

History of the Spanish Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas.pdf/45



Exported from Wikisource on September 4, 2024

22 SPANISH CONQUEST OF YUCATAN AND THE ITZAS

From this, people imagine that this nation is more numerous than it really is.

“The largest and best calculation which I can make of this nation was from the account which the King and his chiefs gave me, and this was that the *Peten* in which we stopped consisted of twenty-two districts and towns, and they did not know how to give me the count of each town, since they know how to count only up to twenty, and in going beyond many twenties, they do not know how to explain it, for it appears to them an infinite number^[1] I did not have much time to verify this, for I preferred to employ the little time I had in baptizing; but nevertheless from what I saw and understood of the number of the people of all ages, I say that *Peten Ytza*, with the other *Petenes*, *Cha Kan Ytzaes* and *Tuluncies* (?), with the communities, which are found on the main land, will all come up to twenty-four or twenty-five thousand souls,- a thousand more or less. This computation I make from the *Peten* on which the King lives, for he told me that all the *Petens* were equal in the number of people, with but little difference.

The Itzas Described. “These *Ytzaes* are well-featured and, like mestizos, nearly all of a light complexion and of very perfect stature and of natural gifts. But the Devil has compelled them, in their weakness, to make themselves

hideous and witches, because it appears to them a greater feat to frighten by their appearance than to conquer by their strength. And so most of them have their faces cut and rubbed in with black, and some streaked like black negroes. And this hideousness many women also show in their ear lobes, so that it is not possible for them to wear ear drops or pendants. Painting themselves or cutting on their faces the form of the animal which they have as a charm, the men consider themselves as more genteel than the women; and as they are of this opinion, they dress themselves in this way, tying up their hair with bands of cotton which are made by them, woven with many curious designs of various colors, with cords and tassels at the ends, made very beautifully. They clothe themselves with some-

1. [↑](#)This is difficult to understand, as the early Maya peoples had recorded numbers running into the millions.

About this digital edition

This e-book comes from the online library [Wikisource](#). This multilingual digital library, built by volunteers, is committed to developing a free accessible collection of publications of every kind: novels, poems, magazines, letters...

We distribute our books for free, starting from works not copyrighted or published under a free license. You are free to use our e-books for any purpose (including commercial exploitation), under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 Unported](#) license or, at your choice, those of the [GNU FDL](#).

Wikisource is constantly looking for new members. During the transcription and proofreading of this book, it's possible that we made some errors. You can report them at [this page](#).

The following users contributed to this book:

- Simon Burchell
- William Maury Morris II
- Xover