Acknowledgments

This book is the result of four years of research conducted between Huautla de Jiménez in Oaxaca and Leiden University in the Netherlands. The project developed out of the generosity of Prof. Dr. Maarten E. R. G. N. Jansen, who invited me to join a research group at the Faculty of Archaeology to investigate Mesoamerican conceptions of time in modern communities and ancient books. The project, titled “Time in Intercultural Context: The Indigenous Calendars of Mexico and Guatemala,” received funding through an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council in the context of the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement No. 295434.

I am most grateful to Maarten for remembering our talks and discussions when I was a Master’s student at Leiden in 2001 and 2002 and first expressed my interest in ceremonial discourse and ancient religious pictography to him. I also thank my colleagues at the Faculty of Archaeology for their seminars and other informal discussions. In particular, I must mention Paul van den Akker, my office mate, whose doctoral research in the Maya community of Momostenango intersected with mine in Huautla in many insightful ways. I thank him for his explanations of the intricacies of the Mesoamerican calendar and, in turn, for his patience in listening to my endless counting of veintenas and trecenas. Discussions with Maarten were always profoundly stimulating, as I have come to expect from the years of intellectual interactions that I have had the privilege sharing with him. My professor and former graduate adviser, Eloise Quiñones Keber, was consistent with her support, enthusiasm, and readiness in sharing hard-to-find references, whether in New York, California, or France. Although my friend and photographer, Javier García, traveled with me to Huautla only once, he graced our trip and memories with his beautiful photos for years to come. Many people lent a hand in later stages of revisions, before and after the pandemic changed our lives. Christina Zahra in Mexico and Danny Zborover, John Pohl, and Isaías Morales in the United States helped me with electronic resources, and Edward Abse shared many insightful ideas on Mazatec shamanism. I would also like to thank Ximena Vargas and David Latorre for their hospitality in Bogotá. In particular, David retouched every single illustration and recording for this book, adding much to its final value.

In Huautla de Jiménez, I must first and foremost thank Santiago Cortés Martínez. His generosity in introducing me to Mazatec culture, language, and ceremonies cannot truly be expressed in a few lines. I hope that we will be able to write our own book together in Spanish one day and do justice to our collaboration. Along with Santiago, Valeriano García Martínez and Miguel García García, who worked at the Casa de la Cultura María Sabina between 2014 and 2016, gave me the opportunity to collaborate with the community of Huautla in many ways, and I always felt welcome there. Finally, although my Mazatec dog Galgo will never read these words, I am sure that he knows how thankful and blessed I have been to find such a loyal companion to wander the streets of Huautla.

Ai miei nonni