

## SOME MAYAN NAMES FOR CERTAIN LEPIDOPTERA IN THE YUCATAN PENINSULA

The native people of this, a most exotic and un-Mexican corner of México, speak today one of the richest dialects in the whole republic. Being a very sensitive people as well as very observing sometimes in the most ultimate details, their language naturally reflects these characters. Among the birds some of their own names become just as differentiating as some of the modern day taxonomists'. Let me give a few examples among the Lepidoptera.

*X-MAHAN-NAIL*. This is the name given to *Erebus odora* Linné, a large noctuid that has the habit of entering houses even in broad daylight. It is given that the moth is borrowing one's house in which to take shelter from the daily torrential downpours, from which the name comes: *MAHAN*, to borrow; and *NAIL*, a "house place".

*X-CHAIL*. This is the name usually given to *Papilio philolaus* Boisd. and *epidaus* Dbl. in the drier parts of the peninsula where other similar species are not known, but in Quintana Roo, it also refers to *P. ageslaus* Guér. and *protesilaus* L.

*AKAT-TZUNU-UN*. A very well known moth group, the hawkmoths. During the rainy season they are very abundant, and there isn't a soul in the whole peninsula who doesn't know this one. *AKAT*, or *AKAB*, means darkness, *TZUNU-UN*, hummingbird, or literally "night hummingbird". In Quintana Roo, it is sometimes called the *DZE-KIK* which comes from *DZE*, blood or sap, nectar; *KIK*, from the verb *UKIK*, drinking, or drinker.

*X-ANDAS*. I wonder if this name which applies to *Morpho peleides montezuma* Guen. has some influence from Spanish. *ANDAR* means in Spanish to walk, or stroll, and this may refer to the way in which this species leisurely flies along forest paths. Upon asking natives the exact meaning of its name, one is only told that it is its name and that they cannot give it a derived meaning.

*TU-TUCH-KIBI*. This name refers to the skippers, especially the tailed skippers, of which there are many species. The name comes from *TU-TUCH* which means jumping, referring to their skipping flight.

*TATAC-CHE*. There are to my knowledge 7 species of the genus *Ageronia* to which this name applies here in the peninsula. The name refers to the noise when one beats two sticks together, a sort of "tac-tac"; and *CHE*, which means wood, or sticks. Some people call them simply *X-TAC*. The "tac-tac" noise of course refers to the noise the various species in the genus make when settling a territorial dispute.

*PEPEN*. A general word which applies to all butterflies and moths, except hawkmoths and certain species well known like *Erebus odora* and its close relatives.