпе зависели от дождя. Следовательно, агропромышленный комплекс henequen привлекал развитие в регионе, активность фермеров и косвенно также поддержку практики религиозных церемоний. Однако в настоящее время агропромышленное развитие хенекена на Юкатане прекращается, и церемония чаачака также исчезает.

Ключевые слова: чаачак, агропромышленный комплекс Генекена, Юкатан, Мексика.

Чарнецки Лукаш, доктор юридических наук и социологии, профессор.

Педагогический университет им. Эдукационной комиссии в Кракове (Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie).

Ул. Подхорунжих, д. 2, г. Краков, Республика Польша, 30-084 (ul. Podchorążych 2, 30-084 Kraków, Rzeczpospolita Polska).

Национальный автономный университет Мексики (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México). Мехико, Мексика (Ciudad de México, Estados Unidos Mexicanos).

E-mail: lukasz.czarnecki@up.krakow.pl