

THE STUDY OF MAYA RITUAL DRAWINGS

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Abstract

The study of ritual drawings in the historical Maya civilization offers profound insights into their religious practices, cosmology, and cultural beliefs. The ancient Maya, known for their remarkable achievements in art and astronomy, left behind a wealth of artwork that played a central role in their rituals and ceremonies. This paper delves into the significance of ritual drawings, their symbolism, and iconography, as well as their connection to the Maya's religious worldview. A prominent aspect of Maya rituals involved bloodletting, which is vividly portrayed in the ritual drawings. These self-sacrificial acts were performed to offer the gods the life force represented by blood, ensuring harmony in the cosmic order. The Maya's intricate calendar system was another crucial element in their rituals, with drawings marking significant dates and celestial alignments relevant to their religious events. The study of Maya ritual drawings uses qualitative and quantitative method. A systematic literature review (SLR) is a research method used to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing scholarly literature on a specific topic. The process is systematic and follows a well-defined set of steps to minimize bias and ensure rigor. The findings suggest that drawings have been utilized as a means of documentation and artistic expression in diverse civilizations, offering a window into their historical and cultural evolution. The prevalence of themes related to civilization, ritual, and religion in the visual representations underscores the enduring impact of these aspects on human societies throughout history.

Keywords: Maya, ritual drawing, civilization, history

I. INTRODUCTION

Drawing played a crucial role in the rituals and ceremonies of the ancient Maya civilization, offering a glimpse into their rich spiritual beliefs and cultural practices. The Maya civilization, known for its remarkable achievements in art, architecture, and astronomy, thrived in Mesoamerica from approximately 2000 BCE to 1500 CE. The study of Maya ritual drawings provides valuable insights into their religious worldview and the significance of art in their daily lives [1][2].

1. **Ritual Context:** Ritual drawings among the Maya were often associated with religious ceremonies, including offerings, dedications, and propitiatory acts. These drawings were created on various surfaces, such as temple walls, pottery vessels, codices (screenfold books), and murals.
2. **Symbolism and Iconography:** Maya ritual drawings were replete with symbolic

representations and iconography. Specific gods, celestial bodies, animals, plants, and supernatural beings featured prominently in these drawings, each with its unique significance tied to cosmology, fertility, rain, and the cycle of life and death.

3. **Codices:** The Maya codices were particularly significant in preserving ritual drawings and religious texts. These screenfold books, made of bark paper, were adorned with intricate paintings and glyphs that narrated the myths, ceremonies, and historical events of the Maya civilization. The most famous surviving Maya codices include the Dresden Codex and the Madrid Codex.
4. **Bloodletting Rituals:** Bloodletting rituals were a central part of Maya religious practices, and ritual drawings often depicted scenes of rulers and nobles engaging in self-sacrificial bloodletting. The blood rep-

resented life force and was offered to the gods as a means of sustaining cosmic balance and maintaining the order of the universe.

5. **Ritual Calendar:** The Maya had a complex calendar system that played a vital role in their religious and ritual activities. Drawing was used to record important dates, auspicious times for ceremonies, and the alignments of celestial bodies that influenced their religious events.
6. **Ritual Performance:** Maya ritual drawings were not just static representations but part of a larger performative context. The drawings were used in conjunction with music, dance, chanting, and other ceremonial elements to invoke the presence of gods and ancestors and communicate with the spiritual realm.
7. **Religious Hierarchy:** Ritual drawings often depicted rulers and priests playing significant roles in ceremonies, emphasizing the close connection between political authority and religious legitimacy in Maya society.

Studying the ritual drawings of historical Maya provides a window into the complexities of their belief system, their reverence for nature, and their quest to understand the cosmos and their place within it. The art of the Maya not only serves as an artistic legacy but also provides invaluable archaeological and anthropological evidence of their vibrant spiritual traditions and cultural heritage. [3]

The paper also highlights the performative aspect of ritual drawings, emphasizing that they were part of larger ceremonial contexts, accompanied by music, dance, and chanting to invoke the presence of deities and communicate with the spiritual realm. Rulers and priests often took center stage in the drawings, underscoring the intertwining of political authority and religious legitimacy in Maya society.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study would likely employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including analysis of artistic styles, symbolism, and historical texts related to the Maya civilization. Additionally, it may involve collaboration with experts in the fields of art history, archae-

ology, and anthropology to gain comprehensive insights into the context and cultural significance of the drawings.

A systematic literature review (SLR) is a research method used to identify, evaluate, and synthesize existing scholarly literature on a specific topic [4]. The process is systematic and follows a well-defined set of steps to minimize bias and ensure rigor [5]. Here is an overview of the systematic literature review method:

1. **Research Question:** Define a clear and specific research question or objective that the systematic literature review aims to address. This question should guide the entire review process.
2. **Search Strategy:** Develop a comprehensive search strategy to identify relevant literature. This includes selecting appropriate databases, journals, and other sources, as well as using specific keywords and search terms related to the research question.
3. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:** Establish specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine which studies will be included in the review. These criteria can be based on factors such as publication date, study design, geographic location, language, and relevance to the research question.
4. **Study Selection:** Independently screen the search results based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This step involves reviewing titles, abstracts, and full-text articles to select studies that meet the review's requirements.
5. **Data Extraction:** Extract relevant data from the selected studies, such as study characteristics, methodologies, key findings, and any other relevant information related to the research question.
6. **Quality Assessment:** Evaluate the quality and validity of the included studies. This assessment helps to determine the reliability of the evidence presented in the literature.
7. **Data Synthesis:** Analyze and synthesize the findings from the selected studies. This process involves identifying patterns, trends, and themes across the literature and drawing conclusions based on the evidence.
8. **Interpretation and Discussion:** Interpret the results and discuss their implications in the

context of the research question. Address any discrepancies or contradictions found in the literature and provide insights into potential gaps or areas for further research.

9. Reporting: Present the systematic literature review in a structured and transparent manner. This includes providing detailed information about the search strategy, study selection process, data extraction, quality assessment, and synthesis of findings.
10. Conclusion: Conclude the systematic literature review by summarizing the key findings and their implications. Highlight the contributions of the review to the existing knowledge and identify potential avenues for future research.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Question

The research question "Drawing for rituals, case study historical Maya" aims to explore the role of drawings in the rituals and ceremonies of the historical Maya civilization. The specific focus is on understanding the significance and use of drawings in their religious practices and cultural traditions.

To conduct this research, the study would delve into historical records, archaeological findings, and artifacts related to the ancient Maya civilization. It would involve a thorough examination of drawings, paintings, and other visual representations found in ancient Maya temples, tombs, and artifacts.

The research would seek to address questions such as:

1. How were drawings used in the religious rituals and ceremonies of the historical Maya civilization?
2. What were the common themes and symbols depicted in the drawings related to rituals?
3. How did drawings play a role in communicating religious beliefs and spiritual concepts among the Maya people?
4. What was the cultural significance of drawings in the context of Maya society?
5. Were there specific drawing techniques or styles associated with religious art in the Maya civilization?

3.2 Search Strategy

To conduct a comprehensive search on the topic "Drawing for rituals, case study historical Maya," it is essential to use a well-defined search strategy that includes various sources and databases, as exploration of the search strategy:

1. Identify Keywords: Start by identifying relevant keywords related to the research question. Keywords may include "drawing for rituals," "historical Maya," "Maya civilization," "religious art," "ancient Maya drawings," "Maya rituals and ceremonies," etc.
2. Library Catalogs: Utilize library catalogs to search for books and academic publications related to the topic. Use the identified keywords to search for relevant titles and authors.
3. Academic Databases: Access academic databases such as JSTOR, PubMed, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. Use a combination of keywords and Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to refine the search. For example, search for "Maya rituals AND drawings" or "historical Maya AND religious art."
4. Archaeological Journals: Explore journals specializing in archaeology and ancient civilizations. Look for articles and case studies specifically focusing on Maya drawings and their role in rituals.
5. Anthropological Studies: Include anthropological studies and research on Maya culture to gain insights into the religious and cultural context of the drawings.
6. Conference Proceedings: Explore conference proceedings related to archaeology, anthropology, and art history, as they may contain recent research on the topic.
7. Expert Consultation: Reach out to experts in the field of Maya archaeology, art history, or anthropology for recommendations and insights into valuable sources.
8. Geographic Focus: Specify the geographic focus to target sources specifically related to the Maya civilization in Mesoamerica.

Several publications including articles in proceedings, journals, books, etc. are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Publication on drawing of Maya ritual

Publication	Online	Printed	Total
Books	30	16	46
Journals	9	0	9
Proceedings	18	0	18
Report	6	0	6
Web page	13	0	13
Total			92

3.2 Data Analyze and Synthesize the Findings

The results of the data processing, as shown in Figure 1, indicated that drawing represent some most issues, such as civilization, ritual, and religion.

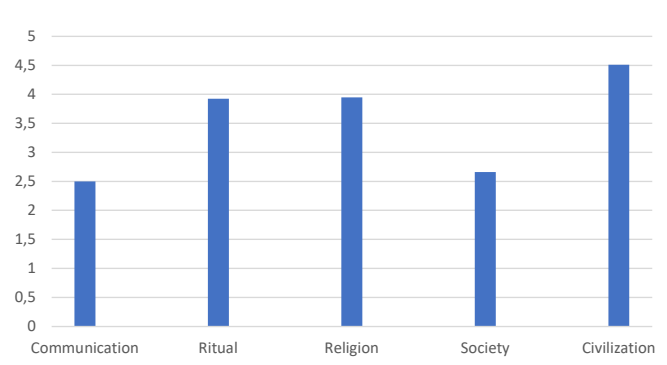


Figure 1. Results of literature review

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the data processing results, as depicted in Figure 1, provide valuable insights into the significance of drawings in relation to key themes such as civilization, ritual, and religion. The visual representation in the figure highlights the prominence of these issues, indicating that drawings have served as a powerful medium for conveying and preserving cultural and spiritual aspects across various societies.

The findings suggest that drawings have been utilized as a means of documentation and artistic expression in diverse civilizations, offering a window into their historical and cultural evolution. The prevalence of themes related to civilization, ritual, and religion in the visual representations underscores the enduring impact of these aspects on human societies throughout history. [6]

Moreover, the versatility of drawings as a form of communication becomes evident through their ability to transcend linguistic barriers and bridge

the gaps between different cultures and generations. The enduring presence of these themes in drawings signifies their enduring role in shaping human identities and fostering a sense of shared cultural heritage.

As these results provide a foundation for further exploration, future research can delve deeper into the contextual interpretations of drawings in specific historical periods and cultural contexts. By doing so, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural, spiritual, and social significance of drawings as a form of visual communication in human societies.

Overall, the data processing outcomes underscore the enduring importance of drawings as a potent means of expression and a vital tool for understanding the complex interplay between civilization, ritual, and religion in shaping the human experience across time and cultures.

Future research in the area of drawings and their role in rituals, particularly focusing on historical Maya civilization, could explore several avenues to deepen our understanding of this topic on Ritual Practices. It will examine the role of drawings in actual ritual practices of the Maya civilization. Research could involve studying historical texts, inscriptions, and other primary sources to understand the procedures and purposes of rituals involving drawings.

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