

The Aztec pantheon fully deified three culturally significant animals.

CHALCHIUHTOTOLIN, Jade Turkey {*chal-chewh-to-to-leen*}

Chalchiuhtotolin is a *nagual* of Tezcatlipoca. Often called the Green Tezcatlipoca, he's the magnificent patron of the Jaguar warriors of the night and of power and glory for warriors in general, cleansing them of contamination, absolving them of guilt, and overcoming their fates. Patron of the Water *trecena*, he's also patron of the day Tecpatl (Flint), the sacramental knife. As a powerful sorcerer, the Turkey is a trickster who plays a flute in the night to lead people astray. Whoever chances to see him should seize him and demand to be granted a wish.

While symbolic of water, sustenance and abundance, Chalchiuhtotolin is also associated with disease and pestilence, a creature of death and decay, regeneration and transformation. He's also linked to the earth's fertility, agricultural cycles, and the natural order of life and death. Appeasing Chalchiuhtotolin was believed to ensure a smooth transition for the deceased into the afterlife and to promote fertility and abundance in the earthly realm.

As the *trecena* patron, the Jade Turkey was variously envisioned. Aubin presents him as a ridiculous “rubber chicken” creature. Borbonicus paints him as a guy in an ornamental turkey suit with a smoking mirror in his headdress signifying his connection with Tezcatlipoca. Meanwhile, I've rendered Borgia's elegant enthroned version in the naturalistic colors of the native ocellated turkey (source of the mythological prototype). The patron of the day Flint is shown in a very different style, but still rather elegant.



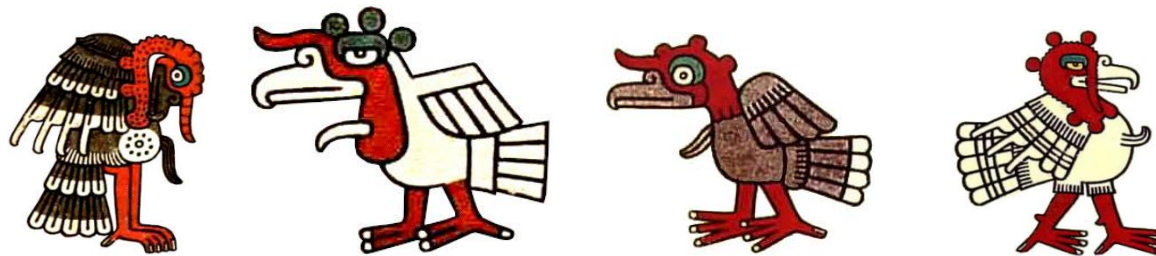
Tonalamatl Aubin

Tonalamatl Borbonicus

Tonalamatl Borgia

Codex Borgia

The Jade Turkey only appears infrequently in the non-calendrical codices as sketchy cartoons in Fejervary-Mayer and Laud. These are identifiable by the “beard” of feathers protruding from their breasts, which can also be seen above in the Borgia examples as decorative tassels.



Codex Fejervary-Mayer

Codex Laud

Codex Vaticanus B devoted more detail to its two images of the Turkey, first as patron of the day Flint in a striking portrait with spread tail-feathers and then as an almost abstract *trecena* patron enthroned with tons of divine folderol. Yohual's jeweled bird wears divine quetzal plumes and another smoking mirror in iconographic exuberance.



Codex Vaticanus B



Tonalamatl Vaticanus B



Tonalamatl Yohual

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HUEHUECOYOTL (Old Coyote) {*hwe-hwe-koy-otl*}

Huehuecoyotl is the trickster god of mischief and pranks and can lead one into trouble. Patron of the day Lizard and the Flower *trecena*, along with Macuil Cuetzpallin (Five Lizard), he's a deity of sexual indulgence, and with Xochipilli and Macuil Xochitl (Five Flower), he's also a deity of music, dance, storytelling, and choral singing. Personifying astuteness, pragmatism, worldly wisdom, male beauty, sexuality, and youth, he's a balance of old and new, worldly and spiritual, male and female, and youth and old age. He's a shape-shifter, turning into animals or humans with sexual partners female or male of any species. Among his male lovers were Xochipilli, the Flower Prince, and Opochtli, a god of hunting. Huehuecoyotl brings unexpected pleasure, sorrow, and strange happenings, and people appealed to him to mitigate or reverse their fates.

Images of Huehuecoyotl as patron of the Flower *trecena* are remarkably ornate:



Tonalamatl Aubin



Tonalamatl Borbonicus



Tonalamatl Borgia



Codex Fejervary-Mayer



Codex Vaticanus B



Tonalamatl Vaticanus B



Codex Borgia



Codex Vaticanus B



Tonalamatl Yohual

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XOLOTL (Evening Star) {*sho-lott*}

Xolotl, the Evening Star, god of twins, is often called the “Evil Twin” of Quetzalcoatl (by the goddess Chimalma), while other lore has them borne by Ometeotl, the Creative Pair. Still other lore says Xolotl and Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli (Morning Star) are the real twins, though the Morning Star is the more dangerous/evil, and what’s more they’re both *naguals* of Quetzalcoatl (Venus). Also, reflecting the Maya Hero Twins, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca are famously considered twins, which further obfuscates divine family trees.

Usually, twins were seen as monstrosities, one of the two often killed at birth, and so Xolotl is called the deity of monstrosities. Adding to his “evil” reputation, he’s considered the god of malice and treachery, representing the bestial side of people, the opposite of intellect.

Recalling the European three-headed dog Cerberus in Hades and the jackal/dog Anubis in ancient Egypt’s Duat, Xolotl was most often depicted as a dog—serving as psychopomp of souls in Mictlan. In the same way, when the Cihuateteo have brought the sun to its setting, the dog-god escorts Tonatiuh on his nightly journey through the Underworld. Xolotl is patron of the day Earthquake (*Ollin*) and of the Vulture *trecena*.

The full gallery for Xolotl is included in the group of deities associated with death and the Underworld. As the dog is one of the *tonalli* in the calendar, I’ll start with its day-signs in the several codices, which curiously resemble that old beer-advertising mascot Spuds MacKenzie.



Aubin



Borbonicus



Borgia



Cospi



Fejervary-Mayer



Laud



Vaticanus B



Vaticanus B



Yohual



To wrap up this gallery of animal deities, let me offer three of the most striking codex images of Xolotl which I've "re-created for your viewing pleasure.



Tonalamatl Borgia



Codex Vaticanus B



Tonalamatl Yohual

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