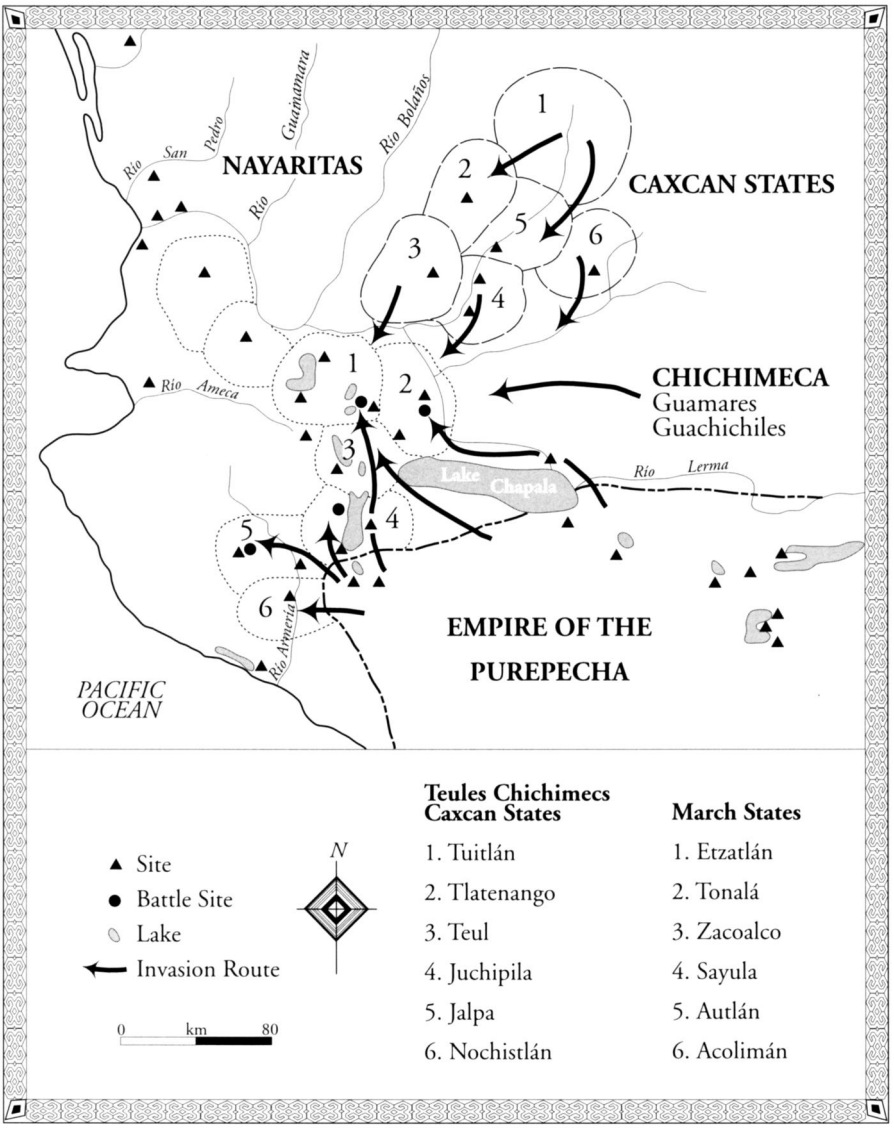


Figure 1. Map showing the relationship of the Nayarita zone to the Caxcán conquest states, the trans-Tarascan states of the Volcán de Tequila zone, and the Purépecha Empire on the eve of the Spanish conquest of western Mexico. Drafting by Jodi Griffith and Susan Alta Martin.

Huichol Society before the Arrival of the Spanish

PHIL C. WEIGAND and ACELIA GARCÍA DE WEIGAND

The following commentary offers an archaeological and historical reconstruction of the antecedents of Huichol society before the arrival of the Spanish, culminating in a discussion of the political significance of the *kawiterutsixi* and the *tukipa* (ceremonial elders and temple district) for colonial Huichol society. The discussion considers the predecessors of contemporary Huichol people in terms of the Mesoamerican world before 1519 and of the Spanish colonial order after contact but before the Nayarita zone was incorporated into the European world system. We use the term Nayarita in its colonial-period sense to refer to most of the unconquered native groups that resided north of the Río Grande de Santiago, west of the Caxcán conquest states, south of the Tepehuans, and east of Pacific coastal towns such as Acaponeta, Centispac, and Ixcuintla (figure 1). The term included the Cora and Huichol area as well as the settlements of the Tepecanos, the Tecuals and, frequently, the Guaynamotecas.

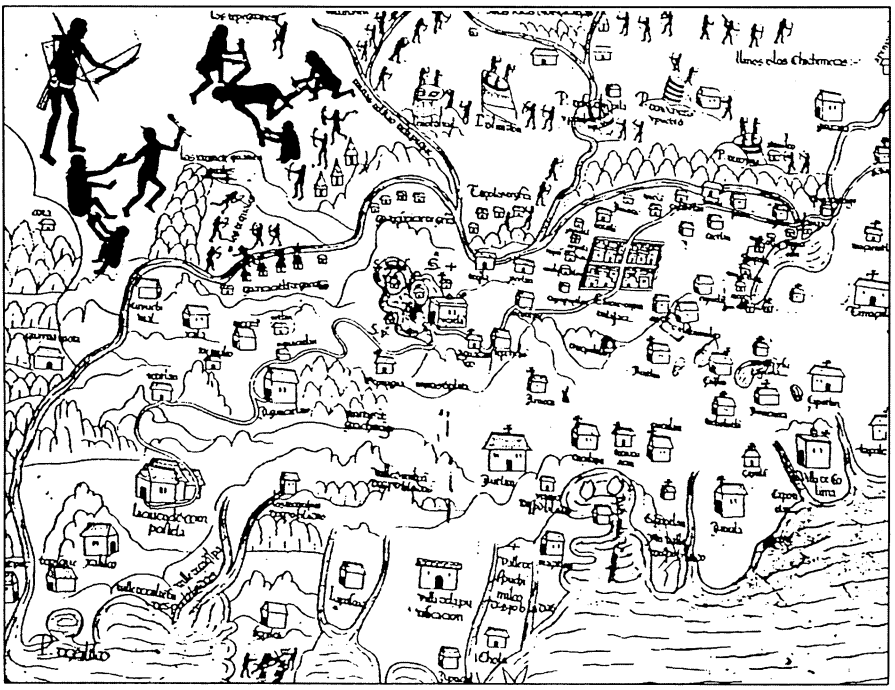
Given the state of historical and archaeological knowledge from the study zone, this reconstruction will be quite problematic and very provisional for two reasons. First, there is a serious dearth of reliable archaeological data for the Nayarita zone, although there are a few high-quality publications and manuscripts. Second, there is a shortage of extensive and reliable colonial documents addressing the social, political, and economic organization of the Nayarita zone in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nonetheless, several excellent documents pertaining to the Nayarita area have recently been published or republished by Calvo (1990). The *informes* (missionary reports) of Fray Francisco del Barrio (1990 [1604]) and Padre Antonio Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]) are the most notable in this collection (cf. McCarty and Matson 1975 and Archivo General de las Indias, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Leg. 7., 66-5-16).

CARTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS

Our first observations concern two of the most valuable maps depicting the study zone, both rendered during the sixteenth century: *La Pintura del Nuevo Reino de Galicia,* dating from ca. 1542 by an anonymous cartographer (figure 2) and *Hispaniae Novae Sivae Magnae, Recens et Vers Descritio,* drawn by the Dutch cartographer Ortelius in 1579 (figure 3).

The *Pintura* has many touches of Mesoamerican codical art, but the ample geographical data it offers are quite accurate in a Western cartographic sense as well. In the *Pintura,* we see that the Nayarita zone was comprised of a number of groups at war with one another, and that none of them had yet been conquered by the Spanish. In the north are the "Tepeguanes" (Tepehuans) and a group that carries the name of "Tenamaztle" (Tenamaxtli), the famous Caxcán leader of the Nueva Galicia rebellion (also known as the Mixtón revolt—*eds.*; cf. Weigand and García de Weigand 1995, 1996). To the west is the representation of a formal settlement, "Cora." To the east are the "Río de Tepeque" (Bolaños River) and the Caxcán towns, including Teul. To the south-

Figure 2. Author unknown, La Pintura del Nuevo Reino de Galicia *(ca. 1542), from Acuña (1988: facing p. 150).*



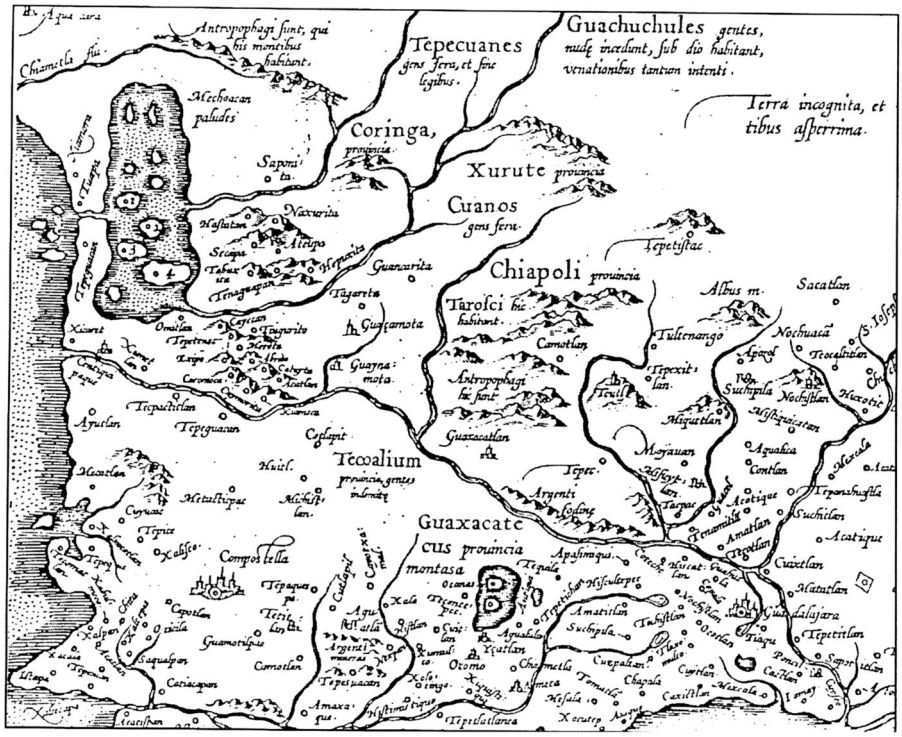


Figure 3. Detail from Ortelius, Hispaniae Novae Sivae Magnae, Recens et Vers Descritio *(1579), private collection.*

east are the "Tecoles de guerra" (warring Tecuals) and to the southwest are the Tecuals. To the south are the towns of Guaxícar, another famous leader of the Nueva Galicia rebellion. In the middle of this zone of the *Pintura* are the "Xuxuctequanes" or "Xuxuctequales." This group dominates the central Nayarita zone and obviously figured in the evolution of the groups that later became known as Wixáritari or Huichols. Among the scenes presented in the Nayarita area of the *Pintura* are depictions of bow-and-arrow warfare and human sacrifice wherein the victim's hands, feet, and heart are being removed. This scene of human sacrifice is quintessentially Mesoamerican. The house types shown are round with conical grass-thatched roofs, much like the contemporary Huichols' *tuki* ceremonial structures.

The Ortelius map does not have codical drawings like these, and since it was composed about thirty-five years after the *Pintura,* it has more toponymic detail. In the western section of the Nayarita zone are

the "Coringa" (Coras), who are organized as a *provincia*. In the southern section of this province is a town called "Naxurita." To the north are the "Tepecuanes," accompanied by the notation *"gens fera, et sine legibus."* To the southeast is the provincia of the "Chiapoli," which is probably the current-day Camotlán zone, and the "Tarosci." A notation to the south of the Chiapoli and Tarosci reads *"antropophagi hic sunt."* In the center of the study zone is the provincia of the "Xurute," bordered by the "Cuanos," who have the notation *"gens fera."* To the far south are the "Tecoalium" (Tecuals), also called a provincia, with the additional note *"gentes indomita."* A very important point, which we develop more fully at the end of this paper, should be emphasized here at the outset: the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish term provincia referred specifically to territories with a recognizable social hierarchy, political structure, and institutions of formal leadership and power.

Many of the place and ethnic terms on these two maps seem closely related, an observation we made some time ago (Weigand 1985, 1992). Liffman (pers. com. 1995) has organized these names to display their possible linguistic interrelations in a convincing and original fashion:

Tepeguanes
Tepecuan

Tecol
Tequal

Xuxuctequal
Xuxuctequan
Xurutequan
Xurute
Naxurita

Obviously, the names on the two maps that coincide most closely with the contemporary Huichol area are the variations on the "Xurute" and "Xurutequanes" set. These terms are essentially the same, especially when one considers the proximity of the "Cuanos" with "Xurute." Both these terms are closely related to the "(Na)xurite" to the west and the "Cuanes" to the east. As an intermediary group between the Coringa (Coras), Tepecuanos (Tepecanos), and Tecuals, the Xurute must have played a very important role in the development and evolution of the sociocultural system in the southern reaches of the Sierra Madre Occidental during the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Spanish.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

With this sense of the various provincias and ethnic groups in the early sixteenth century, we will now turn to a brief summary of the thin archaeological data set for the same general zone. As mentioned, the archaeological work done in or near the Huichol zone is scarce and preliminary. The work by Hers (1989, 1993) is the most comprehensive and detailed. Other pertinent studies are by Kelley (1971, 1991), Kelley and Kelley (1971), Jaramillo (1984), Cabrero (1989, 1992), Shadow and Weigand (1977), Jiménez (1988, 1992), Weigand (1969, 1982, 1992, 1993), and Weigand and García de Weigand (1995, 1996). In addition, the observations by Lumholtz (1902), Hrdlička (1903), and Zingg (1938) are very important. Together these works provide elemental insights concerning the indigenous society from which the Xurute and hence the Huichols must have evolved.

The most important known sites for understanding this society are the Cerro de Colotlán (located on a high *peñol* overlooking the Río Bolaños in the Tepecano *comunidad indígena* of San Lorenzo de Azqueltán; figure 4); Arroyo de los Gavilanes (near the pan-Huichol ceremonial center of Teekata, in the comunidad indígena of Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán); Tenzompa (in the *municipio* of Mezquitic, near the

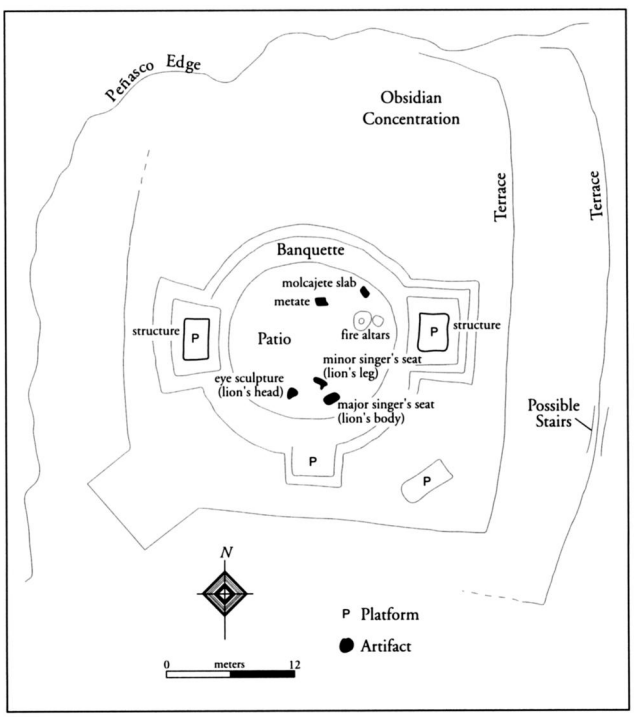


Figure 4. The Cerro de Colotlán circular complex, Post-Classic period, near Azqueltán, Jalisco. Still used occasionally by the Tepecanos.

town of the same name, which was still considered a Huichol settlement in the late nineteenth century); Totoate (Mezquitic municipio near Nostic); Cerro de Huistle (Huejuquilla municipio, a settlement that was also considered Huichol during much of the colonial period); and Tsewi (in the Huichol comunidad indígena of San Sebastián Teponahuaxtlán). Also, a large number of smaller sites have been located by survey to the northwest of the Huichol comunidad indígena of San Andrés Cohamiata and within the San Sebastián zone.

The only sites from which excavational data have been taken are outside the contemporary Huichol comunidades but are obviously very important for interpreting the early evolution of the regionally differentiated Huichol sociocultural systems. The best data come from Tenzompa (Hers 1989), Cerro de Huistle (ibid.), and Totoate (Hrdlička 1903; Kelley 1971). Ongoing projects by Cabrero and associates (near San Martín de Bolaños), Mozillo (near Juchipila), and Darling (in the Tlaltenango zone) promise to augment this small data base in important ways in the near future.

Some of the most interesting observations concern the fact that the architecture visible in most of the aforementioned sites is completely Mesoamerican in character: (1) sunken patios surrounded by banquettes and platforms (of both the circular and rectangular varieties); (2) platforms with terraces and stairways; (3) altars and small pyramids; (4) large rooms (both circular and rectangular, of the "corral" style); and (5) possible ballcourts. As mentioned, there are numerous buildings of the concentric circular style that obviously are derived from the Teuchitlán Tradition, the zone of high civilization just to the south. Compare figure 5, a plan of the monumental complex near Teuchitlán, with figures 4, 6, and 7. The latter three figures are maps of complexes found due east of the Huichol comunidades indígenas in the middle Bolaños Valley. The Bolaños varieties clearly are derived from the greater structures to their south. In turn, it is very probable that the Bolaños circular structures served at least in part as the architectural inspiration for the circular or oval tuki structures located within the Huichols' semicircular tukipa ceremonial compounds (figure 8).

The cultural sequence also represents many centuries of regional development and accommodation to outside influences. Obviously the Huichols' predecessors did not arrive in this zone in recent times. Another interpretation relates the Huichols to the Guachichils and puts their arrival in the Sierra Madre Occidental just before the Spanish en-

try into the lower Chichimec region. A variant of this interpretation hypothesizes that the Huichols were pushed out of the Chichimec desert and into the mountains by the Spanish just after the invasion (cf. Myerhoff 1974). These perspectives suffer from three major drawbacks: (1) there is absolutely no linguistic evidence to support the contention; (2) the regional archaeological data, although poorly understood, shows a long in situ developmental sequence; and (3) the Huichols' own mytho-historical accounts speak of an agricultural and hence Mesoamerican heritage. The fact that they hunt deer in a ceremonial fashion and associate deer with their ancestors is hardly unique to their culture or proof that they were non-agricultural. Likewise, the fact that they harvest peyote from the desert of San Luis Potosí is neither unique to their culture (for example, both Tarahumaras and Tepecanos also harvested there) nor proof of a desert origin. The superficial resemblance between the terms "Guachichil" and "Huichol," given the distances and different language families involved, cannot be taken as serious evidence.

The archaeological evidence, although preliminary, firmly suggests that the Huichols' origins were among a set of closely related, interacting sociocultural systems that had deep roots in the region. The sequence had begun by the Mesoamerican Classic period (ca. A.D. 200–700) and carried through the Epi-Classic (ca. A.D. 700–900) and Post-Classic (ca. A.D. 900–conquest) periods without interruption. Indeed, the linguistic evidence, as summarized by Valiñas (1981, 1994), strongly suggests a coastal or "Sonoran" orientation for the Nayarita languages (the Corachol branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family). This branch of Uto-Aztecan is far more closely related to the Taracahitan and Tepiman branches spoken to the north and west than to the Nahuan languages spoken farther east and south. Valiñas's research also leads him to attribute considerable antiquity to Corachol in the general area. Other members of the Corachol subgroup probably included Guaynamota, Tecual, and Totorame.

In the archaeological context, the zones that most influenced the cultural evolution of the Xurute zone were the Teuchitlán area (Weigand 1993), the Bolaños Valley (Cabrero 1989, 1992), the Huejuquilla zone and upper headwaters of the Chapalagana River (Hers 1989), and the Chalchihuites tradition (Kelley 1971; Weigand 1993; Weigand and García de Weigand 1995, 1996; Jiménez 1988, 1992). The Nayarita zone was completely embedded in a regional system which involved a well-developed Mesoamerican ceremonial and symbolic cy-

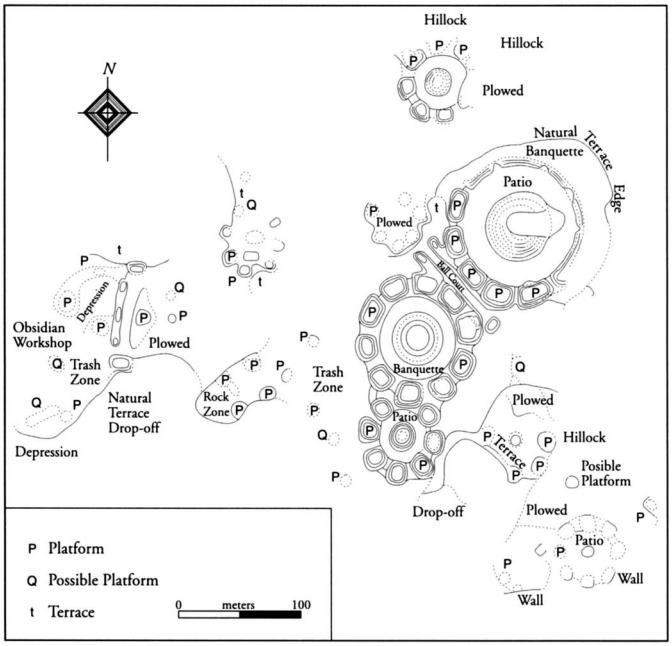


Figure 5. The monumental Guachimontón circular complex at Teuchitlán, Classic period, Jalisco.

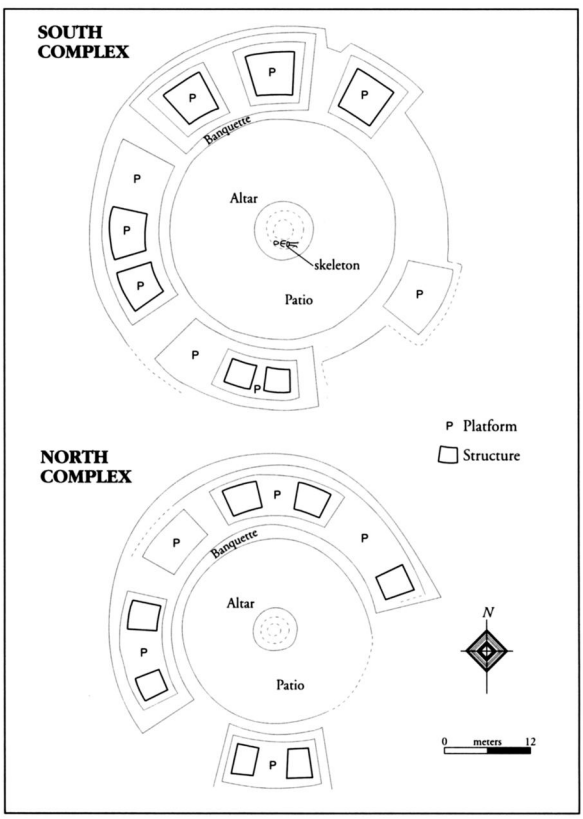


Figure 6. The Cerro Prieto circular complex, Classic period, near Mezquitic, Jalisco.

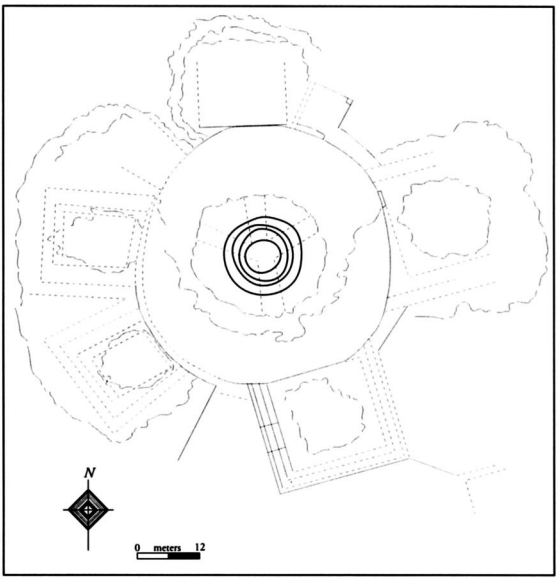


Figure 7. The circular structure at Totoate, Classic period, near Mezquitic, Jalisco. Drawing taken from Kelley (1971).

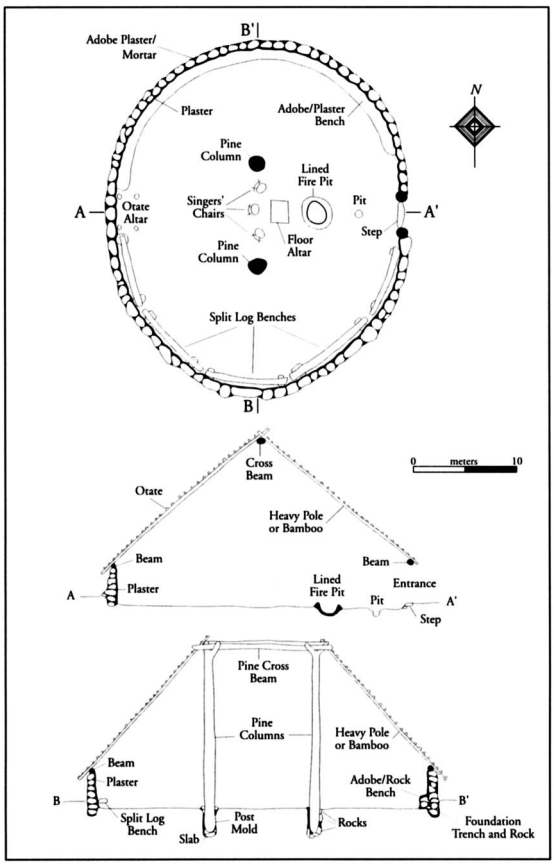


Figure 8. Idealized plan of a contemporary Huichol tuki *(temple). Drafting by Jodi Griffith, Museum of Northern Arizona, and Susan Alta Martin.*

cle, large-scale sites and settlement systems, trade and exchange routes, and the regional political expressions of warfare and territorial conflict. Indeed, it is very possible that the contemporary Huichol peyote pilgrimage to San Luis Potosí is a vestige of a prehispanic trade route linking the Pacific and Gulf coasts (Weigand 1992).

Because of the mountainous character of the Nayarita zone, its peoples, including those of the Xurute section, never reached their neighbors' more complex levels of sociocultural development. The Huichols themselves recognized this unequal relationship. For example, in the nineteenth century Huichols designated themselves the "younger brothers" of the Tepecanos, who were, in turn, their "elder brothers." The two great rock chimneys that stand side by side in front of the ceremonial center at Cerro de Colotlán were a "natural" expression of this relationship: the smaller one represented the Huichols in their role as Younger Brother and the larger one the Tepecanos as Elder Brother.[1]

The diversity of submonumental architecture in the immediate zone is another data set that manifests the capacity of the ancient inhabitants of the zone to accept and remake the cultural and social influences that reached them from their neighbors. The archaeological cultures of the zone, while of fairly modest scale, were original, well adapted, dynamic, and deeply rooted.

POLITICAL HISTORY

We know that as a result of indigenous political and economic dynamics in western Mexico, the Nayarita zone had become a sub-Mesoamerican "region of refuge" (Aguirre Beltrán 1967) long before the Spanish arrived in the area (see figure 1 for the political dynamics of the region). As an example, when the Caxcáns of Tuitlán (La Quemada, Zacatecas) captured the southern towns of Teul, Juchipila, and Tlaltenango, the defeated elites of those centers took refuge among the Nayaritas. This apparently took place during the thirteenth century (Tello 1968: 26–27). This role as a region of refuge continued throughout the colonial period, well after the conquest of the area. The Spanish always pointed to the existence of this region as a major justification for

1. The ceremonial and other metaphorical significance of the "our elder brother" relationship (Wixárika: *tamaatsi;* Náyari: *tahatsi*) is marked throughout the region—*eds.*

more military pacification campaigns. Indeed, so many mulattos and blacks escaped from the mining enterprises in the Bolaños Valley that they adversely affected that economy (Weigand 1992).

The Nueva Galicia rebellion and the definitive conquest led by Viceroy Antonio Mendoza are key events for understanding the next period. The 180 years between Mendoza's suppression of the rebellion and the subsequent burning of the temple/palace complex of Tonati (1542–1722) represent a period of increasing complexity and centralization within the Nayarita zone.

After a fitful beginning in the trans-Tarascan zone, the Nueva Galicia rebellion itself lasted only ten years (1532–1542) and concluded shortly after the greatest battle of the entire conquest and colonial period in Mexico, at the Peñol de Mixtón (Ruiz 1994; Muriá 1994; León Portilla 1995; Weigand and García de Weigand 1995, 1996). The suppression of the rebellion, however, did not by any means end indigenous resistance to the Spanish order. The ten-year rebellion should be considered part of the same historical process as the 180 years of intermittent warfare that followed it. Indeed, from the perspective of the early participants, the rebellion and the Nayarita wars were inseparable because the Nayarita zone served once more as a region of refuge for the defeated but still well-organized Caxcáns and trans-Tarascan groups. For example, we know that Tenamaxtli and an important element of his Caxcán army took refuge in the Nayarita area after their defeat at the Peñol de Mixtón in 1541. During the following year, Guaxícar and an important element of his army followed Tenamaxtli's example, leaving the Etzatlán-Guaxacate (Magdalena) zone just prior to Mendoza's approach. Thus, beginning in 1542, there were two well-organized indigenous armies within the general Nayarita zone. They were concentrated in the Tecual and Cuano areas but undoubtedly had a major impact on the social order of the entire region, influencing the early course of Nayarita resistance to Spanish conquest in ways not yet entirely understood. This resistance lasted until the late seventeenth century in the area that the Huichols occupy today, and just to the west among the Coras it continued until 1722, when the Spanish destroyed the ceremonial center of Tonati.

At this point, let us return to reconstructing the sociopolitical organization of the Huichols' predecessors before the arrival of the Spanish in the general area. We postulate that the multiplicity of architectural forms in and around the study area indicates that a variety of inter-

related cultures or subcultures all participated in a well-integrated regional system. Some of the architectural variability is undoubtedly due to change over time, but most of it appears to be at least roughly coeval, dating predominantly from the Epi-Classic and Post-Classic periods. Only the circular structures at Cerro Prieto (figure 6) and Totoate (figure 7) came earlier. The character of the architectural forms strongly suggests that a series of regional hierarchies existed. These social hierarchies appear to have been very much more developed than the predominantly egalitarian models of the area in modern ethnographic literature would suggest. The egalitarian model of Huichol social organization stresses few if any economic differences or distinctions in political rank or status, and it posits that social classes do not exist. However, this is an artifact of the post-1722 mission period and of anthropologists' proclivity to confuse comunidades indígenas—which by definition are partitive societies that depend on an outside sociopolitical structure—with autonomous and isolated entities.

Whereas the distribution of ceremonial sites, or sites with ceremonial components, is by no means well understood, it seems that of those discovered so far, the most complicated are located outside the area still populated by Huichols in the late twentieth century. This may indicate that the more mountainous zone of contemporary Huichol habitation was tributary to or dependent on the centers of the Bolaños Valley to the east, the larger Tecual centers to the south and southwest, and the small trans-Tarascan states such as Guaxacate in the south and southeast (Weigand and García de Weigand 1996). Even if this area was tributary or dependent, its designation as a provincia and its geographical description by Arias y Saavedra both strongly imply that it had its own political organization (see below). Obviously, the Huichols' predecessors were independent enough to organize themselves in accord with their resource base. Their independence was at least in part guaranteed by the extremely rugged topography of their zone, as the Spanish learned on more than one occasion.

KAWITERUTSIXI AND POLITICAL TERRITORIALITY

For us, one of the most important indications of the prehispanic organization of this zone is the distribution of tukipa centers (figure 8) and the *cargo* (ceremonial office) of the *kawiteru* (figuratively, 'man

who knows everything'; plural: kawiterutsixi). It is also possible that the contemporary boundaries of the comunidades indígenas may mark some type of prehispanic political unit, but this observation is far more problematic than the first point. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were between three and five kawiterutsixi within each comunidad indígena (the entity endowed by Spanish crown charter with composite landholdings) or *gobernancia* (the entity defined by having an independent, *mayordomo*-based civil-religious hierarchy headed by a *tatuwani*).[2] Among the colonial and contemporary Huichols, there are or have been at least five gobernancias (San Sebastián Teponahuaxtlán, San Andrés Cohamiata, Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán, Guadalupe Ocotán, and Tuxpan de Bolaños) but only three comunidades indígenas (San Sebastián, San Andrés, and Santa Catarina). Tuxpan and Guadalupe Ocotán are annexes of San Sebastián and San Andrés, respectively, although neither one is well integrated within its comunidad.

We know from informants interviewed in the 1960s that during the nineteenth century, each kawiteru had a fixed territorial base. This base usually consisted of two, three, or occasionally four tukipa districts, each represented by a single, strong kawiteru who dominated the overall selection of other kawiterutsixi over long periods of time. Informant memory of the political history of the comunidades indígenas is conditioned by several factors. Strong personalities, such as Manuel Lozada and the Cristero leader Bautista stand out, and events are woven around them and their times even though these personalities were not part of the traditional political structure. Another way of relating history is to weave events and bygone ceremonial concerns around the strongest leaders within the traditional political structure. These individuals often were part of the civil-religious hierarchy in the comunidad indígena, and during the nineteenth century they very frequently were kawiterutsixi. Another constraint on historical memory concerns the universally accepted dividing line between specific ancestors and generalized ancestors, commonly set at five generations (García de Weigand and Weigand 1991). This observation applies to most historical personages as well, especially those who do not appear in formal, Spanish-language histories.

The genealogy of the Casa del Nayarit (House of Nayarit), preserved by Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 293), is an example of this

2. From colonial Nahuatl *tlatoani*, 'speaker', translated as *gobernador tradicional* in contemporary Spanish—*eds.*).

process of historical memory formation at work during the seventeenth century (ca. 1670). Huaynory, the *señor* (lord) at that time, was preceded by five named individuals prior to his generation: Nayarit, Huaynoli, Yoquari, Urysty, and Mychy. Huaynory and all five of his specific ancestors were remembered as individuals and related through the primary agnatic line. Prior to this agnatic list of rulers were the generalized *catziques antiguos* (ancient chiefs) (Tello 1968: 280). The historical divide between individual kawiterutsixi and those subsumed in the composite group of demigods and deities is thus about 125 years. Hence, during our first periods of research in San Sebastián in the 1960s, memory of named kawiterutsixi reached back to about 1840. This is about two to three generations after the comunidad indígena structure had finally been accepted by the Huichols in about 1780. In other words, at the outset of our fieldwork, historical memory still extended to the period when the kawiterutsixi were being definitively subordinated by the civil-religious cargo hierarchy, which the colonial political order had imposed. In the 1960s, these nineteenth-century kawiterutsixi were described as extremely powerful individuals. Indeed, in some cases they exercised the power of life and death over other Huichols, determined the timing of the religious cycle with little discussion, and received tributary wealth as "gifts" of goods or services from the people within their numerous tukipa districts: foodstuffs, cattle, women, servants, and corvée labor for their fields. Many of these prerogatives have since been taken over by the officers of the civil-religious hierarchies.

The tukipa districts or groupings of districts were not all of equal power, prestige, or importance; this differential pattern of political power still exists today, although in an attenuated form. Then as now there existed great differences in status and prestige among various kawiterutsixi, but in more ancient times these differences must have been translated into actual political power. As with the contemporary kawiterutsixi and civil-religious hierarchies, political power was defined in religious terms and expressed through ceremonialism, as was characteristic throughout Mesoamerica.

Apart from the kawiterutsixi, each tukipa also has its own hierarchy (*xukuri'ɨkate:* bowl-bearers; see Kindl in this volume—*eds.*). When a kawiteru must be replaced due to death or mental incapacity, this hierarchy or grouping of hierarchies is instrumental in helping to select the most qualified person, even though the nomination may be aided or

blocked by the consensus of other kawiterutsixi. Today, people simply "know" who the new kawiteru will be (since there are so few truly qualified candidates any longer). But during the nineteenth century, there were more prerequisites than generalized prestige or ceremonial knowledge: they also included lineage affiliation, wealth and size of the lineage, and alliances within a set of tukipa districts. While lineages were and continue to be bilateral, political power was and still is most frequently structured along agnatic lines.

The great political transformation between postconquest times (the late seventeenth century) and the pre-comunidad indígena period (the late eighteenth century) was that civil-religious cargo hierarchies gradually eclipsed kawiteru hierarchies. During the postcontact, preconquest period (1542–1680s for the Huichols, 1542–1722 for the Coras), the Spanish recognized several general categories of leaders, which were clearly cognates: (1) catziques (chiefs) (Tello 1968: 41–43, based on a Nayarita informant interviewed in Amatlán during the 1620s); (2) *principales* (ibid.; del Barrio 1990 [1604]: 265); (3) *"algún gran tlatuani"* (some great speaker) (ibid.: 261); (4) *"señores o tlatuanes o reyes"* (lords or speakers or kings) (ibid.: 271); (5) *"casa"* (house, in the sense of lineage, represented by the aforementioned list of five ancestors and one living individual; Arias y Saavedra 1990 [1673]: 294);[3] and (6) *"Nayarit"* (as a title; ibid.: 293). These individuals were always male, and their "houses" or titles—such as señor, principal, tlatuani, or catzique—show that without a doubt the general zone was dominated by a political hierarchy of strong individuals and/or councils. *Our contention is that the kawiterutsixi constituted an important section of this hierarchy or ruling elite among the Huichols' predecessors.*

It has long been a custom among the Huichols to incorporate each new form of political structure above the most important one of the recent past, never eliminating an earlier form but instead creating organizational layers. The oldest ones are near the bottom, the newest ones at the top. In this fashion, we see today's inter-comunidad council (the Unión de Comunidades Indígenas Huicholas, a product of the 1990s) at the top, the officers of the Presidencias de Bienes Comunales (from the Plan HUICOT days of the 1970s) just below, then the civil-religious

3. See the discussions of this term in Neurath (1998) and in Liffman, this volume, in which Nayarita society is compared to "house societies" discussed by Lévi-Strauss (cf. Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995)—*eds.*

hierarchy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and at the bottom the kawiterutsixi, who stand at the base of the sequence.

The tukipa hierarchies, which represent and are constituted by the rancherías, are quickly disappearing or being fundamentally modified by contemporary Huichols. More and more ceremonial activity is being carried out through folk-Catholic cargo obligations, although these too are in decline in many places. The most basic ceremonial and political unit continues to be the *rancho*. The ranchos with the most prestige are focal points for the most extensive bilateral lineages. These are structured along agnatic lines for the inheritance of ceremonial obligations, the rancho site per se, and much of the portable wealth, including cattle.

NAYARITAS IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

While most of the aforementioned sources deal with the Cora section of the Nayarita zone, it is very important to remember how the Nayarita zone was defined by the Spanish. The best geographical definitions were made by del Barrio (1990 [1604]: 270) and Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 287–90]). Del Barrio contrasted the Nayarita with the Tepehuans more in social than geographical terms, but his observation is critical to our argument. The Nayarita zone (including the zone of the Huichols' predecessors) had the well-defined political hierarchy mentioned previously, whereas the Tepehuans had "*ni señor ni tlatoani*" (neither lord nor speaker) (ibid.: 270). Arias y Saavedra is clearer still: he outlined and defined the Nayarita area by mentioning the towns or groups that enclosed it. To the north were the Tepehuans and to the east Mezquitic, Tenzompa, and Huejuquilla. In other words, the entire Huichol zone was included within the Nayarita zone. Hence, his general statements about political complexity referred to the entire zone except when he restricted the geographical referent to a specific provincia, site, or casa (house).

Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 288) defined four provincias in the Nayarita zone. Tzacaimuta was the provincia of the Casa del Nayarit, and by his day this was the most important subarea in the overall Nayarita zone. At Tzacaimuta was the pan-Nayarita ceremonial complex to which all the other provinces paid at least some ceremonial tribute, and at which were kept the mummified remains of the ancestors of Huaynory (the ruler during Arias y Saavedra's time). The ruins of this

temple and palace complex, located near the former Spanish Presidio de Tonati, are still impressive. Hahuanica, Mimbres, and Hueitzolme were the other three provinces, the latter very probably being a reference to at least the southern Huichol subarea.

"Hueitzolme" has often been suggested as an early variant of "Huichol" (Weigand 1985, 1992). Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 287) said that the Hueitzolme area was *"de la lingua thecualme"* (of the Tecual language). We know from the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of Huichol migration to the Tecual area that Huichol and Tecual were very closely related languages. Indeed, Tecual may have formed the linguistic link between Huichol and Cora (Weigand 1985, 1992). Valiñas (pers. com. 1993) considers this idea to be reasonable and logical. Therefore, it is not surprising that in 1673 Arias y Saavedra linked the Tecuals with the Huichols linguistically.

Arias y Saavedra offered specific insights as to the character of most of the provincias. Unfortunately for our study, Hueitzolme was not given a detailed treatment, and the place names listed are mostly in the south, apparently stretching all the way to the mountainous area north of Tequila. Whether the Hueitzolme and Xurute areas are separate, equivalent, or partially equivalent (as we believe) should remain an open topic for archival research. *However, from the late seventeenth century, the Hueitzolme area along with the Xurute and Chiapoli areas (from the sixteenth century), were all called "provincias," and all were obviously within the Nayarita zone.* The Xurute and Chiapoli areas were so designated on the 1579 Ortelius map (figure 3), and the Hueitzolme area was so designated in the Arias y Saavedra account from 1673. Since, as mentioned, "provincia" referred to a territory with a recognizable social hierarchy, political structure, and institutions of formal leadership and power, the concluding section will show how this provincia, like its neighbors, was in all probability a lineage-based society governed by kawiterutsixi and oriented around war and sacrifice.

SACRIFICE, WAR, AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN THE NAYARITA ZONE

Both the archaeological and archival records give strong indications as to how the Nayarita and their closest neighbors exercised power. The excavations by Hers (1989) at the Cerro de Huistle are most informative. At that site, by the Classic period (ca. A.D. 500–800), there

is evidence of human sacrifice and the ceremonial use of human bones in skull racks. Hers postulates chronic warfare for this time period throughout the general area. This warfare was clearly responsible for the location of so many sites in defensible positions (some of them fortified). The warfare, in turn, was a major stimulus for the zone's obviously increasing social complexity. By the Post-Classic period, the evidence for fortification and warfare is even clearer. Some of the violence throughout the area was undoubtedly related to the expansion of the Caxcán states on the eastern fringe of the Nayarita zone (Weigand and García de Weigand 1995, 1996).

The archival references to warfare are equally unambiguous. As mentioned, the 1542 *Pintura* (figure 2) shows various scenes of warfare and resultant human sacrifice throughout the Nayarita and neighboring zones. These descriptions could not possibly be any clearer. Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 293–95) mentioned specifics about the organization of warfare conducted by the Casa del Nayarit. The armed forces of this house were led by a *"capitán"* who carried *"la imagen del Nayarit o Pyltzintli"* (the image of the [political leader] Nayarit or the sky/sun god; ibid.: 293). The warfare was based on open bow-and-arrow formations, and the same soldiers often wielded spears and shields. In the formidable terrain of the Nayarita mountains, this type of warfare proved very effective and difficult to control. Ritual cannibalism followed the sacrifices of defeated soldiers.

According to our very preliminary reconstruction of the social order of the Huichols' predecessors, the political organization of the area was dominated by a series of well-defined, lineage-based councils or casas (houses), probably composed of kawiterutsixi. While each kawiteru represented a grouping of districts within the provincia, not every grouping was equally powerful or prestigious. The most powerful and prestigious kawiteru, backed by his "house," dominated the provincia; in turn, at least by the seventeenth century, he may have represented it at Tzacaimuta before the Casa del Nayarit. These relationships between the provincias obviously did not preclude warfare between the various polities of the Nayarita zone. This was also the case among the far more developed Caxcán states to the east (Weigand and García de Weigand 1995, 1996). As with the leader at the pan-Caxcán center at Teul, the Casa del Nayarit was the basis for a pan-Nayarita ceremonial leader, albeit at a more incipient level than with the Caxcáns. The Casa del Nayarit obviously did not produce an actual tlatoani (speaker) for the entire zone (even though this centralization of power was clearly under-

way). Arias y Saavedra (1990 [1673]: 293) described the wider regional role of the Casa del Nayarit (Tzacaimuta) in these words: *"no le reconocen como a Rey sino como a oráculo de quien toman parecer en sus guerras y sus futuros contingentes"* (they do not recognize him as king but rather as an oracle whose counsel they take in their wars and future affairs).

In general terms, the political organization we are postulating for the Xurute/Huichol zone had an agnatically inherited office structure dominated by specific lineages. We are certainly not dealing with "tribal" or egalitarian social forms. Instead, the evidence supports the idea that *cacicazgos* (chiefdoms) existed throughout the Nayarita zone, including the Xurute/Huichol area. These societies were characterized by hierarchically organized and inherited offices with fixed obligations and political power, and by armed forces engaged in widespread warfare, possibly of a territorial nature.

The system was probably quite flexible, because we know that the sociopolitical situation of the entire zone had been in constant flux at least since the thirteenth century (and probably earlier). As mentioned, from the thirteenth century until the Spanish conquest, the Caxcáns of Teul and Tlaltenango—who were the neighbors of the easternmost Nayaritas—were sponsoring conquests and warfare to the south and southwest (figure 1). Without a doubt, these powerful neighbors, organized as conquest states, must have fundamentally affected the social organization and political configuration of the Huichols' predecessors. This pattern of social disruption and conflict continued well into the colonial period, first as a consequence of the Spanish suppression of the Nueva Galicia rebellion and then as a prolonged resistance to incorporation into the colonial order (the Nayarita wars).

The kawiterutsixi and the tukipa districts in the Sierra de los Huicholes formed an intimate and integrated part of the overall socioeconomic and political order of western Mexico, even if they were geographically somewhat marginal to the main theaters of cultural development and political action. The southern districts of the Huichols' predecessors were oriented toward the polities of the Tecuals and the small states in the Etzatlán-Guaxacate zone, whereas the eastern and northern districts were oriented toward the Caxcán conquest states. Thus, they were completely immersed in a wide world of systematized interaction and were never isolated or completely autonomous in prehispanic, colonial, or more contemporary times. It is simply a fiction to maintain otherwise. The Huichols have always been actors on a far wider stage. ✣

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