



Balancing the World: Contemporary Maya ajq'ijab in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Daniel Croles Fitjar

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In *Balancing the World*, the author illuminates what an *ajq'ij*, or «daykeeper», is by presenting material he collected in a series of interviews with practitioners of Maya spirituality. Frequently labeled as Maya priests, shamans, spiritual guides, or even witches, the men and women called *ajq'ijab* do a variety of work to help their visitors, their ancestors, the spirits and the world itself. Nine interviewees from the Quetzaltenango area in the Guatemalan highlands tell about how they cure and avert illness, perform divinations, communicate with the ancestors and do their part in balancing the world. Most of them agree that they have been chosen for this responsibility and they see it as both a gift and a burden.

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