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ARCHITECTURE, RITUAL, AND SOCIAL IDENTITY AT LATE POSTCLASSIC ZACPETÉN, PETÉN, GUATEMALA: IDENTIFICATION OF THE KOWOJ

By

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A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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Southern Illinois University
Carbondale

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for the
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AN ABSTRACT FOR THE DISSERTATION OF

TIMOTHY W. PUGH for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in ANTHROPOLOGY, presented on March 28, 2001 at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

TITLE: Architecture, Ritual, and Social Identity at Late Postclassic Zacpetén, Petén, Guatemala: Identification of the Kowoj.

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Don S. Rice

This project investigates the ceremonial architecture and associated ritual practices of Late Postclassic (A.D. 1250 to 1540) and Contact Period (A.D. 1541 to 1697) Zacpetén, Petén, Guatemala to observe the ritualized construction of social boundaries by the Kowoj, an ethnic group occupying the site from approximately A.D. 1400 to 1697. Ritual performances are among the most powerful means through which social groups communicate information about themselves to themselves and others and are important media for storing and remembering collective memories. The ceremonial architecture at Zacpetén recorded crucial information concerning Kowoj history, social organization, and cosmogony.

Zacpetén is an archaeological site on a peninsula in Late Salpetén, which lies in an area believed to have been occupied by the Kowoj. The Kowoj were the enemies of the Itza, the most powerful group in the region. In A.D. 1697, the Spaniards, who had been attempting to convert the Itza to Christianity for approximately 172 years, conquered the Itza capital, Nojpeten, which rested on an island in Lake Petén Itzá. The conquest of Nojpeten led to the subjugation of the Itza and Kowoj, many of whom were

resettled in mission communities. While information regarding the Kowoj is sparse, they were known to have had fortified settlements in the northeast portion of the region and claimed to have migrated from Mayapán in Yucatán, México. The Itza, who occupied the western and southern portions of the Petén lakes region, claimed to have migrated from Chich'en Itza also in Yucatán.

Archaeological excavations at Zacpetén cleared shallow humus and collapse from ceremonial and domestic architecture and revealed in situ artifacts and features. The distributions of artifacts were utilized to reconstruct activity areas in ceremonial and domestic contexts. Rituals at Zacpetén were repetitive, ordered, traditional, formal and occurred in special/sacred contexts. The ritual assemblages housing the performances were constructed very similar to those of other sites in the Kowoj region and had layouts nearly identical to those of Mayapán. These ceremonial groups did more than materially define the Kowoj region; they likely acted as proof of migration from Mayapán and social continuity with the city and served as foundations of Kowoj identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present work would have been impossible without the previous research in central Petén conduct by Dr. Don Rice, my dissertation chair, and Dr, Prudence Rice, one of my committee members. The thesis of this dissertation is largely based upon suppositions made or suggested by their earlier work. Dr. Grant Jones, another committee member, also deserved thanks for reconstructing the seventeenth century political geography of Central Petén. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Andy Hofling and Dr. Jonathan Hill for their editing, suggestions, and patience. I am also grateful to Myra Kaha for support during the final year of dissertation writing. Jimee Choi and Christi McGee deserve thanks for proofing and encouragement. I also thank Tedi Thomas for being helpful, as always.

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Leslie Cecil directed the analysis of non-censer ceramics and as the laboratory director, organized all of the materials in the lab. Censers were analyzed by Dr. Prudence Rice, Leslie Cecil, Matt Rockmore and myself. I would like to thank Leslie for insisting that I take all the good screens, buckets, and workers and Matt Rockmore for happily filling out lot cards *ad infinitum*. The author directed the analysis of non-ceramic artifacts discussed in this dissertation. Bill Duncan has conducted a preliminary osteological analysis including the investigation of butchering marks on human bone, some of which is included below. With the exception of the butchering marks and other noted analyses, the osteological interpretations listed below were made by the author. Laboratory assistants included Miriam Claderon, Iris Avelar, Mario Reinoso, Aura Soto, Yulissa Lopez, Eliza Suntecun, Jose Luis Portillo, Martha Rax, Henry Esquivel, Manuel Gregorio, Rony Toraya, Marlon Gonzalez, Victor Ubaldozoc, Mario Roberto Ramirez,

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Archaeological and archival data suggest two Maya groups dominated the 17th century political geography of central Petén, Guatemala: the Itza and Kowoj. The Itza traced their ancestry to Chich'en Itza in north-central Yucatán, México, and the Kowoj claimed to have migrated from Mayapán in northwestern Yucatán (Figures 1-1 and 1-2), which correlates with Yucatecan ethnohistory, placing the group in the city prior its collapse around AD 1441 (Roys 1967: 69, Jones 1998: 11). Seventeenth-century Spanish accounts describe the approximate territorial distribution of these groups and their political relations in central Petén (Jones 1998: 16). However, ethnic connections with northern Yucatecan homelands have not been previously confirmed for either group and little preceding research has investigated social interactions of Late Postclassic-to-Colonial period Petén communities. This dissertation investigates the Kowoj account of migration from Mayapán by describing their ceremonial architecture and patterns of ritual practice, then searching for correspondences between these data and those of other Late Postclassic, Colonial, and modern lowland Maya in Yucatán, México; Petén, Guatemala; and Chiapas, México. One purpose of the research was to discern whether there was evidence of cultural continuity between Petén and Mayapán in the form of similarities in ceremonial architecture and ritual practices.

The archaeological site, Zacpetén, Petén, Guatemala (Figure 1-3), investigated by the author under the aegis of Proyecto Maya Colonial from 1995 to 1997, provides the

central corpus of data. Zacpetén, which lies in the area believed to have been once controlled by the Kowoj, should bear close similarities in ritual practices with nearby sites in Petén also believed to have been controlled by the Kowoj. Such performances would have distinguished the Kowoj from other groups in Petén who did not conduct such rites or claim Mayapán ancestry. It was further hypothesized that the ceremonial architecture of Zacpetén was a symbolic link between the site and the Late Postclassic Maya capital of Mayapán, the purported homeland of the Petén Kowoj, as Colonial documents note indigenous elite residing in the city recreated its prestigious architecture and ritual practices in their homelands (Landa 1941: 38). The architecture and ritual practices of Zacpetén should be very similar to those of Mayapán, though not identical because many Petén Kowoj constructions post-date the fall of Mayapán (ca. A.D. 1441). It was expected that ritual architecture and activity areas would be more consistent within the Kowoj area in Petén than they were with Mayapán because innovations, random change, and shifts in social relationships would have transformed ritual practices as they were transmitted between generations. Ritual performances and their architectural contexts were the primary targets of the research because they are among the most important means through which groups communicate information about themselves and commemorate collective memories (Leach 1976: 45; Connerton 1989: 70-72).

Ritual and Social Identity

The process of archaeologically defining an ethnic group is not simply the illumination of shared cultural patterns, it is the search for ways in which a group communicates and, thereby, constructs its social boundaries. In situations where

historical documentation is extremely limited or absent, the determination of which aspects of the archaeological record reflect ethnic demarcation is difficult if not impossible to ascertain (Kobylinski 1989: 303-312; Shennan 1989: 1-32). Perhaps the most prominent, efficient, and powerful means to convey social boundaries is through ritual performances. Such performances transmit collective memories of the social prototype, events, or people exemplifying the social group (Connerton 1989: 61). In societies in which most, if not all, of the population cannot read, public rituals convey information orally or through reenactments. Much of the information contained in rituals is in the form of metaphor. Social groups and their relationships are transformed into symbols that are easy, if not "good to think" (Tambiah 1969: 423-457) . The complexity of the social milieu is revealed in ritual performance through literal and metaphorical discourses that are internalized by members of the society and "others," thereby allowing the reevaluation and subsequent reconstruction or transformation of group boundaries (Turner 1969: 166-168). Ritual performances also evoke emotional responses from participants that affect sentiments of social solidarity with the in-group and feelings of estrangement from out-groups (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 10-15). In sum, social rituals are performances through which we communicate information about ourselves to ourselves (Leach 1976: 45) and to others (Baumann 1992: 97-115).

The creation of social boundaries is not a static enterprise and ritual performances do not necessarily blindly perpetuate social structure. Boundaries are changed as groups make or break alliances, fight wars or negotiate peace, establish or change trade networks, and migrate from place to place. The latter scenario is of importance to the present work, as the Kowoj claimed to be a migrant population. Since territory is

omnipresent and one of the most powerful social metaphors, migrants lose direct contact with an important physical reinforcement of their social identity. Furthermore, population movements generally entail the termination of old and the initiation of new social relationships that redefine the group. Such transformed social realities and boundary redefinitions are incorporated into ritual performances. In essence, migration involves a major reevaluation of the social world that must be communicated to the in-group and possibly new out-groups (Leonard 1997: 118-135; Malkki 1997; 52-72). Migrants are often united through collectively remembered homelands that living group members might have never visited (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 39).

The Kowoj and Itza were speakers of Yucatecan Maya. Modern speakers of this language reside in modern Yucatan and Chiapas, Mexico, Belize, and Petén, Guatemala. Many rituals performed by speakers of Yucatecan Maya are focused on agricultural success, maintaining health, and feeding the gods. Ritual performances also involve the reenactment of basic cosmic categories (Hanks 1990: 377) and evoke sentiments of solidarity among participants (Boremanse 1998: 29). The rituals of particular interest to the present research are those involving the entire community, especially dedication rites occurring at the completions of calendrical cycles, which signify the death then rebirth of society. These rituals are ultimately tied to primordial events in which the entire universe, including social groups, was created through the differentiation of chaos (Taube 1988: 310-311; Freidel and Schele 1993: 140). Social groups are also distinguished by emphasizing origins such as the historical migration of a population (Jones 1998: 16) or their primordial birth from a flower or cave (Davis 1978: 21; Edmonson 1986: 27).

As in many societies, Maya social differentiation is often explained through animal metaphors (Edmonson 1986: 25; Tozzer 1940). Identity is also objectified in communal symbols (Restall 1997: 153) and embodied through pilgrimages and spatial circumscription (Turner 1973: 207-208). Symbols representing society are manifest in a variety of forms, but those of the Maya tend to be living religious icons (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 108-110). Such icons can be images of gods, saints, world trees, cosmic hearths, or even ceremonial buildings. Movement through space and visiting landmarks with historical significance is another means of internalizing social identity (Turner 1973: 214-215). Many rituals involve ceremonial circuits around, and the ritual cleaning of, household, village, and polity boundaries (Hanks 1990: 337-364). These spatial movements allow participants to experience social identity by visiting social landmarks, places of historical events that brought the group into being.

The Kowoj and Itza in History

Fortunately, both indigenous Maya and the Spaniards recorded considerable bodies of historic information concerning Late Postclassic (A.D. 1250 to 1540), Contact (A.D. 1541 to 1697), and Colonial period Maya society. Indigenous documents describe events back to the Late Classic period, but are not easy to discern as they are composed in cyclical rather than linear time (Farriss 1987: 575-579). These histories detail the activities of the Kowoj and Itza in both Yucatán and Petén. Some have traced the Itza from Petén to Chich'en Itza in the Late Classic period; to Petén in the Early Postclassic period; to Mayapán in the Late Postclassic period, then back to Petén with the fall of Mayapán (ca. A.D. 1441) (Schele and Mathews 1998: 203-204). The Kowoj were

present at Mayapán, but the Itza played a much more prominent role. This walled city was the capital of much of Yucatán during the Late Postclassic period and its influence touched most of the Maya world (Pollock 1962: 1-18). When Mayapán fell, elites from provinces subordinate to the site returned to their homelands, taking codices with them and built temples upon their arrival (Landa 1941: 39).

By the fifteenth or sixteenth century, both the Kowoj and the Itza had established or reestablished themselves in Petén (Figure 1-2). The two groups distinguished themselves by claiming separate origins: the Itza migrated from Chich'en Itza, and the Kowoj migrated from Mayapán (Jones 1998: 16). These origin myths were obviously grounded in actual events, but of importance here is that they served as a criterion for social differentiation. Much more is known of the Itza than of the Kowoj, as the latter avoided contact with the Spaniards, who also saw the Itza as the key to dominating Petén. It is known that the Kowoj and some Itza factions fiercely resisted the Spaniards, but readily manipulated them in attempts to displace the ruling Itza from power. The Kowoj were noted as having heavily fortified sites; being located in the northeast portion of the Petén lakes region; and building temple pyramids (Jones 1998: 325-337 and 397-401).

Late Postclassic and Contact Period Archaeology

The Late Postclassic (AD 1250 to 1450-1540) lowland Maya world was once largely ignored in favor of the more elaborate and exotic remains of the Classic period. Nevertheless, a recent investment in Late Postclassic research has dramatically increased the body of knowledge concerning the Maya just before the arrival of the Spaniards. The most prominent Late Postclassic Maya site was Mayapán in the northern Yucatán

peninsula. The influence of Mayapán is appreciated in several forms. First, one can note that during the reign of Mayapán as the center of the Maya universe, the use of full figure image censers, which have three dimensional deity effigies, increased dramatically throughout the lowlands (Thompson 1970: 187-188). The ceremonial buildings and groups of the site also differ from those of earlier periods in Yucatan, though there is a high degree of continuity with Chich'en Itza (Proskouriakoff 1962: 90-91 and 134).

Mayapán-style ceremonial groups are found in the southern lowlands (Bullard 1970:274-275; D. Rice 1986: 314-316; and Rice et al 1998: 227-245) and Maya highlands (Carmack 1981: 380-388). The rapid expansion of formally and functionally similar ritual paraphernalia suggests the spread of a religious movement (Proskouriakoff 1954: 98-102; Thompson 1957: 625). However, domestic architecture in Late Postclassic Petén is also similar to Mayapán (D. Rice 1988: 236); hence, the trend is not entirely religious. Furthermore, the image censers (Chase 1988: 96) and architecture (D. Rice 1986: 326; Bey et al. 1997: 247-248) characteristic of Mayapán had foundations in earlier periods and did not necessarily originate in that city. Given that the city was cosmopolitan and hence diverse, it was certainly a place ripe for cultural innovation and dispersion. Despite the possibility for innovation at Mayapán, the layouts of ceremonial assemblages were highly repetitive.

The ceremonial architecture of Mayapán was often arranged in two types of ceremonial groups known as the "basic ceremonial group" and the "temple assemblage" (Proskouriakoff 1962:91), the latter of which is the focus of the present research. The temple assemblage (Figure 1-4), described in detail in Chapter 5, includes a temple as its building of central focus. Facing into and centered upon the temple is a raised shrine and

between the raised shrine and temple is a statue shrine, which is a low platform supporting statues. To the right and facing in the same direction as the temple is a lower temple called an oratorio. Finally, at a right angle to the temple and oratorio is an open or colonnaded hall. A variant of the temple assemblage is found in Petén, Guatemala, in the same area historic documents suggest was occupied by the Kowoj. The sites containing the assemblages were fortified and/or in naturally defensive positions, thus the historic descriptions of the placement and composition of Kowoj settlements are met in the northeastern portion of the Petén lakes region. It is hypothesized that temple assemblages in Petén documented Kowoj origins from Mayapán and were, therefore, indexes of Kowoj identity. In order to investigate the relationship between Kowoj and Mayapán temple assemblages, excavations were conducted at Zacpetén, which lies in the Kowoj area and has two temple assemblages in its civic-ceremonial groups.

Methodology

The methodology involved in the present research was designed to accomplish two interrelated goals: to discern material connections between the Petén Kowoj and Mayapán and to investigate Late Postclassic ritual performances. These goals are interconnected because ritual is a means through which human groups communicate "about themselves to themselves" and one of the means of storing and transmitting collective memories. Hence, ritual performances in the Kowoj area should have been rich with ethno-specific practices and the most overt statements of ties with Mayapán. Areas expected to have been the places of public ritual performances were the primary targets of the archaeological research at Zacpetén. The majority of the buildings in the

site's two Late Postclassic ceremonial groups were excavated. In addition, excavations were conducted in five residential groups to investigate household ritual practices and other domestic activities.

The excavations at Zacpetén were designed to search for activity areas by clearing collapse, humus, and leaf detritus from buildings in order to expose architecture features and in situ deposits. Recovered artifacts were excavated, collected, and bagged by their location in a precise 1 x 1 m resolution grid placed upon each ceremonial and residential group. The goal was to define activity areas and determine their relationships with the architecture. Once the soil had been removed from the buildings and screened and in situ artifacts recovered, the exposed architecture was recorded. Next, interesting architectural features were excavated to reveal how they were created, modified, and utilized. Test units investigated the construction histories of most buildings. These units were also intended to search for subsurface deposits such as caches, burials, and trash pits.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2, "Ritual and Social Existence," emphasizes that spatial, temporal, and social boundaries are constructed through ritual performances. The focus upon boundary construction underscores the human need to categorize reality, the arbitrariness of categories, and the constant reevaluation of boundaries. Ritual is one of the most powerful means of creating and negotiating existential boundaries. Social boundaries change as groups enter or break social relationships. Of special interest to the present research are the effects migrations can have on social boundaries and ritual practices that mediate them.

Chapter 3, "Modern and Colonial Yucatecan Maya Myth and Ritual," is a summary and comparison of mythology and ritual performance of the Northern Lacandon Maya; modern and Colonial Yucatán; modern and Contact period Petén; and modern Socotz, Belize. The goal is to define internal consistencies and to provide a body of data for the interpretation of archaeological remains. It is suggested that Maya rituals have various purposes and effects such as making offerings to, and communicating with, deities, healing, purification, constructing and renewing social and production spaces, mediating life cycle transformations, reenacting cosmogony, allowing social interaction, affecting social solidarity, providing a means for the communication of group origins, centering, and so on. The most dramatic impact of religious syncretism with Catholicism seems to have been the replacement or convergence of Maya celestial deities with Dios, Jesus, and the saints. Earthly and Underworld deities remain little changed.

Chapter 4, "Social Histories of the Kowoj and Itza," examines the nature of the two social entities and their relationships and searches for their presence in indigenous and Spanish documents. A special emphasis is placed upon Yucatan, Petén, and the migration stream existing between the two areas from the 8th century until conquest. Both the Kowoj and Itza played a part in the history of Mayapán and they were the two most prominent groups in 17th century Petén. Spanish documents note the Kowoj claimed to have migrated from Mayapán; occupied the northeastern portion of the Petén lakes region; and had fortified sites. The Itza occupied the southwest part of the Petén lakes; claimed to have migrated from Chich'en Itza; and were ruled by Ajaw Kan Ek' and AjK'in Kan Ek' (Jones 1998: 16-60).

Chapter 5, "Late Postclassic/ Contact Period Material Culture," describes previous Late Postclassic Maya research focusing upon architecture, especially previously defined architecture of Petén and the ceremonial architecture of Mayapán. The architecture of Mayapán is the central focus with special concern with its temple assemblages. These assemblages appear linked to earlier ritual and domestic assemblages such as the Triadic Temple Arrangement, E-Group, Twin Pyramid Complex, and Plaza Plan 2. Variants of the temple assemblage appear in the Maya highlands, Isla Cilvituk, and Petén. A Tulum-style temple assemblage exists on the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula. Previous research at Zacpetén is described and architectural similarities to Mayapán are noted.

Chapter 6, "Methodology" explains the excavation, analysis, and data output techniques used to illuminate the architecture and activity areas of Zacpetén. Furthermore, each artifact classification category is defined and their possible meanings in ritual performances are suggested.

Chapter 7, "The Excavation of Group A, Zacpetén," describes the architecture and activity areas in the central Late Postclassic ceremonial group of the site. Group A contains a Mayapán-style temple assemblage. Each building was found to be the setting of different types of ritual performance. Major building themes include the multiple god house, single god house, statue shrine, raised/ ancestral shrine, *sakbe*, and the mat house, an administrative building. Other ritual settings in Group A include a borrow pit that contains the dismembered human remains (likely sacrificial victims) and a deposit of numerous mandibles in the plaza. Since the group has two mat houses separated by a miniature ceremonial road, it is suggested that Late Postclassic Group A may have

mediated a dualistic social system. There appears to have been continuity between the layout of Group A in the Terminal Classic and Late Postclassic periods. However, the stability of spatial structure may have been appropriated rather than the product of settlement continuity as a new type of ceremonial group built in the style of Mayapán appears in the Late Postclassic period that may signal the arrival of migrant populations.

Chapter 8, "The Excavation of Group C, Zacpetén," describes the architecture and activity areas of the second largest Late Postclassic ceremonial group at Zacpetén. Group C also contains a Mayapán-style temple assemblage. The most remarkable finding was a striking parallel between Group C and Group A. The architecture and activity areas of Group C are nearly identical to those of Group A, but the former lacks some buildings found in the latter.

Chapter 9, "Household Excavations at Zacpetén," describes the five residential groups excavated at Zacpetén. All excavated residences, from the smallest to the largest, are similarly composed; hence all were built according to the same ideal template of a house. Each had a front/social room and back/private room, the former of which was finished with plaster. The front rooms were cleaned and used for some ritual activities and the back rooms contained evidence of both female and male production activities. Hearths were not encountered in the residences and kitchen houses were not discerned in the excavations, even when the entire patio group was cleared. Kitchens likely lay off the patios. Hence, while the formal template of residential structures at Zacpetén is clearly defined, the depiction of domestic activities at the site remains incomplete.

Chapter 10, "Intra- and Intersite Comparison of Ritual and Architecture", is a melding of Chapter 3, Chapter 5, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8. It compares the two public

ritual groups, Group A and Group C, at Zacpetén and contrasts the ceremonial architecture at Zacpetén with that of other Late Postclassic sites in Petén, Belize, and Yucatán and the modern Lacandon in Chiapas, México. The purpose of the comparison is to illuminate similarities and differences in ceremonial architecture and activity areas among the various regions. Ceremonial groups in the Kowoj area were relatively consistent in regards to architecture and activity areas. One domestic group at Zacpetén was constructed to resemble, and had the same activity areas as, the ceremonial groups. Kowoj architecture was found to be similar to that of Mayapán and, to some degree, Tulum. Activity areas of Petén could not be compared with those of Mayapán and Tulum because excavations at the latter two sites were not designed to reveal such patterns. The artifact distributions of temples in Petén were found to be nearly identical to those of Lacandon god houses, indicating that similar rituals were performed in the two areas and suggesting possible cultural and historical connections.

Chapter 11, "Conclusions," interprets the ceremonial architecture of Zacpetén according to theoretical considerations of ritual and social identity, descriptions of Maya ritual, and historical accounts of the Kowoj and Itza. First, temple assemblages at Zacpetén appear to be models of cosmogony reconstructed according to temporal cycles. Second, the temples or god houses at Zacpetén were centers of the site, as they were both the architectural focus and places where interactions with deities occurred. Ritual knowledge and the possession of censers appear to have been factors in social unity and, perhaps, stratification. God pots were found in situ outside the public temples in only one location: the god house of an elite domestic group. Third, the god houses at Zacpetén were ensouled and, hence the living heart-centers of the temple assemblages and,

ultimately, the entire site. The presence of two public temple assemblages may indicate that Zacpetén was divided into two social factions. Temple assemblages were the centers of social factions and were connected to Mayapán through architectural mimicry; hence, it is argued that these groups were monuments of Kowoj origins from Mayapán. During the early eighteenth century, the inhabitants of one elite family appropriated the monument of group origin by incorporating it into their domestic group.

Figure 1-1. Yucatán Peninsula.

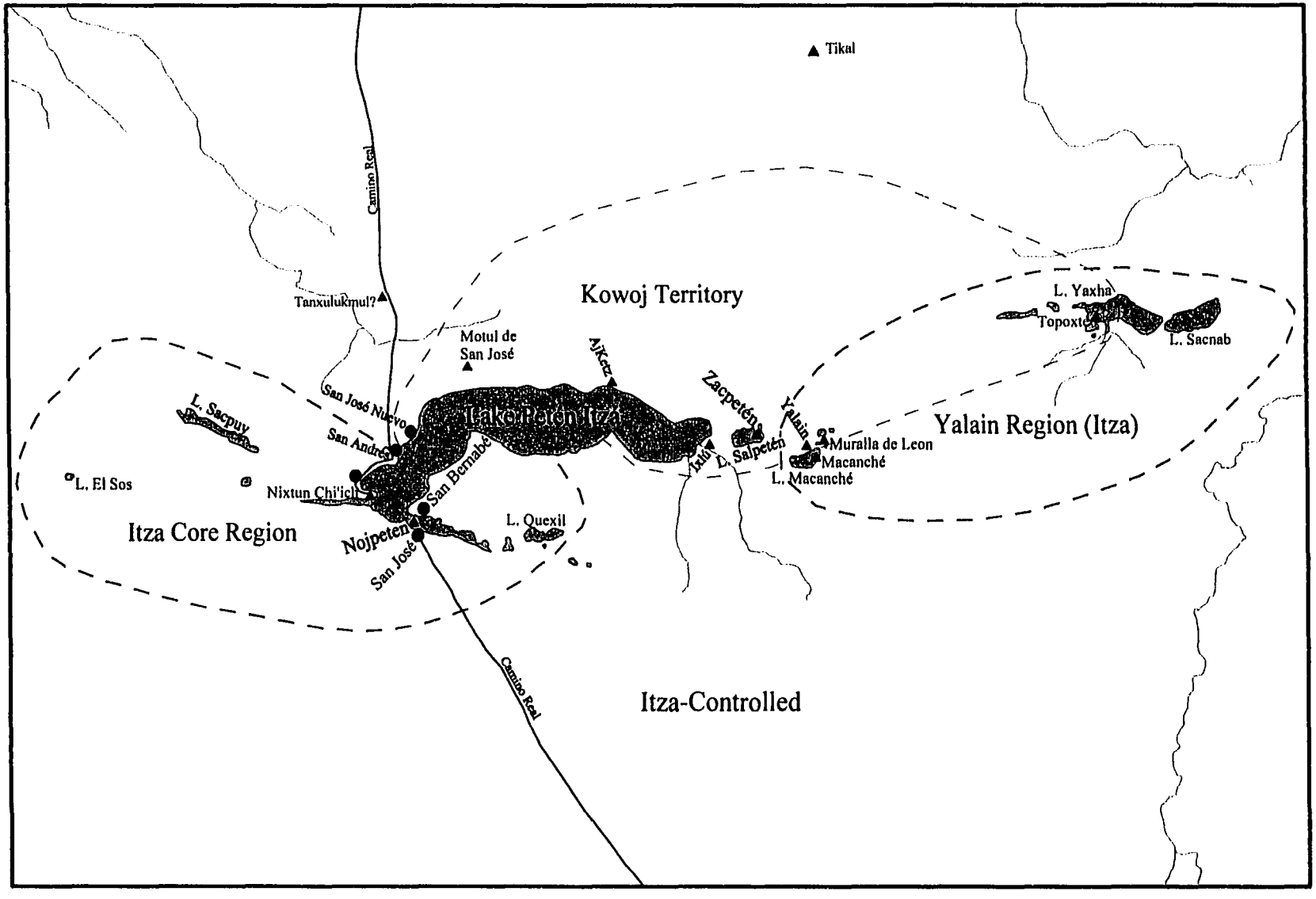


Figure 1-2. Seventeenth Century Ethnic Territories in the Petén Lakes Region (Modified from Jones 1998: Map 3).

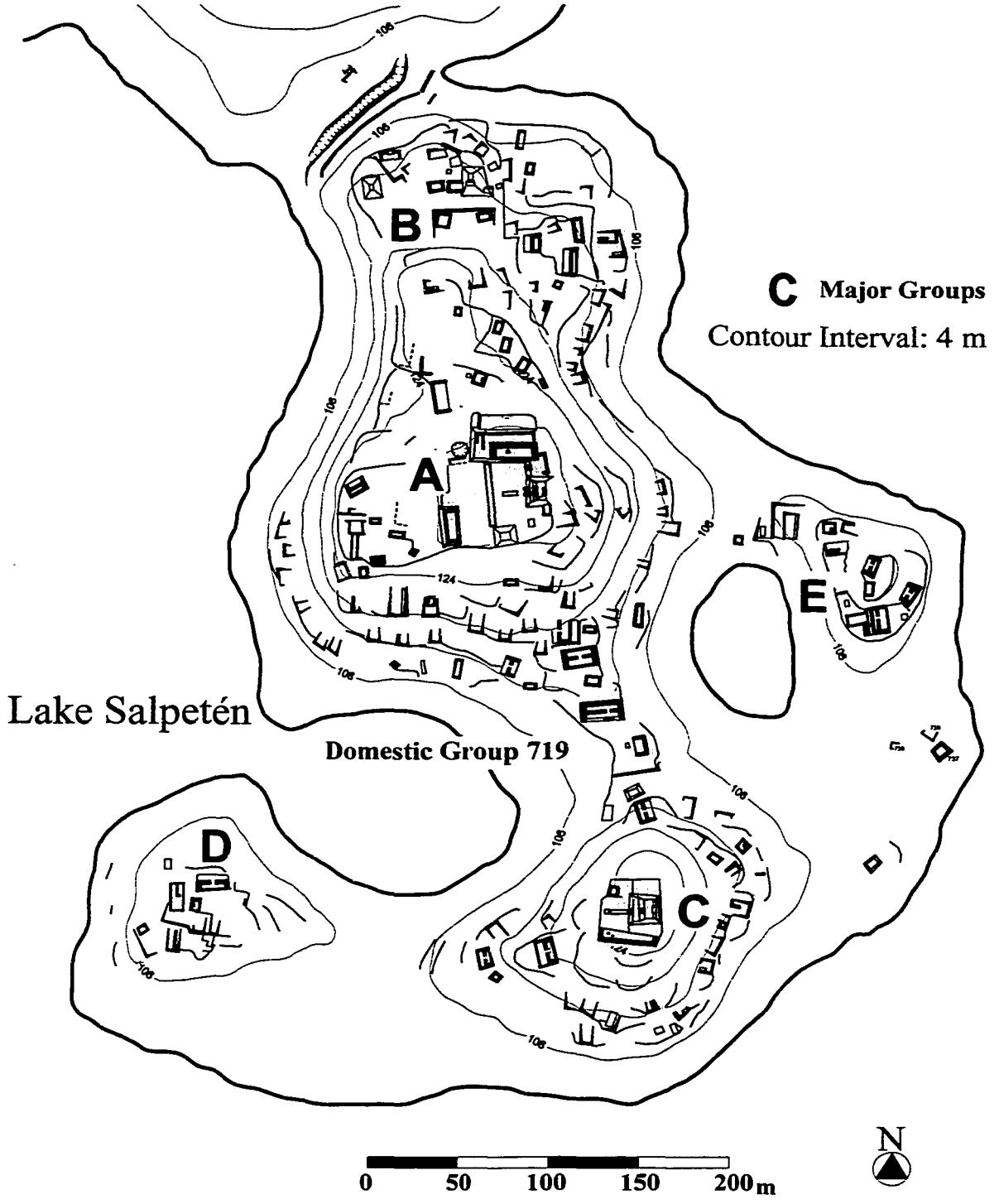


Figure 1-3. Zacpetén.

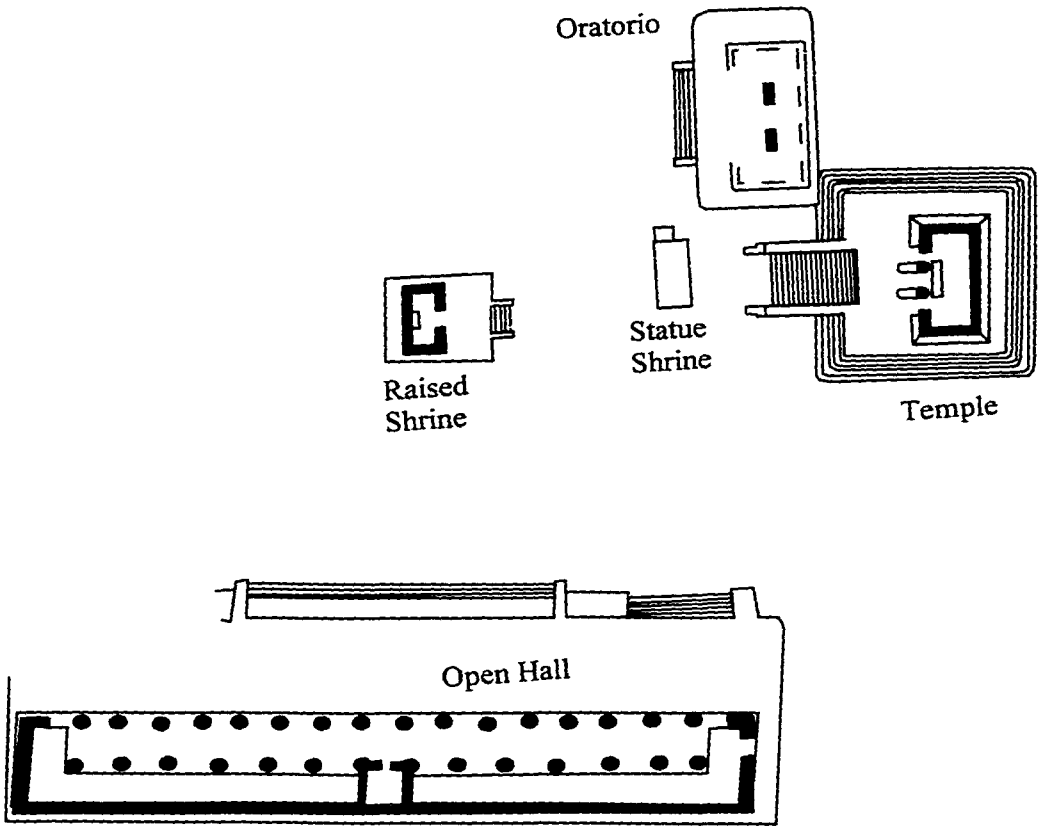
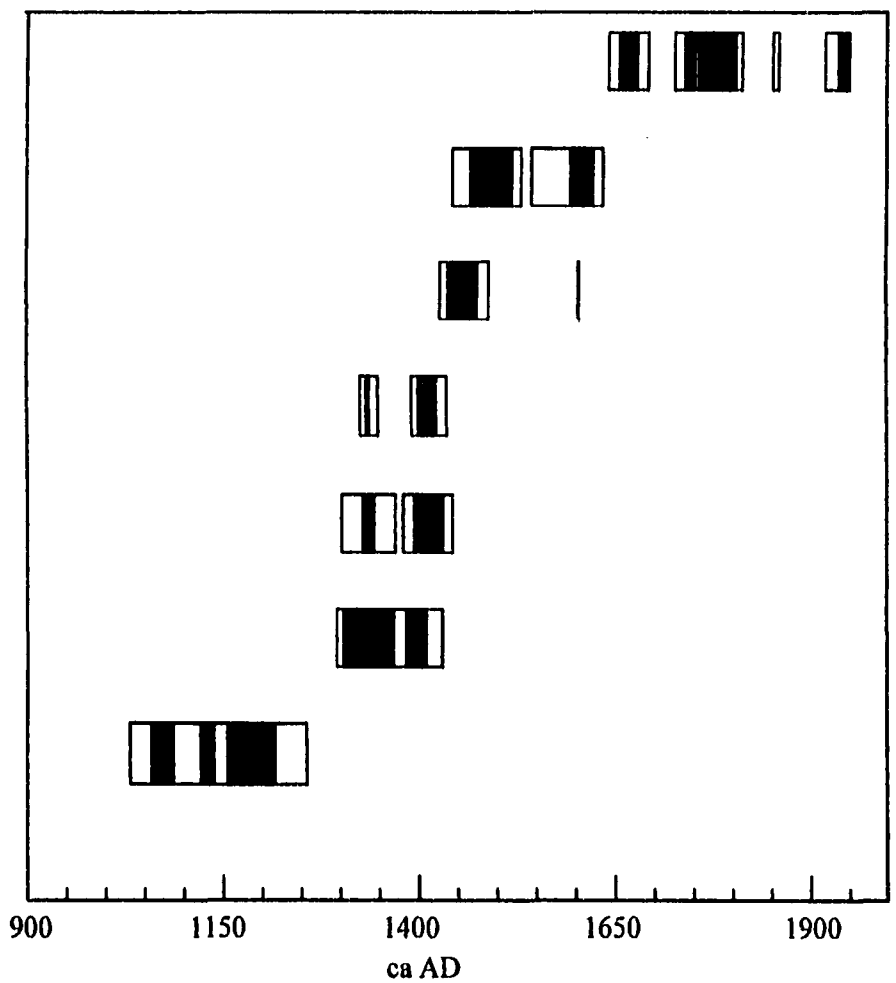


Figure 1-4. Late Postclassic Mayapán Temple Assemblage.



Building	Sample ID	Material	14C age BP	Calibrated 2 sigma results	Relative Prob.
Str. 719	(Beta-107791)	maize	200+/-40 BP	AD 1639-1701	0.28
				AD 1721-1818	0.54
				AD 1831-1881	0.05
				AD 1915-1944	0.13
Str. 747	(Beta-112317)	wood	370+/-30 BP	AD 1447-1528	0.55
				AD 1552-1632	0.45
Str. 732	(AA35236)	copal	426+/-30 BP	AD 1423-1509	0.97
				AD 1601-1613	0.03
Str. 1000	(Beta-112318)	wood	540+/-30 BP	AD 1321-1352	0.26
				AD 1389-1437	0.74
Str. 602	(Beta-112316)	copal	540+/-50 BP	AD 1306-1367	0.40
				AD 1383-1441	0.60
Str. 764	(AA35235)	wood	585+/-45 BP	AD 1299-1419	1.0
Str. 1001	(AA35234)	burned clay	880+/-40 BP	AD 1037-1227	0.98
				AD 1232-1240	0.02

Table 1-1. Radiocarbon Results from Zacpetén.

CHAPTER 2: RITUAL AND SOCIAL EXISTENCE

Human experience occurs within what has been referred to as the "existential triad" formed by "spatiality, temporality, and social being," the first of which was largely ignored by theorists until recently (Soja 1989: 10-25). Leibniz noted space was "neither 'nothing' nor 'something,'" but rendered understandable through the imposition of an origin point, axes, and peripheries (Lefebvre 1991: 169). Time and social being are also without a priori foundations. Reality is symbolically nebulous to humans until placed into meaningful and understandable categories (Foucault 1983: 208). Social being is the totality of social experience an individual internalizes and externalizes and cannot be considered separate from the other two dimensions because it occurs within a spatiotemporal context. Time and space are not natural because both are social constructs involved in power relations (Fabian 1983: 144). Time, space, and social being form the human-constructed context for individual action. As Geertz (1973: 5) suggested, humans are animals "suspended in webs of significance" they themselves have spun. This chapter will address how social being, temporality, and spatiality are created and interwoven in ritual performances through boundary construction.

Boundary Construction

The term "boundary" evokes borders in space that keep others out, which they certainly do, but here it will refer to any point at which "being itself is brought forth"

(Heidegger 1993: 208). Boundaries are created as humans distinguish this from that, now from then, here from there, new from old, and so on. Reality is continuous, but humans break it into understandable parts by imposing boundaries (Leach 1976: 33). Boundaries are points in the web of significance at which a social, spatial, or temporal category is actualized as a concept and is the point of relation with other categories. Boundaries define conceptual regions, thereby bringing them into existence and are nodes of relation between the regions.

Boundary creation or "dividing practices" involve division and categorization; thereby providing a means of control---*divide et impera* (Foucault 1983: 208). Connections between individuals and groups are not inert social sinew, but networks of "relationships of power and domination" (Leach 1976: 62; Foucault 1983: 222-223; Lefebvre 1991: 222). Power is less often manifest as a social contract or physical threat than through manipulating the symbols binding society together (Foucault 1983: 222-223). Divisions in reality are unequal and assigned different symbolic values. Organizational power controls the social, spatial, and temporal settings that have been created through dividing practices (Wolf 1990: 586). Divisions in time, space, and society help structure actions and are a form of power. Since boundaries both divide and unify, they may appear ambiguous (Leach 1976: 62), but such ambiguity helps obfuscate the relations of power (Bloch 1976: 287).

Boundaries are sacred (Leach 1976: 35). The sacred is the ambiguous area between two distinct categories. These categories can be social groups or positions that individuals move through during their life cycle (Leach 1976: 34-35). Foreigners are in a sacred state because they are essentially "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966: 35).

Individuals in a sacred position come into contact with a category of existence other than their own and are often considered dangerous and/ or powerful (Van Gennep 1960: 26-40). The sacred is an essential aspect of social boundaries because sacred states occur at the intersection of categories and rituals mediating boundaries help to define and distinguish the categories themselves. The stronger boundaries are defined, the more dangerous is the mediate connection between them, and the more contact between the categories must be mediated (Leach 1976: 61). Societies do not deal with boundaries in the same way. Some groups strictly avoid the dangers of the boundary situation; others use it as a way to express and utilize the creative and transformative potential of boundaries; and still others lie between these two poles (Douglas 1966: 164-165).

Boundaries are impermanent disruptions in the continuum of time, space, and social being. They are constructed divisions that must be constantly renewed. Boundaries are a source of anxiety because they are contradictory regions: where "the other" is encountered (Douglas 1966: 114-139), where categories become fuzzy and the validity of concepts come into question (Kosko 1993: 18-43), and where the potentiality of nothingness is revealed (Heidegger 1993: 93-114; T. Turner 1977: 58). Interactions taking place within such divisions can potentially reveal the arbitrariness of the categorization system. Such interactions free "in-between" persons to imagine possibilities outside the dominant configurations of time, space, and social being; however, this transcendental awareness is later limited by structures and rules of society, which are communicated in ritual performances (V. Turner 1977b: 68-70). While durable, these structures and rules are themselves subject to change as they are reproduced through time.

In addition to being the source of illumination and creativity, the sacred is the nexus to transform from one category to another or to interact with other categories of being. It is not the sum of the groups that it mediates, but a phenomenon of a totally different nature. The sacred is generative, dynamic, and multivocalic as opposed to the stasis and univocality of the categories that it mediates (V. Turner 1977a: 58). The dynamic nature of the sacred is a powerful, chaotic, and potentially dangerous situation that requires special control, ritual practices.

Ritual

Ritual exists in all societies, but is difficult to define because it differs significantly from place to place (Williams and Boyd 1993: 1-2). Even so, certain characteristics remain sufficiently consistent to allow these behaviors to be categorized as "ritual." Rituals are symbolically laden performances that tend to be formal, ordered, traditional, and repetitive practices occurring in special spatiotemporal contexts different those of everyday life. Much of the significance of symbols is gained from relationships and contrasts with other symbols in larger systems of symbols (Turner 1967: 51). Ritual symbols tend to have multiply meanings (polysemy) and meanings of particular symbols can shift in a given performance. Symbols are not static; their forms and meaning are in constant flux (Turner 1982: 22). Some symbols referred to as "sacred," "dominant," or "key" symbols, tend to be more stable and "sum up" the totality of a specific sphere of existence and the world-view surrounding it (Turner 1967: 28; Geertz 1973: 127; Ortner 1973: 1339). Symbolic systems or "webs of significance" communicated in ritual performances provide an essential framework for social action (Geertz 1973: 90).

By "formal," it is meant rituals often have "restricted codes of behavior" (Bell 1997: 141). They are full of taboos and etiquette. Rituals are characteristically orderly, as they tend to follow well-defined and perhaps codified sequences. Finally, ritual practices tend to be enduring and structured; hence, they are repetitive. The formality, order, and repetitiveness of ritual produce an authoritative license by appealing to tradition (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 3-24). In addition to providing a link to the past through their structural stability, many rituals are traditional because they overtly refer to the practices and objects of past generations.

Since rituals frequently occur in special spatiotemporal niches, these actions are discernibly different from other behaviors (Tambiah 1979: 116-118). Rituals are necessary to protect not only individuals in contact with the sacred as they transform from one category of existence to another, but other people as well because the sacred is contagious and dangerous if contact with it is unmediated (Douglas 1966: 28). Rituals are generally multivocal performances serving a variety of purposes in addition to mediating boundaries. They instruct, explain, entertain, and emphasize significance. Of particular interest here are the roles ritual plays in communicating social, temporal, and spatial differentiation.

The communication aspect of ritual cannot be analyzed literally because it lies somewhere between a statement and an action (Bloch 1986: 245). Ritual communication is more akin to musical than literary discourse and rituals are essentially "orchestras of symbols" (Leach 1976: 43-45; Turner 1967: 48). The symbols of ritual are not limited to the visual. Ritual performances also include sound, smell, taste, pleasure, and/or pain, all of which have symbolic value and act in combination to form a symbolic fugue of the

senses (modified from Lévi-Strauss 1969: 147-163). Like a musical piece, the efficacy of a ritual cannot be totally understood through literal or even metaphorical statements within a performance.

The complexity of ritual communication can be simplified by dichotomizing its efficacy as doctrinal and operational (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 10-15). Doctrinal efficacy is the effect performers believe their rituals will have upon themselves and the cosmos. As a result, rituals contain symbols or reenactments that can be experienced literally. Operational efficacy is the "social-psychological effectiveness" of ritual. This part of ritual is unconscious and experienced emotionally. A "polarization of meaning" exists within operational efficacy between an ideological pole and a sensory pole (Turner 1967: 27-30). The ideological pole describes the rules that "guide and control persons as members of social groups." For example, a particular ritual might reiterate and explain the importance of taboo behaviors. The sensory pole refers to emotional responses symbols can evoke such as feelings of group solidarity. These responses can be highly controlled in rituals so that orchestras of symbols become orchestras of emotions (Tambiah 1979: 126). The ability to evoke emotional responses during ritual has been regarded as a special form of communication that misrepresents the reality of social relationships (Bloch 1980: 93-102). It is used to communicate contradictory or doubtful information because its argument is based on emotion and cannot be questioned (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 24).

Ritual is more than simply a means of mystification, however. It is a means through which we communicate information about ourselves to ourselves and to others (Leach 1976: 45). Others have taken this point a step farther and argued that ritual is a

sort of group therapy. This group therapy is self-actualized in the dialectical relationship between the "social drama and stage drama" (Turner 1990: 16-18). Social drama is real life in motion. Occasionally there are social breaches or controversies in life that lead to crises that must be redressed by society. Ritual is one of the processes used to redress crises; others include legal action and political processes such as war and diplomacy. In this context, the essential part of ritual is the liminal stage.

Within rituals that move people or groups from one category to another is an intermediate or "liminal" stage in which one is in neither one category nor the other (Van Gennep 1960: 18). The liminal stage is basically a performance of the boundary state and individuals in such a state are "creative and innovative" because they see that reality is a construct and are free to imagine other possibilities (V. Turner 1977b: 69). This stage is often represented by monstrosities that are concatenations of unlike categories or by a metaphorical casting off of symbols of social demarcation such as wearing no clothing. The elimination or combination of discrete categories that are usually differentiated by social rules temporarily dissolves social boundaries, thereby bringing about a state of solidarity among those involved in the ritual (Turner 1969: 96-97).

In the liminal stage, the structure underlying society is revealed (Turner 1969: 166-168). Symbols affecting affinity are prominently displayed, thereby bringing social identity to the forefront. These basic categories and social relationships are internalized by participants and help guide society as a base paradigm. Occasionally social crises develop that ritual solidarity cannot bridge and social schism occurs. The "structure" communicated by ritual is fluid, as rituals must constantly adjust to the form and needs of a society in motion. While ritual and real life influence one another, both can be

transformed because of innovation or accident (Turner 1990: 17-18). Innovation is an important part of all meaningful interactions including ritual (Wagner 1972: 8). Even the most codified rituals are subject to change through time because members of any group have varied comprehension of the meaning of symbols (Barth 1987: 31-82). While it can change, ritual structures tend to be durable. The social structuration of ritual practice is a form of power.

Power is not just manifest through force or freely given, but is rather the "total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions," which "structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault 1983: 220-221). In other words, power includes all actions that constrain the actions of others. The power of ritual can be unconscious, but ritual is also used to consciously construct political power through the manipulation of symbols. For example, the salute used by the Nazis as a ritualized greeting overtly signified loyalty to Hitler and even those who did not support him were forced by immediate social pressures to perform the salute (Kertzer 1988: 98). Not only can such performances structure the actions of affected individuals, but they can also manipulate their "sense of self" or social identity (Kertzer 1988: 6).

Two misunderstandings regarding ritual are that rituals do not involve an "other" and that they are not contested. Ritual provides social solidarity, but in plural societies, it may perpetuate "otherness" (Baumann 1992: 97-115). Sub-groups within a population will experience rituals in different way because variations exist in the comprehension of the symbols, group goals, and the roles that persons of different groups play in the ritual (Baumann 1992: 113-115). Competition between groups usually includes ritual performance of some sort. Ritual can become a means of literal argument by way of its

communicative aspects or a means of indirect argument through the manipulation of symbols (Kertzer 1988: 104-124). Such performances can be utilized to undermine the ritual authority of opponents: one need only watch the antics of modern political parties to observe such behaviors. Through ritual, groups compete for power or resist the control of powerful social groups; therefore, instead of just a single orchestra of symbols, there may be multiple orchestras, each playing its own argument that stands beyond debate. Two emotions commonly communicated in ritual performances are feelings of solidarity and estrangement, which distinguish the in-group from the out-group; thereby, forming social boundaries.

Social Being

With respect to social identity, the boundary is the point in the social reality at which the group comes into being. Social boundaries are diverse and circumstantial. Examples of boundaries include political symbolism, history, clothing, territorial borders, mannerisms, languages, ancestry, etc. However, social entities are social constructs, not "bounded objects;" they do not act as cultural billiard balls bouncing off each other without interaction. Nor are social groups purely discrete, but are connected in social relationships (Wolf 1982: 6). Hence, while boundaries are often spoken of in spatiotemporal terms, they are not places, objects, or moments in time, but "difference-producing" sets "of relations" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 46). The difference between a boundary as object and boundary as action is not a matter of mere semantics. To see the boundary only as object is to see the wall, but forget that it was, in fact, constructed for

specific reasons. Groups do not create boundaries in a void, but in their relationships with other groups.

The "presencing" of social identity results from "identity politics" (Brunt 1989: 151), emphasizing that power relations stand at the foundation of identity. Identity politics involve classification and communication. People classify themselves, and the notion of "self" implies an "other." Besides the out-group, social boundaries differentiate the in-group from the wilderness occupied by wild animals. Outsiders are often considered inferior (Hagendoorn 1993: 26-31) and not fully human. Socially distant individuals may be paralleled with wild animals (Leach 1966: 42-63), placing them conceptually in the "savage" wilderness. Not only do people classify themselves and others, they also internalize the way they are classified by other people. Social identities are the sum of self-identification and external classification by other groups (Cohen 1978: 358-387). In ranked and stratified societies, some groups have a greater ability to project their social categorization schemes and this is where the most prominent power relations come into play (Bourdieu 1991: 232-237).

Ethnic identity differs from other social identities because it is an individual's "basic, most general identity" (Barth 1969: 15). Ethnic boundaries can be created, recreated, strengthened, or weakened in many ways. Ethnocentrism is a form of competition that creates boundaries by assigning undesirable or non-human attributes to "others" (McGuire 1982: 168-175; Schwarz 1982: 106-130). Boundaries also can be marked by cultural attributes, such as dress, body decoration, architecture, and language. However, this is not to say that ethnicity unconsciously results from simply doing things the same way, but rather that boundaries can be strengthened or maintained by

"ethnospecific" practices (Kobylinski 1989: 303-312; Shennan 1989: 1-32). Ethnospecific practices are those overtly used as ethnic markers. Ethnic boundaries can also be created through myth and spatialization, discussed in detail below.

The definition of social categories and the creation and recreation of social categories are, perhaps, the most common phenomena dealt with through ritual behavior. The line between "child" and "adult" or between "us" and "them" are ritually mediated not only to maintain the two as separate categories, but also to embed the statuses and behaviors associated with them in the most traditional actuality---often cosmogony itself. Ritual not only stands at social boundaries; it also defines and redefines the boundaries themselves (Lincoln 1989: 173-174). Within a given society, some rituals may argue solidarity and, hence, negate internal boundaries, while others promote sectionalism and conflict, thereby emphasizing internal boundaries (Turner 1973: 207-208). Rituals institutionalize social categorization schemes and individuals who direct them or manipulate their symbols have control, though not unbridled, over an extremely powerful means of communicating their worldview. Social categories can be institutionalized by fusing them with seemingly natural categories and qualities of time and space.

Temporality

Temporal categories are constructs that help bridge human difficulty in comprehending the dynamics of four-dimensional reality. The transformations that occur from one moment in time-space to another are simplified by condensing fluidity into static instances. The past, present, and future are the three primary dimensions of time, but their "presencing" or bringing into being through connection and differentiation (i.e.,

boundary formation) constitutes a fourth dimension (Heidegger 1978: 14; Giddens 1981: 32). The presencing of time involves the construction of boundaries and the relationships between categories, which define the nature of temporal process or flow. Time can flow in a variety of ways, but cyclical and linear time are the most common. Humans are aware of both linear and cyclical time, but one or the other is usually dominant in a given society (Farriss 1987: 569). Cyclical time differs from linear time as it is composed of "perpetual repetitions" (Farriss 1987: 566) with periodic beginnings and endings, separated by disjunctions. Such cycles are usually based on natural cycles such the solar day, seasons, years, generations, and astronomical movements (Farriss 1987: 566). Such natural patterns can then be combined into sets of larger units. Years are combined into decades, centuries, millenia, and aeons. Existence is orchestrated and ordered through temporal cycles, therefore, happenstance does not exist or is irrelevant and all significant events are recycled.

Units of cyclical time are mediated through temporal connections of a qualitatively different nature. These connections are sacred, existing outside of the temporal categories that they separate, potentially dangerous or creative, and linked to cosmic catastrophes and ultimately to creation and the nothingness before creation. The larger the temporal cycle the closer its connection to cosmic catastrophes, creation, or nothingness because these events occur within the cyclical matrix and will ultimately reoccur (Sullivan 1988: 57-62). The sacred zones between temporal units are sources of anxiety, which are intensified when extremely large cycles of time terminate. Critical rituals occur at the end of temporal cycles that recreate cosmogony to avoid cosmic destruction. They also evoke a sense of timelessness because they stand at the boundary

of the past and the present (Bloch 1976: 278-292). This is partly the result of repetition and tradition of ritual practice. Timelessness is also brought about through cyclical time as recurrent cycles breach the boundary between "now" and "then." By juxtaposing the past with the present, ritual exists somewhere outside of mundane time (Bloch 1976: 278-292). This bending of time is often achieved by conducting rituals in spaces associated with past events (Bradley 1991: 217-218) and by cyclically reproducing ritual spaces in traditional forms.

The blending of the past with the present may also be a representation of the higher-order reality of liminal time/space. The liminal stage is often enacted or described in terms of a paradox because it is higher-order and beyond understanding in mundane terms (Turner 1977: 58). The paradox of the past in the present is, therefore, a representation of sacred time/space in the terms of mundane time/space. It is essential that transformations occurring in the liminal stage be formulated in mundane terms because by doing so change appears to proceed under orderly ritual control (Turner 1977: 64-69). The timelessness of ritual is a means through which the enigmatic processes of change are controlled and understood. Change can also be subdued by molding past events into myths that provide a foundation for the present.

History and Myth

The past is one of the most powerful symbols of social identity to be communicated by ritual performances. It is a nearly universal means through which people collectively identify themselves in relation to each other and the rest of the world (White 1991: 51-241). In order to avoid the ethnocentrism of usual history/myth contrasts, history will refer to narratives that narrators claim to be true and the audience

finds credible and myth will refer to history that is authoritative (Lincoln 1989: 23-26). By authoritative, it is meant that myths have the achieved the status of "sacred," "dominant," or "key" symbols and provide the solidarity and indisputable "paradigmatic truth" underpinning the social reality (Lincoln 1989: 21-22). Myths often concern a group's origin and how it historically relates to other groups (Whitten 1989: 282-306), thereby anchoring social relationships of the present in the past. A common myth used to provide the paradigmatic truth for ethnic groups is the story explaining and justifying the association between the group and their territory. These stories concern the place of group origin and how it gained its territory through migration, conquest, or divine intervention (Smith 1992: 436-452).

Knowledge of the past is a form of power. References to the past are constructs that provide meaning and justification for the present (Friedman 1992a: 204-207). Mythopractice or "the practice of myth-making" involves the casting of the past in a mold appropriate for the social present (Friedman 1992b: 853-854). Myth is not a static form of historical consciousness blindly following tradition (see Levi-Strauss 1969: 18). Mythopractice is a dynamic part of power relations and at any given time there may be various competing paradigmatic truths, but one is generally dominant in a given social group (Friedman 1992a: 853-854). However, the authority of myth can be undermined by attacking its credibility or truth (Lincoln 1989: 25-26). One foundation myth can be contested and replaced by another by demonstrating that it is more true, credible, or better fits the present social scenario (Lincoln 1989: 25-26). The authority of myths is often evoked by tying them to cosmogony.

Cosmogony is the evolution of significance or the birth of meaning (Sullivan 1988: 34). Cosmogony myths describe the emergence of "natural" divisions of reality and their associated values and are, therefore, statements of absolute truth. Such myths are very powerful because they establish the basis of truth, while denying validity to alternative truths (Wolf 1990: 592-593). Ethnicity is part of cosmogony because cultural practices of "true" humans (i.e., those of the ethnic group telling the story) are displayed as arising at the beginning of time for important reasons. Myth does not stand alone, but is commonly communicated through ritual, which is one of the most powerful means to create, perpetuate, or modify ethnic identity.

The importance of the association myth and ritual with social identity has long been acknowledged. Humans construct their social being in the image of the past, but the past is also created in the image of present (Friedman 1992a: 853-857 and1992b: 204-207). Temporality and social being are so tightly intermingled that the construction of the in-group quite often involves its placement in one division of time and the out-group in another, generally less favorable, temporal category (Fabian 1983: 1-35). Myths provide a group its ideological foundation and differentiate it from "others" (Lincoln 1989: 21-25). Hence, mythmaking is an action on social existence and a boundary formation process. The most powerful medium for communicating myths is ritual. Ritual is the means through which myths are made concrete (Lefebvre 1991: 34) and can be directly internalized by participants, who enter its virtual space as a quasi-real experience (Williams and Boyd 1993: 17-24).

The collective remembering of social foundations in ritual performances is an important way through which members of a group obtain a sense of collective identity

and legitimate the "social order" (Connerton 1989: 3 and 61). These performances communicate continuity with past prototypical events and allow them to be re-experienced by participants. Ritual preserves these archetypical social images and allows groups to communicate them to themselves (Connerton 1989: 70-72). Since the commemorated events and persons were involved in social foundations, their remembrance is tied to communal renewal, which occurs cyclically. This cyclicity, in turn, emphasizes continuity between the original event and the ritual reenactment (Connerton 1989: 45-69). Such reenactments can involve recreated scenarios or pilgrimages to places where powerful social founding events occurred thereby spatializing them.

Spatiality

As mentioned, all social groups have methods to divide and classify the world and the beings that inhabit it. Categorical differentiation is a symbolic act; therefore, divided spaces are meaningful (Mitchell 1992: 1). The space occupied by a social group, its territory, is the product of creative acts representative of the group and can, in turn, be representative of the group. Social territory may be externalized through the placement of boundary markers or the creation of geographic records and internalized as a spatial metaphor of solidarity. Its borders may distinguish between those who belong, the in-group, and those who do not, out-groups. Given the importance of space in the process of social differentiation, one would expect its center and boundaries to be important locations of symbolic communication.

Space has, until recently, been considered irrelevant to the construction of social reality (Foucault 1980: 70). However, the power of myth is enhanced through its performance in space (Lefebvre 1991: 34). Spatial practices can be mnemonic devices that store our collective memories (Rappaport 1985: 35; Quantrill 1987: 3-34). Cosmogony and more recent societal forming myths can be re-experienced by movement through sacred geographies (Sahlins 1981: 14-17). Geography is also a way that social being can be experienced as a concrete rather than an abstract entity (Heidegger 1993: 347-363). Spatial practices are a means through which the social reality is both internalized and externalized (Barthes 1997: 166-172). Spatial boundaries and the rituals mediating them can be metaphorical of the social entities that they contain. The natural environment contains many features incorporated their sacred landscapes, but the present research is primarily focused upon architecture constructed to communicate social information.

Architecture

Architectural construction, like ritual and ethnicity, involves boundaries and the differentiation of reality, but in this case, the divisions are extruded into physical space. When a building is constructed, undifferentiated space is divided and the parts of the newly divided space are categorically different (Mitchell 1992: 1). The inside is different from the outside, the kitchen is different from the bedroom, the house is different from the theater, and so on. Created spaces are never empty, but contain within them the underlying structure of the social reality by virtue of their definition of the position of individuals in space (Foucault 1997: 351-352). Architects do not construct as objective outsiders, but as social actors (Lefebvre 1991: 360-361); hence, their creations are

reflections of their social contexts. Barthes (1997: 166-172) suggests, "the city is a poem" that unfolds as one moves through it and time changes its components. By living within the architectural poem, inhabitants both read and write it as they internalize and externalize the meanings contained within its form. It is understandable that architecture is considered "the very being of societies" (Bataille 1997: 21).

Just as cyclical temporal consciousness is rooted in naturally recurring cycles, the understanding of social space is often grounded in basic recurrent configurations. Perhaps the most common symbol used to understand society-at-large and the cosmos is the house, the space associated with the family, the minimal social unit. Dwellings seem natural, necessary, and consistent because the family is the basis for biological and social reproduction (Lefebvre 1991: 232). As basic "natural" elements, house forms can provide the template for larger corporate groups, ritual spaces, and the cosmos (Sullivan 1988: 146-147). Architectural divisions within a residence may symbolize basic social relationships within society, thereby providing for their internalization by those dwelling within it (Bourdieu 1977: 89-95). The juxtaposition of house and society evokes sentiments of solidarity and naturalness associated with the former and bridges or hides disparate factions within the latter (Lévi-Strauss 1982: 182-187).

Of particular interest is the creation and recreation of social boundaries with architecture. Spatial boundaries do not simply keep "the other" out, but define the social group contained within and provide it a unifying symbol (Leach 1997: xix-xx). Again, they are the points at which the social group begins to exist. Spatial boundaries are intimately associated with social identities. Architecture is seemingly innocuous because it seems to have been created for pragmatic reasons (Eco 1997: 182-185), but the

construction of space often becomes a political strategy between competing social categories. It can also be used to create boundaries between humans and supernatural beings. Such political and religious buildings are often those involved in ritual performances.

The association between ritual and social boundaries highlights the importance of ritual buildings because such structures are often situated in areas where social boundaries intersect or where social unity is emphasized. Thus, they help mediate interaction between social groups and create solidarity within groups. Ritual architecture is found in liminal zones where interactions between groups---one of which might be supernatural---can safely take place. When the entire community is involved, such interactions tend to occur in centers within settlements or on the peripheries (Turner 1973: 207-208). While centers are by definition a focus of sociopolitical activity in a city, they may be socially ambiguous because they are the places where the "other" is encountered (Barthes 1997: 170-172).

Myths can be cited from memory or read from texts, in literate societies, but they also are reflected in architecture. In some cases, the spatiality of myth can be obvious as in the case of ceremonial architecture and ritual performances that reenact past events. These places and practices signify mythic events and myths (Leach 1976: 37-41; Benson 1983: 183-188). Since ceremonial architecture can be constructed as a representation of origin myths, it can stand as a symbol of ethnic or political solidarity that can be directly experienced (Lefebvre 1991: 222-225). Ritual space in the center often represents the whole (Barthes 1979: 2-26). It is the place where all roads converge; all symbolic differentiation intermingles; all cosmic planes intersect; the past is brought into the

present; and the beginning meets the end. Therefore, the center is, eminently ambiguous and sacred (Sullivan 1988: 138-139; Barrie 1996: 51-78). In the center, all members of the group interact, thereby embodying its solidarity (Barthes 1997: 166-172).

Central places are often broken up into contrasting spaces to illuminate cosmological or social divisions (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 132-163; Ungers 1982: 30-35). They represent a myriad of social relationships with society and are base paradigms for social action (Geertz 1980: 98-136; Lefebvre 1991: 225), reflecting the dialectic between ritual and social reality. Contrasting spaces can be intentionally created through the representation of divisions in the social reality and the cosmos or can accumulate through the construction process. As sequential constructions accrete through time, space is fragmented into temporal shards reminding occupants of the past (Ungers 1982: 31) and is, therefore, part of historical consciousness, especially in societies in which construction is tied to cyclical time. For example, a ruined building can symbolize the destruction of a displaced social system (Lefebvre 1991: 221-225; Lincoln 1989: 103-127; Elvin 1995: 71-73) or represent the homes of gods or heroes (see Davis 1978: 244-249).

Within centers are monumental structures, which are large constructions that are seen everywhere and from which one can see everywhere (Barthes 1979: 3) and, hence, visually omnipresent and omniscient. Monuments are often beyond comprehension because they signify everything and are "nexuses" that help tie society together (Barthes 1979: 3-4; Lefebvre 1991: 222), but also support its boundaries. Monuments recall events crucial to the foundation of the society. As symbols of powerful historical events that brought the society into being, they are part of the "paradigmatic truth" or ideological framework underlying society (Lincoln 1989: 21-22). As symbols of social

foundation, their destruction can also symbolize the destruction of society. Monuments are often destroyed by conquerors to deconstruct the existing paradigmatic truth to make way for another (Lefebvre 1991: 221; Lincoln 1989: 116-127).

The centers of socially relevant spaces (residences, towns, polities, etc.) are often constructed as imitations of the center of the universe. Ceremonial architecture is quite often constructed as metaphors of myths, especially creation myths. The center of the universe or axis-mundi is a place where one can come into contact with other cosmic levels and is, therefore, ambiguous and the most sacred boundary (Sullivan 1988: 130-132). The axis-mundi may have several different forms in the same cultural group such as a cave, tree, mountain, etc. (Sullivan 1988: 134). The axis-mundi has crosscut and separated cosmic planes since creation.

In addition to being metaphors of cosmogony, architecture found in the center can bridge time and space through visual analogy. Visual analogy is also referred to as resemblance, mimesis, or iconicity. Analogy establishes continuities through time and space despite obvious differences through which "the representation shares in or takes power from the represented" (Taussig 1993: 2; Stafford 1999: 9). Nevertheless, even in neighboring sites with similar myths of cosmogony, variation exists in the layout of ceremonial groups. Occasionally, however, repetitions of specific buildings or even entire ceremonial groups are encountered, which suggest mimeses or the construction of a visual analogy. Such intentional recreations of buildings, groups, or distinct styles are attempts to create architectural continuities through time and space that are metaphorical of social continuities and are additional examples of cyclical spaces.

Centers, their monuments, and the rituals conducted in them share an affinity with ethnic boundaries because they all stand at the intersection of discrete social categories and are connections between groups. These characteristics of centers recall the abnormality, timelessness, ambiguity, and sacredness of boundaries (Leach 1976: 35) as well as the liminal stage of rituals. The center stands at the intersection of numerous categories of being. There, individuals may be in contact with members of different families, ethnic groups, supernatural beings, and ancestors. Time may be folded as well, as individuals in the space of monuments come in contact with past events that brought society into being. The liminality, solidarity, and paradigmatic truth of these powerful places are a critical basis for existence of society. Therefore, group boundaries not only lie on the periphery, but also in the center itself. Centers ideally promote solidarity; hence, intra-group boundaries are lessened while inter-group boundaries are nurtured.

Sacred space exists in social centers, but it also exists along territorial borders and these peripheral places have been referred to as "centers out there" (Turner 1973: 191-230). Centers-out-there are locations of mythic events important to the existence of the social group. In this way, space itself is part of historical consciousness. A close relationship exists between centers-out-there and the center proper. In the center, all forms of symbolic differentiation intersect and the various cosmic planes are in contact. Centers-out-there are borders with the wilderness, other social groups, and occasionally other cosmic planes. The symbolism of centers-out-there is often identical to that of centers, thereby providing a structural link between the two. The sacredness of the center and centers-out-there is stated in the form of a sacred icon. It is often the case that both are intentionally located near ambiguous natural features (i.e. mountains between the

earth and sky), which are consecrated by the placement of a sacred icon (Van Gennep 1960: 16-17).

Centers-out-there do not completely encircle a territory because it is not the intersection of territories that creates sacred zones, but rather the social interactions between groups occupying those territories. Centers-out-there are often fragmented around the territorial boundaries in areas where social interactions occur, such as along roads or locations of critical resources (Van Gennep 1960: 16-18). Pilgrimages, which are ritualized travels to centers-out-there. Individuals involved in pilgrimages are liminal and living symbols of solidarity (Turner 1973: 214-215). Pilgrimages can be institutionalized processions of socially central individuals, but can also be undertaken by lower-status persons. They visit places of mythic events, thereby reenacting and re-experiencing the creative wandering of heroes (Sahlins 1981: 13-17; Sullivan 1988: 104-106). Through such pilgrimages and accompanying rituals, social being is embedded in the landscape, but this spatialization of social being is not static. Territorial boundaries define the limits of society, but as the composition and relationships of a group change so does the shape of territory (Rappaport 1985: 39-42).

Not all pilgrimages involve journeys to territorial boundaries and this creates a situation of "overlapping and interpenetrating fields of ritual relations," which means that political solidarity can be undermined by religious pilgrimages or vice-versa (Turner 1973: 206-207). For example, visits to holy centers can dissolve political and ethnic boundaries among fellow pilgrims. Pilgrimages are performed for many reasons, not just to create and control social boundaries. Rituals can also be performed to divine the future, request good harvests, cure the sick, and so on, and each of these may involve a

pilgrimage. It is common for such apolitical pilgrims to journey to locations that are also centers of other groups. If successful, such religious pilgrimages create solidarity that bridges political boundaries (Turner 1973: 207).

Humans create their social being through spatial and temporal practices in which we communicate about ourselves to ourselves and others through ritual (that stands beyond debate). Through such practices, the social group is embedded in the center of time and space (Sullivan 1988: 194). Groups often frame and center their social being in creative events that occurred in the space-time of creation and ethnic origin myths. Social being can be inscribed into the landscape by cyclical ritual circuits that define the center, peripheries, and internal divisions in social time/space. By moving through the sacred landscape, one both re-experiences mythic events, thereby internalizing social being and recreates mythic events, thereby externalizing social being. Many events such as territorial shifts can transform the sacred landscape. Perhaps the greatest threat to the stability of both social identity and perception of the sacred landscape is migration. The effects of migration on social identity is of special importance to the present research as the Kowoj and Itza of 17th century Petén, Guatemala claimed to be migrant groups.

Migrants, Place, and Social Identity

Migrant populations have often been ignored in anthropological research. While identity is often tied to place, many researchers have tried to naturalize these ties and cast migrant populations as social deviants (Malkki 1997: 64-67). Migrations have also been ignored because immobile populations are easier to study (Peters 1997: 80; Breckenridge and Appadurai 1989: I). Archaeologists may have downplayed migration because

modern nation-states naturalized the tie between people, culture, and place, and often attempted to create the past in the image of the present (Dietler 1994: 597-599; Härke 1998: 23-24). Furthermore, archaeologists prefer the simplicity of closed cultural systems (Trigger 1989: 326). However, as the boundaries of modern nation-states have weakened and the world has moved into an era of trans-nationalism, interest in migration has been revitalized in anthropological research. Recent work has focused upon the effects migrations have on social identity.

People with substantial immobile dwellings tend to be "rooted" in space, but sometimes migrate for various reasons such as discrimination, warfare, famine, disease, or opportunities in another area and also for other non-material reasons (Clastres 1995: 70-71). Long-distance migrations do not usually occur in waves, but as long-lasting streams that also include return migrations (Anthony 1990: 902-905). Such streams entail long-lasting social relationships between areas. Adult male scouts often conduct initial migrations, but later movements, which tend to be composed of kin related to the scouts, balance the age-sex ratio. The initial scouts and their families become apex families and brokers of subsequent migrations, which may add to the status of these groups (Anthony 1990: 903-904; Kopytoff 1987: 52-61). However, places are rarely empty and migrations involve the establishment of new social relationships and reevaluations of identities.

Since ethnicity is constructed and constantly reevaluated, its strength fluctuates, especially in response to shifts in social relationships. Studies of ethnic assimilation suggest that as migrants are assimilated, they first lose economic interdependence followed by weakened in-group/out-group boundaries. Eventually, only the use of ethnic

symbols and rituals distinguishes migrants from the larger population (Petrissans 1991: 63-75; Hill 1992: 315-329; Gans 1994: 578-580). While it would be simple if ethnic assimilation progressed universally, ethnic groups do not assimilate at the same rate. Some ethnic minorities encourage their children to assimilate, while others do not (Gans 1994: 579-580) and the state may or may not encourage assimilation.

Since social identities are fluid, the identity emphasized by migrants in the post-migration situation depends upon the context from which the group migrated and into which they arrive. Members of the same group migrating into different areas and social scenarios may develop identities contrarily (Malkki 1997: 66). There are no laws of identity formation and one cannot be sure which of the many identities a group possesses will become dominant in the post-migration social reality. Identities are often used strategically. For example, Japanese who migrated to California in the early part of the 20th century and were rejected by the European Americans, emphasized a larger Asian/Chinese identity; Punjabi migrants in California imagined the Sacramento Valley to be their ethnic homeland (Leonard 1997: 123-127). Korean migrants in Japan, who are not accepted by the Japanese, constructed their own sacred landscape and practice a hybridized version of Korean shamanism and Buddhism that incorporates Japanese elements. These practices, which exclude Japanese participation, emphasize Korean heritage and identity, though the ritual performances would not be considered traditional in Korea (Hardacre 1984: 63-67). Hence, migrants use their historical knowledge to situationally recreate themselves.

As seen in the above example, migrant groups may create continuities with previous homelands by evaluating and interpreting the landscape and new social

relationships in terms of the former homeland. The landscape of the present can be formulated in the shape of that of the homeland. However, the past is not simply a template to be replicated, but a collection of memories. These collective memories are knowledge passed through generations and can be real or imaginary. They are variously used by migrants to strategically construct themselves. Ironically, second or third generation return migrants who are not accepted by occupants of the homeland as pure members of the in-group might advertise ethnic characteristics of the land from which they had returned. Hence, while they had emphasized the original "homeland" in their original migration, the migration place becomes a second "homeland" in their return migration (Tsuda 2000). "Place-images" are important social constructions through which a group defines itself and others and are critical components of competing mythopractices (Shields 1991: 18).

Groups occupying the lands into which migrants arrive also classify the groups, but as with the identities of migrants, it is difficult to predict the reaction of indigenous populations. For example, while early 20th century migrants from India into the United States were initially considered to be "Caucasian" and eligible for citizenship, they were less as well accepted than Japanese migrants were by American "whites". European Americans later changed their classification to non-"white," thereby denying them citizenship (Leonard 1997: 125). This is a classic example of first migrants claiming they have more legitimate control over land than later migrants even though they, themselves, displaced indigenous peoples. It is common for migrant groups to displace earlier occupants, but then claim dominance over later migrants because of greater ties to the land, ironically, through rights of "first occupancy" (Kopytoff 1987: 52-62).

Modern groups displaced by economic or militarily powerful migrant groups and denied the prestige of "first occupancy" can resist assimilation and social domination by constructing identities in their own terms. For example, the Shipibo see white and black people as "failed proto-humans" who robbed them of their wealth and power, but will inevitably be destroyed allowing the resurgence of "true humans" (Roe 1988: 128). The creation myths of the Waurá of Central Brazil described how the Sun gave white people technology and their violent and immoral nature at creation (Ireland 1988: 165-166). The Wakunénai believe they have "collective dream souls", but those of white people are composed of paper and books (Hill 1993: 5-6). Historical knowledge and the construction of social boundaries are not erased or prevented by foreign domination, but remain active parts of indigenous understanding and action.

Indigenous people may resist domination by appropriating the instruments of migrants' power. For example, the Páez of Colombia saw writing and literacy as instruments of European migrants' power through which they can improve their social positions. They have also incorporated the giving of land titles by colonial powers into their sacred geography (Rappaport 1987: 46-53). Subjugated Andean people combined Santiago, the Spaniards' battle patron, with their own deities to form a potent image of resistance (Silverblatt 1988: 184). The manipulation of symbols of domination demonstrates indigenous ability to recognize and reverse Colonial mythopractice. Not only are appropriated symbols used against the dominant group, but they are manipulated to increase the power of indigenous factions as well (Whitehead 1993: 297-298).

Migrations create complex social interactions in which social boundaries are transformed in a variety of ways. Indigenous and migrant populations can be composed

of various groups and boundary formation processes exist within the larger groups as well as outside them. Occasionally, situations require the weakening of intra-group boundaries. Alternatively, members of migrant groups might blend with earlier migrants or indigenous people. There might even be alliances between two factions in different ethnic groups to increase the power of one or both factions relative to other members of their ethnic group. The scenarios are endless, and it is simply impossible to predict the outcome of migration events.

Migration events creates another type of center-out-there, the homeland. Places of origin and promised lands, whether real or imagined, are instrumental in unifying people and providing a basis for common identity (Malkki 1997: 70-72; Rushdie 1991: 9-21; Smith 1992: 438-452). They are often sacred, as the deeds of ancestors were considered heroic or pure. Their purity might arise from their liminality (Malkki 1997: 67) or perfection in character. The homeland is a key symbol and behaviors and social structures attributed to the homeland might form the basis for the system of symbols. As a symbol of social foundation, migrations are myths and can play a part in ritual performance. For example, the Aztecs may have built their capital, Tenochtitlan, to resemble their mythical homeland, Aztlan (Boone 1991: 122). While not part of creation, a migration can be a stage of cosmogony because it is a crucial origin point that defines the composition and characteristics of the ethnic group.

Two factors that are clearly important in the above examples of ethnic boundary formation in response to migration are historical and geographic knowledge, time and space. These factors play a critical role in helping migrants to adapt to the new social situations in which they find themselves. Hence, returning to Geertz' classic metaphor,

humans not only weave webs of symbolic existence in which they are themselves situated, but they also attempt to weave others into this web as well. However, the position of others is generally woven with less favorable threads of time, space, and social being. The weaving of time, space, and social being is a symbolic process achieved through ritual practices.

Summary

The formation of social boundaries is an ever-occurring process constantly readjusted in response to cultural change. As mentioned, spatiality, temporality, and social being are interrelated and cannot be considered separately. All are mythopractices involved in power struggles between groups. The existential triad is communicated by ritual performances, which help to create and mediate its boundaries. Since boundaries are the points at which categories are brought into existence, rituals are events critical to the definition of social identities.

The 17th century Kowoj claimed to have migrated to Petén, Guatemala from Mayapán, Yucatán, México. In light of the previous theoretical discussion, it is expected that they would have emphasized relations with their ancestral city in their ritual performances. In order to provide a background of ritual performance applicable to the Kowoj archaeological materials, Maya ritual must be specifically addressed. The next chapter will examine the ritual practices of modern and Colonial speakers of Yucatec Maya to observe ways in which these groups construct categories of time, space, and social being.

CHAPTER 3: YUCATECAN MAYA MYTH AND RITUAL

This chapter describes modern and Colonial Yucatecan Maya cosmology and rituals as an interpretive bridge between the archaeological data and performances that occurred at Zacpetén. Of course, all aspects and manifestations of Maya myth and ritual cannot be covered here; therefore, this chapter will concentrate on the rituals of the Northern Lacandon Maya; modern and Colonial Maya of Yucatán; modern and Contact period Maya of Petén; and modern Maya of Socotz, Belize. These limits are occasionally exceeded to incorporate practices relevant to the data recovered at Zacpetén.

The Northern Lacandon

Northern Lacandon ritual seems the best ethnographic source for the interpretation of Late Postclassic Maya ritual performance in Petén. The Lacandon still use god pots similar to those of the Late Postclassic period and still have indigenous celestial deities (Davis 1978: 295-297). The Lacandon may have formed from migrants from Yucatán (McGee 1990: 17) and Petén in the early eighteenth century (Tozzer 1907: 37-38; Boremanse 1998: 4). Good descriptions of Lacandon ritual performances are available from several different researchers from 1907 to 1998.

The Lacandon Universe and Cosmogony

The Lacandon universe is usually described as having five circular layers (Davis 1978: 18; McGee 1990: 61) though Boremanse (1982: 84) suggests seven. The

Underworld is ruled by Sukunkyum and is the place of the newly dead, who are punished for sins by Kisin. Above the Underworld is the material world, which is surrounded by the ocean and occupied by living humans, less righteous souls, and earth deities (Davis 1978: 19-24). The world has four cardinal directions with associated deities (McGee 1990: 22-23). Ruined cities are mediate connections between the second and third layers as the gods once in them. Before the creation of humans, the gods lived at Palenque and the chief deity seems paralleled with the ruler described in Palenque texts, Pakal (Davis 1978: 244-249). However, Palenque was destroyed and they moved to Yaxchilan, the center of the second layer aligned with the centers of the other cosmic layers (Davis 1978: 18- 24). Most of the gods died from disease and moved to the third layer.

The celestial gods and the souls of righteous people occupy the third layer. Hachakyum, 'our true father' creator of humans, is the most powerful deity on that plane (Davis 1978: 21; McGee 1990: 62). The deity most closely related to humans is Ak'inchob, the lord of the *milpa*, who acts as an intermediary between humans and the gods. Mensabak, 'soot maker', is the rain deity analogous to Chak, within whose house the dead reside. Akyantho' is the god of foreigners, commerce, disease, and medicine (McGee 1990: 62-70). The gods usually have goddess wives, who play lesser roles, with the exception of Akna', the moon and "mother" goddess and Ixchel, the "goddess of pregnancy and childbirth" (McGee 1990: 62). Feathered serpent pillars separate the third and fourth layers (Davis 1978: 22). The god of the gods, K'akoch occupies the fourth cosmic layer (Davis 1978:23). The fifth layer is the sunless and cold domain of minor deities and the first humans (McGee 1990: 61) that will also be occupied by the last humans (Bruce 1975: 8).

Several discrete acts induced Lacandon cosmogony. K'akoch, the primordial creator who formed the earth, sun, and moon, caused three sibling deities, Sukunkyum, Akyantho', and Hachakyum, to be born from a flower, so he could be worshiped (Tozzer 1907: 94-95). The other gods were similarly born, but those of different *onen*, described below, were born from different flowers (Davis 1978: 21). While Sukunkyum (*sukun* means 'elder brother') is linked with the Underworld and Hachakyum with the heavens, the conflict suggested by the opposing cosmic planes is manifest between Hachakyum and Sukunkyum's assistant Kisin. In fact, Hachakyum seems to have respected his elder brother. After K'akoch placed the three deities at Yaxchilan, he withdrew, as is common of initial creators (Sullivan 1988: 28). The first three brothers may represent three creations with Hachakyum the lord of the present era (Bruce 1977: 190-191).

In various stories, Hachakyum and his youngest son T'uup (*t'up* means 'youngest child') are chased by Kisin who wishes to kill the former (Boresmanse 1982: 73-80). Eventually, Kisin slays Hachakyum's double (i.e. earthly form), while his other form had descended into the Underworld to build a house for Sukunkyum. After completing the task, Hachakyum caused the earth to split, through either an earthquake or the bloating of his corpse, and he emerges to the heavens and Kisin falls into the Underworld. After ascending to the third plane, Hachakyum becomes the most important deity and humans interact with him through a mediator deity (Boremanse 1982: 86). As a youngest son, T'uup parallels his father Hachakyum. His two elder brothers sought to kill him and when they thought they had finally killed and dismembered him, they had actually killed his double (Boremanse 1982: 77-80). The real T'uup was in the third layer with his father who then sent him back to defeat his brothers and confine them to the earth.

Hachakyum created humans and Kisin tried to imitate him, but his creations became the parallel animal souls of humans living in the Underworld forest, (Bruce 1975: 23; McGee 1990: 32-33, 91; Boremanse 1998: 102-104). People with the same species of animal spirit are members of the same *onen*. *Onen* membership is inherited patrilineally and the animal name is the patronymic (McGee 1990: 32-33). They were once endogamous and the gods created each *onen* separately, with the first created being the most human (Boremanse 1998: 102). *Onen* were once spatially limited as specific names were tied to places (Tozzer 1907: 40). They are not totems in the strictest sense (McGee 1990: 31), but since all members have the same species as their animal spirit and its name signifies the group, *onen* are a fuzzy form of totem. They vaguely resemble Zinacantecan animal companions because the death of the animal spirit will result in the death of the corresponding human (Boremanse 1998: 91; Vogt 1976: 19).

Onen were grouped into larger units, usually pairs of related animals. The significance of the larger units is uncertain, but they metaphorically refer to the animals of the *onen* they combine. For example, the two peccary *onen*: *K'ek'en*, 'white-lipped peccary', and *Kitam*, 'collared peccary', are grouped together under the *Kowoj* ceremonial name and *Ma'ax*, 'spider monkey', and *Ba'atz'*, 'howler monkey', are known as *Kasyho* (McGee 1990: 32). Since *onen* were patrilineal, so were the ceremonial names. The combination of two patrilineal *onen* of similar animals under one ceremonial name may be a form of moiety (Thompson 1977: 18).

Humans were originally immortal, but when the gods died and moved to the third layer, humans became mortal (Boremanse 1998: 90). Humans were also distanced from the supernatural and could no longer see or speak directly to the gods (Bruce 1977: 181).

Vaguely parallel with the adventures of the Hero Twins of the Popol Vuh, a Lacandon hero named Nuxi' Aj Lejijbaj, 'Mole Trapper' ventured to the Underworld to obtain knowledge and regain immortality. He eventually failed the latter, but brought back knowledge of the Underworld; hence, the Lacandon are able to prepare for their journey after death (Boremanse 1998: 91-96).

Lacandon Ritual Practice

The primary objects used in Lacandon rituals are incense burners or censers called god pots. These pots are ceramic bowls with abstract faces mounted on one side. They represent particular deities and gender specific designs are painted on each pot (Davis 1978: 72). The vessels are made in a special hut and at the time of the renewal rite, they are moved into the temple. Stones called *naj k'u* "god's house" are "cached" in the ash of the god pot; thereby, ensouling it (McGee 1998: 43). The optimal stone is a carved jade figure, but generally, an uncarved stone plays the role (Tozzer 1907: 87-88). These stones are taken from nearby archaeological sites, the homes of the gods; therefore, they are intermediary between the second and third cosmic layers and remnants of the primordial world when the gods walked the earth. The "awakening" of the pots also involves singing, painting them and striking them with blue, red, and black beads, believed to have once been possessed by deities (Davis 1978: 77). Once ensouled, god pots are sacred objects that allow the Lacandon to communicate with their deities and objects exposed to them can become polluted and dangerous (Boremanse 1998: 61).

In the past, playing a drum with a face depicting the deity of music called participants to the god house and a shell trumpet summoned the gods (Tozzer 1907: 111-113). The Lacandon believed the drums and god pots died each year and remade them

during yearly renewal rites unless they did not have the time or resources to conduct the rituals, but at least one censer was renewed (Tozzer 1907: 106-111). More recent work suggests god pot renewal occurred on a four-year cycle (Davis 1978: 75). God pots are always oriented with their face to the east (Tozzer 1907: 113; Soustelle 1937: 65; Davis 1978: 74; and McGee 1990: 75) unless they were "dead," in which case they faced west and contained a cocoa bean shell. When a god pot dies, the stone is removed and placed in a new pot of the same deity; the paint of an old pot is burned off signifying its death; and the dead pot is placed in a cave (Tozzer 1907: 115; McGee 1998: 45).

The main reasons for communicating with deities are to appease their anger, request favors, or simply to give periodic offerings. It is taboo for Northern Lacandon to be angry, but their deities are often angry and cause sickness or bad harvests to those who irritate them (Boremanse 1998: 60-80). Some deities simply enjoy hurting or killing people. The Lacandon do not directly interact with an angry deity, but do so through a mediator deity (Boremanse 1998: 61). Offerings include food, *balché*, an alcoholic drink, cacao, red paint, and rubber figures, which are transformed and received by the deities in their reverse form. For example, incense is transformed into corn dough or tortillas; rubber figures into servants; and small amounts into large amounts (Davis 1978: 23-26).

Just as god pots are analogs for the use of Late Postclassic to Colonial period human image censers, god houses aid in the interpretation of temples. God houses are generally located 9 m to 15 m from the residence and the largest are around 4.6 by 9.8 m (Davis 1978: 55). While Lacandon residences are now usually built with "Mexican" techniques and materials, the god house is built in an antiquated form with a dirt floor, no walls, and thatched roof (McGee 1990: 55). These buildings do not have dedication

caches, but their constructions are ritual events that animate them (McGee 1998: 42). They are built as the real houses of the gods and are places where the second and third cosmic layers intermingle (McGee 1990: 55).

The interior of god houses and ritual paraphernalia are painted with red circles and dots representing the interior of the house of Hachakyum, which was painted with the blood of sacrificed humans (McGee 1990: 55). God pots were painted with red and black paint; as were the robes formerly worn by men during ceremonies and daily by *t'o'ojil*, who are men with ritual, social, or political power (Davis 1978: 57). The white robes had red and black dots, lines, and other figures and sometimes blue lines (Tozzer 1907: 70-72). Black pigment is obtained from the soot of incense smoke, a parallel to dark rain clouds. Red represents blood and black indicates rain, thereby, incorporating both elements of cosmic reciprocation.

God houses have a number of taboos for ritual purity. Women do not usually enter them except on certain occasions. Animals are forbidden, as are insects (Davis 1978: 56-57), with the exception of honey bees (Tozzer 1907: 63). Men should abstain from sex the day before they make offerings, wear clean clothes, and wash their hands before entering (Davis 1978: 56-57). A special "virgin fire" is used to burn offerings (McGee 1998: 44). Some god houses have their own cooking houses where special food for offerings is prepared (Davis 1978: 60). God houses are sacred places differentiated from everyday life (McGee 1990: 55). Nevertheless, some everyday activities such as flint-knapping occur within them (Boremanse 1998: 24).

God houses are places where males gather to socialize and are the centers of group solidarity. While this might seem to discredit the notion that the buildings were

different from everyday life, Northern Lacandon avoid interaction with members of other residential groups and when household visits occur they are ritualized (Boremanse 1998: 18). Intense gossip discourages frequent social visits (Davis 1978: 57). Each man ideally owns his own god pots so that he can interact with the gods for his family, but younger men may not have their own pots and depend upon their father or father-in-law (Boremanse 1998: 29). Sharing of god pots seems to promote household solidarity. Furthermore, *t'o'ojïl* promote cohesion through the community need for their superior ritual knowledge and closer ties with deities (Boremanse 1998: 31 and 66-67). God houses provide a place for male socializing as well as social solidarity.

Various researchers provided detailed plans of god houses and their contents along with summaries of ritual performances (Tozzer 1907: Fig. 33; Davis 1978: Fig. 8; McGee 1990: Figure 5.3). The three plans of Lacandon god houses (Figure 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3) differ slightly, but share certain characteristics. Many differences may be the result of change through time, different ritual performances, or acceptable variations. One important similarity is that they all involve *balché* rites. *Balché* is a sacred alcoholic drink offered to the god pots that participants must consume in order to purify themselves to communicate with the deities (McGee 1990: 73).

An early plan of a god house (Figure 3-1) depicts a square building during a god pot renewal ritual (Tozzer 1907: 112). A shelf extending along its west side held god pots that were not in use. South of the shelf were dead god pots facing west. North of the shelf was a drum and a cover used to collect soot for black pigment. In front of the shelf was a row of large god pots resting upon a palm leaf mat. West of the large censers were three rows of smaller god pots without activation stones that were servants of the

gods (Tozzer 1907: 89). One of the smaller god pots was a ladle censer with a god face and a hand at the end of the handle. This censer was *Akna*, 'our mother', the mother of the god pots, whose name parallels the term "*Oc Na*," the name of yearly censer renewal rites in Colonial Yucatán (Tozzer 1907: 110-111). This censer was only used during renewal rituals. East of the smaller pots was a row of *balché* offering cups and then tamale offerings. South of the palm mat altar containing the god pots and offering was the god pot of the rain god. East of the altar was another palm leaf mat altar with a pot containing *balché* and several cups, and east of this altar were the benches of participants. North of the god house was a dugout log containing water, presumably to wash hands, and to the northeast was a larger log containing sugar cane. East of the house was a dugout log containing *balché*, opposite which was the god pot of Sukunkyum with his offering, which was placed outside the god house because this pot is dangerous to the other god pots (Tozzer 1907: 95).

The second god house plan depicts a *mek'chajal* ritual (Figure 3-2), which are payments to the gods for the birth and health of a child (Davis 1978: 59 and 264). Two men owned the god house and each had a shelf of pots. The pots of one man were placed on the east side of the palm altar. In front of the row of pots were several rows of offering cups, to the east of which was a board holding rubber figures. South of the altar were bowls containing tamales and the sacred fire. East of the long altar was a smaller palm mat containing cups, cacao, a "cacao beater and cup," and a *balché* jug (Davis 1978: 59). South of this altar was the mundane/impure fire. East of the small mat were the benches of the participants. To the east of the god house were a gourd containing water used to wash hands and two dugout logs, one containing *balché* and the other sugar

cane. Northeast of the god house was the god pot of Sukunkyum. South of the house was a dugout log for "washing cups and pounding cacao" (Davis 1978: 59).

The plan of a god house during a general *balché* ritual depicts a long shelf along the back wall holding the unused god pots (Figure 3-3) (McGee 1990: 56). Immediately to the west of the shelf were several boards upon which the pots are placed and to the west of these was a palm mat altar with offering cups. West of the altar were several boards containing offerings of incense. Along the centerline of the east wall was a *balché* pot surrounded by cups. Around the pot and cups were the benches of participants. In the northeast corner of the structure are more benches and the sacred fire. Outside the structure to the east was a dugout canoe in which the *balché* was made. To the east and north were bowls with water for washing hands. The god pots and the participants are ordered by rank with the owners of the god house in the center flanked by individuals of ever-decreasing relationship and status (McGee 1990: 55-57).

The various known Lacandon god houses were described at different times and for different rituals, but an underlying pattern is evident. While living, almost all god pots are placed in the western side of the building and face east. Dead god pots are present only during new god pot ceremonies and are in the southwest corner facing west. Ritual participants are located to the east near the *balché* pot and cups, which are placed upon a palm leaf mat. In between the god pots and the participants are various offerings of food, drink, and incense, which were also placed upon a palm leaf mat. The god pot of Sukunkyum and a dugout canoe holding the *balché* are located a few meters east of the god house. The patterning in the god houses reflects the "key ritual" underlying most performances: the *balché* rite (McGee 1991: 455). This ritual is the procedure through

which humans offer *balché*, food, and other items to deities. Participants also consume *balché*, which purifies them so that they can interact with the deities; hence, it is a necessary part of all communication between cosmic planes (McGee 1990: 73). The gods also perform the ritual when communicating with their god. Since the recipe for *balché* is the same in the Yucatán peninsula (Davis 1978: 299) and god pots were a key part of ritual practice in Late Postclassic Yucatán, it seems likely that a similar rite was once performed in that area.

In addition to making offerings for health and agriculture, god houses are used for *mek'chajal rites*. These rites ideally take place when a child is young and are payments to the gods for allowing the child's birth and survival as well as gender-based ritual instructions (Boremanse 1998: 81-87). In these rites, offerings are made to the gods and the child is carried on the hip of sponsor/godparent who instructs in the use of various objects. Boys "learn" how to use the bow and arrow, machete, chert, and other objects, which have previously been offered to the deities. The *mek'chajal of* girls occur outside the god house, but the objects of instruction include the backstrap loom, spindles, broom, and other objects that are offered in the god house.

Occasionally, it is necessary to make a pilgrimage to the houses of specific gods. Archaeological ruins were once the homes of gods and it is vital to visit them to make offerings and obtain stones to activate god pots. As part of their historical consciousness, the Lacandon know the ruins in which specific deities lived and myths regarding Palenque and Yaxchilan are quite detailed (Davis 1978: 74 and 244-249; McGee 1990: 57). Deities also live in cliffs or caves adjacent to water, where offerings of food, *balché*, and incense are made to request specific favors or give thanks (Tozzer 1907: 148). Some

cliff and cave shrines were locations where god pots were buried (McGee 1990: 57-58). If god pots were once made yearly, then the pilgrimage to bury the pots may have followed annual cycles.

The Lacandon also practice other rituals including burial of the dead. God pots do not play a part in these rites as contact with the spirits of the dead immediately kills the pots (Boremanse 1998: 93). Individuals are buried in a tightly flexed position with various items to help the soul in its journey to meet Sukunkyum; failure to follow the proper procedure may cause the gods to become angry (Boremanse 1998: 92-96).

The primary foci of Northern Lacandon rituals are the god pots, which are means of communication with and making offerings to angry deities. While "alive," the god pots remain in their house. The key *balché* rite structured the activity areas of all known god houses. The Lacandon embed their historical consciousness in the landscape surrounding their settlements in places such as ruins and waterside cliffs where the gods live or lived. These places are occasionally visited to make offerings or obtain stones to activate god pots.

Myth and Ritual in the Yucatan Peninsula

Modern Yucatecan myth and ritual is heavy syncretized with Catholicism, but indigenous beliefs and practices are still strong within them. The Kowoj and Itza of Petén were Yucatecan speakers and claimed to have migrated from Yucatán, as discussed in Chapter 4; hence, the myths and rituals of the latter provide another strong source for the interpretation of practices in Late Postclassic Petén. Colonial Spanish and indigenous documents provide a great deal of information about indigenous myth and ritual.

Yucatecan Myth

The various Maya groups perceive the form of the universe in different ways and these worldviews have changed through time (Taube 1988: 153) characterized here as a composite. In general, the universe was characterized as a series of stacked cosmic planes (Thompson 1970: 194-196). Above the earth are 13 heavens with 13 gods; the Underworld has 9 layers and 9 deities. A world tree bridges the layers with roots in the Underworld and branches in heaven and four other trees lie in the world corners (Thompson 1970: 195-196; Freidel et al. 1993: 53). An alternative worldview of many Yucatec Maya holds that the universe is an air-filled sphere with east, God, heaven, and the sun on top; west, a female spirit, the moon, and the Underworld at the bottom; and the earth in the middle (Hanks 1990: 304-306). God created the spherical universe by blowing a bubble of air into nothingness. The heavens include seven quincunx, a configuration with four corners and a center, planes increasing in power as one moves east/upward. The Underworld includes planes of water and fire.

The material world in which humans live also varies depending upon the metaphor used to characterize it and it can be four-sided, circular, or a great reptile or fish (Taube 1988: 153-170). In general, however, the universe has five world trees separating the earth and sky with each associated with a specific direction and color: red lies to the east, white to the north, black to the west, yellow to the south, and green in the center. East was considered the primary and most powerful direction (Thompson 1973: 196). The four-sided universe mirrors houses, kitchen houses, and *milpas*. At the four corners of the former two are posts holding up the sky and in the center a three-stoned hearth (Taube 1988: 154-155; Freidel et al. 1993: 130). A path surrounds the *milpa*

cosmos (Taube 1988: 158-159). The circular world is envisioned as a great island, mirror, or turtle (Taube 1988: 164-167). The world as a great reptile is either a floating turtle or a being called Itzam Cab Ayin, the earth crocodile (Taube 1988: 167-170), described below.

Yucatecan deities had various aspects and blended into one another (Vail 2000: 144). While there is a lesser deity called Itzana among the Lacandon, Itzamna parallels the Lacandon deity Hachakyum (McGee 1990: 65), as he is the primary and one of the most versatile deities (Cline 1944: 109; Vail 2000: 137). God E, the Classic and Postclassic Maya maize god, appears to be equivalent to the Lacandon deity Ak'inchob. God E is also the Postclassic "diving god," perhaps representing his descent to receive offerings (Taube 1992: 41-50). God E is killed and rises from a split in the world (in this case, a turtle carapace), but this myth is credited to Hachakyum among the Lacandon. Chak is the Classic and Postclassic period god of rain and lightning, paralleling the central Mexican deity Tlalok and the Lacandon Mensabak. The essential being these names represent is one of the oldest Mesoamerican deities (Taube 1992: 17-27). Ek Chuaj is the merchant deity analogous to Akyantho', but does not appear to have been linked to disease. Chak Chel is an aged creator goddess, who might be related to Akna' and Ixchel is the goddess of the moon, marriage, and weaving, equivalent to the Lacandon Ixchel. God L parallels Sukunkyum and is both lord of the Underworld and fertility (Taube 1992: 79-88). A deity named K'u may have been a personification of sacredness (Ringle 1988 cited in Vail 2000: 129-130). These are but a few of the many Yucatecan deities.

Many indigenous deities of Yucatán were transformed into saints and crosses and in the 1930s, "Dios", the Christian god, still held a status lower than some saints and crosses (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 110). In Yucatan, crucifixes are sacred objects similar to god pots. They act as intermediaries between humans and God, but do so through another intermediary, Jesus Christ (Villa Rojas 1945: 97). Mediator spirits are important in Yucatán just as they are among the Lacandon. Crosses, like Late Postclassic deity statues, are made of cedar (*k'uche'*, 'divine wood'), ritually awakened, dressed in clothes and some are decorated with mirrors (Villa Rojas 1945: 97). The composition, awakening, clothes, and mirrors hint that these crosses differed from Christian crosses. The world tree, mentioned above, was often depicted in crucifix form decorated with mirrors (Schele and Miller 1986: 284). Yucatecan crosses are world trees and are believed to be alive (Freidel et al. 1993: 53). They are also ranked in a hierarchy (Villa Rojas 1945: 97-98). Similar to Lacandon god pots, married men ideally obtained their own crucifixes. If they display special powers, they may become lineage crosses and some eventually may be revered at the village level. Extremely powerful crosses called "Most Holy" are sentient beings that protect people, punish sins, are owed offerings, and ritual service (Villa Rojas 1945: 98-99).

Wooden images of saints are also important to Yucatecan communities, though perhaps less so than crosses and deities in more recent communities (Villa Rojas 1945: 101). In the Colonial period, the "cult of the saints" involved the communal veneration, festivals, clothing, and feeding of saints and specific saints were believed to protect the community. Their veneration helped to maintain communal boundaries, even in dispersed populations (Farriss 1984: 320-333), and they were symbols of the community

(Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 108). While western communities may tend to distance themselves from the divine by universalizing it, the Maya veneration of saints was "localized" in the community (Restall 1997: 153). The cult of saints seems to have had ties to pre-Columbian divine icons (Farriss 1984: 320). Like Lacandon god pots (Davis 1978: 73), household-owned saints were passed between males from generation to generation and represented the household (Restall 1997: 153).

Various types of lesser spirits including *chak*, *k'uil-k'ax*, and *balam* (Villa Roja 1945: 101) seem to have survived to conquest relatively intact. *Chak* are rain and cloud spirits, *k'uil-k'ax*, 'gods of the forests' are forest guardians, and the *balam* guard people, fields, and settlements. There are also evil spirits such as *alux, ixtabay*, winds, and ghosts. *Alux* are small goblins that cause problems unless they are given offerings, in which case they become *milpa* guardians (Redfield and Rojas 1934: 119-120). Modern people believe that Late Postclassic image censers are *alux*. *Ixtabay* can transform into trees, snakes, and most commonly beautiful women and try to seduce and kill men to take their souls (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 122; Villa Rojas 1945: 104). Sorcerers are able to assume the form of animals and have pets that they send to perform evil tasks (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 104). Winds may be conceived as complex spirits that cause sickness (Villa Rojas 1945: 133-135). These spirits enter the stomachs of weak, sick, or tired people and cause them to be very ill.

Mayan cosmogony generally, and Yucatecan and Lacandon in particular, proceeded through several stages. Previous creations failed because the proto-humans were deficient in some culturally important way. The Popol Vuj, a Quiche Maya document, states that worthy humans should be able to work, speak, and make offerings

to the deities (Tedlock 1985: 165). One important myth in the Popol Vuh that appears to have been present among prehispanic groups in Yucatán is the story of the Hero Twins (Tedlock 1985; 138-139; Schele and Mathews 1998: 210-255). The Hero Twins existed just before the present creation and wandered the world and the Underworld combating beings, including the lords of dead, whose power overwhelmed other beings.

In Yucatán, prior creations were destroyed by various means, but the last fell to a flood (Taube 1988: 135-143). The flood was attributed to various causes including the flood monster/ earth crocodile Itzam Cab Ayin, who may have been an aspect of Itzamna (Taube 1988: 138-139; Taube 1989: 2-4). Itzam Cab Ayin seems to be the Maya variant of a being found in creation accounts throughout Central and South America. Cosmogony myths among many groups in these areas describe that before creation and the establishment of the center, the universe was in a state of "chaos, prime matter, indistinction, the indiscernible" requiring division so the symbolic universe could emerge (Sullivan 1988: 24-26). The acts of creator deities divide chaos, separating the earth and sky (Sullivan 1988: 97). Following the initial division, the universe evolves in the direction of humanity, but prior to achieving that point, a catastrophe occurs, often manifest by the temporary reemergence of primordial chaos (Sullivan 1988: 49-66). In Central and South America, the chaos of the catastrophic flood is often represented by a single being, generally a water reptile, which must be dismembered or sacrificed so that the sky and earth can be separated (Sullivan 1988: 84-87; Taube 1988: 135-151).

The image of the temporary reemergence and dismemberment of chaos is important as a metaphor of symbolic differentiation, as well as cyclical time. The division of chaos into numerous unequal parts allows the emergence of differentiated

reality, including social groups (Sullivan 1988: 90-94). Just as the dismembered water reptile was unequally divided, status differences exist among social groups. The fact that the reemergence of primordial chaos was a temporary catastrophe signals the development of temporal cycles and is a symbol of transition from one temporal unit to another (Sullivan 1988: 59). At the end of each cycle, the old temporal unit is destroyed by periodic chaos. The contained chaos framed within the context of cyclical time is extended to other phenomena such as the intersection of spatial units and social groups. The flood is an image of disorder used creatively to mediate change.

The separation of the sky and earth is achieved by the appearance of the axis-mundi, the shape of which becomes the form of the newly ordered cosmos (Sullivan 1988: 61-65). In the Maya area, the axis-mundi is represented by a tree, mountain/cave, or three-stone hearth (Freidel et al. 1993: 59-122). The axis-mundi also signifies separation and, hence, mediation of categories. In other words, the axis-mundi is representative of the ritual mediation of sacred states of being. Humans must periodically reenact the primordial differentiation of reality to maintain the order of the universe (Sullivan 1988: 46-47; Taube 1988: 310-311).

Like the South American flood monster (Sullivan 1988: 58), Itzam Cab Ayin was sacrificed and its body used to construct the earth (Taube 1988: 139-140). The five world trees separated the earth and sky and their bases were composed of parts of Itzam Cab Ayin. Once divided, the chaotic flood monster became the ordered universe (Taube 1988: 170-172). The world trees are replicated in the construction of social spaces such as houses and villages in which the four corners and center define the whole (Hanks 1990: 300).

The creation of humans in Yucatán is varied, vague, and poorly known. One group called the Xiw (and possibly the Kowoj) believed, like the Lacandon, that their ancestral lineages were born from *nikte* flowers (Edmonson 1986: 27). Flower births seem related to Central Mexican cave origin myths. According to the Popol Vuh, after flood, the gods created humans from corn dough (Tedlock 1985: 163-167). These humans could do all that the gods required including work, speak, make offerings to them, etc., but they threatened the gods because they were too powerful because they could see/ know everything. Hence, as in to the Lacandon myth, human sight or knowledge of the universe was restricted.

Yucatecan Ritual

The religious beliefs of the Maya of Yucatán are syncretized with Christianity, but they have indigenous ritual specialists called *h-men* (Love 1986: 50). *H-men* follow the example set by Itzamna, the first *h-men*. They have many responsibilities including leading rites of exorcism, dedication, curing, divination, giving of thanks, and requesting divine aid (Love 1986: 45-112). When performing rituals, *h-men* are in direct contact with supernatural forces and are, hence, shamans (Freidel et al. 1993: 33). In the past, they were also political leaders, composed books with ritual, genealogical, and divinatory knowledge, and were part of complex religious hierarchies (Love 1986: 119).

Curing rites are common and vary greatly depending upon the source of the illness, which is determined through divination. Divination has two primary methods: crystallomancy and corn grain counting. The latter is used to obtain favorable or unfavorable responses, but crystals extend the sight of the *h-men* so that he can see the source of an illness (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 170; Hanks 1990: 339-340). People

can become sick by being exposed to bad winds, but angry deities and witches also send bad winds (Hanks 1990: 128). When divination reveals that deities sent the illness, offerings are made to ask forgiveness. If people are sick because of a bad wind, the shaman will exorcise it. *H-men* possess detailed herbal knowledge and use medicines to cure (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 171-176) and also perform cupping and/or let blood.

The Maya of Chan Kom held new house ceremonies to create boundaries that blocked evil winds (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934 146-147). An altar was set up in the middle of the house and offerings were made to the posts. Several rituals were conducted when placing a new *milpa* (Hanks 1990: 361-380). First, the corners and boundaries were established, swept, and marked. Offerings were made to deities before cutting and burning the *milpa* to protect the farmer from harm. While burning the field, good winds were summoned to help the fire burn properly (Villa Rojas 1945: 104). Offerings were made for rain and the harvest must be shared with the deities as thanks. The perimeters of both households and *milpas* must be swept because they define the boundaries of the spaces and failure to maintain these is dangerous (Hanks 1990: 349).

Yucatecan agricultural and healing rites are similar to Lacandon *balché* rituals. In these rites, the *h-men* faces east toward a crucifix (Hanks 1990: 368-375). Between the *h-men* and the cross are various offerings, depending upon the ritual or stage in the ritual, including *balché*, gruel, meat, bread, and other items. Spirits descend to eat and drink the offerings (Hanks 1990: 368). While god pots were once used in Yucatán, they have now been eliminated from rituals ; yet, the gods are still fed.

Hetz'mek or 'hip carrying' rites ideally occur when females are three months old, signifying the three-stone hearth, and males four months old, representing the four sides

of the *milpa* (Villa Rojas 1945: 144-145). Offerings are made and the child is carried upon the hip of their godmother who instructs boys how to use machetes, hatchets, and hoes and girls to use manos, needles, and scissors (Villa Rojas 1945: 145).

Rituals of the Colonial Maya of Yucatán

Time was extremely important to the Colonial as well as modern and Precolumbian Maya. They had various methods for recording time, but only the vague year, *tzolk'in*, long count, and *k'atun* cycle will be discussed here. The "vague year" is composed of 18 months of 20 days and one month (*Wayeb*) of five days for a total of 365 days. The *tzolk'in* or 260-day divinatory calendar is composed 13 day numbers and 20 day names, both of which proceed sequentially from one day to the next. *Tzolk'in* day names and numbers establish the nature of the soul of beings born on that date (Fischer 1999: 481) and the day name that occurs on the first day of the vague year is the name of the yearbearer and determines the year's prophecy (Taube 1988: 180-182). Because of the mathematical relationship between the two calendars, only four *tzolk'in* day names can occur at the New Year. In the Long Count, which was largely discontinued after the Late Classic period, the solar day was called *k'in* and 20 *k'in* formed a *winal*. A *tun* (360 days) lasted 18 *winals* and 20 *tuns* formed a *k'atun* (19.7 solar years). A *b'ak'tun* (394.5 years) was composed of 20 *k'atuns* and 13 *b'ak'tuns* (5128.5 solar years) was the length of time from creation to cosmic destruction. Another cycle called the *may* was composed of 13 *k'atuns* (256.4 years) and was the primary Late Postclassic and Colonial calendar (Edmonson 1986: 9). Each *k'atun* had a priest called *ajk'in may* or *Balam*, who had a spokesman called the *Chilam Balam* (Edmonson 1986: 4-5).

The Maya joined space and time and *k'atun* and *may* cycles were "seated," or grounded in space, at specific centers (Edmonson 1986: 4-5). Each cycle center was linked to the previous seat through cyclical time and considered a re-embodiment of the same conceptual place. Seats of cycles were considered "born of heaven" or sacred (Edmonson 1986: 5). While seats corresponded with temporal junctures that linked them to creation events, the entire world was sometimes seen as being enclosed in a great *k'atun* wheel (Taube 1988: 165). This evokes the paths or roads that surround social spaces and reminds one that "...a man on a road" is time (Edmonson 1986: 50). Time and space were one and social being was derived from the ordering of these dimensions.

Many rituals in Colonial Yucatán involved ceremonial circuits conducted during major calendrical rites. Cenotes, caves with springs, wells, ruins, and towns served as boundary markers and on colonial maps, each was marked by a cross (Roys 1943: Figure 1 and 176-190; Marcus 1993: Fig. 5). Cave, cenotes, and the quadripartite motif were found in the centers, as well; hence, the center and periphery are symbolically related. Cenotes, caves, wells, and other holes in the earth were considered portals between the material and supernatural worlds; were associated with rain and fertility; and were the locations of rituals and pilgrimages (Turner 1973: 229; Roys 1943:82; Brady and Veni 1992: 163). Elites made ritual circuits to peripheral "centers" in order to maintain political boundaries (McAnany 1995: 87-88) and, perhaps, reenact the primordial wanderings of mythical heroes (following Sullivan 1988: 133).

Rituals mediating the largest temporal cycles were the most complex and those of smaller cycles were progressively simplified versions. Edmonson (1986: 29) suggests that a *b'ak'tun* celebration occurred in Merida in AD 1618 and presents a complete model

of Colonial Maya calendrical ritual. Apparently, the *b'ak'tun* celebration had 20 acts beginning with a *balché* rite followed by the masking of impersonators of the 13 sky deities who are "defeated" and sacrificed by the 9 death gods, thereby ending the 13 *k'atun* cycle (Edmonson 1986: 25-27). In Act 4, the yearbearers appear followed by birds representing the major social groups. Act 6 involved a procession to the temple and heart sacrifice. The yearbearers reappear as Chaks, who cause a rainstorm that defeats the land (Edmonson 1986: 25), perhaps symbolizing a flood. In Act 8, the world-trees are set at the four corners and center by a ceremonial circuit, then, the old *Chilam Balam* and yearbearer are replaced; thereby reseating the *k'atun*. In Act 11, Itzam Cab Ayin arrives with the seven pacers on his back, who clean, renew, and resurvey the world, but are sacrificed in Act 12. After another human sacrifice, the various lords answer questions to prove their worthiness, then the prediction for the coming *k'atun* is made. In Act 16, blood is drawn from various body parts and then historical events are commemorated. Next, the *k'atun* is counted, then a comical play is performed. Finally, the *Chilam Balam* makes predictions for the coming year.

The structure of the proposed *b'ak'tun* celebration of 1618 was "abbreviated" during rites celebrating shorter cycles of time such as the *may* and *k'atun*. The *may* ceremony of AD 1539 began with a counterclockwise circuit around the province then the internal lands were surveyed (Edmonson 1986: 269-272). While it lacked the first eight acts of the *b'ak'tun* celebration of 1618, it had the remaining twelve. The commemoration described the fall of Mayapán (Edmonson 1986: 28). Circuits and commemorations were also part of *k'atun* rituals during the Terminal Classic period at Tikal in Twin-Pyramid Complexes (Coe 1965: 111; Jones 1969: 128-137).

New Year rituals were performed according to the vague year calendar. The last five days of the year compose the "month" called *Wayeb*, which was considered dangerous (Landa 1941: 138), as the flood monster, the symbol of primordial chaos, temporarily returned during these days (Taube 1989: 9). Each year was associated with a specific direction, omen, aspect of the *Wayeyab* god, and temple deity and these positions rotated along with the yearbearer with the same beings occurring every four years. The aspects of the *Wayeyab* god never entered the temple. The paired *Wayeyab* god and temple deity may have been two parts of the same being (D. Chase 1985: 119), one on the earth and the other in the cosmic layer of the deities.

Each year, a noble was appointed the principal and some acts of the *Wayeb* rites were conducted in his house (Landa 1941: 140). Four pairs of stone piles rested on the edge of town, one pair at each of the cardinal directions. An image of the *Wayeyab* deity was made and placed on the stone piles next to that of the previous year (Landa 1941: 139). These images were "hollow images of clay" with braziers, which describes effigy censers (Tozzer 1941: 139-140). An image of the temple deity was placed in the house of the principal. Next, the road between the house of the principal and the piles of stones was "cleaned and decorated" and the priests marched down the road to make offerings to the censers (Landa 1941: 140). The new censer was then moved adjacent to the temple deity image in the house of the *principal* and both received offerings and auto-sacrificed blood was offered to a stone (Landa 1941: 141). After the *Wayeb*, the temple deity was placed in the temple and the *Wayeyab* deity was moved to the stone piles in the cardinal direction counter-clockwise of that previously visited and left there for the next year.

The New Year involved other rituals after the *Wayeb* rites including a "ceremony to avert calamities" and renewal ceremony (Love 1986: 169-170). The former ritual was performed directly after the *Wayeb* rites in years with the yearbearer Kawak (Landa 1941: 148; Love 1986: 172-173). During these rites, four deity images were made, placed in the temple, and given offerings. The participants danced and later walked on hot coals to purify themselves. In the renewal ritual, which occurred on New Year's Day, a feast was given to all the deities and all utensils were remade and houses swept. The sweepings and terminated utensils were considered dangerous and placed in a special location outside of town (Landa 1941: 151-152). Four ritual practitioners called *chak* formed a square by holding cords between them. This formation resembles the creation account in the Popol Vuh (see Tedlock 1985: 72). Nobles and others, who had been abstinent and fasting, entered the rectangle to be purified (Landa 1941: 153). Next, a new fire was ignited, incense burned, and a *balché* ceremony performed.

Calendric rituals were important times of architectural construction and renovation, which occurred during *Wayeb* rites (Love 1986: 177). *K'atun* and *may* seatings, which involved new ritual responsibilities for host communities, would have necessitated renovations and new constructions. Many monuments set during the Late Classic period celebrated *k'atun* (Taube 1988: 193) or half-*k'atun* endings. Before rededication, buildings may have been terminated through burning or defacement (following Mock 1998: 4-6). Many reconstructions involved architectural mimicry that reified the repetition of temporal cycles. Examples include Twin-Pyramid Complexes, the Castillos of Mayapán and Chich'en Itza, and E-Groups, all described below.

Sacrifice occurred for various reasons, but one form of sacrifice associated with calendrical ritual is a recreation of the sacrifice of Itzam Cab Ayin. As mentioned, in Act 11 of *k'atun*, *b'ak'tun*, and *may* rituals, the pacers arrive, sometimes on the back of Itzam Cab Ayin, then are sacrificed in Act 12 (Edmonson 1986: 26). The pacers both cleanse/terminate and mark/dedicate; therefore, they not only ride upon the back of Itzam Cab Ayin, but are also act as world destroyers and creators and their sacrifice parallels that of the flood monster.

Yucatecan rituals were complex, varied, have changed through time, and are now syncretized with Catholicism. They include healing, divination, giving of thanks and requests to the deities, renewal of the world, boundaries, and religious and political offices, prophecy, and historical commemoration. The later attribute is of special interest to the present work as it documents that commemorative rites are connected with cyclical renewal. Furthermore, such renewal rites involve sacrifice and architectural renovations.

Petén

As the Spaniards tightened their grasp on Petén in the 16th and 17th centuries, they observed and recorded many of the ritual practices, but those that were more exotic attracted the Spaniards' attention. The modern Itzaj of Lake Petén Itzá and Socotz continue to practice some rituals and tell stories that appear to have pre-conquest origins.

Itzaj

Knowledge regarding Postclassic cosmology of Petén is nearly non-existent; however, a great deal of information exists within the oral traditions of the modern Itzaj living on the north shore of Lake Petén Itzá. For the most part, beings that in Lacandon

mythology would have occupied celestial layers have been eliminated from Itzaj lore. However, spirits such as the winds, Ixtabay, and the lords of the forest are present, as are sorcerers who transform into animals (Hofling 1991; 2000: personal comm.).

It is possible that only the names of deities were eliminated from oral traditions because the subjects of many stories have no proper names and are referred to as "a man," "a woman," etc. (see Schuman 1964; Hofling 1991). Similar to Lacandon cosmogony (Boremanse 1982: 73-84), Itzaj cosmogony involves a chase, but in this case, the protagonist is "a disobedient boy" rather than Hachakyum and the antagonist is an animate squash rather than Kisin (Schuman 1964: 351-352). The chase ends in the division of the world, just as it does among the Lacandon. Itzaj oral traditions also hint at a cosmic termination similar to that predicted by the Lacandon. Large animals in caves await their chance to get out so they can eat people (Hofling 1991: 187) just as the Lacandon describe large animals that will destroy the earth (Cline 1944: 111-112; Davis 1978: 22). In both cases, the animals are subdued by ritual practices.

Some indigenous ritual practices remain among the Itzaj. The best known is the Ritual of the Skull practiced in San José, Petén. San José was dedicated as San José Nuevo when a mission was constructed there in the 18th century (see Jones 1998: 392). The Ritual of the Skull involves three skulls that are stored in the church on the altar. On the night of November 1st, All Souls' Day, one of the skulls is carried in a procession around the town to houses of people who request a visit (Reina 1962: 31-32; Hofling 1995:135). Each skull is used every third year similar to the four-year rotation of *Wayeb* yearbearers. The skulls are believed to be those of "spiritual men of ancient times" (Reina 1962: 32). Like many Catholic groups, the Itzaj believe that the dead return to

earth on this day to visit the living and receive offerings. The containers holding offerings and candles of wild bee's wax are newly made for the ceremony (Reina 1962: 30). The use of the skulls is a form of ancestor veneration. Three skulls may be related to *ox-multun-tzek* or 'three piles of skulls' of Yucatán in which each pile represented a different social class and in the Colonial period, they stood for Maya, Spaniards, and mestizos (Roys 1967: 134).

The Itzaj have other rituals including agricultural rites that occur during the various stages of planting and harvest. Food and drink are offered and the four cardinal winds are called to help the *milpa* burn well (Hofling 1991: 198; Anonymous 1999: 191-195). Crosses were placed in the corners of the *milpa* to protect it from bad winds.

The inhabitants of the adjacent community of San Andrés performed the Ritual of the Pig until recently (Schwartz 1990: 127). In this ceremony, a cooked pig head with shoulders was placed on a table with offerings including bread stuffed in the pig's mouth. The table was then carried by a man through town who was led with a rope by another man for three days with frequent stops at residences and bars where participants consumed alcohol to excess. When the man carrying the table became too intoxicated, another carried the pig. At the end of the ritual, the head was divided among participants.

Each of the older towns in the Petén lakes region has a communal symbol that unified the communities. The three skulls are the community symbol of San José, St. Andrew in San Andrés, and a large ceiba tree in La Libertad (Schwartz 1990: 131).

Socotz

The Maya of Socotz in Belize were an offshoot of Itzaj, who migrated from San José, Petén, spoke Itzaj, and their patron saint was also San José (Thompson 1930: 36 and

111). The highest deity was the angry Dios, below whom were numerous Mayanized saints and indigenous spirits. The most important spirits were agricultural guardians. Offerings to these spirits were made in a quincunx pattern. Instead of four spirits of the same type at each corner, a different type of spirit was at each corner including *balam winik*, *kaanan kax*, *jalach winik*, and *ajbej*. The rain lords were *chak*, who possessed stone axes, and a singular *Yum Chak* or lord of the Chak was mentioned as well (Thompson 1930: 107 and 172). The lords of the forest or *yumil kaxs* protected people while they were in the forest and were ruled by AjT'up (Thompson 1930: 107). Three or four winds associated with the cardinal directions both caused sickness and helped the *milpa* fire burn. An aspect of T'up called T'up Ik' was the youngest wind brother and had two older brother winds (Thompson 1930: 108). Another T'up and two older brothers, who did not appear to be wind lords, were also mentioned (Thompson 1930: 163-165). The ubiquitous *ixtabay* were present as crow-headed demons with hollow bodies that transformed into females and drove men insane (Thompson 1930: 110).

H-men also existed in Socotz and were primarily herbalists, but some were believed to be witches (Thompson 1930: 109). The importance of agricultural deities was reflected in the numerous rituals associated with the agricultural cycle. Ritual offerings were made before cutting the *milpa*, when the *milpa* was burned, during planting, when the ears develop, and after the harvest (Thompson 1930: 117). These rituals involved the use of rum rather than *balché*. The *ik'ob* could be called to help the *milpa* burn, possibly through playing a flute (Thompson 1930: 176).

Important communal rituals at Socotz included the Fiesta of San José and the Ritual of the Pig. The Fiesta of San José, which occurred around the spring equinox,

predictably involved processions and masses, but on the last of the nine days, a young ceiba tree (*yaxche*) was erected in the plaza (Thompson 1930: 111-112). This tree represented the world tree and its erection in the plaza was a creation metaphor. In the Ritual of the Pig, a hog's head with shoulders was cooked and its mouth stuffed with food. Then, it was placed in a basket, which also contained food and rum, and carried by a man, who is a pig impersonator, to nine houses and ended at the church or a house. After nine clockwise and nine counterclockwise circuits around the head, the head was cut into four pieces and given to the four principals. One might speculate that the division of the head represented the primordial division of the universe.

Hetz'mek rituals at Socotz were nearly identical to those in Chan Kom, described above, except the sponsor was a godmother rather than a godfather and the rite involved nine circuits around the altar (Thompson 1930: 110-111). The number nine is obviously important in the most rituals at Socotz.

Accounts of Ritual in Contact Period Petén

Various accounts describe the ritual practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth century occupants of Petén. However, the various practices are disjointed and the ritual system to which they belonged is not readily apparent though it most likely resembled that of Colonial Yucatán.

The Spaniards noted numerous deity images at Nojpeten, but described few in detail. Three were also found in Yucatán as *Wayeb* temple gods including Itzamna Kawil, Aj Kokahmut, and Kinchilcoba (K'inich Ajaw?) (Thompson 1951: 392). Two other deities, Moloc and Hobo, were offered burned human sacrifices. Moloc may be Muluk, a day name and one of the yearbearers. Hobo may be the deity Bacab Hobnil,

associated with the Kan yearbearer (Landa 1941: 142; Comparato 1983: 302). Two war deities, whose effigies the Itza carried into battle, were called Pakoc and Hexchunchán (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 302-303). They also had a central blue-green world tree (Thompson 1951: 392). While the Itza ruler refused to covert to Christianity around AD 1617, he gladly accepted a cross from Spanish priests (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 76), which he likely understood as an image of the world-tree. When sections of road were blocked by rebelling Itza, they placed images of the "gods of the road" (AjBey) to scare the Spaniards (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 95).

Various ritual practitioners were described among the Petén Itza. AjK'in Kan Ek' seems to have been the highest member in a religious hierarchy paralleling that of his first cousin, the "secular" ruler, Ajaw Kan Ek'. The third highest ritual practitioner was Aj Tut who was either the Balam or Chilam Balam of Nojpeten. Numerous lower priest were also described (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 316) and were likely part of a hierarchy headed by AjK'in Kan Ek'. If priests and prophets were separate ritual specialties (Landa 1941: 130), then Aj Tut may have headed a hierarchy of divination specialists. A female subordinate of AjK'in Kan Ek' was described by the Spaniards as a witch, sorceress, and priestess (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 330-331); therefore, females were ritual practitioners. She claimed to meet her jaguar animal companion or nagual at the lakeside and noted that if it died, she would die, thereby suggesting a shared life force similar to Zinacantecan animal companions or Lacandon *onen*.

Some public ritual places in Petén were superficially described by the Spaniards after the conquest. Apparently, Nojpeten had 21 large civic ceremonial buildings including temples, big houses, and shrines (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 297-316).

The central group included ceremonial structures of AjK'in Kan Ek', Ajaw Kan Ek', and AjTut. The largest building was the temple of AjK'in Kan Ek', which had a platform with nine terraces. An "ugly" crouching statue rested at the top of the stairway. Inside the temple was a carved greenstone statue of the "god of battles" above which was an image of the sun constructed of plaster, shell, and human teeth (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 313-314). Deeper inside was a long bone suspended by colored ribbons with a bag containing more bones beneath it. The temple also contained deity images of various materials and censers with incense wrapped in corn husks (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 314). The nine terraces of this temple suggest a building similar to the Castillo of Chich'en Itzá (P. Rice 1998: personal comm.). A carved stone serpent head like those found at Chich'en Itzá, recently discovered in Flores, provides further evidence for connections with Yucatán.

The temple of Ajaw Kan Ek' was built similarly to that of AjK'in Kan Ek': it had a large stone altar surrounded by seats and housed deity effigies of various materials. This building became the Spaniards' church. The ceremonial building of AjTut lay in the plaza and was topped by a large statue that apparently gave prophecies (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 314-315). This structure appears to have been a statue shrine. The three buildings formed an assemblage that integrated the ceremonial roles of Ajaw Kan Ek', AjK'in Kan Ek', and AjTut: of high ruler, high priest, and prophet.

During a previous visit to Nojpeten in AD 1618, Fray Juan de Orbita noted a stone and stucco statue of a deified horse called *Tziminchak* or 'thunder tapir/horse' in a temple (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 72-73; Jones 1998: 36-45). Hernan Cortés had left his horse with the Itza, but it soon died and the Itza apparently deified it. Fray Orbita

smashed the statue to pieces, which angered the Itza and their deities. The later heart sacrifice and dismemberment of Fray Diego Delgado in AD 1624 appeased the angry deities (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 92; Jones 1998: 47-48).

The island had various other ritual buildings including structures standing "two yards" high with interior masonry benches (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 256). Individuals who could not enter ceremonial buildings on Nojpeten worshiped in caves (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 316). The Itza also had a special place on the "mainland" where they celebrated important rituals including what appears to have been a massive *balché* rite (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 84). This could have been modern Tayasal or Nixtun-Ch'ich, where Classic period plazas could have held the large numbers of revelers. Rituals also took place in homes, where deity images were found on benches and altars, including that of Ajaw Kan Ek', where "idols", an altar, and codices were found (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 314).

Unfortunately, the visits of the Spaniards tended to disrupt life in Contact period Petén; therefore, even if they were interested in describing and were allowed to see daily ritual practices, their accounts may not have described typical events. As in the other Yucatecan groups, various rituals were conducted by the Petén Itza and *balché* rituals seem to have played an important role in many of these rites. While specific features of the *balché* rites are not described, the participants were intoxicated; their faces painted black; and the rites were day long events involving dancing (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 85). As mentioned, incense and other items, including human hearts, were offered to deity images for various purposes. As in Yucatán, whistling was mentioned as a method to call the wind spirits (Jones 1998: 317).

The most detailed ritual events described by the Spaniards were those concerning human sacrifice, which they undoubtedly over-emphasized and embellished. The various means of sacrifice included bloodletting, heart removal, burning, and beheading (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 92 and 302). Sacrifice occurred at various times for various reasons including appeasing angry deities. AjK'in Kan Ek' seems to have been the central participant of many sacrificial events and at Nojpeten they occurred only in the central ceremonial group (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 316; Jones 1998: 319). In one case, Spaniards and allied Maya were captured by the Itza, sacrificed and dismembered on the spot (Jones 1989: 180) so ceremonial architecture was not a necessity. Cannibalism was also described, but since accusations were made by enemies or the Spaniards, such accounts are unsubstantiated (Jones 1998: 334). On the other hand, heart sacrifice, beheading, and bloodletting are all depicted in Maya codices (see Villacorte and Villacorte 1930: 78, 376, and 414).

Mopan

The religion of the Mopan Maya of San Antonio, Belize blended with that of the Kekchi Maya. All of the shamans are Kekchi as are some deities (Thompson 1930: 68), but the Mopan obviously retain a great number of their "Yucatecan" beliefs and practices. Since an adequate illumination of Mopan characteristics would require a careful study of Kekchi cosmology and ritual, they will not be discussed in detail. One characteristic that will be addressed, however, is the importance of Mopan saints to agriculture and health as it has implications for indigenous deity images. The Mopan of San Antonio migrated from San Luis, Petén, in 1883 and initially suffered many hardships including crop failures and illness (Thompson 1930: 38-39). They decided they needed the images of

saints they had venerated in San Luis, armed themselves, and raided San Luis, taking the saints and church bells. The people of San Luis attempted a counter-raid to recover the stolen items, but were defeated; the saints seem to have preferred San Antonio. Crops and communal health improved because of the arrival of the saints (Thompson 1930: 39). While possibly embellished, this account illustrates the importance of the saints as sacred objects to health and agricultural productivity.

Summary

Similarities and differences are evident in modern and Colonial myths and rituals of the Northern Lacandon, Yucatán, and Petén. Many of the greatest differences were caused by the conquest but, as with any body of religious knowledge, differences in cosmology and ritual will exist between groups and among individuals within the same group (Barth 1987: 31-82). Rituals must change through time to match social transformations (Turner 1982: 22). Similarities in knowledge and practices, conversely, suggest shared understandings of the universe; intertwined historical paths, and relative stability in ritual practices. Since nothing is known of Kowoj cosmology and ritual practices, shared patterns are of interest here because the most durable practices were the most likely to have been present among the Kowoj.

Clear parallels are seen among the deities of the three areas including some similar or identical names. Deities tend to blend into one another (Vail 2000: 144) and this is especially apparent between areas. In Yucatán, the maize god is resurrected from a crack in the earth, thereby dividing the universe (Freidel et al. 1993: 65) while among the Lacandon, the high god, Hachakyum, fulfills this task. Some blending of deities is the result of cyclical repetition. The double of Hachakyum was killed and he rose to the third

cosmic plane, then the double of his son, T'up, was also killed and rose to the third plane. In both cases, the killers are immobilized in a single cosmic plane. There are also clear structural parallels between T'up and his father. Both are the third and youngest brother and associated with the sun.

T'up and the *ixtabay* appear to have been the most commonly reoccurring beings. T'up differs from the *ixtabay* because he is a specific being rather than a class of beings. Nevertheless, one aspect of T'up may be the same as the goblins called El Duende and *alux* (Thompson 1930: 107). T'up is a contradictory character because he is the youngest son, yet he eventually dominates his two older brothers by outsmarting them.

The number three, along with four, nine, and thirteen, is very important in the rituals of Yucatecan speakers. "Three" indicates centrality and creation and the three-stone hearth may be the origin of this metaphor (Freidel et al. 1993: 66-67), hence it has clear feminine connotations. At the beginning of time, the three primary Lacandon gods were born and this birth may parallel that of the Palenque triad. The sons of one of the three gods, the primary Lacandon deity, are also three in number and, like Hachakyum, the youngest of the three becomes the strongest. The three brother myth may have provided the basis for the three brothers who founded Chich'en Itza, two of whom were malevolent (see Landa 1941: 19 and 177). More recent Yucatecan myths describe three saint images being found/ born in a borrow pit and three images of saints, only one of which was among those found in the borrow pit, represent the village of Chan Kom (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 108- 109). Three brothers may have also ruled the Petén Itza (Jones 1998: 83) and they appear to have three high ritual practitioners: AjK'in Kan Ek', Ajaw Kan Ek', and AjTut (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 313). Three skulls of

ancient religious men are venerated symbols of San José, Petén (Reina 1962: 32). The *cha' chak* ritual in Yucatán has three altars that signify the temples of three archangels in the highest cosmic plane (Hanks 1990: 363). Altars in Yucatán contain sets of three offering bowls, crucifixes, and candles (Hanks 1990:375-383). Granted, the importance of three in Christian cosmology may have influenced post-conquest numerology; however, this number is clearly emphasized earlier in the Maya area in the Palenque triad, triadic temple groups, and E-groups, described below.

The Lacandon retain higher indigenous deities, but in other areas, syncretism with Catholicism displaced these deities with Dios, Jesus, and saints; however, indigenous beliefs have not been eradicated. While Dios and the saints replaced higher deities, they, along with the crucifix, were reanalyzed and incorporated into the indigenous schema. Even so, these beings also carry with them beliefs and practices of European origin. In some cases, deity names have been removed from oral traditions; however, some of their exploits remain with characters unidentified by name. The lower spirits are very resilient in the face of syncretism as they are not as threatening to the dominant position of Dios, Jesus, and the saints. Since most are malevolent, they were easily reanalyzed as demons. In Yucatán, the death deity Kisin was simply combined with Satan (Villa Rojas 1945: 104). With the exception of the elimination of human effigy censers and human sacrifice, syncretism seems to have done little to transform the relationship between humans and deities. Crosses and images of saints were effectively adopted in place of effigy censers. Indigenous deities were combined with the saints, but most importantly, these spirits under various names are still able to consume offerings.

The Lacandon and Yucatec Maya both see the universe as being composed of several cosmic layers, separated through the creation process. The presence of the world-tree among Late Postclassic Maya in Petén and the modern Maya of Socotz reveals they also had multiple cosmic planes. Among some groups, the highest planes are associated with the east/heat and the lowest with the west/cold. Relations with the Underworld are distinct from those with the celestial planes. Among the Lacandon, burials do not include god pots and pots of the Underworld deity are separated from the others.

The flood origin myth appears to have been common throughout Mesoamerica and was associated with temporal junctions. Nevertheless, it is not as evident among more recent Maya populations. At Socotz, the flood myth was combined with that of the Bible, but still occurs at the end of ages (see Thompson 1930: 166). Lacandon refer to the *balché* drink in its canoe as a flood (Davis 1978: 90-97). Itzanok'uh seems to have been the Lacandon equivalent of Itzam Cab Ayin; however, an association between the former and flooding has not been established. Itzanok'uh also appears to have had a parallel in Petén, described in Chapter 4.

Ritual practices vary depending upon the desired action. In all groups, offerings of food and drink are made to spirits to prevent negative actions and to ask for favors. Deities granted or denied agricultural success and good health depending upon their temper. Offerings are made to deities numerous times during the agricultural cycle. In Yucatán and Socotz, offerings laid out in a quincunx pattern on the altar replicate the form of the *milpa* and the larger universe.

Humans did not directly interact with a deity angry, but had a mediator act on their behalf. Mediators can be human such as *h-men*, who have closer connections with

the deities or they can be other deities. In some groups, women and children cannot directly interact with deities and require the male head of household to do this for them. Mediation creates chains of dependent relationships among humans and between humans and supernatural beings.

Lacandon practices illuminate that god pots are used throughout the year for various purposes especially for appeasing the angry gods. Similarities are evident between god pots and Yucatecan crosses and saints: all are ritually awakened, they establish connections between cosmic planes, and they are vehicles for giving offerings to deities. The vessel of a god pot is its "cave" (Davis 1978: 151) and contains a sacred stone. Both caves and ruined temples are god houses. Some powerful statues of saints originated in forest caves and borrow pits (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 109). Cave birth places the images at the beginning of time both because they were the homes of gods when they lived upon the earth and because the gods and ancestors were born from flowers/caves. Objects so derived are sacred and in some cases sentient objects.

Several specific rituals are found in more than one of the areas. *Balché* rites, which help structure activities in Lacandon god houses, are found throughout Yucatán, Guatemala, and Belize. In many cases, however, the *balché* has been replaced with rum. Nevertheless, alcoholic beverages are used to attain ritual purity in order to communicate with and make offerings of alcoholic and other beverages and food to the deities. The Ritual of the Pig was practiced in Socotz, San José, and San Andrés. This rite, like the bullfight in the Maya highlands (Pohl 1981: 526), may be a modern translation of an older deer ritual (Schwartz 1990: 127). Colonial deer rituals conducted for successful hunting involved deer skulls, bloodletting, and excessive drinking of alcohol (Landa

1941: 155). The *Hetz'mek* ritual may have been present in all Yucatecan communities and a variant of this rite was mentioned by Landa (1941: 102-106).

Sacred images are means of unification. Many towns in Latin America received their name from patron saints and the name of one's hometown is an important part of social identity. The image of the patron saint is often similar to a flag (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 108), an emblem of the community. Even towns with the same patron saint may be differentiated because each image was often considered a unique being. The most powerful in the crucifix hierarchy, on the other hand, was "a religious denominator common for all villages" (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 110). Saints were not the only communal symbols as the skulls of San José and the ceiba of La Libertad were used in the same way (Schwarz 1990: 131). God pots may also distinguish groups as each god house contains a different set of deities (Tozzer 1907: 99). Since each household head is depended upon to interact with the deities, this reliance affects unity and men with higher ritual knowledge can incorporate more people as dependents (Boremanse 1998: 29-31).

One facet of indigenous ritual practices present in Late Postclassic Petén and Yucatán, but absent from modern groups, is formal religious hierarchy. In most groups, the Catholic Church appropriated this dimension of ritual practice. Lacandon ritual performance exists at the family level, but there exists the clear possibility of the development of religious hierarchies through higher ritual knowledge and, hence, greater ability to mediate with the deities.

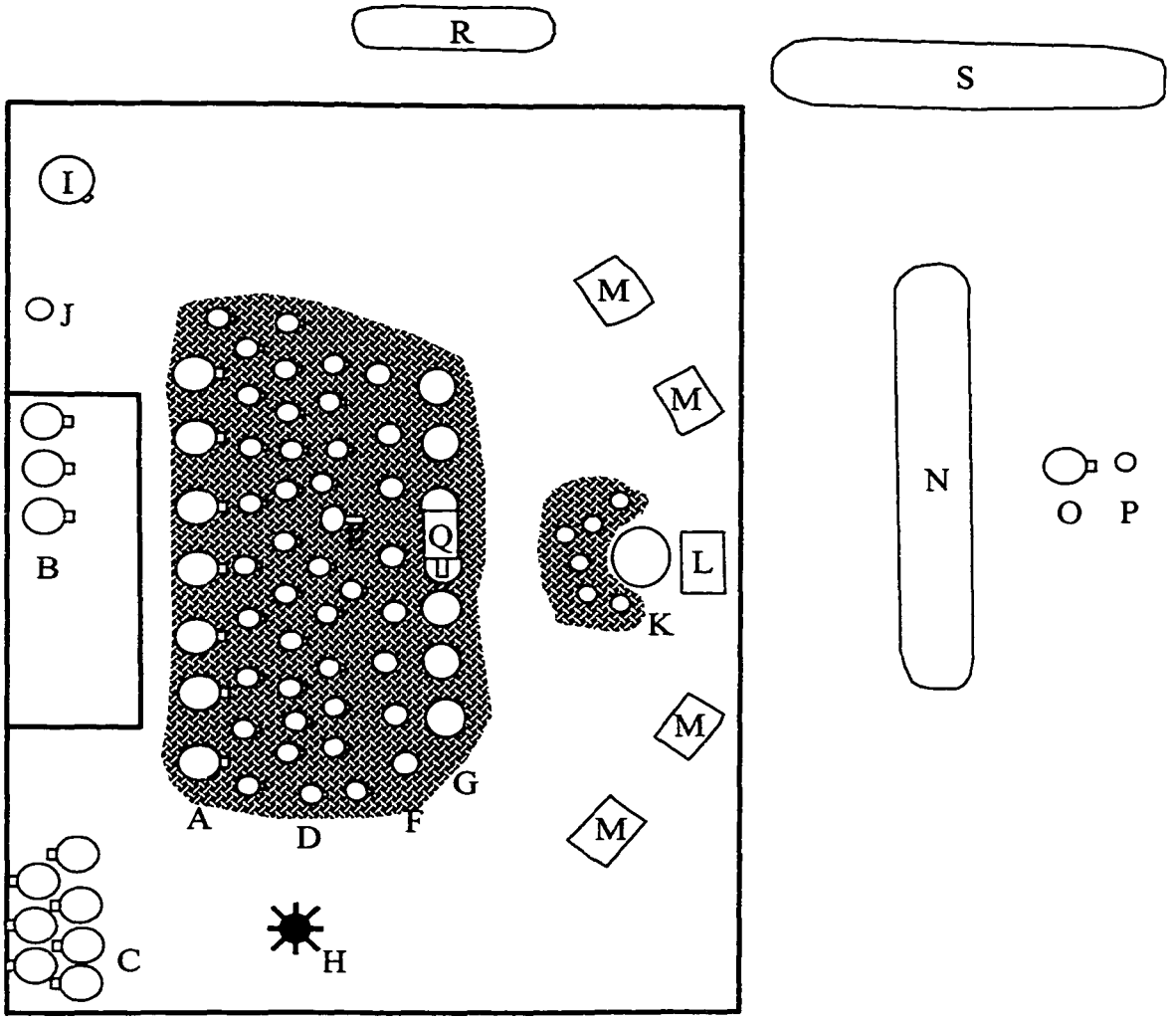
New Year rites were critical for Colonial period Yucatecan and Petén Maya and were tied to cosmic, social, and political renewal. Many involved circuits to points surrounding a given social space, thereby defining it. *Wayeb* ritual circuits visited four

cardinal points, which defined the social space of the village and represented the whole. Pilgrimages to caves and ruins were vital for the Lacandon and in Colonial Yucatán, but those of the latter were more elaborate and clearly cyclical. Caves are the homes of Itzaj earth guardians and dangerous spirits (Hofling 1991: 141-186) and were Contact period ritual places. Among all groups, the landscape is a medium of historical knowledge. The Lacandon and, as will be described below, Contact period Petén Maya placed their centers of time/space in locations where group members no longer lived. In both cases, the centers were places of former greatness and social foundation. Calendrical rites tend to involve circuits of places with deep historical significance that physically define social spaces and participants often carry imagery of social unity.

Ceremonial cleaning and sweeping, like renovations, are associated with New Year rituals, represent purification, and define social space. Some modern groups associated bad deeds with dirt. When a person died, the floor was not swept until the soul returned to claim its bad deeds (Redfield and Rojas 1934: 201). The area where the Lacandon god pots were placed was often swept and the refuse placed in a special location (Tozzer 1907: 146). Among the Maya of Oxkutzcab, the altar could be an everyday table, but once the refuse of everyday life is ritually swept from its surface, it was transformed into a road to the supernatural. Sweeping was also a means of creating boundaries in domestic and *milpa* space and of shamanic curing (Hanks 1990: 337-364).

Some of the various myths and rituals of Yucatecan Maya speakers have been briefly described and compared in this chapter and while the review is in no way all-inclusive, deep similarities have been noted. As a Yucatec Maya-speaking group, the Kowoj of Contact period Petén must have had characteristics similar to the other modern

and Colonial period Yucatec Maya speakers, mentioned. It is not proposed here that linguistic ties necessitate cultural continuity. However, ritual is a form of communication and should tend to be tied to the essential metaphors of the spoken language. Furthermore, social differentiation of many Maya groups was partially based upon whether or not a person could speak "properly" (i.e., the same dialect) (see Edmonson 1986: 3). The social and historical relationships between the Kowoj and the other Yucatecan groups are discussed in Chapter 4.



A- God Pots (in use)
B- God Pots (on the shelf)
C- Dead God Pots
D- Small God Pots
E- Aknaj (ladle censer)
F- Balché Offerings
G- Tamale Offerings
H- Virgin Fire
I- Drum
J- Cover Used to Collect Copal Soot
K- Balché Pot and Empty Cups
L- Leader's Stool
M- Participants' Stools
N- Balché Log
0- Sukunkyum's God Pot
P- Sukunkyum's Offering
Q- Copal (Pom) Board
R- Canoe for Water
S- Canoe for Sugar Cane
T- Ceremonial Cooking House
U- Copal (Pom) Chem
V- Water for Washing Hands
W- Bowls for Copal (Pom)
X- Mesh Bag of Cups
Y- Natural Whet Stone
Z- Reed Rings
A1-Prepared Cacao
A2-Cacao Beater and Cup
A3-Secular Fire
A4-Annatto Tree
A5-Offering Cup, Unspecified
- Palm Mat

Figure 3-1. Lacandon God House during New God Pot Ceremony (Redrawn from Tozzer 1907: Fig. 33).

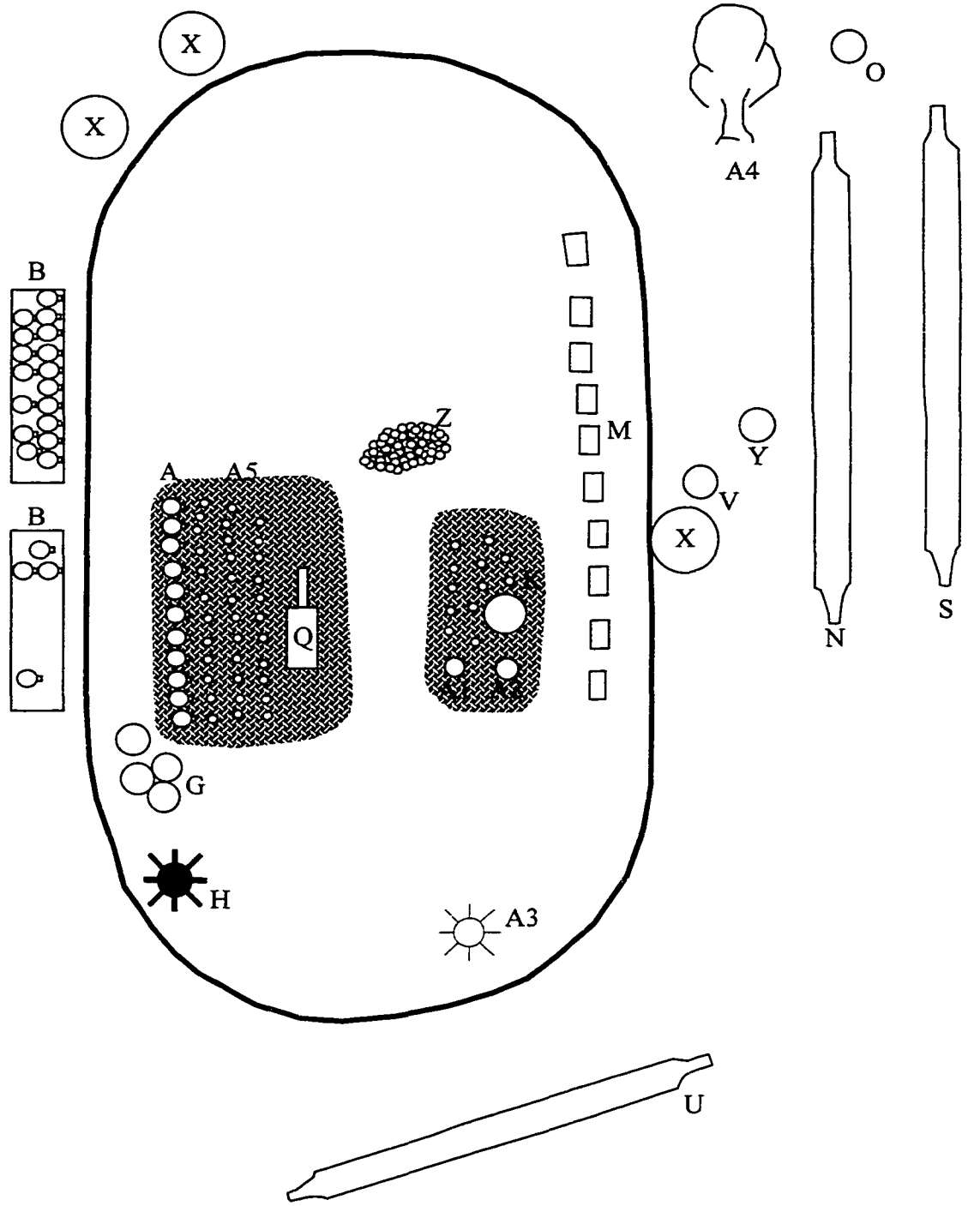


Figure 3-2. Lacandon God House during a Birth Payment Ritual (Redrawn from Davis 1978: Fig. 8).

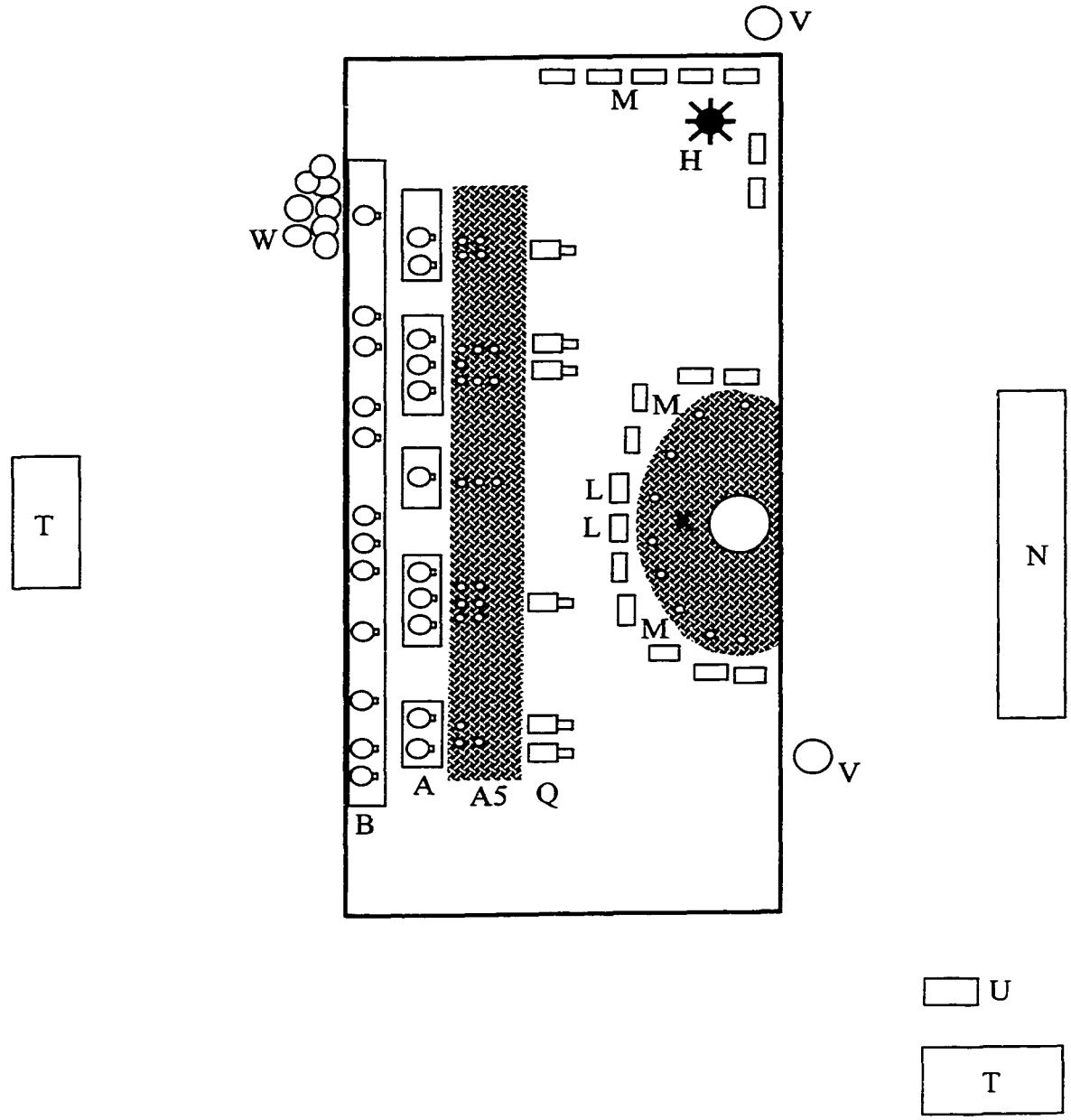


Figure 3-3. Lacandon God House (Redrawn from McGee 1990: Figure 5.3).

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL HISTORIES OF THE KOWOJ AND ITZA

The Maya of Petén and Yucatán were neither "prehistoric" nor immobile before the arrival of the Spaniards. They had a complex writing system, which first appeared on stone monuments in the Early Classic period, and continued to write bark "books" or codices at least until conquest. After the Spaniards began burning Maya codices (Tozzer 1941: 78) and Maya elite were educated by Spanish missionaries, they began to record their histories, rituals, genealogies, mythology, etc in European script and continued to recount them orally. The Spaniards also recorded accounts of the people who they had conquered and their histories. These documents, as well as pre-Hispanic monuments, describe social interactions and migrations, including those of the Kowoj and Itza of Petén, Guatemala, and this chapter will concentrate upon the history of the former. Migrations and other movements through space are themes critical to the construction of Maya society. Movement on a road was synonymous with time (Edmonson 1986: 59) and the construction of places along the road was tied closely to temporal cycles.

The histories of Petén, Guatemala, and Yucatán, México, were recorded in indigenous and Spanish documents, both of which should be read with caution. During the Colonial period, the Maya recorded their social memories in the various books of the Chilam B'alam, which were historical and prophetic documents written and held by indigenous communities. Parts of these books were translations of earlier glyphic texts (Roys 1967: 5). The Chilam B'alams are recorded in "cosmic time" in which recent

histories were projected into the past and predicted the future because of recurring temporal cycles (Farriss 1987: 570). Different places may be referred to by the same name because they are linked in cyclical time. For example, both Chich'en Itza and Mayapán may be referred to as Mayapán, and one is often uncertain as to which "Mayapán" the documents refer. The same is true of Chich'en Itzá, Tulum, and Tancah (Ball 1986: 379-405; Ball and Taschek 1989: 190-191).

The Spaniards recorded their conquests, but their accounts were slanted to justify Spanish aggression and colonialism. They also recorded indigenous knowledge, but this information was partially compiled from confessions derived from torture, thereby adding to their cultural bias (Tedlock 1993: 139-149). In addition, Maya groups realized the power of the Spaniards and sought to manipulate it to their advantage. While they were militarily overwhelmed, the Petén Maya were far from helpless innocent victims in the struggle for power and they attempted to use the Spaniards to their advantage by reporting that their enemies were conducting intolerable acts such as sacrifice, cannibalism, idolatry, and rebellion (Jones 1998: 325-337). Despite these problems, indigenous documents, and Spanish writings and recordings of indigenous histories provide invaluable information for the interpretation of archaeological data.

During the 17th century, the Itza and the Kowoj dominated the politics of the Petén, Guatemala and both claimed to have migrated from Yucatán, México. The present work cannot attempt to summarize the entirety of Maya ethnohistory, but will briefly describe the social histories of the Itza and Kowoj, focusing upon the latter. The migrations of the groups will be traced from the Petén lakes region to northern Yucatán

and then back to Petén. The possibility of a Colonial period migration from the Petén Lakes to the Lacandon region of Chiapas will also be addressed.

The Names: Kowoj, Itza, and Kan Ek'

At the time of conquest, as throughout Maya history, kinship was very important to Maya elites and elite surnames often used a "double naming system" including both a patronym and a matronym (Roys 1940: 35; Jones 1998: 80). For example, the name "Kan Ek'" is formed by adding the Kan matronym to the Ek' patronym (Jones 1998: 80). The matronyms were call *naal* names and often had a na- prefix (Jones 1998: 79). Patronyms indicated lineage membership with obligations of altruism to other lineage members and often relationship to apical ancestors (Roys 1939: 40; 1940: 35). Such lineages were usually exogamous (Roys 1939: 40). Some families were able to control elite positions for generations and ruling families sometimes formed dynasties such as the Kan Ek' line of central Petén. It has recently been suggested that the Maya were organized in ruling "houses" rather than lineages (Gillespie 2000: 475-478); hence, it is possible the name Kan Ek' was that of a ruling house.

The double naming system was probably not the sole mechanism of surname transmission among the Late Postclassic Maya. Another possibility is found among the modern Lacandon Maya, who derive surnames from the *onen* to which they belong, as described in Chapter 3 (Tozzer 1907: 41; McGee 1990: 30-33).

The etymology of the term "Itza" was likely *aj itz ja*, 'sorcerer of the water', (Jones 1998: 428), which may indicate their association with the ritual mediation of water sources or their origins from a place of water. In this case, "Itza" is not a patronym, but

an ethnic group and linguistic designation. Itza history was closely tied to Quetzalcoatl-Kukulcan and the 256-year *may* cycle (Roys 1967: 136). The ultimate place of origin of the Itza appears to have been Petén, Guatemala (Schele and Mathews 1998: 201), but passages in Chilam Balams describe them as foreigners who migrated from the eastern coast of Yucatán in the Late Classic period (Roys 1962: 40).

The Itza were associated with both Chich'en Itza and Chak'anputun, which is thought by some to have been Champotón, Campeche (Thompson 1970: 45). It has also been suggested that the occupants of Chich'en Itzá, Quen Santo, and Seibal were related and all migrated from the Gulf Coast in the area of Laguna de Términos (Kowalski 1989: 183). Some now believe that Chak'anputun was actually Chak'anpeten and located in Petén, Guatemala (Schele and Mathews 1998: 204). A migration stream between the two areas existed from at least the Late Classic to the Colonial period. The Itza originated in Petén, but some moved into Yucatán during the K'atun 8 Ajaw of A.D. 672 to 692 (Schele and Mathews 1998: 202-203). In the following K'atun 8 Ajaw of A.D. 928 to 948, the Itza were driven from Chich'en Itza and moved to Chak'anputun, which is believed to be located on the northwest shore of Lake Petén Itzá in the area that Jones (1998: Map 4) suggests was occupied by the Chak'an Itza (Figure 1-2) (Boot 1995: 337). The Itza returned to Yucatán in the 13th century to establish a joint government at Mayapán (Schele and Mathews 1998: 204).

The migrations of the Itza might seem to be of remarkable intricacy and duration, but migrations often follow such complex streams (Anthony 1990: 899-901). Despite the distance, interaction continued between Yucatán and central Petén as evident by the claim that relatives of Ajaw Kan Ek' were from Chich'en Itza (Jones 1998: 273).

Kan Ek' is a surname following the double naming system. *Kan* may have meant 'serpent,' 'four,' or 'sky' and *Ek'* means 'star' (Jones 1998: 80). "Kan Ek'" was the name of the Petén Itza rulers from at least A.D. 1525 to 1697, which suggests dynastic rule. The earliest mention of the name Kan Ek' was encountered on Stela 10 from Yaxchilan, which was set around A.D. 766 (Boot 1997: 6). Apparently, one of the wives of Yaxun Balam was from Motul de San José and may have been Itza. The title *Ch'ul Itza Ajaw*, 'holy Itza lord,' appears on Stela 1 from Motul de San José (Schele and Mathews 1998: 187). Motul de San José was located in Kowoj territory in the 17th century (Jones 1998: Map 5), but might have been an earlier Chak'an Itza capital. An individual named Kan Ek' was also mentioned as being the ruler of Motul de San José on Stela 10 at Seibal, which was set in A.D. 849 (Boot 1995: 334; Schele and Mathews 1998: 184-185).

The name Kan Ek' appears on monuments at Chich'en Itza as well and this group seems to have been part of the Itza migration from Petén to Chich'en Itza around A.D. 672 to 692 (Boot 1995: 337; Schele and Mathews 1998: 187-203). However, the complete name is not commonly mentioned in Colonial-period documents of Yucatán though Kan and Ek' are both very frequent. When Mayapán collapsed in A.D. 1441, many Itza, including the ancestors of Kan Ek' dynasty, were driven from Chich'en Itza and returned to Petén (Jones 1998: 13).

The word "Kowoj" (also recorded as Couoh, Kob'ox, Kowõ, and Kob'ow) meant 'tarantula' or 'very poisonous spider' in Colonial Yucatec Maya, and was the name of a powerful lineage during the Late Postclassic and Colonial periods (Roys 1957: 8-9). The term is also translated as "rock fine as honey," perhaps in reference to amber (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 340; Brady and Prufer 1999: 139). The name, like that of the Kokom,

was not very common, but was found in Yucatán, Campeche, Chiapas, Belize, and the Petén lakes area at the time of the Spanish conquest. It is mentioned as both a patronym and matronym in Yucatán (Roys 1957: Table 1). Several rulers had the name; therefore, it might have conveyed some sort of status. While mentioned as an elite name in Yucatán, the Kowoj may have originated in the southern lowlands (Thompson 1977: 24). In almost all areas, the Kowoj resisted or avoided Spanish domination.

If the name Kowoj were used in the manner described of the modern Lacandon rather than the double naming system, then different rules were in effect than were present among the Itza. Interestingly enough, there was a cacique named Kitam Kowoj in a mission town called San José on the south side of the Petén lakes around 1704 (Jones 1998: 402). As mentioned, "Kitam" is the name of one of the two *onen* united under the Kowoj ceremonial name; hence, the name Kitam Kowoj suggests that the practice may have also existed in Petén. Nevertheless, "Kowoj" was occasionally used as a *naal* name or combined with a *naal* name (for example, "Napot Kowoj"); hence, in some cases the name was part of a double name.

The name Kowoj designated elite lineages in many areas throughout Colonial period Yucatán, México. This family ruled the province of Chanputun (Champoton) in A.D. 1517 and remained one of the most powerful Yucatecan chiefly lineages for another 100 years (Roys 1957: 168). The group caused the Spaniards problems during the conquest and was ascribed a "warlike" character (Landa 1941: 50 and 56). Spanish and indigenous documents suggest Chanputun was fortified with a wall and ditches and a temple was built in the ocean near the city in a form similar to that of the central temple of Chich'en Itza (Landa 1941: 26; Roys 1957: 167). It was rumored that Kukulcan, a

cultural hero/ god, built the structure just before he left Yucatán (Landa 1941: 26). The architecture of Champoton was reportedly similar to that of Mayapán, but has not been the subject of archaeological research (Roys 1957: 167).

The Chilam Balam of Chumayel notes an individual named Kowoj presided to the south in the Ritual of the Four Corners that occurred at Chich'en Itza (Roys 1967:65), but the date of the event was not specified. A place called Kitab Kowoj is also mentioned in this document (Roys 1967: 78).

In A.D.1545, a place called *Tix Kowoj* was a boundary town of the Sotuta Province and an official named Napot Kowoj participated in the ritual circuit that defined the boundary (Roys 1939: 425). The name Napot Kowoj follows the double naming system. "*Tix Kowoj*" may have meant 'at the place of the (feminine) tarantula' or 'at the place of Lady Kowoj' (Hofling 1999: personal comm.). The Kowoj were an old family, numerous and large landowners in Sotuta, but were not prominent in highest political circles until around 1749 (Roys 1939: 47 and 48).

In A.D. 1562, a certain Juan Kowoj, who had previously been baptized, was interrogated and tortured by the Spaniards in Sotuta and admitted to possessing numerous "idols" and being involved in the sacrifice of a young boy (Tozzer 1941: 118). If this were true then he presumably would have been a ritual specialist. However, such confessions must be held suspect because persons being tortured often tell their captors whatever they wish to hear. Furthermore, many such confessions were recorded by the Spaniards long after the actual interrogation (Tedlock 1993: 143-147).

The name Kowoj was also present among elites within what is now northeastern Guatemala. In 1690, another Juan Kowoj is mentioned as a lieutenant involved in a

rebellion in Chanchanja (Jones 1989: 257). Apparently Juan Kowoj and the settlement *alcalde* were calling for external Maya to come and kill the Spaniards at Chanchanja, but were caught before the attack was took place. The name was also present in what is now Belize in the towns of Lamanai and Tipu (Jones 1989: 235).

In AD 1697, the Spaniards encountered a group of refuges from central Petén at Yucum in Chiapas including individuals with the patronym Coguo (Kowoj), who claimed to have fled the sacrifice and cannibalism of the Itza (De Vos 1988: 221). In 1712, a group at Petenacte had similar names to those at Yucum, but the most common name was Kowoj. The Yucum and Petenacte groups seem to have been the same and may have been the ancestors of the northern Lacandon (Hellmuth 1972: 215-216 cited in Boremanse 1998: 4; De Vos 1988: 220-231). If they were the same group, then the frequency of the name Kowoj increased dramatically in the region between 1697 and 1712, perhaps in response to the disruption caused by the Spanish conquest of the capital of the Petén Itza in AD 1697.

While the name Kan Ek' is not common in historic literature in Yucatán, the Itza, the legendary founders of Chich'en Itza and Mayapán, are prominent. Kowoj was a patronym throughout the Maya lowlands and was often the name of elite families. It was the name of one of the most prominent groups in seventeenth century central Petén. The Itza and Kowoj were found throughout Colonial Yucatan, Chiapas and Belize. The former was an ethnic group and the latter a patronym and *onen*. The double name Kan Ek' and the Itza were present in Petén in the 7th century and both subsequently appeared at Chich'en Itza. Around AD 1283, the Itza played a critical role in establishing Mayapán as the seat of the *may*.

Mayapán

From A.D. 1283 to 1441, Mayapán was the center of the Maya world and one of the most frequently mentioned places in indigenous historical accounts (Pollock 1962: 2). The Itza established Mayapán as the seat of the *may*, the center of time, space, and society, between A.D. 1263 and 1283 (Roys 1962: 43), probably the latter date on the Long-Count date 11.3.0.0.0 (Edmonson 1986: 58). The term "Mayapán" may have been a Maya-Nahuatl combination meaning 'cycle water place' (Edmonson 1986: 298), which suggests a relationship with the Itza or 'water shamans.' Mayapán was ruled by the *multepal*, a political system composed of leaders of a number of social groups, each with representatives at Mayapán (Roys 1943: 12). While the *multepal* was a council, it was dominated by the *jalach winik*, the highest ruler, and this position appears to have initially been controlled by the Itza (Roys 1962). The Itza ruled Mayapán for approximately one hundred years. The people eventually began to grow distrustful of their military and shamanistic power and disliked the immoral behavior of the Itza rulers (Roys 1962: 44). Between A.D. 1362 and 1382, the ruling Itza were overthrown by a rival Itza, the Kokom (Landa 1941: 26; Roys 1962: 44-66). At this time, the Itza rulers failed a test of esoteric knowledge and were dismembered (Roys 1962: 45).

Another powerful ethnic group at Mayapán, the Xiw or Tutul-Xiw, are said to have migrated from a place called Tulapan, settled in the Pu'uc area, and were eventually invited to join the *multepal* (Tozzer 1941: 30-31). The name Tutul-Xiw may have been derived from a Nahuatl word *xiuhtototl* meaning 'turquoise bird' (Tozzer 1941:30). The precise timing of the Xiw arrival is debated (Roys 1962: 46; Edmonson 1982: xvi; Kowalski 1987: 66-67), but it is agreed that the Xiw were present during Mayapán's final

decades and vied with the Itza for control of the city. Unlike Itza, Xiw was a lineage name; however, the Xiw formed the core of another ethnic group with separate origin myths and a different calendar (Edmonson 1986: 9).

Yet another important group at Mayapán were the Chel, who claimed to be equal in power to the Kokom/Itza. This group controlled the Ah Kin Chel province on the northern coast of the Yucatán peninsula, as well as the city of Izamal. Before the collapse of Mayapán, the Kokom/Itza and Chel appear to have been involved in a trade war (Landa 1941: 40).

The name Kowoj was present at Mayapán and some members of the lineage were social elites, but not part of the uppermost echelon unless they were part of the Itza or Xiw. In the Chilam Balam of Chumayel, the name is mentioned in reference to events that occurred before the revolution at Mayapán in the mid-15th century. Here a Kowoj is mentioned as the guardian of the east gate (Roys 1967: 69). This title has alternatively been translated as 'guardian of the spirit of the fort to the east' and the Kowoj guardian may have been Xiw (Edmonson 1986: 39 and 81). In the Colonial period, the name Kowoj was concentrated in the Province of Mani, the location of Mayapán (Roys 1957: 9). Since Mani was ruled by a Xiw governor and council after the fall of Mayapán (Edmonson 1986: 40-41), many Kowoj may have been allied with, dominated by, or a faction of the Xiw.

Despite the Chel and numerous other groups that participated in the *multepal*, the Kokom/Itza and Xiw dominated politics to the degree that it can be considered essentially a diarchy, a government with an essential political duality. The conflict between the Xiw and Kokom/Itza created social boundaries, as each considered the other to be foreigners

(Roys 1943: 176). The Xiw controlled the western half of Yucatan and the Itza, the east (Edmonson 1982: x). They also used different ritual calendars resulting, according to Itza accounts, in the Itza being associated with the gods of the 13 heavens and the Xiw with the nine gods of the underworld (Edmonson 1982: 45-46). Two different birds symbolically distinguished the two in communal rituals: the Itza were represented by the *quetzal* and the Xiw with *yaxum* or blue bird (Edmonson 1982: 24). The Kokom may have been considered the "male" lineage and the Xiw the "female" lineage in the wedding of the two groups in political union (Lincoln 1990: 145-146; 627-633).

As with most dual organizations (Turner 1991: 217), relations between the Kokom/Itza and the Xiw were unstable and beset by conflict. In the mid-15th century, the Kokom brought a "foreign" group, the Kanul, into Yucatán to bolster their power, whereupon the Xiw and other groups allied and killed all but one of the ruling Kokom males (Landa 1941: 32-37). This rebellion resulted in the destruction of much of Mayapán, the end of the *multepal*, and the forced diaspora of the Itza from Chich'en Itza to Petén (Roys 1962: 47). At this time, representatives to the *multepal* returned to their provinces (Landa 1941: 39), but Mayapán continued to be the cycle center until 1539, when the Xiw moved their center to Merida and the Itza appear to have reseated the *may* at Mayapán (Edmonson 1986: 41). Itza were still present at Chich'en Itzá, as well, and in AD 1536, they massacred a Xiw pilgrimage from Mani to Chich'en Itzá, who had been promised safe passage by the Kokom (Edmonson 1986: 40-41). The Itza and Xiw remained powerful ethnic groups and rivals in Yucatan until the early 19th century (Edmonson 1982: xix).

Elites leaving Mayapán brought codices with them and constructed ceremonial buildings when they arrived in their homelands (Landa 1941: 39; Herrera y Tordesillas 1941: 216). Mayapán remained a powerful place and ancestral ties to the site were prestigious. Elite families even claimed to know the locations of ancestral homes in the city (Landa 1941: 98; Tozzer 1941: 98). The ability to perform rituals in the tradition of Mayapán and having ancestral ties to the site were status markers and proof of nobility.

The polity centered at Mayapán was a plural society composed of numerous ethnic groups and lineages, including the Kowoj, but dominated by the Kokom/Itza and Xiw. The city was a religious and political center, the symbolic anchor of the Late Postclassic Maya world, just as Chich'en Itza was before it. Both Mayapán and Chich'en Itza were to remain centers of prestige and symbolic foundations of ethnic and lineage identity for populations that had been displaced from the cities. Two such displaced groups were the Kowoj and the Itza of Petén, Guatemala.

Petén

Spaniards under the command of Martín de Ursúa y Arizmendi attacked and took Nojpeten, the capital of the Petén Itza, on March 13, 1697 (Figure 1-2) (Jones 1998: xix). The fall of this capital not only signaled the defeat of the Itza, but also the beginning of Spanish presence in Petén. This attack occurred after 172 years of interaction with the Spaniards, which began when Cortés passed through the area in AD 1525 (Jones 1998: xxiii). During the earlier period of contact, missionaries ventured into Petén to convert the Maya people living there and recorded much of what they saw on their journeys.

Politics in 17th century Petén was dominated by the Itza and Kowoj just as the Itza and Xiw had dominated politics in Yucatán. Other groups were also present in Petén at this time. The Chak'an Itza were an Itza faction that may have migrated to the area in the early 10th century (Schele and Mathews 1998: 204). Another group, the Kejache, did not live on Lake Petén Itzá during the Contact Period, but to the northeast of the lake. They had long-standing interactions with the Itza, Mopan, and Kowoj (Jones 1998: 22-23). The Kejache may have occupied the site of Isla Cilvituk, Yucatán, México, which has ritual assemblages similar to those of Mayapán (Alexander 1999) and the Kowoj area.

The Mopan were the most widespread, but the least known Yucatecan ethnic group and eventually became subordinate to the Itza (Jones 1998: 19-22; Jones 1999). The historically known Mopan, Chinamitas, Tulunk'is, and other groups were likely part of a single ethnic group, the Mopan, that occupied southeast Petén, southern and eastern Belize, during 17th century (Jones 1999). A sizeable population (ca 10,000) of Mopan still occupy southeastern Petén and Southern Belize and, while they speak Yucatecan Maya, they are linguistically distinct from the modern Itzaj, who are more closely related to modern occupants of Yucatan (Hofling 2001). These data suggest the Mopan and Itzaj split fairly early, possibly in the Terminal Classic period, and the ancestors of the latter were part of the group (Itza) involved in the migration stream with Yucatan. The Itza who returned from Yucatan in the Postclassic period, likely displaced the Mopan, driving them into southeast Guatemala and Belize (Hofling 2001).

The Itza were the most powerful group in Petén during the 16th and 17th centuries. It was their defeat by the Spaniards that brought about the conquest of Petén. Like the Itza in Yucatán, the name Itza, in Petén, was an ethnic group rather than a lineage name.

During the Contact period, the Itza were ruled by a dynasty of *jalach winik* named Ajaw Kan Ek'. The last of the Kan Ek' rulers claimed that members of his lineage had successively ruled the area since their migration from Chich'en Itza in 8 Ajaw (A.D. 1441-1461) or 256 years (Jones 1998: 11-13 and 308), which corresponds with the destruction of Mayapán and the driving of the Itza from Chich'en Itzá. Some of the relatives of Kan Ek' still lived at Chich'en Itza (Jones 1998: 11) and, as mentioned, the name Kan Ek' is, in fact, recorded in inscriptions at Chich'en Itzá.

The Itza polity covered the western part of the lakes as well as areas to the east (Figure 1-2). It was a conglomeration of groups including the Itza proper, the Chak'an Itza, Mopan, and others. As mentioned, the Kan Ek' dynasty controlled the position of *jalach winik*, the most powerful political office. While the Spaniards described Ajaw Kan Ek' as a *rey* or 'king,' his rule was not absolute (Thompson 1977: 24). For example, Ajaw B'atab' K'in Kante allied with the Kowoj in revolt against Ajaw Kan Ek' just prior to the conquest of Nojpeten (Jones 1998: 106). Ajaw Kan Ek' appears to have been the highest member of a ruling council (Jones 1998: 104-106). The Kan Ek' lineage also controlled the position of AjK'in or high priest, which at the time of conquest, was held by AjK'in Kan Ek', parallel cousin (father's brother's son) of Ajaw Kan Ek' (Jones 1998: 60). The fact that the AjK'in and Ajaw were related was most likely not accidental or the product of political maneuvering. The two individuals were symbolically considered the same persona, two aspects of the center (Jones 1998: 60). The Ajaw seems to have been primarily involved in political ritual relations and the AjK'in with deity relations; however, they overlapped considerably. AjK'in Kan Ek' had a special relationship with

the deities and was believed to be able to call them. He also appears to have been in charge of conducting human sacrifice (Jones 1998: 316-318).

Below the Ajaw/ AjK'in ruling pair were four senior/ junior B'atab' pairings, the Ajaw B'atab' and B'atab' respectively (Jones 1998: 96-101). Each of the pairs of lords was associated with a ward within Nojpeten as well as a territorial division outside the capital. Hence, there are pairs of officials associated with each of the cardinal directions and a pair in the center (Ajaw and AjK'in) matching descriptions of Wayeb rites (Jones 1998: 97) and the form of deities in the calendar pages the Madrid Codex (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 374-377). In addition to the ideal quincunx political structure, there were 13 *Ach Kats* headed by an *Ach Kat Jalach Winik*, which Jones (1998: 104) suggests, "represented the military, religious, and practical interests of home communities." Each *Ach Kat* was a military and religious leader and may have been a lineage leader, as well. However, their roles were not entirely focused on practical concerns as much as the fact that there were 13 of them, which may be correlated with the 13 *k'atuns* of the *may*, each had "its own idol, priest, and prophecy" and territory (Jones 1998: 102).

In the late 17th century, the Kowoj were the ruling lineage of a polity covering the northern and eastern part of Lake Petén Itzá and Lake Salpetén and extending northward toward Tikal (Figure 1-2). A Kowoj faction may have also established residences near Lake Yaxhá and Lake Sacnab at the site Topoxté (Jones 1998: 17). Kowoj settlements visited by the Spaniards directly after the conquest were unfortified and friendly in opposition to Itza reports that the Kowoj were extremely hostile and lived in settlements with "castles and fortresses" (Jones 1998: 324-325). Perhaps the places visited by the Spaniards and the behavior shown toward them were chosen and staged to mislead the

conquerors as to the power and intentions of the Kowoj. Later interactions with the Kowoj revealed settlements with complex fortifications (Jones 1998: 348). Archaeological data presented below demonstrate that Kowoj sites tended to be fortified and in defensive locations. The Itza and Kowoj were often at war (Jones 1998: 56).

Zacpetén was initially mentioned as the name of a lake in Petén, likely Lake Salpetén (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 70); however, a map published in 1854 places it further to the east, north of Lake Yaxhá (Chase 1985: 202-203). It was later cited as a town called Sakpetén under the control of Ajaw B'atab' K'in Kante (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983: 272) and possibly AjKowoj. The archaeological site, Zacpetén, certainly has the fortifications and "castles" described of the Kowoj.

The Kowoj and the Itza spoke the same Maya language and apparently did not differ significantly in regard to their habits and material culture (Jones 1998: 18). The groups intermarried and Kowoj elite could visit Nojpeten, but they also were political rivals of Ajaw Kan Ek'. The only known means of distinguishing the two were their names, locations in space, origin myths, and, as is the theme of the present dissertation, their ceremonial architecture. The Itza claimed to have migrated from Chich'en Itza and the Kowoj from Mayapán. The Kowoj migration occurred in the early 16th century at the time of the Spanish conquest of Yucatán (Jones 1998: 16). It is uncertain whether they fled from the Spaniards or simply relocated after the A.D. 1539 seating of the *may*. They, like the Itza, may have had relatives in Petén.

In 17th and 18th century central Petén, the Kowoj were quite prominent in local politics; however, their political structure is uncertain. It is known that they were ruled by AjKowoj, who the Spaniards often referred to as Captain Kowoj. The family of

AjKowoj intermarried with that of Ajaw Kan Ek' because AjChan, another important political figure, was the former's son-in law and nephew of the latter (Jones 1998: 167 and 327). Whether or not they were part of the Itza polity, the Kowoj seem to have sought to take control of the center, not just Nojpeten, but the position of Ajaw, the social-political center. The internal political structure of the Kowoj is less know than that of the Itza, however archaeological research has provided some evidence of pairing of ceremonial buildings (Pugh and Rice 1997: 524-526), perhaps architectural analogues to Ajaw/AjK'in or Ajaw B'atab'/ B'atab' social dualities or moiety.

The Kowoj played various roles during the conquest of Petén and they certainly were not to be taken lightly nor were they prone to sway to the Spanish cause. The Spaniards' first known acknowledged interaction with the Petén Kowoj occurred in January of 1696 at Nojpeten with the meeting of AjKowoj, the Kowoj leader, and Fray Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola, who thought the former "possessed by Satan" as opposed to the piety of Ajaw Kan Ek', the Itza ruler (Jones 1998: 208). Apparently, during this meeting AjKowoj and his son, Kulut Kowoj, arrived painted for war and carrying arms symbolizing their position regarding the Spaniards. Sometime in 1695, AjKowoj had allied with Ajaw B'atab' K'in Kante, in an attempted coup d'état against Ajaw Kan Ek' because of the latter's attempts to create an alliance with the Spaniards. During this revolt, half of the houses on the island were burned (Jones 1998: 326). AjKowoj was a strong opponent to cooperation with the Spaniards, but was also struggling with Ajaw Kan Ek' for control of Petén. At one point, the latter promised the submission of his territory to the Spaniards if they defeated AjKowoj and Ajaw B'atab' K'in Kante and beheaded both as well as their elite subordinates (Jones 1998: 213).

Avendaño tried to convince AjKowoj, as he had Ajaw Kan Ek', that the temporal cycle was almost complete and it was time for conversion to Christianity, but AjKowoj defiantly responded, "What does it matter that the time when we would be Christians is found to be completed, if the sharp point of my stone lance has not been worn out" (Jones 1998: 206-207). Avendaño left the island capital carefully as he was informed by the wife of Ajaw Kan Ek' that AjKowoj as well as Ajaw B'atab' K'in Kante meant to kill and dismember him (Jones 1998: 214). While horrific, this threat was likely unexaggerated, as sacrificial victims were often dismembered after heart removal and archaeological data, presented below, demonstrate that this practice was present among the Kowoj. The Spanish also suggested that the Kowoj practiced cannibalism, but this may have been propaganda (Jones 1998: 334).

As in Yucatán, the Kowoj continued to cause the Spaniards problems well after the conquest. Just months after the conquest AjKowoj and AjChan allied with the Spaniards in an effort to destroy political opposition. They eventually wished to overthrow the Spaniards, and assume control of Petén (Jones 1998: 323-326). Ursua met with AjKowoj and initially took him prisoner. Ursua, then, questioned AjKowoj and Ajaw Kan Ek', together and the former claimed to have earlier attacked Nojpeten because Ajaw Kan Ek' had executed some Spaniards. Ursua eventually decided that Ajaw Kan Ek' was untrustworthy and AjKowoj innocent. Nevertheless, just after Ursua left Petén in mid-1697, AjKowoj was arrested for plotting to attack and kill the Spaniards and subsequently executed (Jones 1998: 336). AjChan remained an ally of the Spaniards until he disappeared to establish a community independent of the Spaniards (Jones 1998: 418-421). After the death of AjKowoj, Kowoj settlement shifted away from Lake Petén Itzá

as families fled to their *milpa* houses away from the lake shore or to outlying settlement at places such as Lake Yaxhá and Tikal in order to remain independent of the Spaniards, who worked to force populations into *reducciones* (Jones 1998: 336 and 349).

After the execution of AjKowoj, the Kowoj may have been loosely organized under his son, Kulut Kowoj and one of the primary goals of the Spaniards in 1699 was his capture (Jones 1998: 371). However, Spanish forays into Kowoj territory were met with ambush and the Spaniards seem to have been more directed towards searching for food than finding Kulut Kowoj (Jones 1998: 371-382). They eventually captured him, however, and after a brief imprisonment he settled at San Martín on the north shore of Lake Petén Itzá. Around this time, many Kowoj families began to come out of hiding and settled at north shore *reducciones* (Jones 1998: 392-393). Once again, Kowoj complacency was feigned as became evident in the rebellion of 1704. The Kowoj and their allies still meant to take control of Nojpeten as they had attempted before the conquest (Jones 1998: 404). The leaders of the rebellion included Kitam Kowoj, cacique of San José; Pedro Tzin (another elite lineage name), cacique of San Jerónimo; Kulut Kowoj, cacique? of San Francisco; the cacique of San Martín; and the elusive *B'atab'* AjTut. The rebels saw the *galeota*, the warship used in the attack on Nojpeten, as the instrument of the Spanish conquest and power and they meant to take control of it, kill all Spaniards, and take control (Jones 1998: 397-405). The rebellion ultimately failed and, with the exception of B'atab' Aj Tut, the leaders were captured and executed.

A final mention of Kowoj rebellion occurred around 1750. Apparently, a Kowoj of San Barnabé attempted to rally the town together in rebellion to kill priests and other

ladinos. However, this accusation was made by an enemy of the Kowoj and may have been simply propaganda (Jones 1998: 413-414).

The pre- and post-conquest stance of the Kowoj was one of resistance, rebellion, and usurpation. They wished to overthrow both the Spaniards and the Itza who had previously held the political center of Petén. Their political position is reflected in their settlement structure. Both the Spanish and Itza described that Kowoj settlements were fortified and archaeological investigations have found that defensive sites in Kowoj territory support these claims (Pugh et al. 1997). The Kowoj elite may have arrived in Petén in the 16th century, but they saw their claim to power in Petén to be equally legitimate to that which they had enjoyed in Yucatán. It may have been that at the completion of the *may*, the Kowoj and their allies were to take political control from Ajaw Kan Ek', but the latter resisted the Kowoj claim to power though alliance with another political force, the Spaniards. This alliance would later return to haunt the Itza as the Kowoj used it to destroy the power base of Ajaw Kan Ek'.

While many Maya directly resisted the Spaniards, others simply left the Petén lakes region. One of the most famous migrations was that of AjChan and his followers. They left the Petén lakes in the beginning of the 18th century and created an independent settlement in the Mopan region composed of various ethnic groups (Jones 1998: 418-420). Other groups appear to have migrated to Chiapas, México and blended with other groups to eventually form the Northern Lacandon (de Vos 1988: 221).

Modern Descendants of the Petén Lakes Maya

The modern communities surrounding Lake Petén Itzá have inherited and reproduced social and spatial configurations passed to them from the inhabitants of the

Late Postclassic/ Colonial period. While *chicle* trade, logging, migration, cable television, drug trafficking and other aspects of the tightening world system have all played a part in transforming local communities, the distant past of the area still has an influence on the present. Flores, which was Nojpeten, is still the local political center and its streets still bear evidence of a quadripartite settlement structure (Jones 1998: 69). Counterclockwise ceremonial circuits are still conducted in Flores as part of the Catholic calendar and a "Canek" family lives just north of the central plaza.

The modern boundaries of San Andrés and San José municipalities seem correlated with those of the Chak'an Itza and Kowoj, respectively (Hofling 1999) and the name Kowoj remains common in both places (Reina 1962: 27). In 1802, the cacique of San Andrés was named Pedro Cohouj (Kowoj) (Schwartz 1990: 65). The Itzaj of San José, who still speak Itzaj Maya, a Yucatecan language, also claim to have migrated from Yucatán or Taancaj (Mayapán) (Hofling 1999). They possess elaborate oral traditions that incorporate indigenous perceptions of time and space, poetic discourse, cosmology, and ritual practice (Hofling 1991), including the Ritual of the Skull and, until recently, the Dance of the Pig, described in Chapter 3.

Another possible descendant group of the Petén Maya are the northern Lacandon of Chiapas, México. The Lacandon are presently located in the region of Chiapas just west of Petén, Guatemala. The term "Lacandon" originally referred to an island in Lake Miramar in the Lacandon area called Akan Tun, but the Lacandon refer to themselves as *hach winik* or 'real people' (Boremanse 1998: 3). During the 16th century, the people of the island in Lake Miramar were notorious for taking captives, sacrificing, mutilating, and eating them (Boremanse 1998: 3). However, the individuals occupying Lake

Miramar at that time were Cholan Maya speakers and were conquered by the Spaniards in 1586 and the inhabitants resettled elsewhere (Boremanse 1998: 3).

As previously mentioned, the names of some late 17th and 18th century occupants of Chiapas matched those of Petén Maya and the modern Lacandon. There also seems to have been an influx of Kowoj into Chiapas just after the conquest of Petén (De Vos 1988: 221-222). At the time of the conquest, the Spaniards encountered refugees in the Lacandon region fleeing the Itza, who they claimed were trying to kill and eat them (de Vos 1988: 221). The Lacandon conducted raids on the Petén lakes region into the 19th century and appear to have occupied western Petén as well (Schwartz 1990: 93); therefore, a potential migration stream was clearly open. It is very probable that a portion of the population of the Petén fled the area during the Colonial period and settled in the Lacandon region of Chiapas (Tozzer 1907: 38; Boremanse 1998: 4). The Northern Lacandon formed from various mobile Yucatec and northwestern and central Petén populations, including the Itza, Kehache, and Chols (Schwartz 1990: 34), displaced by conquest and disease. The Southern Lacandon are linguistically much closer to the Northern Yucatecans and may be recent migrants (Hofling 2001). The Northern and Southern Lacandon are distinct ethnic groups (Boremanse 1998: 7).

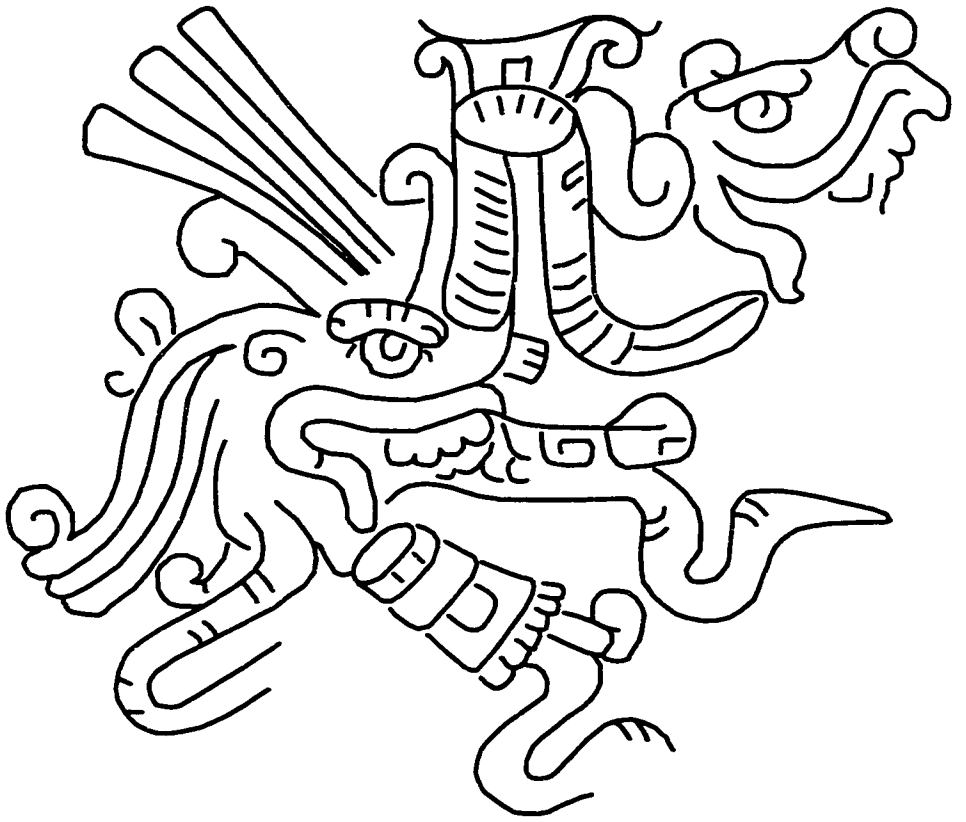
In addition to the ethnohistoric data connecting the Northern Lacandon to central Petén, their ritual practices are similar to those of the Kowoj, as will be suggested below. Some iconography of the Lacandon area bears similarity with Petén as well. On a lakeside cliff adjacent to a cave-shrine at Lake Petha, where the deity Itzanok'uh lives, is a painting (Figure 4-1) that the Lacandon believe was made by the deity (Tozzer 1907: 69) and which seems to represent him. The painting depicts the deity as a reptile with

feathers, a gaping mouth, and various snake-like appendages. Itzanok'uh 'great god of the Itza' (Boremanse 1993: 328) or 'great alligator god' is the god of "hail, lakes, and alligators" (McGee 1990: 62) and protector from supernatural evil (Tozzer 1907: 148). While a protector, the deity is also malevolent as it enjoys the death of woman and children in childbirth (Boremanse 1998: 77).

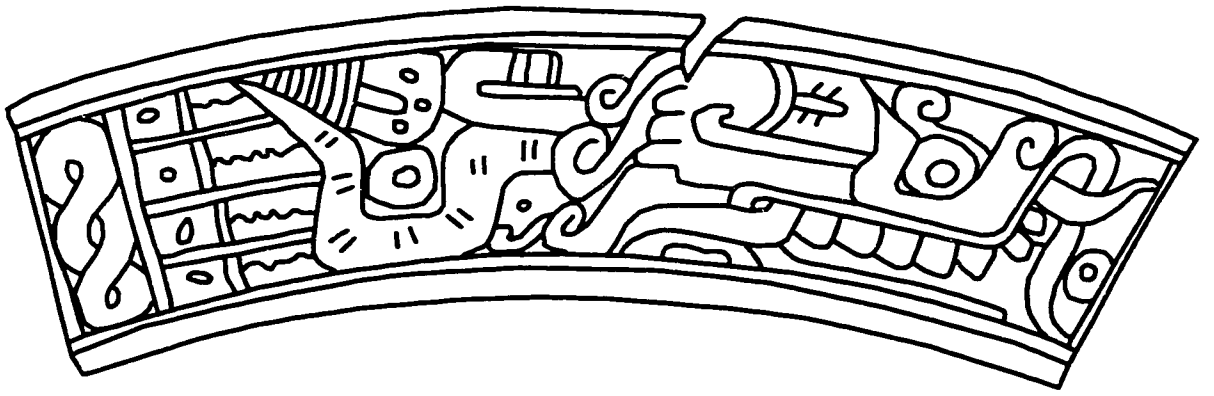
The image of Itzanok'uh is very similar to the reptilian images found on Late Postclassic period ceramics and carved bone in the Petén lakes region (Figure 4-1) (see Rice 1989). The name "Itzanok'uh" may have been derived from the name of the deity Itzamna, who appears to have been divided into three deities among the Lacandon: Itzanok'uh, Itzanal, Ts'ibatnah (McGee 1990: 69). It would appear, therefore, that Rice (1989: 311) was correct in her association of the Petén feathered serpents with Itzamna. The serpent rock-carving links the occupants of the Lacandon area to those of the Petén lakes on the basis of style and cosmology; however, this link may predate the Spanish conquest. The image of Itzanok'uh does not resemble the iconography of the modern Lacandon (Tozzer 1907: 69), but may be that of the original migrants from the Petén lakes and other parts of northern Petén.

The history of the Petén Maya describes a population composed of numerous ethnic groups variously involved in alliances, warfare, migrations, and resistance. Of these, the Kowoj, who occupied the northeast portion of the Petén lakes, claimed to have migrated from Mayapán, Yucatán, México at the time of Spanish conquest. However, the Kowoj, like the Itza, were most likely involved in an existing migration stream between Yucatán and Petén. The Kowoj continued to resist the efforts of the Spaniards to subdue Petén even after the conquest of Nojpeten in 1697. However, despite their

efforts, the independent Kowoj settlements were eventually reduced by the Spaniards. Many Kowoj remained in the Petén lakes region and lived at mission settlements, but others migrated to other areas such as Chiapas, México. However, they left behind evidence of their pre-conquest existence in the form of distinct patterning in the archaeological record.



a. Itzanok'uh on Rock-Painting at Lake Petha, Mexico (Redrawn from Tozzer 1907: Fig. 16)



b. Reptile on Postclassic Period Pottery, Petén, Guatemala (Redrawn from Rice 1983: Figure 2)

Figure 4-1. A Comparison of Lacandon and Petén Lakes Reptile Motifs.

CHAPTER 5: LATE POSTCLASSIC/ CONTACT PERIOD MATERIAL CULTURE

As with any cultural group, the Maya of central Petén changed through time. Despite its inevitability, cultural transformation is not random, but a process building upon the past with each new generation interpreting and recreating its world. A complete picture of the Late Postclassic and Contact period world must take into account events occurring in the larger Maya, Mesoamerican, and eventually transcontinental Colonial world of which it was part.

The earliest direct evidence of human settlement in the Petén lakes is the Xe ceramic sphere encountered at Nixtun-Ch'ich' (Rice et al. 1996: 256), which dates to the early Middle Preclassic period (1000 to 300 B.C), though the area may have been settled earlier (Rice and Rice 1980: 439). Initially, settlements concentrated near rivers and lakes, but population increased and expanded inland away from water sources in the later part of the period. The Late Preclassic (300 B.C. to A.D. 250) and Early Classic (A.D. 250 to 600) periods saw population increase even further and the rise of inland centers (Rice and Puleston 1981: 153). Most of Early Classic Mesoamerica was influenced, to some degree, by Teotihuacan in Central México. This influence partly resulted from trade networks entering the Maya lowlands through Kaminaljuyu, but Uaxactún and Tikal may have interacted directly with Teotihuacan and Tikal elite claimed connections with the city (Santley 1989: 145; Coggins 1983: 64). Teotihuacano architecture and

obsidian were present and emissaries may have resided at Tikal (Coggins 1983: 54-55; Schele and Freidel 1990: 159-164).

During the Late Classic period (A.D. 600 to 830), population increased at inland sites such as Tikal, which reached a 12-km radius population estimated at 92,000 (Culbert et al. 1990: 117), testifying to the height of its political power. Teotihuacan influence faded during this period as the great central Mexican city declined. Population in Petén reached its apex in the mid-8th century, but declined thereafter until it met it lowest point around A.D. 950 (Rice and Rice 1990: 148). This decline defines the Terminal Classic period (A.D. 830 to 930) and was seen at Tikal (Culbert et al. 1990: 119). It may have had a harder impact on large centers, while small centers were not affected or even prospered (Fry 1990: 296). The latter seems likely at Zacpetén in central Petén (Rice et al. 1998) and Punta de Chimino in the Pasión region (Demarest 1997: 220), both small lakeside centers with defensive systems. The population of Seibal increased dramatically (Tourtellot 1990: 99) and its monuments suggest it became a vital political center (Schele and Freidel 1990: 387-388). The Itza of Yucatán, once thought to have migrated from Tula, are now believed to have originated in central Petén (Boot 1995: 337; Schele and Mathews 1998: 204). This migration could account for the Terminal Classic decline in Petén. The shift to Yucatán may have occurred when the Itza appropriating part of the trade network once coordinated by Teotihuacan (Ball and Taschek 1989: 190). At this time, Chich'en Itza, which was controlled by the Itza, became a major trade center (Kepecs et al. 1994: 142-143).

The Postclassic period in central Petén is divided into two parts: the Early Postclassic period dating from A.D. 930 until 1250 and the Late Postclassic period

ranging from A.D. 1250 until 1540. Early Postclassic period material culture is not clearly defined as the pottery appears transitional from Terminal Classic types and wares to those characteristic of the Late Postclassic period (P. Rice 2000: personal comm.). The architecture seems transitional as well. Population in the Petén lakes increased in the Early Postclassic period (Rice and Rice 1990: 148), perhaps in response to an Itza faction being driven from Chich'en Itza and settling in Petén (Jones 1998: 13). The Late Postclassic period in Petén is defined by styles related to Mayapán in Yucatán. The collapse of Mayapán brought about new migrations to Petén, but it is uncertain whether these occurred at the collapse of the Yucatecan city in A.D. 1441 or the official reseating of the *may* around A.D. 1539 (Edmonson 1986: 114-120; Roys 1962: 72; Jones 1998: 16). This important indigenous event was eclipsed by the Spanish conquest of Yucatán around A.D. 1540, the beginning of the Contact period in Petén. Hernán Cortés passed though Petén around A.D. 1524, but this event had little effect on the cultural history of Petén. The conquest of Yucatán caused social migrations that disrupted early 16th-century social relations in Petén. The Petén Maya Contact period ended in A.D. 1697 at Nojpeten and sometime thereafter in the surrounding areas, as the Spaniards conquered Petén, which initiated the Colonial period. Itza-speaking people still live on the northern shore of Lake Petén Itzá (Hofling 1991: 1-2).

The ritual architecture of the Late Postclassic and Contact periods is of primary interest in this dissertation. The following sections outline previous research in Petén, Guatemala, and other areas such as Yucatán, Belize, and the Guatemalan highlands with special attention paid to Late Postclassic architecture.

Previous Late Postclassic/ Contact Period Archaeological Research in Petén

The first Postclassic fieldwork in the Petén lakes area (Figure 5-1) was undertaken by Teobert Maler (1908: 55-61), who recorded and partially mapped Topoxté, a large Late Postclassic site on three islands in Lake Yaxhá, in 1904. Later, Carl Guthe (1922: 364-368) investigated Nojpeten or Taj Itza, the capital of the Itza. He mapped and excavated portions of the Tayasal peninsula, which he believed was the Late Postclassic capital, but he largely recovered Preclassic and Classic period material (Cowgill 1963: 5).

The next major efforts at Late Postclassic research in central Petén were undertaken in the late 1950s by George Cowgill and William Bullard. Cowgill (1963) investigated Flores Island, the Tayasal Peninsula, and numerous other sites in the Petén lakes region to document the Postclassic occupation of the area. He defined three major ceramic groups: Augustine, associated with the Early Postclassic; Paxcaman with the Middle to Late Postclassic; and Tachis with the Middle to Late Postclassic (Cowgill 1963: 84 and 115). The latter group was rare, occurring primarily on Flores Island, and since it was found with censers, it was believed to have had a ritual function (Cowgill 1963: 46). No sudden changes in ceramic styles provided evidence for large-scale migrations into the area during the Postclassic period, but variation existed that might be explained by small migrations or trade (Cowgill 1963: 510). The Postclassic ceramics of Lake Sacpuy and Lake Petén Itzá differed from those recovered at Lake Yaxhá, perhaps because of contemporaneous regional variation (Cowgill 1963: 127). Cowgill (1963: 36 and 62) asserted Flores was the capital of the Itza territory, arguing the highest frequencies of Postclassic artifacts were found on the island and the lake level was never

high enough to make the Tayasal Peninsula an island. He also recovered a high frequency of Postclassic ceramics around Lake Sacpuy (Cowgill 1963: 64).

Bullard (1960, 1970, and 1973) excavated in the late 1950s and early 1960s at Topoxté in Lake Yaxhá, Yalain and Macanché Island on Lake Macanché, and Ixlú on the isthmus between Lake Salpetén and Lake Petén Itzá. His goal at Topoxté was to investigate the Late Postclassic occupation, which he referred to as the Isla Phase (Bullard 1970: 251). Topoxté has large ceremonial architecture that stylistically suggests contact with people who live on the east coast of Quintana Roo and the area of Mayapán (Bullard 1970: 301). He also conducted a detailed ceramic analysis and noted the Augustine group was associated with the Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic periods and the and Paxcaman group with the Early to Late Postclassic periods (Bullard 1970: 297-299 and 1973: 228-241). The Topoxté group was associated with the occupants of Topoxté and Lake Macanché who seem to have arrived in Petén in the Middle Postclassic period and participated in the "figurine censer cult", Mayapán, and Tulum-style architecture. Bullard (1973: 231-232) suggested the foreigners eventually left and another migrant group, the Petén Itzá, arrived around A.D. 1450 but both the earlier and later foreigners were small groups of elites rather than massive population movements.

The next major project in the Petén lakes was conducted by the University of Pennsylvania on the Tayasal Peninsula and other areas around Lake Petén Itzá. The purpose of this project was to reveal the Postclassic occupational sequence (Chase 1985: 184). The results of this research were summarized by Arlen Chase (1976, 1982, 1983, and 1985), who claimed the area surrounding modern Flores Island did not evidence a Late Postclassic population high enough to demonstrate the island was the last capital of

the Itza. He argued the architecture of Topoxté and Spanish accounts of Nojpeten's location demonstrated Topoxté was the capital. Chase (1985:201-205) also suggested, on the basis of regional variations in ceramics, two populations existed in the Petén lakes during the Late Postclassic Period: the Itza, who occupied Lake Yaxhá, Lake Macanché, and Lake Salpetén, and an indigenous group that occupied Lake Petén Itzá and portions of Belize, who eventually became part of the Itza political network.

Somewhat contemporary with Chase's research were the surveys of Don and Prudence Rice who continued Bullard's research in the eastern lakes to examine how settlement patterns in the area changed through time in response to social and environmental factors (Rice and Rice 1980: 432-434). According to their findings, considerable overlap exists between the Augustine, Paxcaman, and Topoxté ceramic groups. The Paxcaman group was used for a long time, overlapping with the Augustine group in the Early Postclassic period and with the Topoxté Group in the Late Postclassic period (Rice and Rice 1985: 181-182). These groups represent regional variations within the Petén lakes rather than unilinear transition. During the Late Postclassic, the Paxcaman group is uncommon in the eastern lakes while Topoxté ceramics dominate the area (Rice 1987: 236-237). The Topoxté group shows similarity with ceramics of the east coast of Yucatán and Mayapán and rose in popularity along with human image censers during the Late Postclassic period, both may have been brought by migrants into the eastern Petén lakes. While Topoxté ceramics have a relatively circumscribed distribution in the eastern lakes, image censers are found throughout Petén.

Late Postclassic settlement patterns in Petén differ from those of the Classic period as they are much less influenced by "regional centralized authority" (Rice 1988:

243). Late Postclassic settlements were more densely populated around ceremonial groups (Rice 1988: 241-242). Such tightly nucleated settlements tend to occur in defensive locations such as islands and peninsulas, which are often reinforced with defensive walls, moats, and ditches (Rice 1988: 236). Late Postclassic architecture is characterized by C-shaped structures with benches, which arrived in the Terminal Classic period possibly through Seibal (Rice 1986: 334). Mayapán-style temple assemblages were found to occur only in the eastern portion of the Petén lakes, which suggested the basis for defining the territory of a distinct ethnic group (Rice 1988: 234).

Grant Jones, Don Rice, and Prudence Rice (Jones et al. 1981) suggested archaeological and historical evidence make Flores Island, rather than Topoxté, the most likely candidate for Nojpeten. Its location is similar to that described in documents and many of the modern toponyms are the same as those found in such records. Furthermore, Topoxté appears to have been abandoned during the Contact period (Jones et al. 1981: 532-544). Chase (1982: 167-170) countered by noting the lack of clear archaeological evidence for the location of Tayasal, but maintained it was located on Topoxté Island.

Recent surveys conducted by *Proyecto Maya Colonial*, directed by the Don Rice, Prudence Rice, Rómulo Sanchez, and Grant Jones, have been undertaken in order to reconstruct the political geography of the Petén lakes during the 17th century. These surveys have contradicted the earlier findings of the University of Pennsylvania research (Chase 1983) by demonstrating there were substantial Late Postclassic populations around Lake Petén Itzá at Tayasal, the Candelaria Peninsula, Pasajá, and Colonia Itzá (Rice et al. 1996; Pugh and Schwarz 1996). The recent recovery of a large carved

reptilian head on Flores Island, similar to those on columns at Chich'en Itza, provides additional evidence suggesting Flores was Tayasal/Nojpeten.

The research of *Proyecto Maya Colonial* has revealed Cowgill, Bullard, and Chase were partially correct in their conclusion that distinct cultural groupings existed in the eastern and western lakes area during the Late Postclassic period. However, the temporal sequence and relationship of these areas has been further illuminated and there appear to have been more than two groups. One group of Itza may have migrated from Yucatán around AD 928 and settled on the western side of Lake Petén Itzá (Schele and Mathews 1998: 204). A second group of Itza migrated from Chich'en Itza in the 15th century (Jones 1998: 12). Sometime between the fall of Mayapán in the mid-15th century and the arrival of the Spaniards in Yucatán in the early 16th century, the Kowoj migrated from Mayapán to the northern part of the Petén lakes. Another group called the Mopan occupied the area south of Lake Petén Itzá and may have occupied Petén prior to the Late Postclassic Itza migration (Jones 1998: 19-22).

In 1995, *Proyecto Maya Colonial* surveyed and excavated several structures at Nixtun-Chi'ch, including Structure 188, a colonnaded hall (Pugh 1996). The building actually includes two open halls lying side by side. Similar to the Mayapán examples described below, the interior shrine was surrounded by numerous human effigy censer and non-effigy censer sherds, quartz crystals, and a stone turtle. Nixtun-Chi'ch had open hall-based ceremonial groups rather than temple-based groups. A similar pattern was observed at El Fango, Ixlú, and Macanché, and may represent an Itza or Mopan ceremonial assemblage type. The group believed to have occupied Nixtun-Chi'ch, the Chak'an Itza (Jones 1998: 8), may have been the inhabitants of Chak'anputun, who

migrated from Chich'en Itza (Schele and Mathews 1998: 204). A large I-shaped ball court oriented north to south suggests an additional connection between Chich'en Itza and Nixtun-Chi'ch and the possibility that the latter is Chak'anputun.

Recent archaeological research by *Proyecto Maya Colonial* has focused upon Ixlú and Yalain, which also have Itza or Mopan assemblages. Ixlú may have been the Contact period site Saklamakhal and Yalain, an Itza center. Ixlú also has a ceremonial group similar to those of the Kowoj, which is not surprising as the area appears to have been contested by the Itza and Kowoj (D. Rice: 2000).

In addition to *Proyecto Maya Colonial*, new Late Postclassic research began on Topoxté Island in 1989 as part of *Proyecto Triángulo* (Hermes and Acevedo 1991; Hermes et al. 1996; Pinto and Noriega 1995; Noriega 1995; Wurster et al. 2000). This work has focused upon excavating and preserving the central ceremonial group.

Many projects that focused upon the Classic period have ignored Postclassic occupations, but the Tikal project reported many important aspects of Late Postclassic ceremonialism including ceremonial deposits in Classic period buildings and stelae movements. Late Postclassic offerings were also found in "above-floor excavations" in Temple II (Adams and Trik 1958: 134). In Temple I, Late Postclassic burials and a cache of incense were deposited beneath the floor. In addition to offerings and caches, sparse Late Postclassic architecture also seems present at Tikal, indicating the occupation of that site continued. Classic monuments were moved at Tikal and Yaxhá in Petén and Caracol in southern Belize, probably during the Postclassic period (Satterthwaite 1958: 75-76). It has been suggested stela movement may have been part of a revitalization of Classic period ritual performance during the Postclassic period (Satterthwaite 1958: 76).

However, stelae erection never ended as it certainly continued at Late Postclassic period Topoxté in a diminutive form (Bullard 1970: 272-273).

Lowland Maya Late Postclassic Research Outside of Petén

In the past 30 years, migration and diffusion have been largely ignored in archaeology because of theoretical shifts in the discipline (Anthony 1990: 896-897; Härke 1998: 19-21). While migration and diffusion theories of social change were overused by culture-historical archaeologists, this does not mean migrations do not have significant impacts on cultural transformations. Ethnohistoric documents in both Yucatán and Petén suggest migrations, kinship relations, trade, and warfare were all conducted over large distances. Migrations between Yucatán and Petén were mentioned by indigenous people on both ends of the migration stream (Edmonson 1986: 61; Jones 1998: 7-19). Social interactions such as marriage/alliance and warfare also occurred between Belize and Petén (Jones 1998: 56). Given the degree of social interaction between Yucatán, Belize, and Petén in the Postclassic period, a consideration of selected lowland Maya Late Postclassic period material culture outside of Petén is in order (Figure 1-1). Since the Kowoj claimed to have migrated from Mayapán, the architecture of that site will be considered in detail.

Belize

Numerous recent projects in Belize have focused upon Postclassic period occupations. A "Middle Postclassic" period component is mentioned at many sites in Belize, but in this summary, they will be combined with Late Postclassic materials.

Santa Rita Corozal is a coastal site located in the northernmost tip of Belize. Various archaeologists have conducted research at the site, but the most well known are the earliest conducted by Gann (1900) and the most recent by Diane and Arlen Chase (1988; Chase 1981, 1985, and 1986). Santa Rita had a relatively large Late Postclassic occupation and was likely the capital of the Chetumal province, but modern construction has erased much of the site (Chase 1985: 105; Chase 1986: 349). Its architecture differed from that of Mayapán because no colonnaded halls were present. Its ceramics vary from those of central Petén and share few similarities with nearby sites in Quintana Roo (Chase and Chase 1988: 79). Santa Rita had preserved murals, one of which depicts a "*tun* sequence" or series of 20 consecutive 360-day periods (Love 1994: 34-38). The resemblance of the murals to the widespread "Mixteca-Puebla Style" does not constitute evidence of non-Maya occupation of the site, but rather that the occupants of Santa Rita were part of a long-distance trade network and were in contact with other Late Postclassic groups (Chase and Chase 1988: 83).

The apparent Late Postclassic patterning of image censers and cache content at Santa Rita may duplicate quadripartite calendric rituals described in Colonial documents (Chase 1983; Chase 1985: 118-124). Image censers occur smashed and in pairs with one censer in the pair being more complete, matching historic accounts of rituals in which a new "idol" is placed with that of the previous *k'atun* (Chase 1988; Chase and Chase1988: 72). This practice apparently has antecedents in the Classic period, but Late Postclassic period censers had less "abstract symbolism" (Chase 1988: 93-98). Domestic groups at Santa Rita indicate high, low, and middle-status occupants. Paired censers and effigy caches were found in elite, but not lower status, domestic groups (Chase 1992: 123-125).

As at Tikal, monuments at La Milpa in northwestern Belize were moved by Late Postclassic or Contact period Maya who made pilgrimages to the site (Hammond and Bobo 1994: 26-32). Stela movements and re-erections were also observed at Mayflower and Kendal in southeastern Belize. An effigy censer and small cup found cached near the Mayflower stela, attest to Late Postclassic ritual activities (Graham 1994: 113, 129). Cerros, in northern Belize, was an important site of Late Postclassic pilgrimages from nearby Santa Rita (Walker 1990: 472). Postclassic constructions, censer deposits, caches, burials, and monument re-erections at Chau Hiix and other sites in northern Belize tend to focus on the centerlines of Classic period ceremonial groups and may represent continuities in ritual practice between the two periods (Andres 2000: 363-388).

Lamanai is located 70 km south-southwest of Santa Rita and was the site of a mission occupied from A.D. 1568 to around 1641 (Jones 1989: 120; Pendergast et al. 1993: 65) as well as a substantial Late Postclassic period occupation (Pendergast 1985; Loten 1985). Mayapán-style image censers were encountered in Classic period temples and buildings modified by Late Postclassic groups (Loten 1985: 90). Chalice-shaped ceremonial vessels were also utilized (Pendergast 1981: Figure 15 and 27). As in Petén, the Terminal Classic flows into the Early Postclassic without a clear change in artifact content. Some changes occurred in architecture and ceramics leading into the Late Postclassic period, which suggest contact with the northern lowlands. Construction of ceremonial structures was less frequent than in the Classic period and the obsidian trade appears to have ceased (Pendergast 1986: 234-249). Surrounding the mission were various low cobble-floored residences without platforms (Pendergast et al. 1993: 65).

Marco González, a small site on Ambergris Cay, may have been politically connected to Lamanai and its primary port (Graham and Pendergast 1989: 14-15). Another possible island trading station is found on Wild Cane Cay off the coast of southern Belize (McKillop 1987: 90-94). While ceramics at the site suggest heavy Terminal Classic and Early Postclassic occupation, radiocarbon samples primarily date to the Early Classic and Late Postclassic periods.

Altun Ha is located in northern Belize 40 km west of Lamanai and approximately 15 km from the Caribbean. The site appears to have been abandoned after the Late Classic period, but during the Late Postclassic period, burials and offerings were placed in the ceremonial center, including items suggesting interaction with Lamanai (Pendergast 1982: 140; 1986: 224). Later, in the 15th and 16th centuries, the site was reoccupied by a new population that reused Classic period constructions and built their own buildings on top of ruined mounds (Pendergast 1986: 224-226). The ceremonial group in Zone C was almost completely reoccupied and occupation occurred even in remote areas of the site (Pendergast 1982: 263).

Research at Laguna de On in northern Belize compared Classic period shore occupations with Postclassic period island excavations (Masson 1993 and 1997). Corresponding with Late Postclassic research in Petén (Rice 1988: 236), Laguna de On was nucleated and situated in a defensive location (Masson 1993: 274). An analysis of architecture, settlement, burials, ceramics, and lithics indicated that while stylistic differences existed between Classic and Postclassic artifacts, there was functionally little difference (Masson 1993: 270-273; 1997: 311-312). Classic communities tended to compose larger social hierarchies while Postclassic communities were relatively

independent. (Masson 1993: 269). Recent work at Caye Coco revealed it was a Late Postclassic center that may have dominated Laguna de On, which lies approximately 18 kilometers to the south, and other smaller sites (Masson 1999: 288-302).

Tipú, a historically described site on the Macal River in west-central Belize near the border with Guatemala, has Late Postclassic and Colonial occupations. The Late Postclassic ceremonial area rests upon a hill and is similar to Petén temple assemblages. A stela (presumably Classic period) was reset into the top of the stairway of Str. II, a temple, in this group. Like Lamanai, Tipú was the site of a colonial mission and the remains of the surrounding community are composed of low cobble floors without platforms (Pendergast et al. 1993: 65). An analysis of the interments beneath the church floor indicated the population was not biologically stressed by the colonial situation (Danforth et al. 1997: 20). A study of the projectile points of Tipú suggested side-notched projectile points were part of the resistance strategy of the occupants (Simmons 1991); however, these points are common at late sites and can be used for hunting as well as warfare. At Uchentzub, near Tipú, Late Postclassic ceremonial artifacts such as censers and incense were encountered in a cave (Schmidt 1977: 103-113). Cave rituals were likely common, but research has only recently begun to focus on such features.

Yucatán

The east coast of the Yucatán Peninsula holds numerous Late Postclassic and Contact period sites possibly connected to a long-distance trade network (Sanders 1955: 179-215; Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 185-193). The higher population along the east coast in the Late Postclassic periods contrasts with sparse settlement in the Classic period (Con 1991: 122). While Late Postclassic sites appear uncommon in central Yucatán (Andrews

1993: 40), this is probably the result of destruction caused by the construction of Colonial settlements (Roys 1952: 133-134).

Just north of Belize on the southeast coast of Yucatán is a peculiar Postclassic manifestation referred to as the Lobil phase (Harrison 1979: 200; Fry 1985: 133-134). In this phase, Classic period architecture was defaced and covered by poorly constructed platforms with a different orientation. Late Postclassic image censers were found on the platforms, but with no corresponding evidence of occupation. These practices might represent a revitalization movement or termination rites (Fry 1985: 134-137).

Cozumel, a large island located off the east coast of northern Yucatán, was a Late Postclassic period trading and pilgrimage center (Freidel and Sabloff 1980). The island had a central administration area at San Gervasio, which controlled the numerous sites on the island. It may have been ruled by a *multepal* with representatives of various social groups residing in both the center and in their districts, thereby replicating the government at Mayapán (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 179-182). Elite domestic architecture is similar to that of Mayapán and field walls, which were also present within the site of Mayapán, cover almost the entire island (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 84-159). Cozumel differed from Mayapán because numerous shrines were found throughout the site, independent of domestic groups. These were proposed to be patron deity shrines of specific groups, which helped perpetuate internal social divisions, but ritual circuits to shrines around the island promoted solidarity (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 183-184).

The population of the northeast coast of Quintana Roo increased during the Late Postclassic period (Andrews and Andrews 1975: 1). The site of Xcaret, which may have been historically known as Pole, was a walled site located on the mainland opposite

Cozumel and may have been the access point to the island (Andrews and Andrews 1975: 7-73). Most of the visible architecture at the site was built during the Late Postclassic period as was that of Playa del Carmen (Andrews and Andrews 1975: 74-104). Inland sites may have been paired with coastal sites, with the former being the places of residence and the latter used for rituals and trade.

Tulum is located on the east coast of Yucatán, southwest of Cozumel (Figure 5-2). This site was originally investigated by Lothrop (1924) with follow-up by Miller (1982) and others. Tulum is a walled city with a dense settlement (Lothrop 1924: 65; Miller 1982: 78). Its architecture is very similar to that of Mayapán but, as discussed below, it differs enough to suggest a different type of ceremonial group. Tulum has numerous shrines including a shrine-within-a-shrine variety (Miller 1982: 43-44) that is also seen at Cozumel (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: Figure 14). It may have been a port of trade in a long distance trade network and a pilgrimage site (Miller 1982: 75-96). The extant architecture and the murals at the site post-date Mayapán and its redware lasts into the 17th century (Miller 1982: 11). The use of Chen Mul Modeled image censers occurs between A.D. 1350 and 1520 and its "post-A.D. 1400" murals seem influenced by Central México. Miller (1986: 206-207) suggested artistic transformations at Tulum indicate direct foreign influence. The local residents were still making offerings in the central temple of Tulum in the 1920s (Lothrop 1924: 32-33).

Tancah was occupied during the Late Postclassic period and seems to have been dominated by Tulum, which lies 4 km to the south (Miller 1982: 31-32; Miller 1985: 32). The site has no colonnaded structures, but a vaulted tandem structure, Structure 44, appears to fill the role of a hall. Like Tulum, Tancah has murals and numerous small

shrines including a shrine-within-a-shrine variety (Miller 1982: 43-44). It has a Spanish church and may have been the Colonial site *Tzama*. Excavations in the church suggest rituals within it combined Catholicism and indigenous religion (Miller and Farriss 1979: 223-240; Miller 1982: 21-38, 78).

Dzibilchaltun was utilized by the Late Postclassic period Maya as a ceremonial area, perhaps for pilgrimages. The Temple of the Seven Dolls, a buried Late Classic radial structure, was partially uncovered. The Late Postclassic occupants excavated a tunnel through the western doorway of the buried central chamber and reconstructed the western stairway (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 99-112). Within the inner chamber, a Late Postclassic shrine with an altar was built and painted with a "hieroglyphic medallion," which was later repainted three times on *k'atun* and half-*k'atun* ending dates (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 112-116; Thompson 1980: 116-117). In front of the altar were cached seven ceramic figurines representing deformed humans (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 113-117). Given their dedication dates on calendric endings, they may represent the seven pacers of Colonial period ritual. The late occupants excavated another tunnel into, and built a stairway upon, Structure 38 (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 312). Stairways of other buildings were also renovated and several shrines were constructed (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 25). The late occupants lived in earlier buildings or built their own residences in the site's center, probably to take advantage of the cenote (Andrews and Andrews 1980: 312-313). During the Colonial period, a mission church was constructed near the cenote.

Chich'en Itza rose as the center of the Maya world during the Terminal Classic period and was occupied by various ethnic groups (Andrews 1990: 259). The site may

have been in contact with "foreign" cities such as Tula (Kepecs et al. 1994: 153). Chich'en Itza was the site of various important events during the Late Postclassic period, yet very little is known of the site from that period. Apparently, Mayapán Red and Chen Mul Modeled pottery types occur earlier at Chich'en Itza than Mayapán and these ceramics gradually replace Fine Orange and Plumbate wares (Lincoln 1990: 361). Mayapán Red ceramics and Chen Mul censers were also recovered from a shaft in the High Priest's Grave (Thompson 1938: 46-48). Numerous Late Postclassic period offerings were recovered from the Sacred Cenote (Coggins and Shane1984: 111-155), supporting ethnohistoric accounts of its use. Epigraphic and ethnohistoric evidence suggests the Xiw/Kokom diarchy began at Chich'en Itza (Lincoln 1990: 121-132).

Mayapán was surveyed and excavated by the Carnegie Institution of Washington from 1949 to 1955. The city was an important center of the Maya world during the Late Postclassic period. Its approximately 4,000 buildings cover 4.2 sq. km and are surrounded by a defensive wall (Smith 1962: 171). Most are part of household groups surrounded by low property walls (Bullard 1954: 234-247). West of the center of the site is a large ceremonial group, but smaller groups are located elsewhere in the site. Ch'en Mul Modeled image censers of Mayapán consist of a vase-shaped vessel with a three-dimensional modeled effigy mounted upon the front (Smith 1971: 210) that represented Maya and some central Mexican deities (Thompson 1957: 599-632). Mayapán ceremonial assemblages include the basic ceremonial group and temple assemblage, described below. The increase in number of shrines at Mayapán may represent a collapse of centralized religious authority (Proskouriakoff 1954: 101; Thompson 1957: 624; Smith 1962: 267). Alternatively, the presence of a large ceremonial assemblage at Mayapán, as

well as household shrines in the Classic period, provides evidence against a dramatic change in ritual performance (Leventhal 1983: 72-76).

Isla Cilvituk, Campeche, México was apparently occupied by the Kehache (Alexander 1999), who were also present in the Petén, Guatemala during the Contact period. It is located in a frontier region between Mayapán and Petén, which has seen little Late Postclassic research (Alexander 1999), and will have much to tell about relations between the two regions. Investigations have already encountered architecture (Alexander 1999) and ceramic image censers (Andrews 1943: Fig. 21) similar to those of Mayapán and Zacpetén. The architecture has C-shaped bench structures, colonnaded halls, tandem buildings, and beam and mortar ceilings (Andrews 1941: 106; Alexander 1999). Furthermore, the fact that the site was densely settled on an island corresponds with Late Postclassic period defensive posturing, nucleated settlement, and construction on uneven terrain in Petén (Alexander and Manzanero 1995: 20-25).

Late Postclassic research in the Maya lowlands has revealed continuity in certain traits through space and discontinuity in others. Many sites in the Late Postclassic Maya world were constructed in defensive positions. Buildings are often tightly concentrated around ceremonial areas. Coastal sites, mural painting styles, and copper and gold artifacts at inland sites indicate the presence of a long-distance trade network with links to central México. Human image censers appear at most sites as well. With the exception of beam and mortar ceilings and settlement patterns, these traits could define the Terminal Classic period as well as the Late Postclassic. However, the material culture of the two periods is very different and these differences extend beyond stylistic change. Late Postclassic societies invested far less energy in monumental constructions,

were often ruled by councils, social hierarchies were less complex, and population seems to have decreased. The last characteristic might be a consequence of "invisible" non-platform domestic architecture, but the other characteristics suggest social transformations between the Classic period and Late Postclassic period.

Late Postclassic Period Architecture

There is a great range of variation among Late Postclassic/ Contact period constructions; hence, the present discussion will be limited to defining the five basic types of buildings and the two ceremonial groups found at Zacpetén. The five basic building types, as defined at Mayapán, are shrines, oratorios, colonnaded halls, temples, and residences. The two Late Postclassic ceremonial assemblages at Zacpetén are basic ceremonial groups and temple assemblages (Figures 5-7 and 5-8). Additional building types and ceremonial groups existed during the Late Postclassic/ Contact period. Before examining Late Postclassic architecture, possible antecedent forms including earlier ceremonial assemblages and C-shaped structures will be discussed.

Antecedent Forms

Tikal is a good starting point for a discussion of antecedent architectural forms influencing the Kowoj because it lies only 25 km north of the Petén lakes and has numerous repeated architectural groups. These groups include the Triadic Temple Arrangement, E-Group, Twin Pyramid Complex, and Plaza Plan 2.

One of the earliest types of repeated ceremonial groups is the triadic temple arrangement (Figure 5-3). These groups featured temples on three sides of a plaza with the forth side open. At Teotihuacan, prior to A.D. 100, the monumental architecture

included numerous such arrangements that seem to have been constructed over caves and were the ceremonial groups of residential barrios, possibly used as ballcourts (Manzanilla 1999: 15). Triadic temple arrangements appear in the Maya area at Preclassic period Nakbe and El Mirador. They are also found at Uaxactun and Palenque (Guillemin 1968: 9; Ashmore 1989: 281). At Tikal, one triadic group is found in the northern part of the North Acropolis and it was open on the south. The northern building of this group was decorated with large monster masks and dates to around A.D. 550 (Guillemin 1968: 9-16). Underlying the North Acropolis is a triadic group dated to A.D. 1, but it was open on the west side (Guillemin 1968: 11-15).

E-Groups were originally defined at Uaxactun (Figure 5-4) and are primarily Late Preclassic period ceremonial assemblages used as observatories for solar equinoxes and solstices (Ruppert 1940: 222-230). E-Groups include a radial temple on the western side of the plaza. On the eastern side of the plaza is a long platform topped by three buildings. Early Classic period stela added to Group E at Uaxactun all date to *k'atun* seatings (Coggins 1980: 732) suggesting the groups also commemorated that temporal cycle. The E-Group at Tikal is located in Mundo Perdido; it was constructed in the Middle Preclassic period and continued to be used as a solar observatory until the Late Classic period (Leporte 1993: 301-312).

Twin-Pyramid Complexes (Figure 5-5), also known as Plaza Plan 1 (Becker 1971) are complex groupings including two radial temples to the east and west, a stela and altar enclosure to the north, and a nine-doorway vaulted building to the south. The stela in the northern enclosure is generally carved with the image of a ruler performing scattering rites, a ritual gesture possibly originating at Teotihuacan (Coggins 1980: 737),

and in front of the eastern pyramid are several uncarved stelae and altars. Judging from the dates on the stelae in the northern enclosures, these groups were constructed to celebrate *k'atun* seatings (Jones 1969: 128-137) and appear to have been models of the cosmos. The east and west temples represent the passage of the sun in the heavens and through the underworld, respectively (Guillemin 1968: 28). The north structure may represent the heavens and the stela may depict a royal ancestor (Coggins 1980: 726). Twin Pyramid Complexes are found at Tikal, Yaxhá, Ixlú, and Zacpetén and there may have been 13 such assemblages, perhaps constructed during each *k'atun* of the *may* (P. Rice 2000: personal comm.).

Plaza Plan 2 is a recurring domestic group pattern (Figure 5-6). The residence of the group is typically a vaulted range structure with benches and evidence of doorway curtains (Becker 1971: 186-189). The most constant quality of Plaza Plan 2 is the presence of a ceremonial building on the eastern side of the plaza, which differs from others in the group as it has a square base and is taller. This building includes burials, "axial burning," altars, and caches and may correspond with domestic oratorios at Mayapán (Becker 1971: 178-181). The groups often include a vaulted range-type building with three doorways. Plaza Plan 2 is widespread and exists at Quirigua, Copan, Mayapán and many other sites (Becker 1983: 182-193).

Each of the various repeated plans found at Tikal has a distinct layout; however, these groups were undoubtedly related. E-Groups may be antecedents of Twin Pyramid Complexes, as both were constructed to celebrate the completion of the *k'atun* and use radial temples (Coggins 1980: 732). Late Postclassic temple assemblages of Mayapán, to be discussed below, may have been derived from of these two groups (P. Rice 19 99:

personal comm.). The vaulted ritual buildings of Plaza Plan 2 appear to correspond with the nine-doorway vaulted buildings of Twin Pyramid Complexes (Becker 1971: 183). Furthermore, some of these southern vaulted structures in Twin Pyramid Complexes appear to have been constructed in the form of residences (Guillemin 1968: 24); therefore, these groups are also linked to Plaza Plan 2.

Triadic Groups, Plaza Plan 2, and Twin Pyramid Complexes seem to be combined in Temples 1, 2, and 33 of the Great Plaza at Tikal. Guillemin (1968: 19-25) suggests Twin Pyramid Complexes mimicked the Great Plaza. In fact, Stela 31 celebrating Stormy Sky, the founder of the Jaguar Paw dynasty, was found deep inside of Str. 5D-33 (Coe 1967: 40-49) in the same position as that of a stela enclosure. A long structure on the south side of the plaza may be a nine doorway structure (Guillemin 1968: 19; Ashmore 1991: 202). The Great Plaza appears related to both Triadic Groups and Twin Pyramid Complexes, but some of the latter actually precede its construction and the Great Plaza may have resembled a Twin Pyramid Complex before it became Triadic Group. Hence, the Great Plaza is not a form interceding Triadic Groups and Twin Temple Complexes, but combines the two together. The burial in Temple I in the Great Plaza suggests this group may have been constructed as a "huge variant form of Plaza Plan 2" (Becker 1983: 174); hence, Triadic Groups, Plaza Plan 2, and Twin Pyramid Complexes may all have contributed to the form of the Great Plaza.

Early C-Shaped Buildings

C-shaped buildings are characteristic of the Maya Late Postclassic period, but these buildings had earlier Maya antecedents. The category "C-shaped structure" includes buildings with C-shaped walls, C-shaped platforms, and C-shaped benches, and

U-shaped buildings (Tourtellot 1988a: 258). Of interest here are buildings with C-shaped benches constructed adjacent to and following the form of C-shaped walls.

At Seibal, numerous structures have C-shaped benches, especially the "Class K" structures. These were once believed to have been the residences of Late Classic period foreign "founders" (Tourtellot 1988b: 109-111), but now appear to have been indigenous, possibly from Ucanal (Tourtellot and González N.D.). These large buildings have C-shaped benches, interior masonry tables, and relatively higher frequencies of many domestic and ceremonial artifacts. Class K structures are often associated with Class C masonry rectangular altars/shrines with elaborate burials. Class D oratorios, a household ceremonial building, also appear at this time (Tourtellot 1988a: 394). These oratorios may be related to the oratorios of Tikal Plaza Plan 2, but the buildings at Seibal are oriented in a different direction and have no burials. The form and uses of Tikal oratorios seem divided into Class C and D buildings at Seibal (Tourtellot 1988a: 233). Possible predecessors to the Postclassic open hall are found in Plaza A at Seibal (Tourtellot 1988a: 406) where a pair of long structures lay side-by-side. Similar paired halls have been found at Late Postclassic Nixtun-Ch'ich' in Petén (Pugh 1996: 206). C-shaped structures also appear at Dos Pilas during the Late Classic period (Houston 1993: 52). The proximity of this site to Seibal suggests some sort of regional trend.

Late/Terminal Classic period C-shaped structures are also found in central Petén and Yucatán. The structures in Petén are found at Michoacan, and El Fango, the latter of which lies in the savannas between the Petén lakes and Seibal (Rice 1986: 325-337). C-shaped open halls appear at Ek Balam and Uxmal and may mark the Terminal Classic period in Yucatán (Bey et al. 1997: 239-249).

Late Postclassic Building Types

As mentioned, the present section will examine shrines, colonnaded halls, oratorios, temples, and residences (Figure 5-7). An additional building type found at Mayapán, but not at Zacpetén is the dance platform. The Carnegie study at Mayapán was a landmark in Late Postclassic period research and the buildings at Zacpetén bear a great deal of similarity to those of that site. Consequently, the classification system of Mayapán will be utilized here.

The block-and-slab masonry characteristic of the Mayapán includes "uncut, rough blocks or slabs" as well as cut stones borrowed from earlier buildings (Smith 1962: 214). These various stones are combined to form a single wall, but borrowed Puuc-style decorated stone was often used in facades and altar and bench faces. These decorative stones were usually found in ceremonial and elite residential groups (Smith 1962: 215). Most masonry was not coursed and the walls were covered by a heavy coat of plaster (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 93). Larger stones were placed at the base of walls as a foundation. Columns were composed of round drums and most roofs were beam and mortar, though few were thatched as well (Proskouriakoff 1962: 92-94).

Shrines generally have square superstructures tending to be less than 3 m long. Shrines at Mayapán include raised shrines, statue shrines, and interior shrines (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 90). Raised shrines are independently-standing small enclosures with a medial altar. They usually rest on a platform and face into an open hall, temple, or residence. Raised shrines often contain a cist burial with multiple individuals (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 108) and may have been utilized for ancestor veneration. Statue shrines stand in front of temples and often held stucco and stalactite statues depicting

human, animal, and anthropomorphized figures (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 136), depicting the same personages found on image censers (Winters 1955: 403). Statue shrines are composed of a rectangular enclosure or simply a small platform. Interior shrines are found in open halls, elite houses, and oratorios and have rectangular enclosures within which is an altar. Some were altar houses, but others contain sculptures of figures seated upon the altar (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 113; Smith 1962: Figure 11), which probably represented deities or ancestors; hence, many interior shrines were also statue shrines.

Colonnaded or open halls are elongated structures with a C-shaped wall and bench that is broken by a medial interior shrine. Halls vary significantly, but the superstructure of the typical hall in the ceremonial center of Mayapán is 28 m wide and 7 m deep. The medial shrines of halls sometimes contain stucco figures seated upon the "altar" (Shook and Irving 1955: 141). Halls generally have two rows of columns, sometimes covered with stucco modeled into human figures (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 116). They often included an additional service room on one end. Colonnaded halls were once thought to be men's houses (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 90), but are now believed to have been corporate group administration buildings (Carmack 1981: 287-290; Rice 1988: 240-241). The stucco sculptures on the columns may represent central group members and ancestors (Pugh 1996b).

The artifacts found in colonnaded halls of Mayapán are varied, but the most common were human effigy censers found in or near the medial shrine. The shrines also held statues, non-effigy censers, incense, obsidian blades, and occasionally altar turtles (Shook and Irving 1955: 133-145). They also had refuse behind them including non-censer ceramic sherds, animal bones, charcoal, and disarticulated human remains (Shook

and Irving 1955: 134 and 145-146). It is difficult to generalize about the content of halls at Mayapán because only three were excavated. The halls at Mayapán do not always contain an interior shrine; however, no such structures were excavated. Halls without shrines may have had different activity patterns.

Although the word "temple" is applied cross-culturally, difficulties arise when one tries to define it. By definition, a temple is "an edifice or place dedicated to the worship or presence of a deity" (Ching 1997: 248). The Maya had buildings used to communicate or make offerings to deities, *k'u naj* or 'god houses' (Taube 1998: 428). The gods created humans to worship them and feed them blood (Freidel et al. 1993: 202). These two requirements of the gods seem to have been accomplished in *k'u naj*. Among the Lacandon, god houses were literally constructed as houses (Soustelle 1937: 65). In earlier periods, god houses were built upon man-made mountains. The relatively large substructure of these buildings represented a mountain, often the "First-True-Mountain" that emerged from the primordial sea during creation (Freidel et al. 1993: 138-139). The heights of Late Postclassic temples are significantly lower than those of the Classic period. Temple IV of Classic period Tikal stands over 64 m high. The platform of the Castillo of Mayapán stands 15.3 m high and with the superstructure, it probably stood 19 to 20 m tall. Most Late Postclassic temples were much lower; however, they usually stood above other architecture at a given settlement.

Oratorios have C-shaped walls and benches and generally rest on the rear of a platform. The superstructure of a typical oratorio is approximately 12 m long and 6 m wide. Within the buildings is a medial altar or niche. They generally have two sets of two columns: one along the front of the building and the other inside the building. While

oratorios at Mayapán share a common form, sufficient variation exists to distinguish between those associated with temples, colonnaded halls, and houses (Pugh 1996). Oratorios incorporate a feature along the back wall that was the focus of sacred activities. This feature may be an altar, niche, or interior shrine upon which two human figures sometimes sat (Smith 1962: 221).

Oratorios appear to have been smaller god-houses. Three oratorios were excavated in the central ceremonial group at Mayapán and all had a high frequency of image censer sherds (Shook 1954: 274; Winter 1955: 414; and Smith 1955: 115). Many had tenoned serpent heads above the balustrades. Oratorios in residential groups tended to be relatively clean, but those with artifacts had numerous image censer sherds (Thompson and Thompson 1955: 235; Chowning and Thompson 1956: 433-438; Smith and Ruppert). Of the 11 excavated household oratorios, eight had cist burials. Oratorios could have been lesser god houses, perhaps to group ancestors, and the god house in ceremonial groups might have been that of the ruling elite. A second possibility is that the pairing of the oratorio and temple or lesser god house and god house was a reflection of a hierarchical dual political structure (i.e., *b'atab'* and *ajaw b'atab'*).

Dance platforms are small and square and did not support a superstructure. While they are called dance platforms, there could have been used for a variety of purposes.

The other major type of building at Mayapán was the residence. Almost all residences had a medial wall dividing them in half making them tandem structures (Smith 1962: 266; Freidel 1981: 315). The front room was stuccoed and had a bench, often C-shaped, and the back room had neither. There is not a clear-cut difference between elite and non-elite houses, but rather a continuum between large well-constructed houses and

small poorly built houses with the best of the former tending to be located near ceremonial groups (Smith 1962: 218-219 and 266). Elite residences tended to be larger and more elaborate and are found in groups of several buildings including additional residences, ceremonial structures, and other buildings. The back room of such residences was often divided into several small rooms, one of which often contained a shrine.

One important point concerning residences is their front rooms tend to resemble colonnaded halls. The origin of open halls is uncertain; however, they are very similar in appearance to the front rooms of elite tandem residences at Mayapán (see Smith 1962: Figures 3-5) and may have evolved from this feature. The columns constructed as human figures may have represented the constituents of the corporate group (following Lincoln 1990: 636). Given that Maya groups are often united through real or fictive kinship, it seems quite appropriate that the halls were modeled after the social area of the house.

Mayapán Domestic Groups

Domestic groups were not constructed with the same regularity as the two types of ceremonial groups. The only essential constructions are a residential structure, a patio, and a masonry property wall surrounding the household social space (Smith 1962: Fig. 1). However, patterning is evident if one looks solely at elite households. Non-elite domestic groups do not seem to have had the same number of masonry constructions as those of the elites. In many non-elite households, only a house and patio remain. Elite domestic compounds include the central residence, smaller houses, oratorios, shrines, a kitchen, gardens, and animal pens (Smith 1962: 267). The smaller houses were occupied by married children or servants; therefore, the composition of elite domestic group architecture was greatly influenced by the wealth and power of the individuals as well as

their stage in the household developmental cycle. Non-elite households obviously went through similar developmental cycles. More discernible patterning is evident in the ritual buildings within a household group. If there is an interior shrine in the back room of a house or inside an oratorio, a raised shrine, outside of the given building, is centered upon and facing it (see Smith 1962: Figs. 3-7).

Three residential groups at Cozumel may have been constructed as Mayapán-style groups (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 159). Each group has a Mayapán-style residence facing east into a western-facing oratorio with a shrine between them. While they do resemble Mayapán groups, residential groups at Mayapán form a variety of different layouts and it would be difficult to demonstrate which most concisely exemplifies "Mayapán-style." An additional pattern at Mayapán includes the same elements, but the house is at a right angle to the oratorio (Figure 5-9) (Smith 1962: Figure 4). This pattern resembles a temple assemblage and Freidel and Sabloff 's pattern resembles a basic ceremonial group with the residence standing in place of the colonnaded hall.

Mayapán Ceremonial Assemblages

Recurring patterns of ceremonial architecture or assemblages are relatively common in Mesoamerica as seen in the E-Groups, Triadic Groups, Twin-Pyramid Complexes, and Plaza Plan 2. Two recurring patterns of ceremonial architectural at Mayapán are basic ceremonial groups and temple assemblages (Figures 5-7, 5-10, 5-11, and 5-12). Basic ceremonial groups include a colonnaded hall, raised shrine, and oratorio. The three buildings generally occur in a line with the shrine lying between the others. Both the shrine and the oratorio are centered upon and face into the colonnaded

hall (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 91). The oratorio was occasionally set at a right angle to the hall, apparently because of spatial limitations.

Mayapán temple assemblages are altered basic ceremonial groups that also include a temple and a statue shrine. The raised shrine is centered upon and faces into the temple. Between the temple and the raised shrine is usually a statue shrine. The oratorio is connected to the right side of and faces in the same direction as the temple, generally east or west. At a right angle to the temple is an open hall. The temple is the central building in the assemblage. Four or five temple assemblages at Mayapán are found in the Ch'en Mul ceremonial group and another is located near the Cenote Itzmal Ch'en. Since temple assemblages are the focus of this dissertation, these groups are discussed in detail.

Group Q-218 (Figure 5-7) is located in the southern part of the Ch'en Mul ceremonial group. The central building is the temple, Structure Q-218, which faces west and has serpent columns and balustrades. The floor of the superstructure was constructed three times. Sometime after the first floor construction, an altar was built directly behind the columns. There was no altar against the back wall (Winters 1955: 403-407). Most sherds recovered on the floor were image censers. Numerous obsidian blades and other artifacts were encountered outside the doorway (Winters 1955: 406). Directly in front of Structure Q-218 were two low masonry rectangles. One of these rectangles, Structure Q-218b was a shrine containing stucco and stalactites statue fragments (Winters 1955: 408). West of the statue shrine was Structure Q-216, a raised shrine that faced into the temple, which was not excavated. The open hall, Structure Q-212 and oratorio, Structure 217, were not excavated either, but a unit to the rear of the oratorio found burned human and animal bones and numerous censer sherds (Winters 1955: 414).

Group Q-143 (Figure 5-12) stands in the eastern part of the Ch'en Mul ceremonial group. The temple, Structure Q-143, faces west and has serpent columns and a medial altar against the back wall. The floor of the superstructure was built three times. After the first floor was built, a rise was added to the floor in the front of the superstructure. After the second floor, interior walls were added creating an anteroom and interior chamber (Winters 1955: 398-399). Of the 1339 sherds recovered on the second floor, 1285 were from image censers and 16 from non-image censers (Winters 1955: 413). Just west of the temple was Structure Q-146, a low platform upon which rested a shrine centered upon the temple. In addition, four small masonry rectangles rested south of the shrine. Numerous image censer sherds and fragments of stucco and stalactite statues were found in the shrine and rectangles (Winters 1955: 413). West of the statue shrine was Structure Q-149, a raised shrine, facing into and centered upon the temple. The shrine contained a medial altar and its floor, like that of the temple, was remodeled twice (Smith 1955: 116). A large number of image and non-image censers were associated with the shrine, but most were found outside the building (Smith 1955: 118). Neither the colonnaded hall, Structure Q-145, nor the oratorio, Structure Q-142a, were excavated.

Group Q-159 (Figure 5-10) is located south of the Castillo. The temple, Structure Q-159, faces east toward Structure Q-143. This structure has serpent columns and a medial altar. The temple floor had been constructed at least twice (Winters 1955: 409). Of the 651 sherds on the floor, 631 were image censer fragments. An altar turtle, a tripod cup, and a jade bead were also recovered (Winters 1955: 413). In front of the temple were two statue shrines, which were not excavated. The oratorio and hall of this group were not excavated either.

Group Q-58 (Figure 5-11) is located in the northern portion of the Ch'en Mul group. The temple faces east and has serpent columns and an interior shrine. In the center of the upper floor, which was surfaced three times, was a shaft containing the partially burned remains of several humans. Upon the temple floor were 2057 sherds, 72% of which were from image censers and 1% from ladle censers (Shook 1954: 272-273). In an unexcavated area to the right of the temple are vague traces of low walls and benches (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 102) possibly the remains of an oratorio. In front of the temple are several shrines. The plaza around the shrines had been surfaced three times during its latest occupation. Into the earliest surface, a circular shaft was excavated, then, this feature was surrounded by a platform, Structure Q-59a. In the shaft were three superimposed burials with several ladle censers (Shook 1954: 259-260). These burials were separate deposits, possibly associated with the three plaza constructions. Upon the first floor were constructed Structure Q-60, which contained a cist burial, and Structure Q-59b, a shrine, which faces the temple and held stucco and stalactite statues that appear to have been intentionally smashed. A circular burial shaft was found in the latter building (Shook 1954: 260-262). While, Structures Q-59a and Q-60 may be classified as shrines, the raised shrine of the group, Structure Q-66, lies southeast of the temple and faces north. The open hall, Structure Q-64, was not excavated, but seems to have had a medial niche rather than an altar (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 102).

With the exception of the statue shrines and one raised shrine, only the temples in the four assemblages mentioned above were excavated. One can extrapolate activities conducted in raised shrines, oratorios, and halls from other such buildings; however; similar buildings in different types of assemblages may have slightly different uses.

Image censer sherds were encountered in large numbers in all four temples. Since such censers depicted deities, one can clearly see that these were god houses. In addition, three of the four serpent temples were constructed then renovated twice; the fourth was renovated at least once, perhaps twice. Unlike the serpent columns at other sites such as Chich'en Itza, those of Mayapán vary and may depict mythical scenes (Pugh 2000). Most statue shrines were built upon low rectangular platforms and contained stucco and stalactite statues.

An assemblage located just east of the Castillo could be either a basic ceremonial group or a temple assemblage (Figure 5-12). The layout is that of a basic ceremonial group including a colonnaded hall, a raised shrine, and an oratorio. The hall, Structure Q-151, has two galleries of columns, an end room, Puuc mask piers, a C-shaped bench, and an interior shrine. The interior shrine once contained a pair of seated figures with a carved limestone turtle between them. The interior shrine was remodeled six times. This shrine and the floor in front of it contained numerous image censers, two miniature tripod cups, a few non-image censer sherds, and numerous obsidian blades (Shook and Irving 1955:135-154). The raised shrine, Structure Q-148, is centered upon and faces into the hall, contained a medial altar, and was reconstructed several times. The altar cache was desecrated. The superstructure contained numerous unspecified censers and incense (Smith 1955: 118-121). The oratorio, Structure Q-153, is not centered upon the hall, but rests to the south of the Cenote Ch'en Mul. This building has a C-shaped bench with a medial altar, within which was a lip-to-lip cache containing incense. On the oratorio floor were a carved limestone turtle and numerous image censer sherds (Smith 1955: 109-115). The superstructure appears to have been constructed twice (Smith 1955: Fig. 1a).

The Cenote Ch'en Mul lies 10 m east of the Castillo; it is the natural feature upon which Mayapán was centered and the cave component of the mountain/cave axis-mundi. The cenote is not just a sinkhole, but has passages leading to the northwest and northeast. The Castillo may have been deliberately constructed above the northwest passage (Brown 1999). Along the northeast branch is a small chamber with several water pools, directly above which lies Structure Q-152, the Caracol. This cenote dictated the location of the site center and two important buildings. Since the Cenote Ch'en Mul was part of the central mountain/cave of Mayapán and lies on the left side of an oratorio of a basic ceremonial group, the cenote, hall, raised shrine, and oratorio may have formed a variant of the temple assemblage. This fifth temple assemblage also may be the central assemblage in a quincunx pattern. The Q-143, Q-218, and Q-159 serpent temples lay to the east, south, and west of the cenote. Structure Q-58, the other serpent temple, lies to the north, but does not have the precise alignment of the others. These five assemblages seem to combine to form a still larger quincunx assemblage.

The fifth temple assemblage does not stand along, but is oriented around the same plaza as Group Q-143. Hence, this group includes two open halls, two oratorios, two raised shrines, a temple, a statue shrine, and a cenote. A similar pattern was found in the Itzmal Ch'en group and in Petén, Guatemala.

The Itzmal Ch'en group (Figure 5-13) is located in the northeast portion of Mayapán. The central buildings of this group include two open halls, a statue shrine, an oratorio, a temple, and a central shrine. The shrine is radial accommodating the multi-directionality. This group was originally believed to be a variant of the temple assemblage (Proskouriakoff 1962a: 127) and it appears to combine a basic ceremonial

group with a temple assemblage. This group demonstrates the template guiding the construction of basic ceremonial groups was subject to manipulation and may constitute evidence of social duality. Furthermore, its orientation was obviously determined by Cenote Itzmal Ch'en, which lies to its west.

There are five or six temple assemblages at Mayapán, four or five of which are in the ceremonial core and one of which lies in the Itzmal Ch'en group. These groups are repeated assemblages that were obviously constructed to replicate a specific ritual setting. Since the reconstructions of buildings in the ceremonial core seem to have corresponded, with most being constructed three times, they may have been reconstructed at calendric intervals such as the *k'atun*.

Temple Assemblages Outside of Mayapán

Several temple assemblages have been found outside of Mayapán. Possible examples are present at Isla Cilvituk (Alexander 1999) in Campeche; Cobá in Quintana Roo; Topoxté, Muralla de León, Ixlú, and Zacpetén in Petén, Guatemala, and, possibly, Tipú in Belize. It is generally assumed that the architectural similarities were the result of migrations of groups from Mayapán (Pugh et al. 1997). Precursory groups might exist at Chich'en Itza and a late variant of the pattern exists on the east coast of Yucatán.

Isla Cilvituk lies on Lake Silvituc, Campeche, México and has both a temple assemblage and a basic ceremonial group (Alexander 1999). The temple assemblage has a temple facing north with a structure to its right, presumably the oratorio. At a right angle to the temple is a hall and opposite the hall is a small building, perhaps a raised shrine. This group is interesting because its layout is similar to the assemblages in Petén; however, its temple faces north rather than west.

Cobá is an inland site in Quintana Roo, México, and has a possible Postclassic temple assemblage (Folan 1983: 71-75). In the Las Pinturas complex (Figure 5-14), a temple (facing east northeast) faces 13 rectangular shrines with circular elements similar to those of Group Q-58 at Mayapán. West of the altars were human remains including a beheaded juvenile in a crypt with two skulls nearby. At the base of the temple stairway is an oratorio complete with a C-shaped bench, which contains murals depicting Itzam Cab Ayin (Taube 1989: 7). A diminutive hall structure lies at a right angle to the temple.

Topoxté includes three islands in Lake Yaxhá, Petén, Guatemala, approximately 28 km northeast of Zacpetén. The main island, with the most elaborate ceremonial group, is called Topoxté Island and the others Paxte and Cante Island. Topoxté Island (Figure 5-15) has a temple assemblage (Johnson 1979; Rice and Rice 1981: 279). The temple, Structure C, faces west as does the oratorio to its right. Two pairs of circular drum columns in the temple were later modified into rectangular forms (Girón 1995: 238). The columns and balustrades do not have serpent imagery, but a carved serpent head with gaping jaws was found reused as a stone in the shrine immediately to the west of the temple and was likely removed from the temple when it was remodeled (Hermes and Noriega 1997: 758). The temple has an anteroom and inner chamber with an altar against the back wall. The anteroom contained numerous scattered fragments of image and non-image censers, and incense. The inner chamber was fairly clean with the exception of two redware vessels near the altar (Bullard 1970: 262). The temple also had drum fragments and miniature cups in unspecified locations. In front of the temple are two unexcavated shrines. At a right angle to the temple is Structure B, a colonnaded hall,

with Structure G, a raised shrine, facing into one side of it. Structure L is a small platform containing an ossuary of disarticulated human remains (Bullard 1970: 267).

The unexcavated temple assemblage on Paxte Island (Figure 5-16) is similar to the Topoxté assemblage (Rice and Rice 1985: 178), but it has two open halls. The temple faces east with two shrines in front of it. To its right is a small C-shaped structure that may be an oratorio and a hall lies at a right angle to the temple. The assemblage on Cante Island (Figure 5-17), on the other hand, has an eastern facing temple with its oratorio, which also faces east, at the base of its stairway. Both the oratorio and temple face into an open hall and a second hall rests to the south. Several stela and altars rested to the north of the oratorio.

Muralla de León (Figure 5-18) lies 5 km southeast of Zacpetén on the northeast shore of Lake Macanché. The site rests upon a hill surrounded by fortifications and in its southern portion lies a Late Postclassic temple assemblage (Rice and Rice 1981: 275). This unexcavated group contains a western facing-temple, in front of which is a low platform. At a right angle to the temple is a colonnaded hall with an end room. No oratorio was observed to the right of the temple, but a shrine or oratorio lies in the southern part of the group facing into the open hall.

Complex I at Tipú (Figure 5-19) in western Belize has what appears to be a variant of a Mayapán temple assemblage. In this group, Str. 2, the temple, faces west and has a rectangular masonry platform in front of it (not pictured). At a right angle to the temple is an open hall. To the right and facing in the same direction as the temple is what appears to be an oratorio; however, in front of the oratorio is a long low structure with a rectangular masonry feature at its end. Directly in front of the oratorio is an open hall.

Approximately 100m west of Complex I is a circular depression that appears to have been a borrow pit.

The majority of the ceremonial groups at Ixlú are based upon open halls rather than temples, but Group C (Figure 5-20) may have a temple assemblage variant (D. Rice 2000: personal comm.). The group includes a "temple" facing west with an open hall at a right angle to it and a shrine in front of it (Figure 5-20). This group cannot be formally designated a temple assemblage because the temple lacks god pots and it could pre-date or post-date Mayapán syncretism.

Chich'en Itza has several groups that may be precursors to temple assemblages in the area called "Old Chich'en." The Platform Ho' Che (Figure 5-21) includes a temple with serpent imagery on the balustrades (5D1) facing north into a raised shrine (5D6) (Lincoln 1990: 403). A small platform rests between the temple and shrine. At a right angle to the temple is a C-shaped vaulted range structure (5D2). To the right of the temple is a gallery-patio building (5D3), rather than an oratorio, but it faces in the same direction as the temple. A ballcourt rests in the western part of the group and a *sakbe* leads north to a borrow pit. This group appears to be a replica of the central ceremonial group at Chich'en Itza (Lincoln 1990: 406). Three additional possible precursors to the temple assemblage rest in Old Chich'en. The *Grupo de la Cornisa de los Pájaros* includes a temple facing west toward a radial platform with open halls at a right angle to it. An additional hall rests opposite of the temple. In the *Grupo Principal del Suroeste,* a temple faces west toward a shrine with an open hall at a right angle to it. A building south of the hall may be an oratorio. The *Grupo de la Fecha* has a western facing temple with a long platform at a right angle to it.

Most of the assemblages at Chich'en Itza are simply examples of the "temple-long structure-altar complex" found throughout the Maya highlands and lowlands (Fox 1987: 24-26). Temple assemblages are variants of the temple-long structure-altar complex; however, the specific Mayapán variety is of interest to the present study rather than the more general and widespread form. The group on Platform Ho' Che may be a temple assemblage because it has a serpent temple, shrine, and oratorio. This group suggests the possibility that temple assemblages are related to the central plaza of Chich'en Itza.

Tulum-Style Temple Assemblages

It is not difficult to imagine a Mayapán-style temple assemblage within the layout of Tulum (Figure 5-2). A serpent temple faces a platform with two stairways oriented to the group's primary axis. A colonnaded hall lies at a right angle to the temple and several structures to the right of the temple could have been oratorios. However, the assemblage does vary from those of Mayapán. An oratorio is not clearly present, shrines rest at the base of the stairway, there is no statue shrine, and numerous shrines and other buildings surround and face the plaza. A similar patterning of assemblages is seen at various sites along the east coast of Yucatán and may represent a different, though related, type of Late Postclassic period ritual group.

An assemblage similar to that of Tulum was encountered at El Meco, which lies north of Cancun on the shoreline parallel to Isla Mujeres (Andrews and Robles 1977). In this assemblage, a serpent temple faces east toward a platform with two stairways. Two shrines are attached to the base of the temple, a colonnaded hall stands opposite the temple, and several other shrines face into the plaza. To the west of the temple is another

hall. The group's temple, which has serpent balustrades, is very similar to that of Tulum (Lothrop 1924: 146).

Another assemblage similar to that of Tulum, but with a temple lacking serpent imagery, was encountered at Xelha, which dates to the Postclassic period (Sanders 1955: 213). The "temple" faces west toward a platform with two stairways, which lie along the group's primary axis. Again, numerous shrines face into the plaza. Despite the similarities, no colonnaded halls were found at Xelha; however, like Tulum, the site had defensive walls (Lothrop 1924: 135). Another site, Chacmool, lies near Punta Santa Rosa, approximately 90 km south of Tulum, and has colonnaded structures (Lothrop 1924: 160-165). The "temple" faces west toward a platform with two stairways, which lie along the group's primary axis. Two shrines at the base of the temple and several other structures face into the plaza. An open hall lies at a right angle to the temple.

Several shared characteristics of Late Postclassic sites along the east coast suggest a Tulum-style temple assemblage. A temple faces either east or west, usually the latter, toward a platform with east and west stairways centered on the temple. Around the plaza are numerous shrines and occasionally other structures. The Tulum-style assemblages lack the rigid structure of those of Mayapán. They have certain constants, but various structures are allowed to face into the plaza. At Cozumel, individual shrine ceremonies allowed heterogeneous religious expression, but since they were located near one another along the same ceremonial circuit, they promoted solidarity (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 184). The Tulum assemblages clearly exemplify these characteristics. The variety of shrines surrounding an unvarying structure allows diversity to exist within an orderly context. The origin of the repeated characteristics of the Tulum-style groups was likely

Mayapán. In Group Q-58 at Mayapán, the temple faces east toward several shrines, one with two stairways along the primary axis. This group contains the constant elements of the Tulum-style groups within the context of a Mayapán-style assemblage, but lacks the variety of shrines.

The proposed Tulum-style temple assemblage is similar to a group at Iximché in the Guatemalan highlands. The temple in the ward of Ahpo Sotz'il (Guillemin 1967: 247; Schele and Mathews 1998: 302) faces east toward a platform with two stairways, which are oriented with the temple's medial axis. Encircling and facing into the plaza are numerous halls, shrines, and other buildings. While very similar in form to Tulum, the group at Iximché includes two temples rather than one and a ballcourt (Guillemin 1967: 240). The resemblance to the east coast assemblages is interesting because the inhabitants claimed to have migrated from Tulan (Schele and Mathews 1998: 294-295). Utatlán, another highland site, may also have a variant of the Mayapán temple assemblage (Carmack 1981: 385).

Mayapán- and Tulum-style temple assemblages are variants of a temple-based ceremonial group. The temples are usually, though not always, on the eastern side of the plaza facing west. Temple assemblages are found outside Yucatan in Campeche, México, Petén, Guatemala, and the Maya highlands. With the possible exception of Isla Cilvituk in Campeche, architecture in Petén most closely follows that of Mayapán. The archaeological site of Zacpetén, Petén, Guatemala, the central focus of this dissertation, has two temple assemblages resting on its highest terrain, one in Group A (Figure 5-12) and the other in Group C (Figure 5-13) (Rice et al. 1998: 229-230).

Zacpetén

Zacpetén rests on a peninsula in the northeast corner of Lake Salpetén in Petén, Guatemala (Figure 1-3). The site is located 25.6 km E NE (76°) of Flores (Nojpeten), Guatemala and 26.1 km S (188°) of Temple 2 of Tikal, a large Classic period Maya center. It was first investigated by Don and Prudence Rice in 1979-1981 (D. Rice 1986: 323-324; P. Rice 1986: 264-266; Rice 1988: 227-244; Rice et al. 1998: 207-246). Excavations at Zacpetén produced uncorrected radiocarbon dates ranging from AD 1070± 40 to 1750±40 (Table 1-1) representing the late occupation of the site. It also had significant occupations during the Middle Preclassic (1000 to 300 B.C) and Late (A.D. 600 to 830) to Terminal Classic (A.D. 830 to 930) periods.

The terrain on the peninsula is steep and rough with occasional bedrock outcrops. The bedrock is composed of limestone with occasional strata of gypsum. These mineral deposits occur throughout the basin, making the water extremely saline and undrinkable (Rice and Rice 1980b: 5). Nevertheless, the water of Lake Salpetén contains all local fish species, turtles, and other aquatic animals. At present, large trees cover the majority of the site. The point where the peninsula meets the mainland was cultivated recently and is now covered by extremely dense brush. A small area between Group D and Group E was under cultivation while excavations were being conducted at the site. A pig enclosure was located in the area of Group D causing considerable damage to the Late Postclassic component of that group. Despite these small encroachments, the peninsula is a serene forest location occupied by howler and spider monkeys, coatimundis, toucans, hummingbirds, and various other animals.

In order to make the sloped terrain of the peninsula comfortably inhabitable, a great deal of modification was necessary. The cultural modification of the site extended from the Middle Preclassic to the Colonial period. In its final days, Zacpetén had three large plazas and two smaller ones: the latter two, Group D and Group E, being elite residential groups. One of the three larger plazas, Group B, was also the site of a Terminal Classic period ceremonial group. Group A and Group C contain Late Postclassic ceremonial assemblages. Surrounding the ceremonial groups and elite plazuelas were numerous residential groups. These groups negotiated the terrain through the construction of level residential patios or very small plazas. The domestic patios are densely clustered on terraces ringing the hillsides below the ceremonial groups and elite household groups (D. Rice 1986: 264). The present project is not the first to investigate Zacpetén, but is a follow-up to earlier survey by Don and Prudence Rice.

Previous Research

In 1979, Don and Prudence Rice initiated archaeological research around Lake Salpetén. This research involved three 2 km long and 500 m wide transects randomly placed around the lake and survey and testing on the peninsula (Rice and Rice 1980b). The transects were surface surveyed and 42 test units were excavated. The surveys revealed 152 structures or 50.7 buildings per sq. km. Of the 42 test units, Middle to Late Preclassic (1000 BC to AD 250) deposits were encountered in seven units, Early Classic (AD 250 to 600) in three, Late Classic (A.D. 600 to 830) in 38, Terminal Classic (AD 830 to 930) in one, and Postclassic (AD 930 to 1540) in three. Results were different on the Zacpetén peninsula. There, 190 buildings were encountered in the survey with an average of 819 structures per sq. km. Of the 17 test units excavated at Zacpetén very

little occupation existed before the Late Classic period with only one unit, in Group D, having an Early Classic component. Four of the 17 units had Late Classic materials; five had Terminal Classic occupations; and all 17 had Postclassic materials. Following the *Proyecto Lacustre* investigations, research at Zacpetén ceased for fourteen years until resumed by Proyecto Maya Colonial. During this research hiatus, looters excavated several trenches into several buildings.

In 1994, Zacpetén was revisited by Proyecto Maya Colonial; the site map drawn in 1980 was checked for accuracy; and preliminary excavations were conducted by the author. Six test units were excavated in the plazas of the five largest groups at the site and a trench was placed on the northernmost portion of the peninsula where a defensive system is located.

Group A (Figure 7-1) rests on a high hill in the center of the peninsula and is the site's largest group. Five of the structures form a Petén variant of a Mayapán temple assemblage including a western facing temple (Str. 602) with a low platform (Str. 607a) in front of it and a rectangular altar (Str. 607B) at the end of this platform. An oratorio rests to the right of the temple (Str. 605). An open hall (Str. 606) lies at a right angle to the temple and oratorio. The raised shrine (Str. 601) rests on the south side of the plaza facing into the open hall. These buildings form a temple assemblage, but there are additional structures in the plaza. A small *sakbe* (Str. 603) divides the plaza in half and an open hall rests in the southwest corner of the group. An oratorio (Str. 614) facing south lies on the edge of a borrow pit (Op. 1000). No domestic structures were found in this group. The two test units in Group A revealed a substantial Middle Preclassic occupation followed by a hiatus until the Late to Terminal Classic period, at which time,

the group experienced a heavy renovation. The group continued to be used in the Early Postclassic period, but during the Late Postclassic, it was once again dramatically reconstructed (Rice et al. 1998: 224).

Group B lies in the northern part of the peninsula just south of the defensive system. Within it are two small pyramidal structures one on the east and the other on the west side of the plaza, which appear to form a version of a Late Classic twin-pyramid group, best known from the site of Tikal. Several other buildings were encountered in the group as were two stelae, one of which, Stela 1, was carved and very eroded. It depicted a standing elaborately dressed human figure holding a ceremonial bar and performing a scattering rite (Rice et al. 1998: 229). Stela 2 was uncarved and wider at the top than at the bottom and lay directly to the west of the eastern pyramid, as is typical of twin-pyramid groups (Jones 1969: 13-14). Late Postclassic censer sherds found on the surface of this group suggest its use continued beyond the Terminal Classic period. The test unit in Group B revealed only thin topsoil above bedrock with no diagnostic sherds (Rice et al. 1998: 224).

Group C (Figure 8-1) rests on a high hill in the southern portion of the peninsula and contains a second Petén variant of the temple assemblage first defined at Mayapán. This Late Postclassic group includes a temple (Str. 764) facing west toward a low platform (Str. 766A) with a rectangular altar (Str. 766B) at its end. To the right of the temple is a platform that contained a perishable oratorio (Str. 1002). At a right angle to the temple is an open hall (Str. 767) with a raised shrine (Str. 765) facing into it. These buildings form a temple assemblage and a low platform (Str. 1003) lies between the temple and hall. The test unit excavated in Group C encountered several superimposed

floors and Middle Preclassic, Terminal Classic, and Early Postclassic sherds (Rice et al. 1998: 224), but a deeply excavated burial pit jumbled the strata. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, later test units indicated the initial construction of the plaza of Group C occurred in the Terminal Classic period or later.

Group D is a residential group located on a low rise in the southwestern part of the peninsula. As mentioned, pigs have heavily disturbed this group, but it appears to contain at least three residential structures with associated buildings. The test unit in this group encountered only Late Postclassic diagnostics (Rice et al. 1998: 224).

Group E is located on a small hill in the eastern part of the site. Upon the hill is a residence with a plazuela. Surrounding this group at the base of the hill are several other domestic groups including one with an obviously elite residence. The test unit, which was placed at the base of the hill near the latter residence, revealed the initial construction of the patio in the Terminal Classic period, followed by an Early Postclassic, then a Late Postclassic construction (Rice et al. 1998: 224). As mentioned, excavations in 1980 revealed the portion of this group on the hill had an Early Classic construction phase.

A large defensive system, which was covered by extremely dense brush, was found on the northern end of the peninsula where is meets the mainland and north of Group B (Figure 1-3). The northernmost portion of the peninsula has a rather constricted access point. This access point was controlled by a canal, two parapets lining a ditch, a high stone wall, numerous low walls, and possibly a perishable wall. The system was constructed in the Terminal Classic period, but ceramics found in later reconstructions suggest it was maintained through the Early Postclassic until the Late Postclassic/ Contact period (Rice et al. 1996: 316; Pugh 1995). The ditches and parapets of the

defensive system seem more similar to defensive systems of Classic period southern sites such as Tikal and Becan, rather than Late Postclassic northern Yucatán sites such as Mayapán or Tulum (see Webster 1974: Figure 4). The location of the defensive system is reminiscent of that of Punta de Chimino (Demarest and Valdés 1995). Numerous small side-notched projectile points, knife/ lance fragments, and whole specimens suggest Zacpetén's defensive system was put to the test at least once (Pugh 1995). To the east of the defensive system were two parallel walls that may define a rudimentary causeway leading from Group B to the lakeshore.

The various test units indicate a moderate Middle to Late Preclassic occupation of the lake followed by near abandonment in the Early Classic period. The area was heavily reoccupied during the Late Classic period. In the Postclassic period, most areas around the lake were largely abandoned, but population increased dramatically on the peninsula (Rice et al. 1998: 222). The choice of the peninsula for settlement was likely the result of the natural protection of the peninsular neck, which was augmented by an extant defensive system. After the completion of the preliminary 1994 field season at Zacpetén, intense excavations were initiated in 1995 to investigate the Late Postclassic to Colonial period occupations of the site.

Summary

Late Postclassic architecture is characterized by C-shaped and tandem buildings with benches. The open hall with a C-shaped bench seems to occur at most large sites with the exception of a few on the east coast of Yucatán such as Tancah, Xelha, and Santa Rita. The east coast sites also differ as occupants continue to build vaulted structures while beam and mortar ceilings or thatched roofs were used elsewhere. The

masonry of this period is block and slab in reference to its use of uncut stones and no attempts to build with stones of matching sizes. The builders seem to have been aware of the lack of symmetry in the masonry because they covered it with thick plaster. The architecture of Mayapán follows these characteristics, but shares clear continuities with Terminal Classic period and earlier constructions.

The temple assemblages and basic ceremonial groups of Mayapán were repeated with precision and appear to have been exported to other sites in Campeche and central Petén. East Coast sites in Yucatán appear to have developed a new variant of ceremonial group or produced a faulty replica. The exportation of the Mayapán temple assemblage to central Petén seems to confirm origin myths of the Contact-period Kowoj, who claimed to have migrated from Mayapán. In the subsequent chapters, the architecture of Zacpetén, Petén, Guatemala, excavated by Proyecto Maya Colonial from 1995 until 1997, will be described and ritual activity areas defined. If the Kowoj did migrate from Mayapán, they would have brought not only the mental templates of ceremonial architecture with them, but also the ritual practices accompanying those sacred spaces.

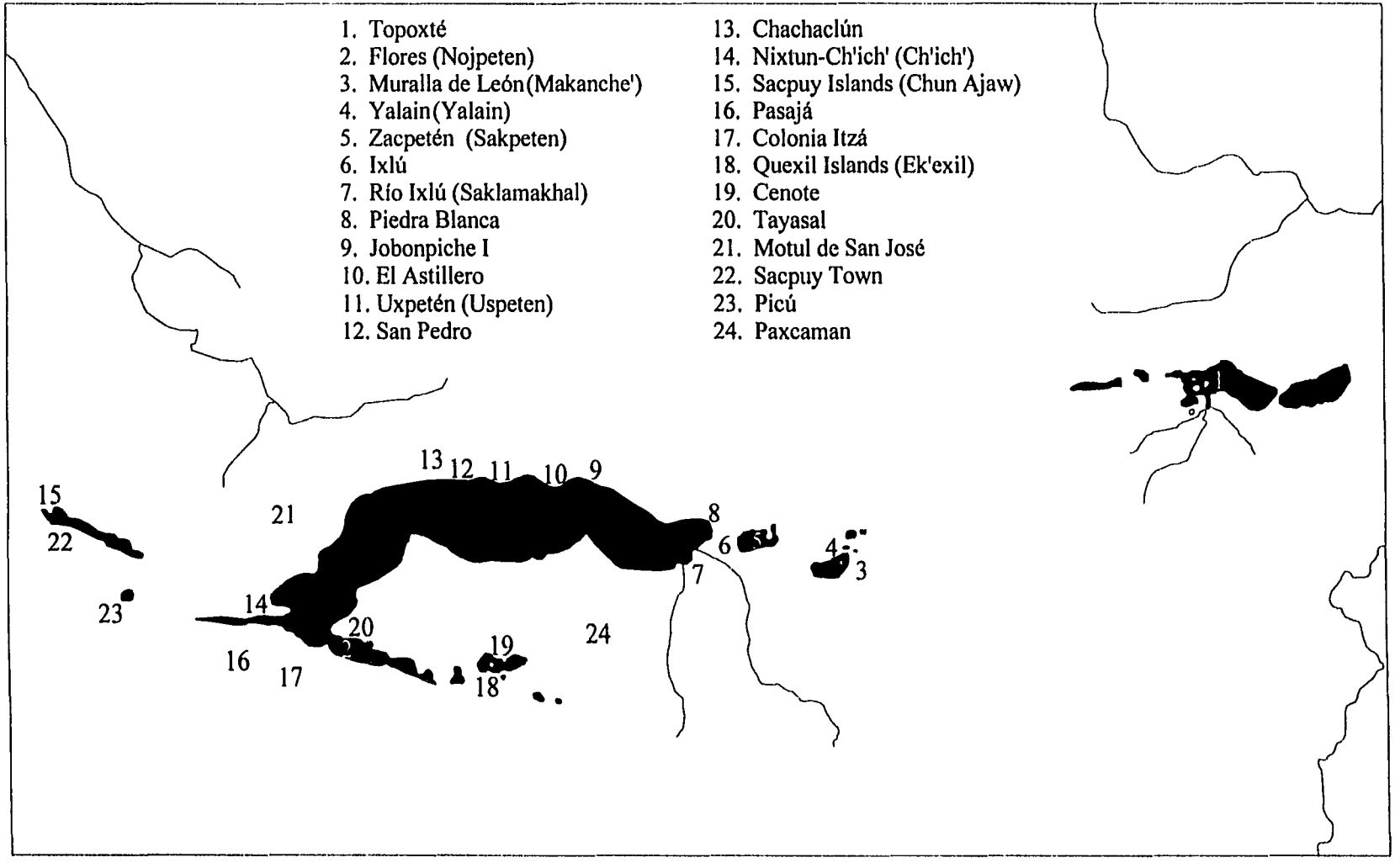


Figure 5-1. Terminal Classic and Postclassic Sites in the Petén Lakes Region (From Rice et al. 1996: Figura 4).

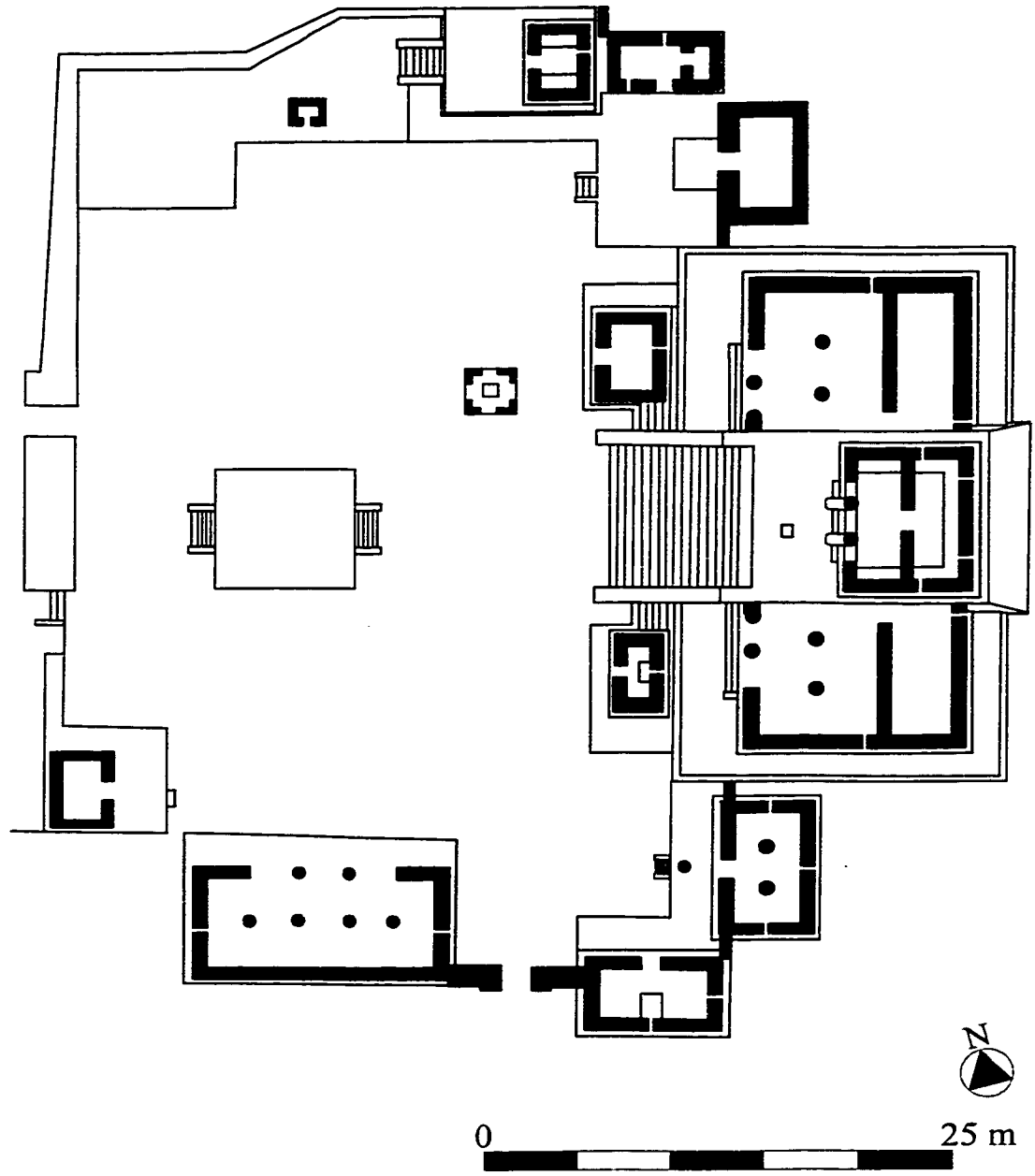


Figure 5-2. Tulum, Central Group (Redrawn From Lothrop 1924: Figs. 41, 54, and 60, Plate 25).

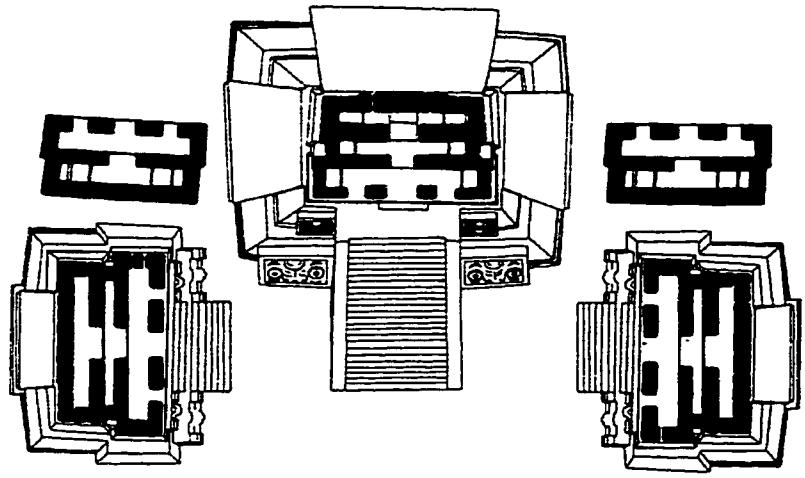


Figure 5-3. Triadic Temple Arrangement, Tikal (From Coe 1967: 42).

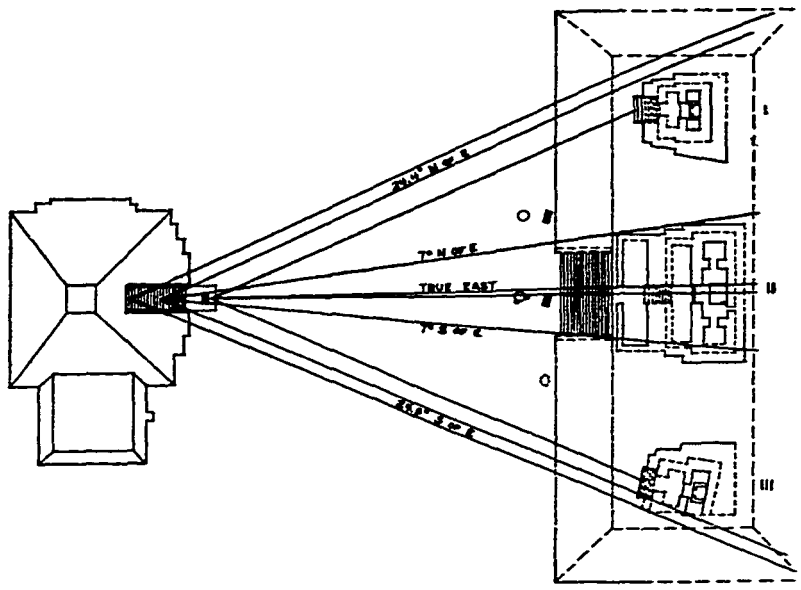


Figure 5-4. Uaxactun, Group E (From Ruppert 1940: Fig. 14).

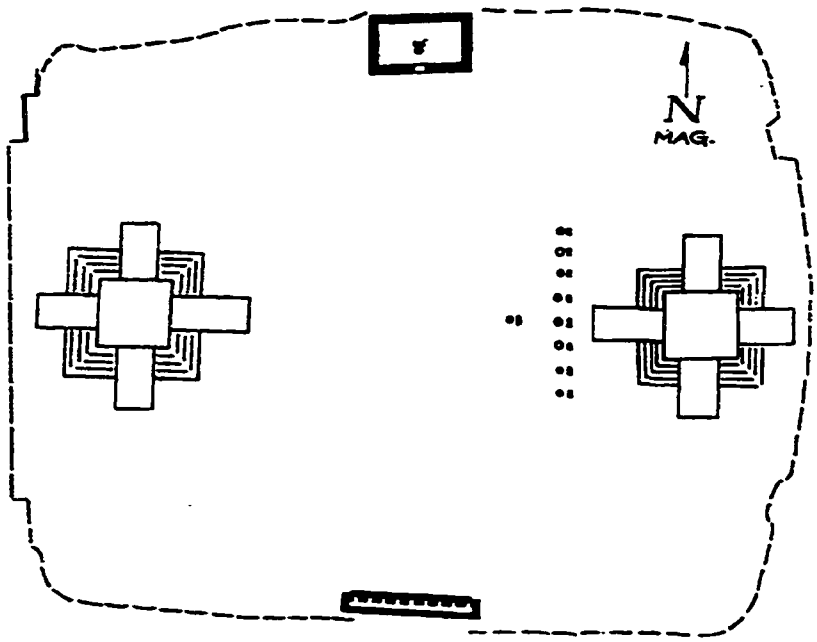


Figure 5-5. Idealized Twin-Pyramid Complex (From Guillemin 1968: 24).

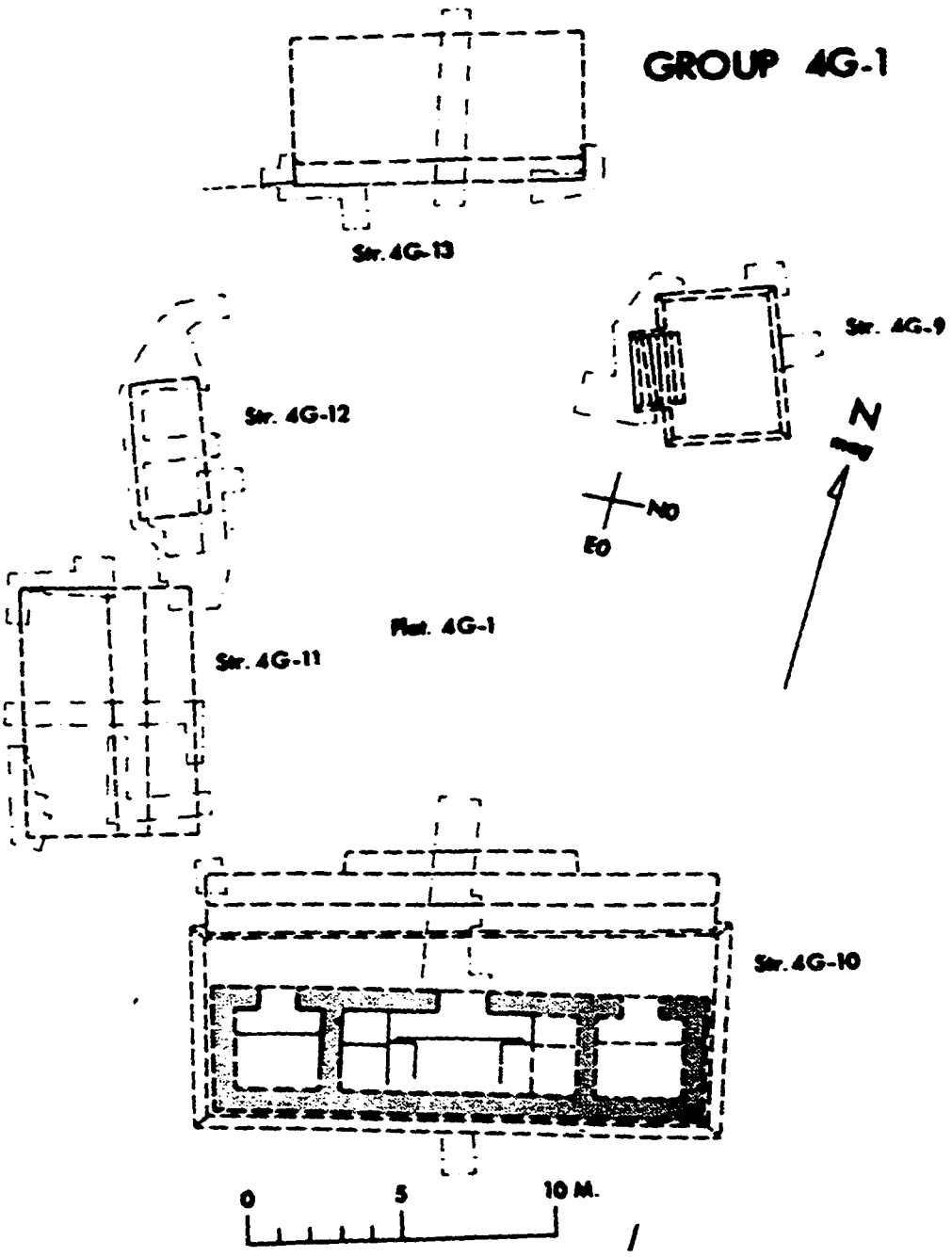


Figure 5-6. Tikal Plaza Plan 2 (From Becker 1983: Fig. 1).

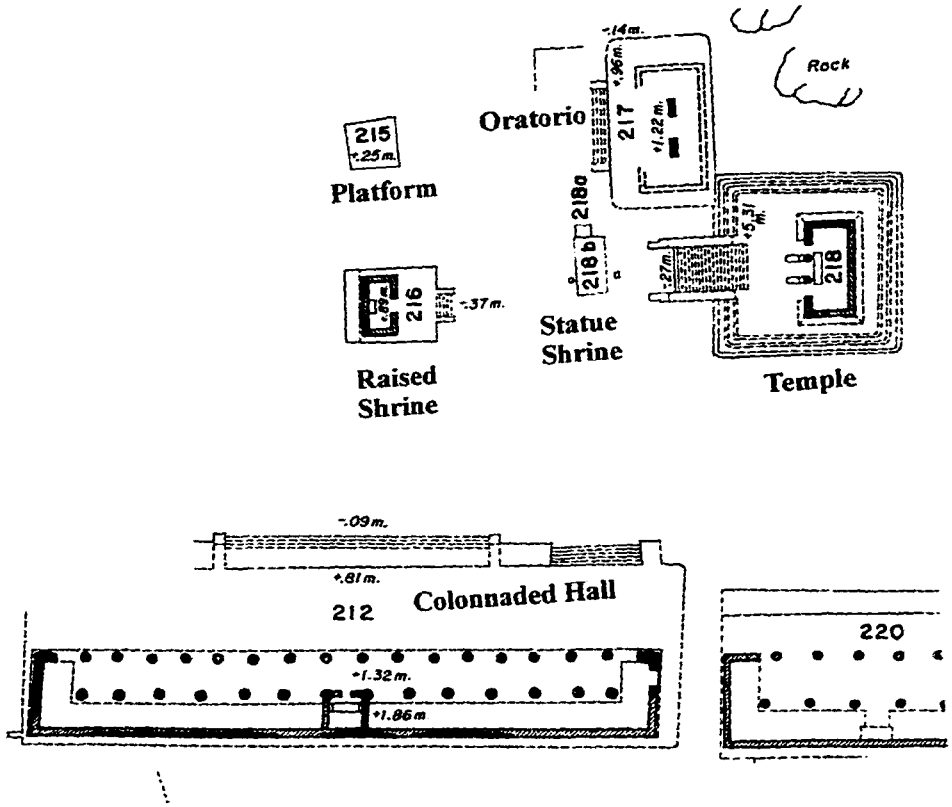


Figure 5-7. Mayapán Temple Assemblage, Group Q-218 (From Proskouriakoff 1962b).

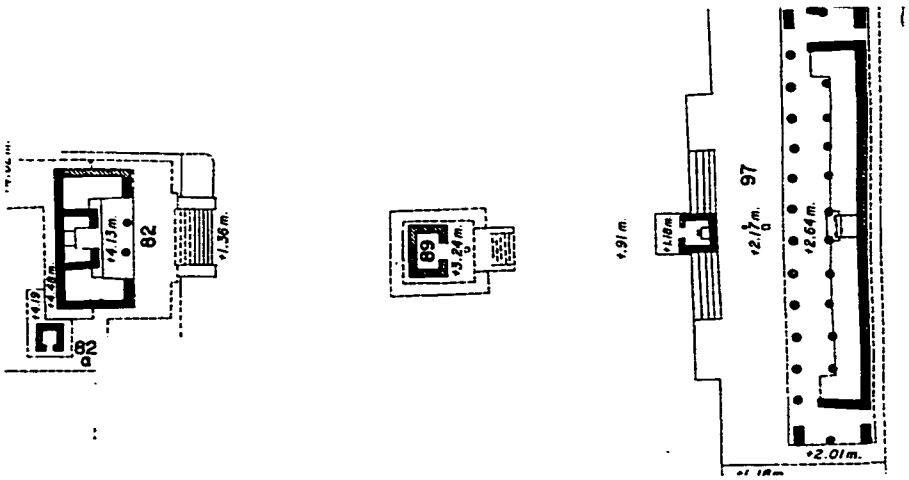


Figure 5-8. Mayapán Basic Ceremonial Group (From Proskouriakoff 1962b).

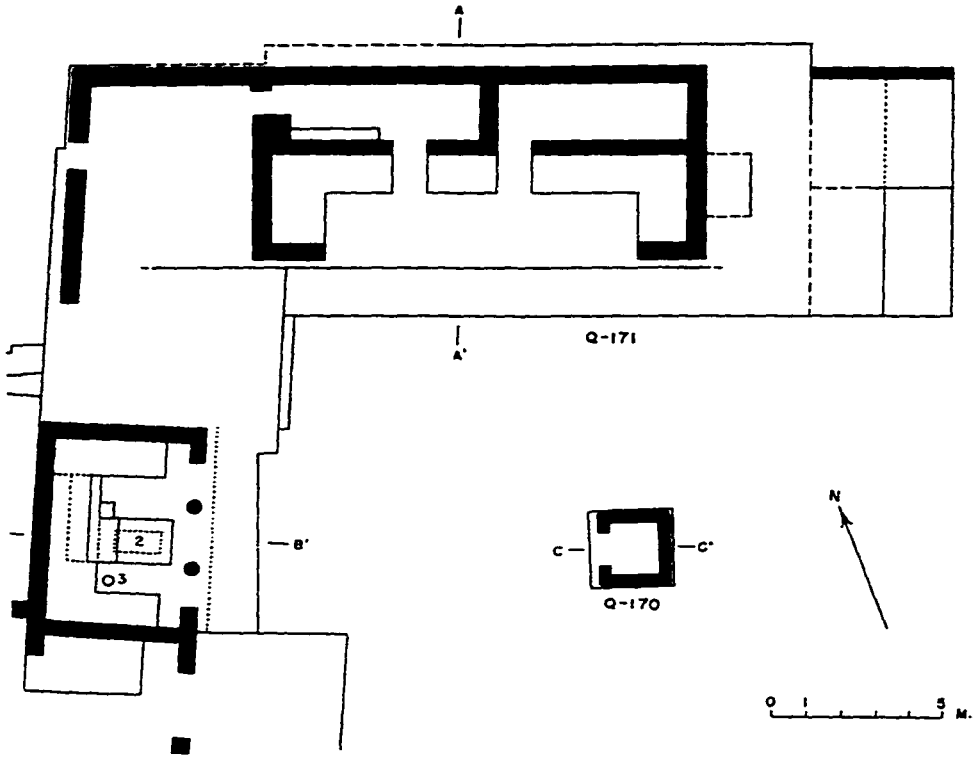


Figure 5-9. Mayapán Residential Group (From Smith 1962: Figure 4).

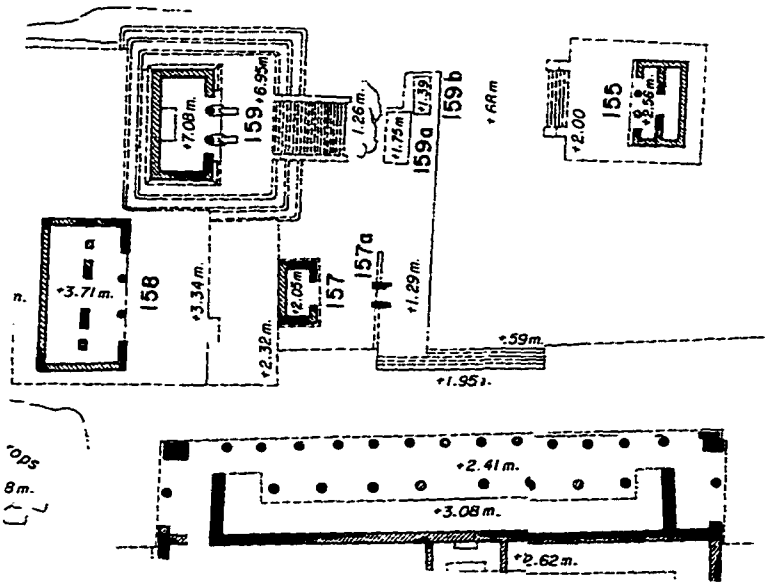


Figure 5-10. Group Q-159, Mayapán (From Proskouriakoff 1962b).

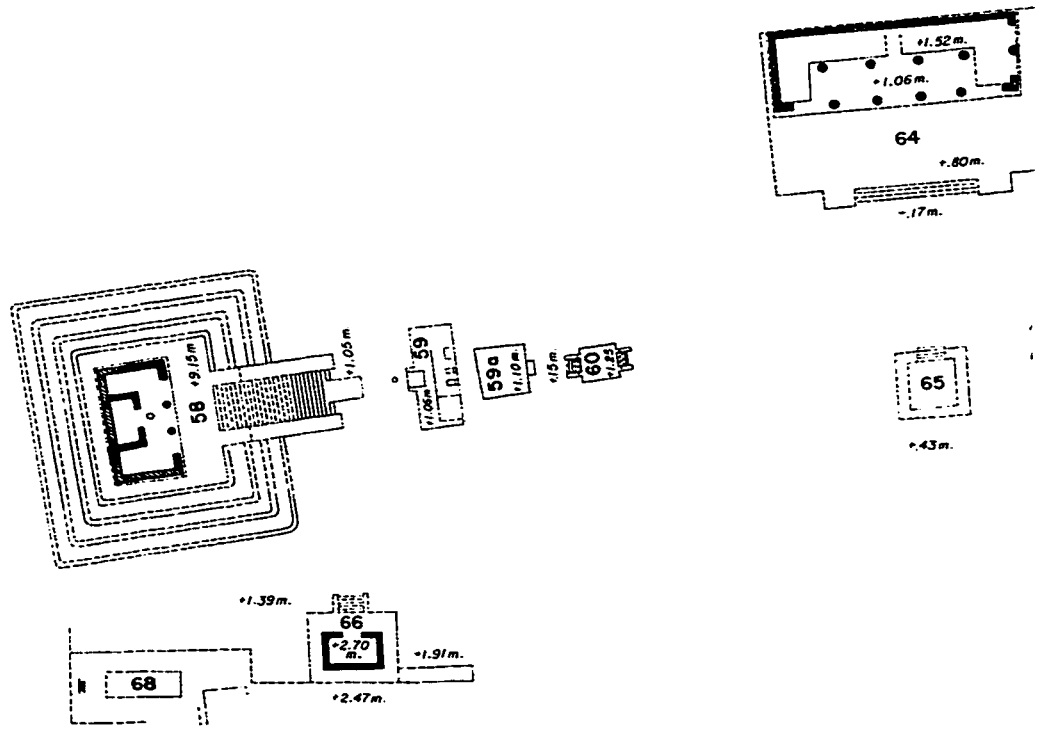


Figure 5-11. Group Q-58, Mayapán (From Proskouriakoff 1962b).

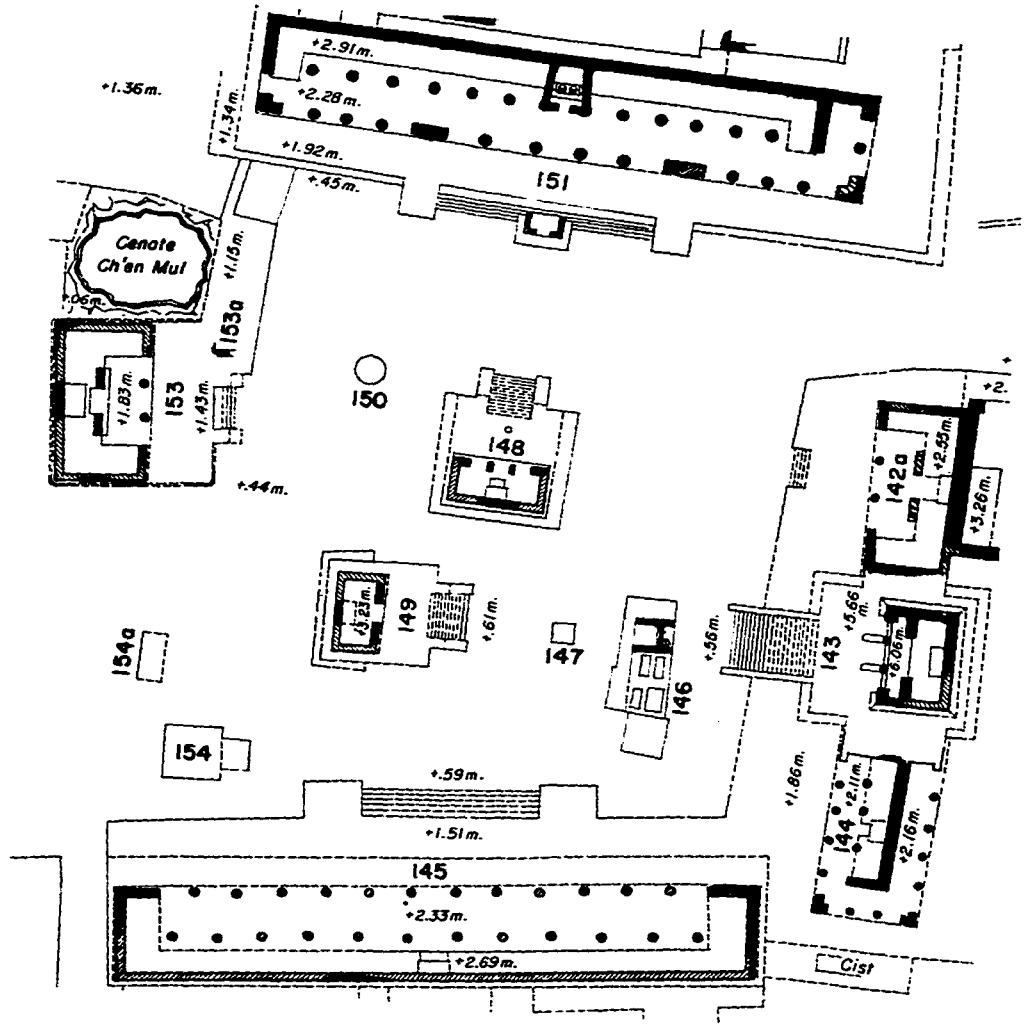


Figure 5-12. Ch'en Mul and Group Q-143 (From Proskouriakoff 1962b).

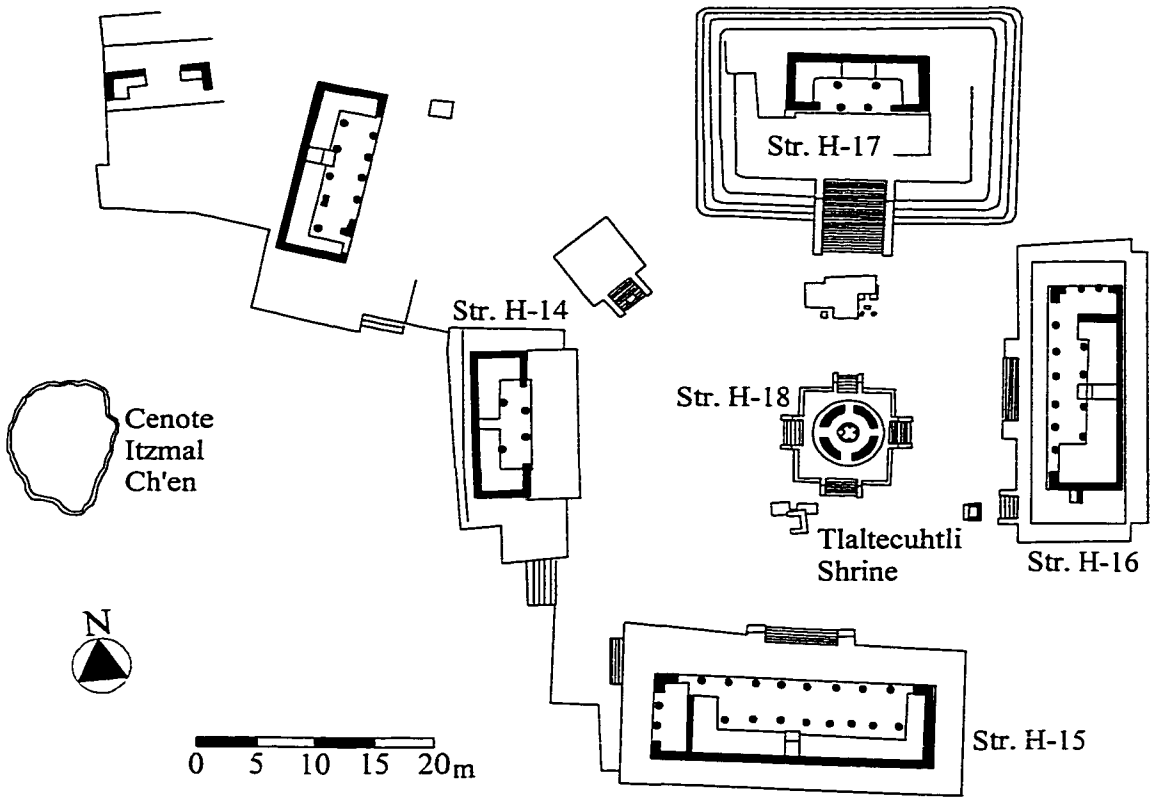


Figure 5-13. Itzmal Ch'en, Mayapán (Redrawn from Proskouriakoff 1962a: Figure 1).

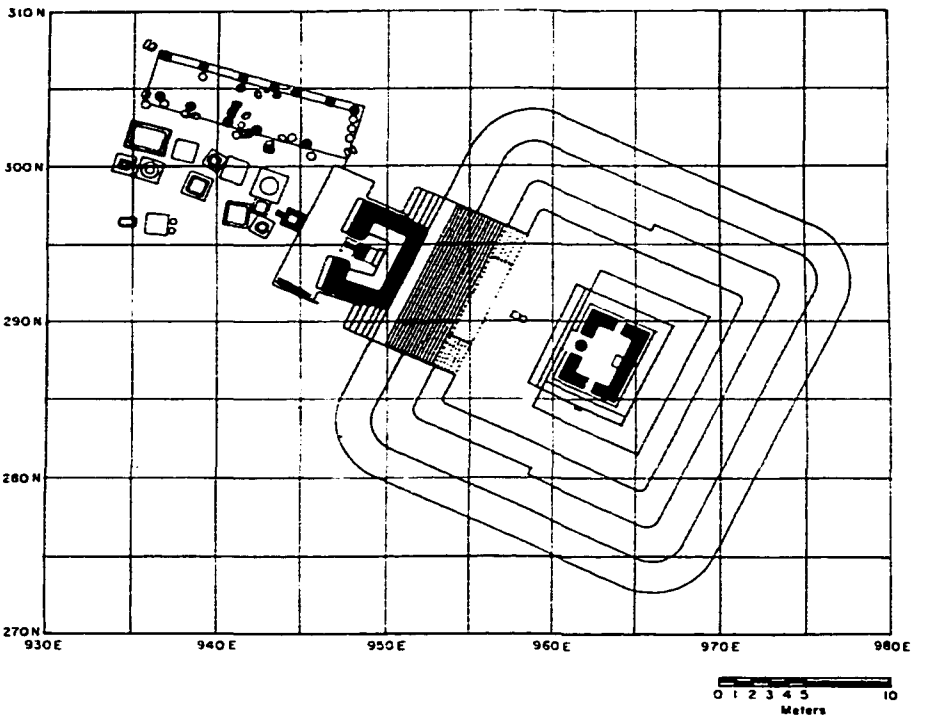


Figure 5-14. Las Pinturas Complex, Coba (From Folan 1983: Figure 5.6).

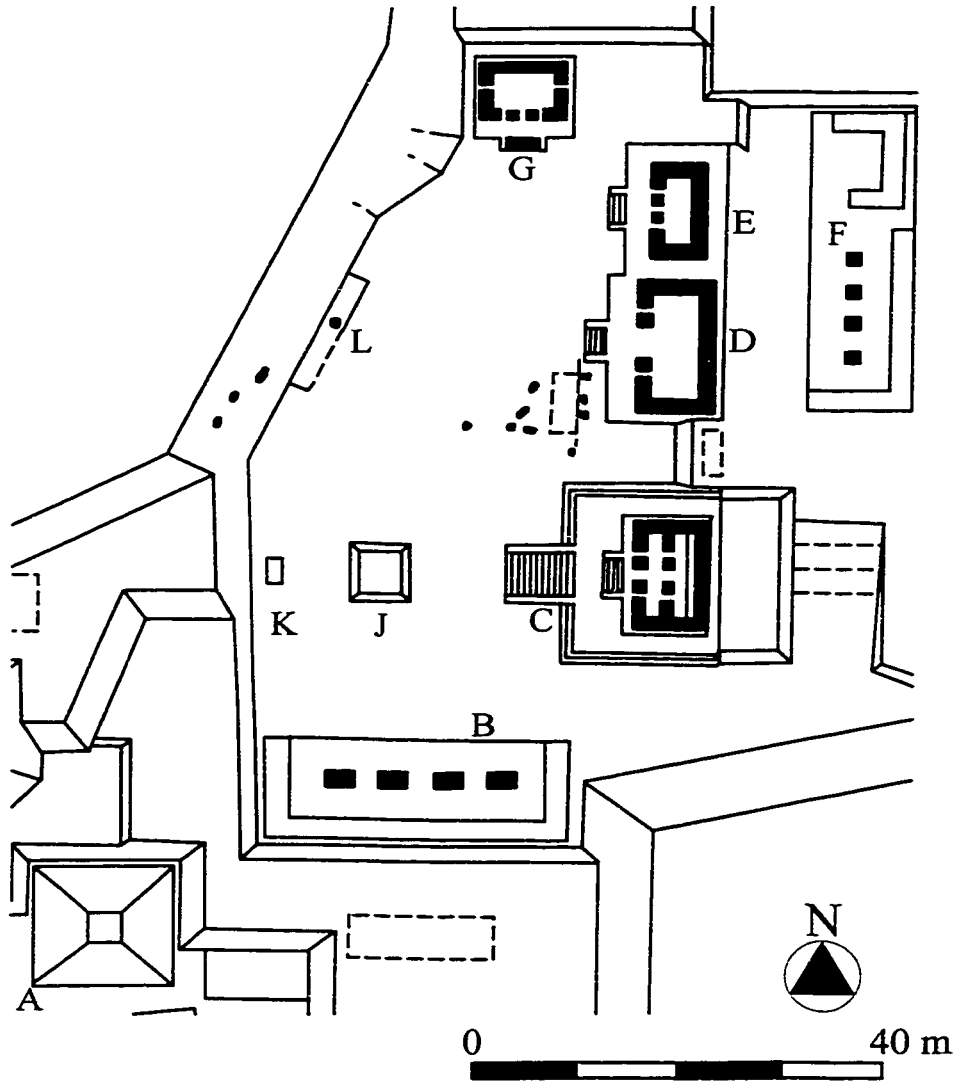


Figure 5-15. Topoxté Island, Central Group (Redrawn from Bullard 1970: Fig. 3).

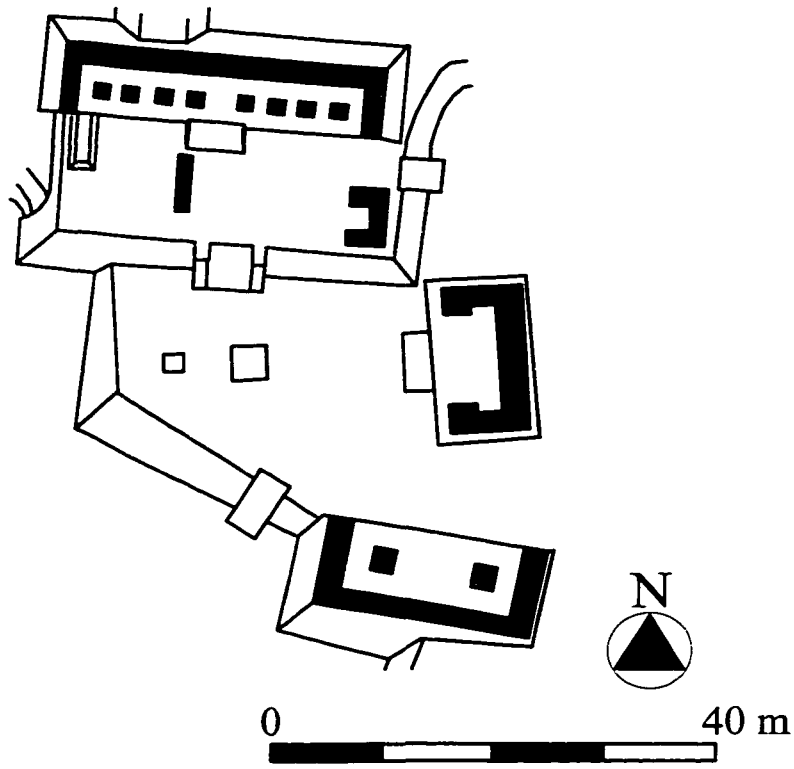


Figure 5-16. Paxte Island, Central Group (Redrawn from Rice and Rice 1985: Fig. 4).

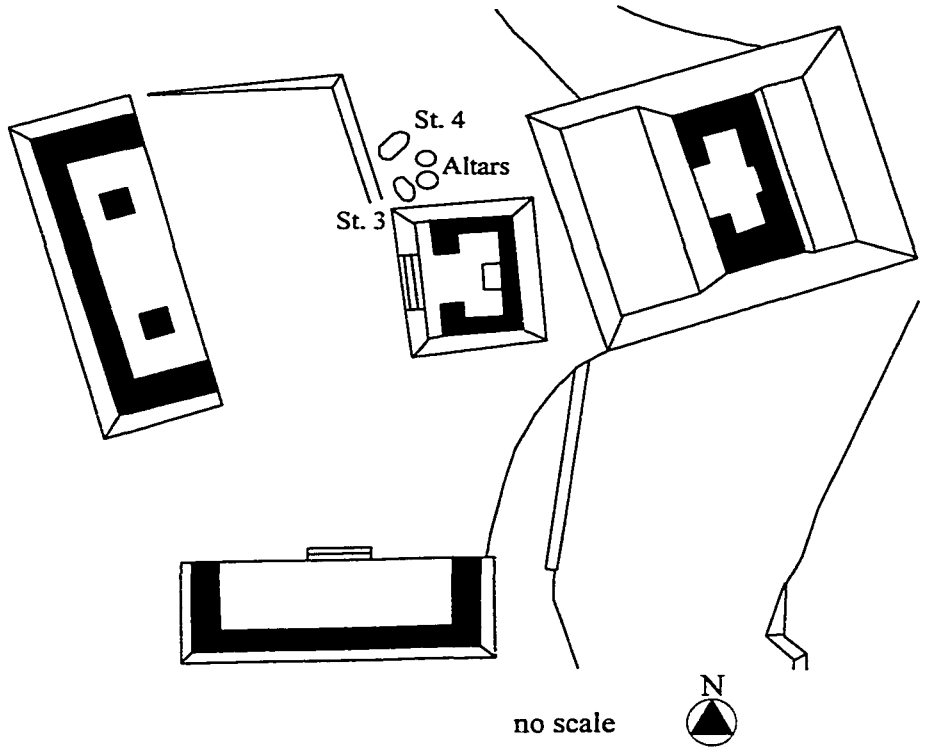


Figure 5-17. Cante Island, Central Group (Redrawn from Johnson 1985: Fig. 1).

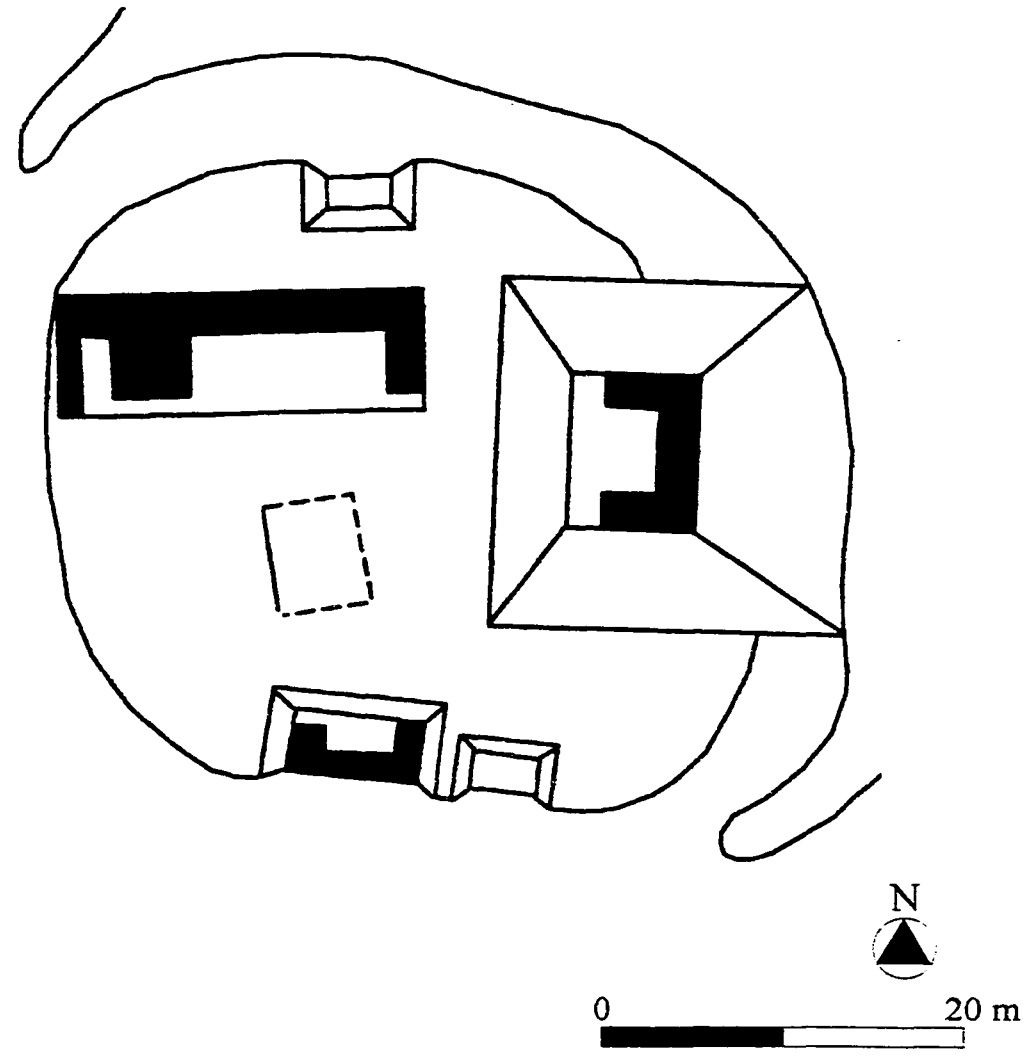


Figure 5-18. Muralla de Leon, Central Group (Redrawn from Rice and Rice 1985: Fig. 4).

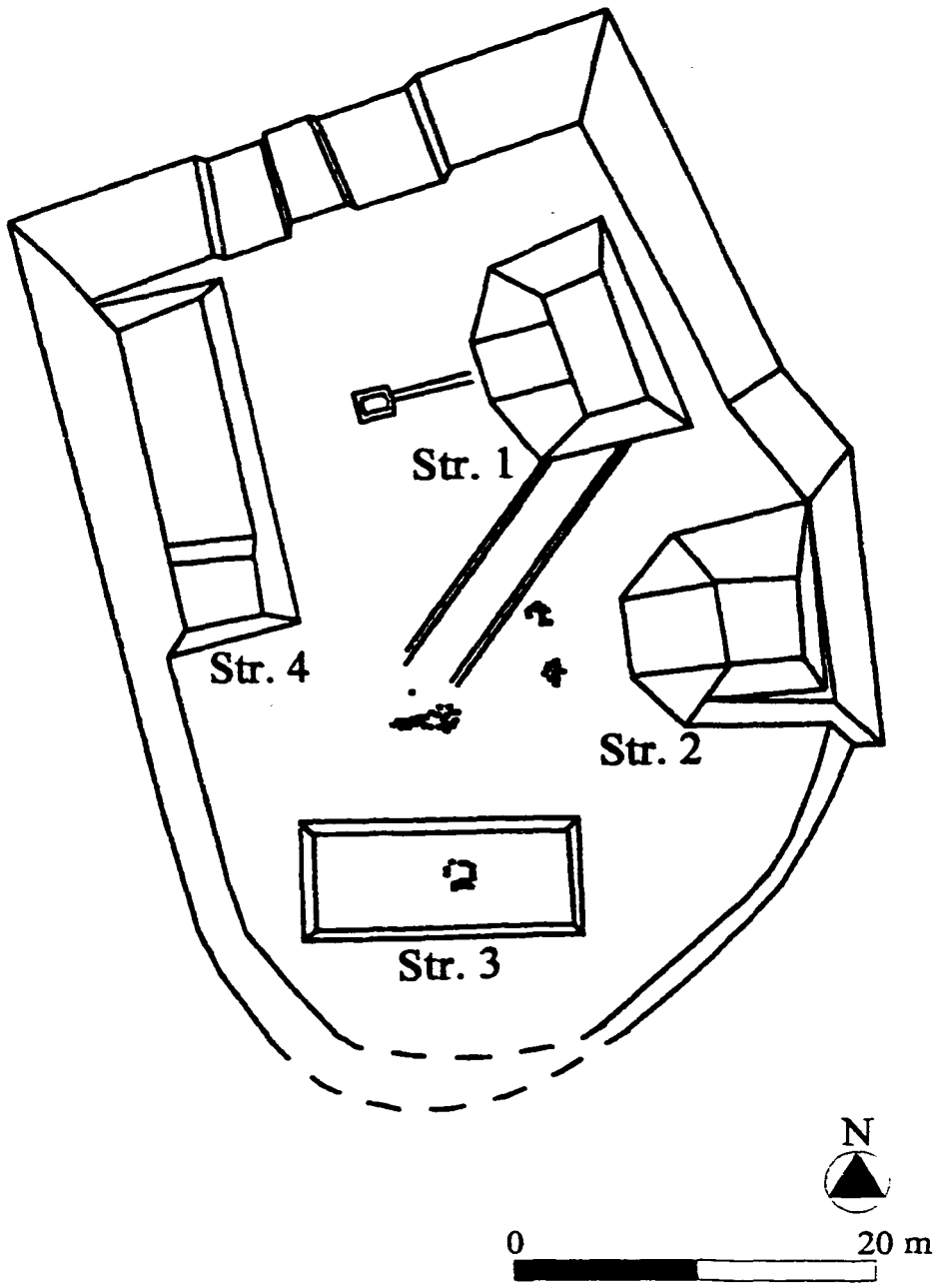


Figure 5-19 Tipu, Complex I (Redrawn from Kautz and Jones 1981: Plate 5).

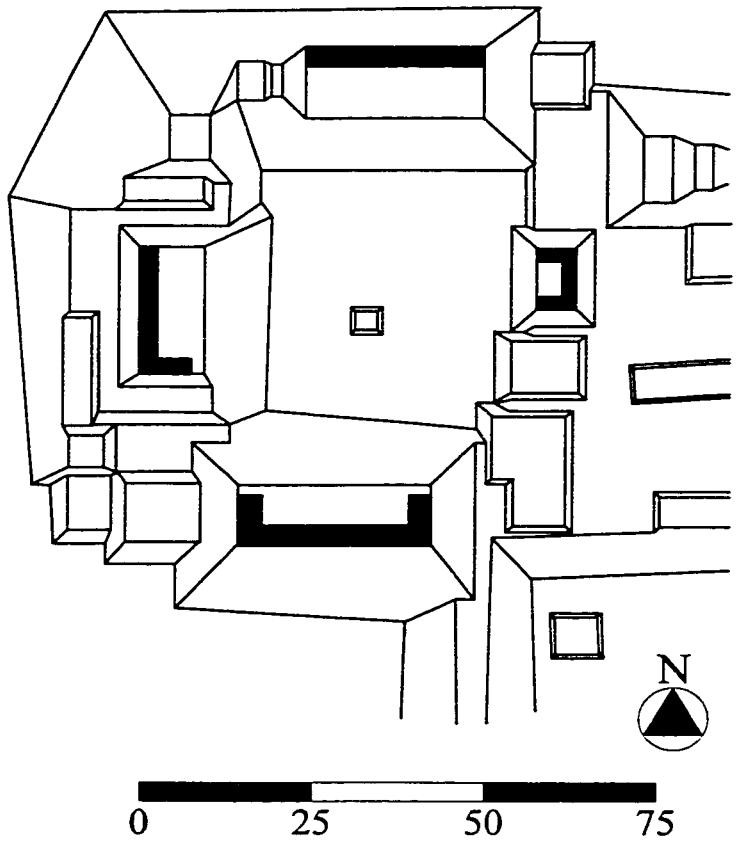


Figure 5-20 Ixlú, Group C.

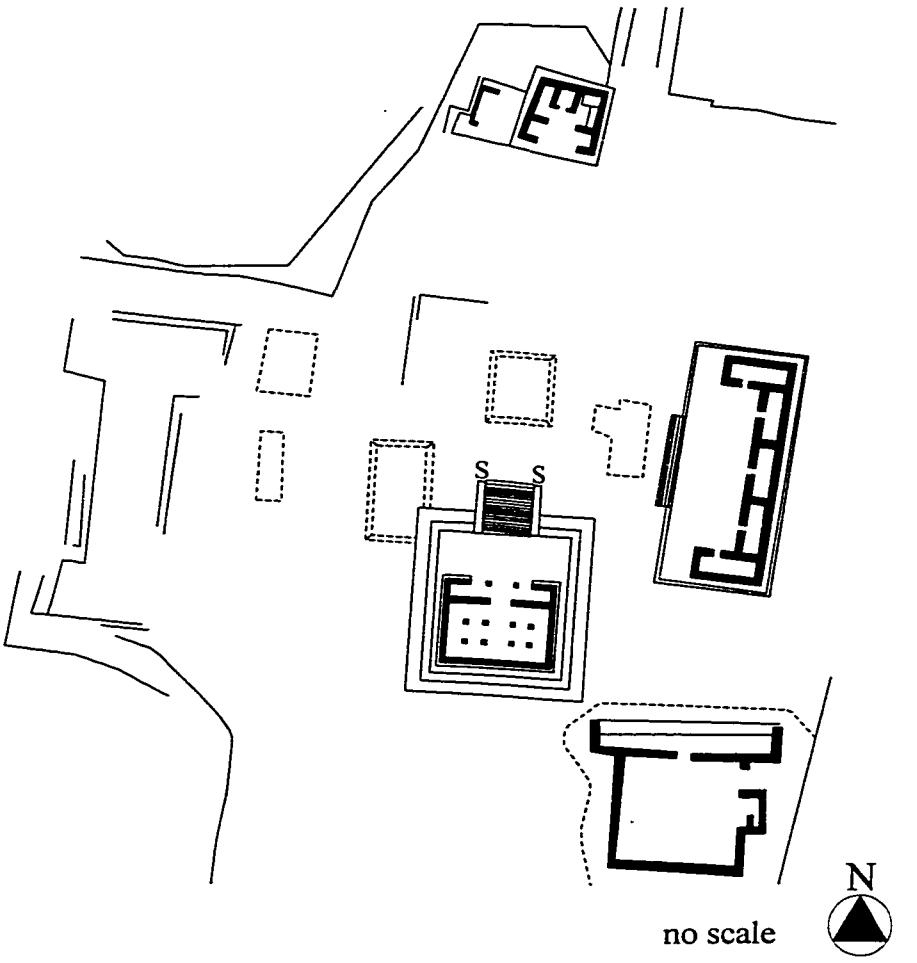


Figure 5-21 Platform Ho' Che, Chich'en Itza (Redrawn from Lincoln 1990).

CHAPTER 6: METHODOLOGY

The goal of the field and laboratory research of the present project was to illuminate the architectural and ritual practices at Zacpetén so that they could be compared with those discerned in earlier research efforts. Given that there are patterns in the form of buildings, it is expected that patterned behavior will also be evident in activity areas. The primary archaeological indicator of activity areas is artifact distributions, which reflect discard patterns (Rathje and Schiffer 1980: 116-119). However, the simple presence of a concentration of a given artifact type does not always indicate that the artifacts were used in that specific location, as tools are most often not simply dropped where they are used. Various processes produce the archaeological record and these can be generalized as primary and secondary refuse. Primary refuse is material that is deposited where it was used. Secondary refuse includes artifacts that are moved from the area where they were used and deposited in another area. The difference between primary and secondary refuse is critical because the interpretation of a buildings activities based upon the latter can result in a misinterpretation. For example, secondary refuse can be deposited in abandoned buildings or behind buildings other than where it was used. Objects can also be lost in areas other than where they were used.

Occasionally, archaeologists are fortunate and encounter materials abandoned as *de facto* refuse. Such material rests in situ in the location where they were used or stored (Rathje and Schiffer 1980: 119-120). *De facto* refuse can be quite revealing; however, it

is often the case that some items are left while others are taken. Abandoned items illuminate the activities associated with their use while obscuring those of taken items.

Excavation Methodology

The excavations at Zacpetén were carried out with the goal of reconstructing activity areas within buildings. Excavations took place primarily as surface operations, conducted with special concern toward spatial control of artifacts and their relationships to architecture. Architectural characteristics of all buildings are presented in Table 6-1.

Since the position of artifacts was the quality sought from the archaeological record, the most important aspect of the methodology was the excavation grid. In order to assure the accuracy of the grid, a transit was used to lay several transects in each group from which the rest of the grid was constructed. The remaining grid was constructed through triangulation and measurement between points. In areas in which the latter method produced imprecise results, such as those with extreme slope, the transit method was used for the entire grid. The grid resolution was 1 x 1 m. Vertical control was established through an arbitrary vertical datum plane. Several datum stakes on each building were tied into the datum plane with the transit, thereby allowing accurate and comparable elevation measures.

In total, 4,685 1 x 1 m units were excavated in the 1995 and 1996 field season. Excavations were conducted with trowels and small hand picks. Larger tools were not used because in situ deposits were often quite shallow (<15 cm). Deposits usually lay under approximately 20 cm of soil unless near walls, in which case overburden could be up to 50 cm deep. Materials were removed and bagged in 1 x 1 m horizontal units and according to cultural and natural strata. In general, a humus layer and a collapse layer

rested above Late Postclassic and Contact period floors and walls. All soil was screened through 1/8" hardware cloth. Excavations in previous years revealed an unacceptable number of tiny, yet important artifacts, such as divination crystals, mosaic mirror pieces, and smaller side-notched projectile points, would be lost with larger screen sizes. Artifacts lying directly upon floors, benches, and other surfaces were drawn in situ.

In addition to discard patterns and in situ artifacts, activities are also indicated by special deposits such as burials and caches. In order to search for such activities and to record construction histories, several 1 x 1 m units were excavated below the floor to bedrock in most cases. If an excavation was over 1 to 1.5 m deep because of a high platform and/or numerous construction phases, a single unit might be excavated to bedrock and several other squares to a depth of 50 cm. In excavations over 2 m deep, the excavation unit size was increased to 2 x 2 m, but was stepped to a 1 x 2 m unit at a depth of 2 to 2.5 m below surface to insure safety.

One of the most important tasks was the recording of architectural plans and profiles. Field drawings were composed at a scale of 1:10, which was at times somewhat encumbering and time consuming; however, the data produced were well worth the time and effort. In architectural clearings, all exposed surfaces were drawn, while in test units two profile were sketched. Several looters trenches were found at Zacpetén. The walls of these trenches were cleaned and the stratigraphy recorded. A few trenches extended into tunnels, but the latter were not investigated. All trenches and tunnels were filled and while artifacts were collected, the soil from looters' excavations was not screened.

As part of recording the architecture at Zacpetén, the masonry was classified by material, and form. Stones whose greatest dimension is less than 15 cm were referred to

as small stones. Medium-sized stones are between 15 and 40 cm long, large stones between 40 and 75 cm long, and very large stones were greater than 75 cm long.

The shapes of stones and the manner in which stones are set into a wall are important because some masonry strategies are better able to deal with loads and lateral forces. In addition, varying placements appear differently and are, therefore, aesthetically different. Pebbles are stones smaller than 8 cm long that have rounded edges. Gravel is similarly small stone with sharp edges. Stones unmodified or simply broken to approach a desired shape are called rubble. Stones shaped so they are well squared and fit tightly together with other such stones are called cut-stone. A great deal of variation was missed in the categories "rubble" and "cut-stone" as stones are often squared, but often not to the point that they fit together snugly. These are referred to as squared rubble.

Loten and Pendergast (1984: 8) provide terminology based upon how a given stone is set in a wall relative to its shape. Facing stones with the roughly equivalent height and depth are called blocks. Stones laid flat with the height of the exposed edges being less than half the length of the depth of the face are called slab facings. Similarly shaped stones placed so the thinnest dimension composes the depth are called veneer or vertical slab facings. Another distinction in masonry made by Loten and Pendergast (1984: 8) is between hard and soft limestone facing. Hard limestone facing is composed of limestone that is difficult to cut or break and when it is worked, it tends to be broken, battered, or chipped. Soft limestone is easy to work and is often cut.

Ching (1995: 158) further classified masonry in regards to how the stones of a wall were placed in relation to one another. Rubble walls that are not constructed in continuous courses are called random rubble walls. Those comprised of rubble set in

rough courses are called coursed rubble walls. A squared rubble wall is composed of crudely coursed squared rubble. At Zacpetén, Late Classic period masonry tends to be composed of coursed cut-stone and Late Postclassic/ Contact period of various configurations of rubble. However, stone robbing during the latter period resulted in cut-stones being placed in rubble walls.

Plans

The primary data discussed in the present work are the various plans of buildings and artifact distributions. Each building includes two plans, one of the masonry and plaster surfaces, and the other a line drawing. The line drawings are included as interpretations of the masonry plans and to provide a simplified background for artifact distribution contours.

While more than 600 artifact distribution maps were produced, only a fraction are included in this dissertation. Two types of artifact distribution maps were produced: point maps and contour maps. The point maps are not piece plots; each point was placed in the center of a given unit because symbols are a quarter to half the size of the depicted units. These plans combine distributions of artifacts with low frequencies in order to maximize the amount of data per map. Contour maps are used to represent artifact distributions with counts higher than 10 to 15 artifacts. Both point and contour maps of artifact distributions were overlaid onto the line drawing of each building.

Prior to producing several hundred contour maps of artifact distributions, test maps were made to determine the best mapping strategy. In the end, raw artifact counts by 1 x 1 m unit, which translates to counts per m^2, were determined to be the best route for the present project. An alternative was to weigh artifact counts to include soil depth

(m^3). This procedure was not used because it assumes that artifact counts are a function of soil depth. Units near walls inside buildings often had the highest number of in situ artifacts and they also had the deepest soil because they included wall collapse; however, the in situ artifacts lay beneath the collapse and their frequency was, therefore, not related to its mass. Artifacts of critical interest to the present study, such as Late Postclassic censer sherds, offering cups, stone beads, human mandibles, stingray spines, quartz crystals, red-slipped drum sherds, etc., were rarely if ever included in collapsed fill. Such fill generally included sparse lithics, bone, and eroded sherds. Experimentation revealed that the use of m^3 simply lowers the contrast in distribution contours and once applied, the researcher no longer has a choice as to whether or not artifacts were included in fill, as contingency has already been assumed. In this case, raw data are preferable because one need only look at the distribution map to discern artifact counts and researchers can decide for themselves whether or not artifact counts seem to be correlated with soil depth.

Kriging was used as the gridding method to produce the distribution maps contained in this dissertation because it searches for trends in data (Golden Software, Inc. 1996). However, in order to minimize the statistical prediction of values in the interpolation, all unexcavated units and units with missing data were set to zero. It is not expected that Kriging perfectly represents true artifact distributions because no gridding method can account for the various processes involved in the deposition of artifacts. The method is simply used to illustrate artifact concentrations or lack thereof and for this purpose, it performed perfectly. Most patterns had already been identified in field notes.

Laboratory Methods

Each bag of artifacts was washed, and then sorted. In my analysis of artifacts, censer sherds were removed from bags and all other artifacts sorted and counted by the categories listed below. Much of the analysis presented in the present work was a "rough sort" meaning that it was a sorting into general categories rather than specific types. The exception to the rule of general categories was ceramic censer sherds, as these were sorted into the full range of type-variety categories (though not all are presented here). Following the artifact sorting, the data were analyzed with computer-mapping software, which produced plans of artifact distribution patterns.

Dr. Prudence Rice and I then sorted the censer sherds and Leslie Cecil later conducted a detailed study of non-censer ceramics. The latter analysis will not be presented in detail here; however, dates of test unit strata were derived from these data. For the most part, discussions of human bones are derived from my own analysis. Bill Duncan has analyzed some of the human remains recovered at Zacpetén and is cited when his findings are mentioned. Students at *Centro Universitario de Petén* (CUDEP) have conducted some analyses, but their results will not be presented here. Detailed lithic and faunal analyses have not yet been conducted.

Once counts of each artifact type were recorded for each provenience, the data were entered into a computer spread sheet and checked for errors, which involved a considerable amount of time. Once clean, the data were used to construct artifact distribution maps in Surfer Surface Mapping System, described above.

Artifact Categories

The artifacts at Zacpetén were classified into 96 different categories and an "Other" category allowed the recording of additional unique items. The present section defines all artifact categories of the sort, though some, such as bead types and censers are included together to avoid redundant text. Emphasis is placed on possible ritual uses of objects since ritual is the focus of the present dissertation. Many objects are used in both mundane and ritual contexts, while others are limited to the former. In the case of the former, the ritual uses of typically mundane objects were likely linked to their functions in the mundane world.

Bark Beaters. Bark beaters are small thick slabs, oval in outline, and composed of limestone or granite. They have numerous parallel groves on one side and often other patterns on the other (Rice 1987: 227-228). They were hafted and are believed to have been used to "beat bark" into cloth or paper. The modern Lacandon beat bark with grooved wooden mallets and use the bark cloth to make head bands for god pots and ritual participants (McGee 1991: 45). These headbands were often painted red (Tozzer 1907: 31). Bark paper strips were apparently used by the Classic period Maya to collect drops of blood for offerings (Schele and Miller 1986: 181). Bark paper was also used to make codices (Landa 1941: 28-29; Coe 1973: 150).

Beads. Beads were obviously decorative, but they are commonly found in caches and in situ in sacred places such as temples. Beads were made in a variety of forms and materials. They had symbolic value that likely differed according to the material from which they were constructed and their form. Many were made from human and animal

teeth, particularly the canine in the case of the latter, or bone. Most beads were composed of stone and the color of the stone was likely the strongest signifier. In the artifact sort, beads were categorized simply by color, but some of the red and white colored "stone" may have actually been polished shell. They were most commonly composed of greenstone, followed by red/pink stone, white stone, and finally black stone (serpentine). The fifth major Maya color, yellow, is absent. This follows Colonial descriptions testifying to the importance of green and red stones. During droughts, red and green stones were offered to the deity *Itzam Na* (Tozzer 1941: 146). Red stone beads worn by young woman during rites of passage symbolized virginity and were also used as a medium of exchange (Tozzer 1941: 106 and 117). Young boys wore a white bead in their hair (Landa 1941: 102). Beads were used as offerings to "idols" (i.e., effigy censers) during rituals such as *Wayeb* rites (Landa 1941: 166), but they had other uses as well. Among the modern Lacandon, newly made god pots are struck with red, black, and blue/green beads to awaken them (Davis 1978: 77). It is likely that the bead "offerings" described by the Colonial Spaniards were also awakening rites.

Cache Vessels. Cache vessels were usually small, lidded, globular bowls with two loop handles on the sides and one handle on the lid. They generally held an assortment of colored stone beads, various greenstone artifacts, copper foil, and shell. These vessels and their contents were used to "awaken" or ensoul the building in which they were placed (Stuart 1998: 402).

Censers. Censers are most often discussed here as image or non-image censers, though they will occasionally by mentioned by specific types. Image censers are pedestal-based

vases or urns with attached human, animal, human-animal or animal-animal effigies (Rice 1999: 32). The vast majority of the image censers at Zacpetén include standing human or human-animal (i.e., humans with fangs) combinations representing specific deities. When male, the figure usually wears a tunic with bells on the bottom, braided breastplate, loincloth, high back sandals, large earplugs and ankle and wrists bracelets with bells, and an animal headdress. The female god pots are the same, but wear a *huipil* and have no braided breastplate. All god pots are modeled to represent specific deities, although their identities are not always known. In some cases, faces were made from molds made of ceramic. Two such molds were recovered at Zacpetén. Some of the effigies bear traces of white, red, black, and blue paint. These image censers come in two major sub-categories: large image censers that stand approximately 35 cm tall and small effigy censers standing about 15 cm tall.

Image censers at Zacpetén are believed to have functioned similarly to those still utilized by the Northern Lacandon Maya to communicate with their deities. As explained in detail below, these items were consecrated nexuses between the material world and other cosmic planes. Image censers did not immediately become inert when they were "retired" from service. Apparently, they still had residual power. The fear of image censers continued into this century. For example at Chan Kom, image censers were believed to be malevolent spirits (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 120). One way these powerful objects may have been discarded, minimizing contamination and perhaps subverting the danger into useful energy is through caching of censer parts, especially the heads. This practice was present at Zaculeu in the western Guatemalan highlands

(Woodbury and Trik 1953: 114) and at Zacpetén in Str. 766. Among the Northern Lacandon, "dead" censers were placed in caves (Tozzer 1907: 115).

Several types of image censers are found at Zacpetén, the most common of which is Patojo Modeled. Patojo Modeled censers are large and have a coarse orangey-brown paste (Rice 1987: 184-188). Patojo Modeled can be divided into two varieties, Patojo and Moza, which are lighter and darker, respectively, in surface and paste color. Both types were made during the Late Postclassic through early Colonial periods at Zacpetén. Another large censer type, Pitufo Modeled, has a fine gray snail-inclusion paste (Rice 1998: personal comm.). These sherds occur in low frequency relative to Patojo Modeled and none were found as primary refuse at Zacpetén. Chaman Modeled censers are red-slipped with gray snail-inclusion paste. Another moderately large censer type is Ídolos Modeled, which was found in very low frequencies and never in primary refuse deposits at Zacpetén. These censers are composed of a fine cream-colored paste, and date to the Late Postclassic and Contact periods (Rice 1987: 195). The smaller censer type at Zacpetén is Kulut Modeled, which is found in low frequencies relative to Patojo Modeled, but is often found as complete vessels in primary deposits. This type is usually red-slipped, but is made of the paste of Uapake Unslipped ware. This ware is "yellowish-red to brown" and the surface tends to be poorly smoothed with numerous pockmarks (Rice 1987: 179-180). Late and Terminal Classic period image censer sherds were also encountered at the site, but will not be specifically described here.

Non-image censers are found in various forms including hourglass, ladle, and bowl shaped censers (Rice 1999: 32). In Late Postclassic deposits at Zacpetén, the latter type is rare, ladle censers very uncommon, and hourglass censers relatively common.

Hourglass censers vary in size, but are much smaller than the larger effigy censer vases and often have spike or button appliqués and/or figure impressions. Such censers are depicted in the Dresden Codex as containing offerings of incense to various deities (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 60-66). In ritual contexts at Zacpetén, hourglass censers were likely used to present offerings such as copal to deities and ancestors. In modern Chiapas, it was suggested that spiked non-image censers could have had multiple uses including burning incense, holding flowers, and containing blood offerings (Deal 1988: 86). Among the Lacandon Maya, ladle censers are a singular form representing the mother of the god pots used only during new god pot rites (Tozzer 1907: 110). Elsewhere in Mesoamerica, they also may have been used to present hand-held offerings as depicted in Mixtec codices (Codex Selden 1964: 9).

Non-image censers are generally discussed as a group here, but occasionally specific types will be mentioned. La Justa and Extranjeras Composite censer sherds are combined into one group as they are very difficult to distinguish because they are both composed of Pozo paste. This coarse, gray to light brown paste type extends from the Early Postclassic to the Colonial period (Rice 1987: 170-171). La Justa/ Extranjeras Composite makes up the majority of non-image censer sherds at the site. Gotas Composite censers have a reddish-brown paste and have spike or figure (such as bird) appliqués and/ or impressions (Rice 1987: 183). Mumúl Composite censers were used from the Early to Late Postclassic and are composed of two pastes: one is similar to that of Patojo Modeled censers; the other is cream colored (Rice 1987: 192). Gotas and Mumúl Composite sherds are found in the same frequency at Zacpetén and together they match the frequency of La Justa/ Extranjeras Composite sherds. Fijate Composite

censers are part of a newly defined group with brick red surfaces and dark gray cores and is the least frequent non-image censer type at Zacpetén.

Ceramics. Ceramics in the miscellaneous category are primarily worn sherds included in fill, but also include the various vessel types used in everyday life at Zacpetén. Slipped tripod plates or dishes, which may have been used in ritual practices (see Offering Plates, below), were often not distinguished, as these objects are the subjects of another dissertation.

Copper. Copper was found in three forms at Zacpetén: foil, bells, and a hatchet head. At nearby Topoxté, tweezers were found as well. Late Postclassic copper alloy artifacts at Lamanai were primarily from West México (Hosler 1994: 211), and we assume those at Zacpetén were from the same source. Copper artifacts primarily fulfilled ritual or ornamental functions. Each of the forms had various significances, but copper was associated with creation as in West Mexican myth, the first humans were partially composed of metal (Hosler 1994: 227). Among the Tarascans, bells produced sacred sounds; tweezers were emblems of priests and were used to remove body and facial hair; and axes were symbols of power (Hosler 1994: 158, 192, and 233-243). The significance of copper artifacts among the Maya is not clear.

Cups. Cups used for ceremonial drinking were mentioned as objects used in calendric rituals, however, the exact form of the cups was not described (Landa 1941: 147; Chase 1985: 121). At Zacpetén, they were roughly cylindrical in form or occasionally miniature pedestal vases. Ceramic cups were encountered with censers at Santa Rita Corozal, which also appear to have been associated with calendric rituals (Chase 1985: 121).

Ceremonial drink is also offered to Lacandon god pots, but the cups used are perishable and vary according to the drink (Davis 1978: 114-115). Furthermore, the cups may be decorated with markings identifying them with a specific deity and if so, they are used to present offerings only to that being. When offered, they are placed in front of the god pots. While offering cups are small, the Lacandon believe the offerings appear large to the gods (Davis 1978: 115). Small drinking cups have been found at Mayapán (Smith 1971; 92-95), Santa Rita Corozal (Chase 1985: 121), Topoxté (Bullard 1970: 294), Zacpetén, and other sites.

Crystals. Crystals are used in shamanic ritual, particularly divination, in numerous indigenous cultures throughout North and South America (Sullivan 1988: 423; Brady and Prufer 1999: 129-139). The Maya of Oxkutzcab, Yucatán, México, use their crystals or *saástuún* to illuminate dangerous winds or to obtain knowledge (Hanks 1990: 87, 247). Shamans may place their crystals in a bowl of liquor to awaken them (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 170). At Zacpetén, crystals are often found near hematite mirror fragments. This pattern may have also been present at Zaculeu, where two crystals were found on a hematite plaque (Woodbury and Trik 1953: 231). Among many South American groups, shamans are believed to contain crystals within them that allow their vision to be unconstrained by distance and penetrate corporeal and cosmic boundaries (Sullivan 1988: 423). Crystals have the same vision/ knowledge extension property among the Maya (see Thompson 1930: 173; Hanks 1990: 246-247). Yellow and white crystals may have been recognized as different types of crystals by the Maya (Brady and Prufer 1999: 140) and both are found in different contexts at Zacpetén.

Drums and Rattles. Drums and rattles were important items in rituals, especially those that included dancing or the reading of codices (Landa 1941: 93-94 and 149; Tozzer 1941: 179). A drum similar to those of Zacpetén is depicted in the Madrid Codex (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 298) and in the mural of Mound 1 at Santa Rita ((Roys 1967: Fig. 4). Rattles were likely present at Zacpetén, but have not been recognized in the material record. Rattles and drums are mentioned as being associated with the Lord of the *K'atun* and are pictured as such in the Santa Rita mural (Roys 1967: 77-78). Lacandon drums were constructed to resemble K'ayum, the deity of music (Tozzer 1907: 97 and 111) and drumming appears to have been an offering of sorts. This point is reiterated by the fact that among earlier Lacandon, poor drumming was punishable by sacrifice in place of the original victim (Tozzer 1941: 104). The personification of drums may also be seen in the Santa Rita mural where God M is depicted playing a drum decorated with a human skull from which the sound emerges (Taube 1988: Figure 37). The association of rattles and drums with the Lord of the *K'atun* and the making of drums with the yearly cycle may be partially explained by cross-cultural explanations that relate percussion to transition. In many cultures, percussion is used in rituals used to establish contact with the otherworld, to signal the transition from one state of being to another, and to associate transformations with the emotional effect of the music (Needham 1967: 611-613). As in the case of the rattle and drum of the Maya *k'atun*, percussion instruments often become emblems of transition they help mediate (Needham 1967: 611).

Eccentric Chert. Eccentric chert or "ceremonial flints" are often found in Classic period occupations, especially tombs (see Pendergast 1982: 69-127) and caches. They include in a variety of shapes such as abstract forms, deities, humans, and animals. The latter

may have been offerings similar to Lacandon rubber figures. The three eccentrics recovered in Late Postclassic contexts at Zacpetén were all broken and were likely taken from Late Classic deposits and reused as cache items.

Faunal Remains. Faunal remains at Zacpetén have not yet been the subject of a detailed analysis, but preliminary examination indicates they include a variety of species. Consequently, they were simply sorted into four categories: miscellaneous bone, worked animal bone, animal teeth, and animal canines. It is very likely that fragmentary human remains were included with miscellaneous faunal remains. Easily identifiable human bones such as cranial bones and teeth were found scattered throughout the site, especially in ceremonial area. It seems certain that materials that are less easily identifiable as human, such as rib and pelvis fragments, were also strewn across the site. Cremated human remains were also generally not identifiable as human in this sort (with the exception of teeth) and, when preserved, were likely classified as miscellaneous bone.

Worked animal bones were those that were modified, other than by butchering, to form other objects such as bones carved with glyphs, bone squares, etc. Some animal remains were used in ritual practices. Animals were sacrificed and offered to deities (Landa 1941: 114) and faunal remains still play a role in rituals as offerings (Hanks 1990: 363-375) and symbols (Thompson 1930: 112-113). Animals caught in the wild appear to have been especially valued as they were cared for by the gods and, hence, sacred (Villa Rojas 1945: 108). Animal teeth, like those of humans, were used as offerings at Zacpetén. Among the Lacandon, animal mandibles, which Tozzer (1907: 115) thought were sacrificial markers, were placed into the thatched roof of the Lacandon god house. Some animals such as jaguars and tapirs were considered to be powerful beings and their

remains were highly regarded heirlooms or even power objects (Landa 1941: 203; Saunders 1998: 12-44). Claws and/or talons were encountered at Zacpetén and these could have been used for bloodletting or simply been remains of butchered animals.

Figurines, Ceramic. Ceramic figurines represent a variety of forms including animals and humans. Female effigy figurines were considered separately from the other figurines because a similar theme was repeated. Male figurines exist, but the same form is not notably repeated. Most of the female figurines are hollow and were probably whistles, but only one complete female whistle was recovered. The figurines depict a female in either a kneeling or "hocker" position, apparently pregnant, usually with one hand on the stomach and the other on a leg, and often wearing a necklace, bracelets, and ear spools. One wears a corncob necklace. Some of these figurines are mold-made and some have a red slip. Similar figurines have been recovered at Cauinal (Ichon et al. 1981: 204), Macanché Island (Rice 1987: 202-203), Zaculeu (Woodbury and Trik 1953: Fig. 274) and several were found in a chultun at Nakum (Tozzer 1913: 190). At least 11 of these artifacts were recovered at Zacpetén and their presence at other sites further illustrates their importance. Whistling appears to have been one way to come into contact with supernatural beings (Thompson 1951: 393). These objects could represent important female ancestors or deities. The latter is the most likely as shamans in Colonial Yucatán carried images of Ix Chel, the goddess of healing, in their medicine bundle as part of their basic ritual paraphernalia (Landa 1941: 154). They were also placed under the bed of woman giving birth (Landa 1941: 129).

Flutes and Whistles. Flutes and whistles are used to make music, but in Contact period Petén, whistling was one of the means to summon deities (Thompson 1957: 393). Apparently, when the high priest of Nojpeten, AjK'in Kan Ek', was captured, he whistled to request aid from the gods (Jones 1998: 317). At Chan Kom, whistling a short tune is used to summon whirlwinds at the time of the milpa burning to help spread the fire (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 133-134). Supernatural beings approaching humans are heard by the latter as a whistling sound (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 112-113). A flute is clearly depicted in a ritual sacrifice/offering scene in Dresden Codex (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 78). Among the Lacandon, the gods were once summoned with shell trumpets (Tozzer 1907: 113). The Itzaj of San José, Petén also used conch trumpets until recently (Hofling 2001: personal comm.).

Gold Foil. Gold foil, like copper, was an imported material obtained through trade, most likely from Central México. It was considered valuable, but less so than jade and colorful feathers (Taube and Miller 1993: 90). Gold was *tak'in* 'the excrement of the sun' (Miller and Taube 1993: 90; Ulrich and Ulrich 1982: xvi). While rare, squares of gold foil are found at many Late Postclassic period sites such as Mayapán (P. Smith 1955: 119). It does not appear to have arrived in the Maya world until after the 8th century (Taube and Miller 1993: 90).

Gizzard Stones. Gizzard stones are so classified because they resemble stones of the same name encountered in Historic sites in the Southeastern United States. Gizzard stones or grit are used by birds, such as chickens, to aid in digesting food. The stones found at Zacpetén are tiny stones that once had angular edges that are now very smooth.

They have been identified as grit only through visual inspection and could have alternatively been small stones used in rattles for an extended amount of time. While a faunal analysis has not yet been conducted, it is noteworthy that the majority of the stones were found in a house (see Chapter 9, Str. 719) occupied in the eighteenth century; therefore, domesticated chickens could have been present.

Greenstone and Serpentine Axe Heads. Greenstone and serpentine axe heads were primarily encountered in ceremonial contexts at Zacpetén. These objects were symbols of lightning and often associated with God K, a deity closely related to power and dynastic descent (Taube 1992: 69-79). Chak, the rain deity, frequently carries one of these objects in Maya codices (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930: 74). They are found in the eye of the head variant glyph for the number six. Stone axes heads are also mentioned as a form of currency in the Contact period (Thompson 1970: 138).

Gypsum. Gypsum occurs naturally at Zacpetén and gypsum strata are visible in the eroded edges of large rock outcrops. This material is a soft crystalline material that when fired, can be used to make plaster of Paris or the white stucco used to coat various types of ritual vessels, especially censers.

Hematite Mirrors. Hematite mirrors were composed of a mosaic of polished hematite inlaid into a wooden backing. These objects were placed into bowls of water or liquor and used for divination. Such mirrors were analogous with "reflecting pools of water," lakes, fire, spider webs (spiders also being associated with divination), caves and may have been connections with the Underworld (Taube 1984: 112-119). Their association with spider webs is due to the fact that the faces of hematite mirror are often made in a

mosaic pattern that looks like a spider web (Taube 1984: 112-120). Spiders called "*am*" are generally associated with divination. One might wonder if the name "Kowoj", which means both 'tarantula', and 'amber', might have also been related to divination (Brady and Prufer 1999: 140).

Historic European Artifacts. Historic European artifacts found at Zacpetén include a white clay pipe stem, a lead ball, and several pieces of iron. White clay pipes are common Colonial artifacts among all social statuses as they were cheap and easy to acquire (Noël Hume 1970: 296-313). Indigenous people throughout North, Central, and South America practiced tobacco smoking and this type of pipe seems to have been a European modification of an indigenous form. White clay pipes began to be used around AD 1580 to1590 (Noël Hume 1970: 303; Deetz 1977: 19-20). Round mold-made lead bullets were the most common form of firearm projectile until the nineteenth century, but were used until much later (Noël Hume 1970: 221-222). It is doubtful that the Kowoj occupants of Zacpetén had muskets because no gunflints were found. Several pieces of miscellaneous iron were found at Zacpetén. The majority were likely Contact or Colonial period objects but, since they cannot be identified, one cannot be certain that they are not relatively recent artifacts. No European ceramics of any kind were found at Zacpetén.

Human Remains. Human remains played a part in numerous ritual activities including burial, ancestor veneration, caching, bone retrieval from tombs, human sacrifice, war trophy taking, and others. It is also possible that a single deposit can be the result of several of these activities. For example, after the interment of an important individual, their burial might be reopened, a bone removed, and this bone might subsequently be the

object of ancestor worship (Deal 1987: 175; McAnany 1995: 60-63). Alternatively, captives may be sacrificed and dismembered and some of their remains may be taken as war trophies (Landa 1941: 120), others deposited in caves (Tozzer 1941: 119) or otherwise cached. Human remain were significant in ritual practices for a variety of reasons. The sacrifice and dismemberment of humans provided blood nourishment for deities and reenacted events that formed the universe at creation (Freidel et al. 1993: 204 and 281). Heads with articulated vertebrae (Thompson 1970: 178-179) and remains lacking skulls are often used as dedication caches. Remains can also be used for healing (Love 1986: 218).

Human teeth and mandibles seem to have had a special significance at Zacpetén. Mandibles, often with articulated vertebrae, are common offerings. At Teotihuacan, buried soldiers who appear to have been sacrificed wore mandibles and false mandibles made of shell. These may have been trophies given to successful warriors (Sugiyama 1989: 98), a point supported in Colonial Maya literature (Landa 1941: 123). Tlalok, the Central Mexican rain deity was often depicted as a "jawless head" (Schele and Mathews 1998: 416) and some mandible removal may be associated with him. Mandibles and the tongue were considered to house the power of speech and the soul of the individual and their removal the may have caused the destruction or appropriation of that power (Nash 1967: 457-461; Prufer and Dunham 1997: 43). Teeth with evidence of cutting at the roots and false teeth made of shell were found in an artificial tunnel excavated by the author at Ixlú. False teeth were also found at Zacpetén. Teeth and teeth substitutes seem to have been presented as offerings.

Lithics. Lithics were first classed by material then by form. In other words, obsidian blades were considered separate from chert blades. Nevertheless, each of the two types had similar forms. Cores are simply pieces of chert or obsidian from which blades or flakes have been removed. Blades are very long, narrow, and likely removed from a core by pressure flaking. Flakes are chips of stone stuck from the core. Most obsidian tools begin as blades and most chert tools begin as flakes. Unfortunately, the allotted analysis time did not allow for the differentiation of debitage, which are waste flakes and other pieces from the production process, from utilized and modified flakes. However, obvious unifaces, which are tools modified on only one side, were so classified. Bifaces are tools modified on two sides. Lance/ knife points are larger, thinned, and hafted bifaces with bilateral symmetry. Side-notched points are small hafted bifaces less than 3 cm in length that were likely arrow or dart points. These artifacts appear in Petén during the Terminal Classic period and are frequently found at Postclassic sites (Rice 1987: 213-215). Eccentrics are complex and finely made lithic forms that were not made for utilitarian purposes. These are likely symbols and decoration. A few lithic objects of chert (but not obsidian) include unworked nodules, hammerstones, awls, scrapers, and celts. Hammerstones are stones used to strike other stones in order to remove flakes or other purposes. Awls are pointed tools used to make holes. Scrapers are used to remove flesh from hides and celts are symmetrical axe heads.

Lithic artifacts were variously used in ritual practices; however, with the exception of eccentrics, all of these artifacts were likely predominantly used for everyday purposes. Among the Lacandon, lithics are actually processed during extended ritual performances (Boremanse 1998: 28). Small pieces of chert and obsidian were used by

the 20th-century Maya of Chan Kom to draw blood in curing rites (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 173). Lance/ knife points could have been used for heart sacrifice or the dismemberment of remains. Arrow points were used in arrow sacrifices and warfare rituals. Obsidian blades were utilized as cache offerings since the Preclassic period and were used in bloodletting as well.

Manos and Metates. Manos and metates were generally used to grind corn into flour for tamales and tortillas. While most of these were undoubtedly functional tools, many manos and metates throughout Mesoamerica were "art-tools" or "tool-symbols," meaning that they were specifically created for symbolic purposes rather than for use in production (Graham 1992: 165). Such manos and metates are well known in the Maya area in Balankanche cave near Chich'en Itza, Yucatán, México. These miniature artifacts were shaped to appear like manos and metates and are believed to have been offerings (Andrews 1970: 32). In addition to offerings, such tool-symbols may also indicate the appropriation of symbols of woman's domestic labor to act as elite symbols of reproducing the life force of the community (Graham 1992: 186-187). Humans were fashioned from corn in Maya cosmologies; therefore, mano and metate art-tools could be symbols of creation. Miniature manos and metates were rare at Zacpetén, but many larger and seemingly functional examples with use wear were recovered in apparently symbolic contexts (i.e., embedded length-wise into the floor as immobile artifacts). It may be that tool-symbols included items that were fully functional and not particularly well made or that were simply retired from use in production and use as symbolic items.

Net Weights. Net weights or sinkers are either composed of recycled perforated sherds or specifically produced ceramic objects. These objects are small hourglass shaped objects used as weights on lines and nets for catching fish (Rice 1987: 100).

Offering Plates. Offering plates, small shallow dishes made of ceramic or turtle shell, were found in central locations (i.e., the medial axis inside the superstructure). These vessels were primarily composed and created from shaped sherds recycled from other vessels. Only two sherd offering dishes were recognized at Zacpetén, but many other such vessels were most likely identified as simply sherds if their broken parts were recovered separately. A possible offering plate was also recovered at Mayapán (Shook and Irving 1955: Figure 7g). Sherds are often recycled into tools such as net-sinkers and spindle whorls; therefore, their use as offering dishes is not surprising. However, in the modern Guatemalan highlands, vessels are sometimes intentionally broken to use as offering dishes (Tedlock 1985: 70).

Painted Stucco. Painted stucco includes both red and black examples and occasional combinations of the two. Stucco was also likely whitewashed, but the present analysis did not search for such coloring. The stucco in elite houses in Colonial Yucatán was elaborately painted (Landa 1941: 86). The modern Lacandon paint their temples and ritual objects red so that they will resemble the house of their chief deity, which is painted with human blood (McGee 1990: 55). Objects are also painted black, which, as described below, seems to represent rain.

Patolli Boards. Patolli boards appear as gaming boards incised on stone slabs, boulders, and plaster surfaces or painted on mats. The incisions are ladder-like designs laid out in

cruciform patterns. Occasionally, one of the squares in the pattern is filled in with an X, hatching, or diagonal lines. Among the Aztecs, *patolli* was a game of chance and gambling (Miller and Taube 1993: 132). It also seems to have been a ritual practice as well as these boards were incised on altars at Seibal (Smith 1977: 349) and on the floors of at least two ceremonial building at Tikal (Jones 1999: 131).

Phalli. Phalli are frequently found in the Pu'uc area and at Chich'en Itza and range from small amulets to 3.2 m long monoliths (Mayer 1998: 67). In the Pu'uc area, these effigies were often made in the form of stelae-like monuments or architectural features such as rainspouts (Dunning1992: 141). At Chich'en Itza, a wooden phallus was recovered from the cenote and several tenoned stone phalli and a shell phallus effigy pendant were found in or near the "House of the Phalli" (Coggins and Shane1984: 37 and139; Mayer 1998: 67). A phallus was also found by the Le Plongeons in a serpent temple at Nisucte, near Cancún (Lothrop 1924: 144). Apparently, urination and ejaculation were associated with rainfall and fertility (Dunning 1992: 141). Blood drawn from the penis was also an important offering (Landa 1941: 114). In a bas-relief in the North Temple of the Great Ballcourt at Chich'en Itza, a male is depicted drawing blood from his penis in front of a large phallus (Mayer 1998: 66). Phalli seem to have played an important part in ritual practices throughout the Maya area and are obvious symbols of male fertility. The Spaniards recorded accounts of the enemies of the Itzá describing that the latter group carried erotic objects with them (Roys 1962: 41).

Pigment Stones. Pigment stones are bright coarse yellow stones that when fired turn red. Unfortunately, the stones have not been identified, but are probably limonite (Fe_2O_3) (P.

Rice 2000: personal comm.). Experiments indicate that when fired, crushed, and mixed with water, the stones produce a nice red pigment (Cecil 1997: personal comm.). Several of these stones were found adjacent to fired gypsum and small manos and metates with red pigment stains, which suggests red paint production (see Chapter 9, Str. 719). Red pigment is used for decoration, but among the modern Lacandon, it symbolizes blood and is specifically used to paint objects and the god house prior to ritual performances; however, this pigment is made from the seeds of annatto trees (McGee 1990: 46-55).

Pinchers. Pinchers of crustaceans were found in low frequency at Zacpetén and all were found in the two central ceremonial groups. The specific types of crustaceans have not been identified, but some are larger and appear to be those of ocean crabs. It is possible that these creatures were eaten during feasting events, but given their unusual appearance and ability to move between land and water, one might speculate that they had symbolic importance as well. A giant crab imitator played a role in creation events in the *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1985: 97-98).

Rattle Beads. Rattle beads are small round beads made of ceramic that likely originated from the feet of tripod vessels, which rattle. It seems unlikely that they would have been used in a hand-held rattle as they would have easily been broken in the larger cavity.

Red-Slipped Ceramics. Red-slipped ceramics were usually included in the "miscellaneous ceramics" category, but exceptions were made for modeled sherds, drums, and cache vessels. Drums and quincunx cups with modeled faces were often Tirso Red type, which is red slip on fine cream-colored paste. Cache vessels were often identified as Chipotle Red type, which has red slip on Uapake (coarse brown) paste.

Shell. Shell artifacts are divided into three categories: marine, worked, and miscellaneous. In most cases, marine shell indicates conch shell fragments. Conch (Strombus sp.) shell trumpets are used by the northern Lacandon to call the gods (McGee 1990: 53). Conch shells were also associated with Quetzalcoatl and Tlalok (Miller and Taube 1993: 152-153). Worked shell includes any type of cut shell and can include a variety of artifacts. One common form was *jute* (Pachychilus *indiorum* and P. *glaphyrus*) shell worked into pendants. These may have been amulets as shells are considered to provide protection (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 176-177). Miscellaneous shell includes all types of unidentified shells, but the majority of these are *jutes* and Pomacea *flagellata*. *Jutes* were occasionally used for ritual offerings, but the majority was eaten as food (Healy et al. 1990: 180). Pomacea shells were encountered as offerings in a tunnel at Ixlú. Both Pachychilus and Pomacea shells found behind an open hall at Nixtun-Ch'ich' and may have been used for feasting. Nevertheless, most miscellaneous shell at Zacpetén seems to have been the product of non-ritual subsistence. In general, shells were important symbols and could signify completion, water, fertility, and social status (Miller and Taube 1993: 152-153; Broda 1987: 99-102). Coral was also found in some caches at Zacpetén, but was rare.

Smooth Chert Gravel. Smooth chert gravel was frequently used as pestles. These objects were found with small metates/ mortars made of limestone and both the mortars and smooth chert gravel pestles bore traces of red pigment, hence, they appear to have played important roles in the production of red paint.

Speleothems. Speleothems are described as part of the basic ritual paraphernalia of household altars in the Maya highlands and are sometimes used as candle holders (Deal 1987: 175-177). These objects were also used as stelae, idols, and sometimes power stones that activated god pots (Brady et al. 1997: 732-736). Brady et al (1997: 740-746) suggest that speleothems were thought to naturally contain supernatural power, especially "rain, fertility, and healing" power, associated with caves. As cave objects, speleothems most likely evoked caves and symbolism associated with them such as the axis-mundi, and the caves from which the primordial ancestors emerged. They are not, however, only used in cave rituals as they are often found in surface sites, especially in burials and caches. Speleothems are rarely mentioned in the archaeological literature and while they are uncommon, a large part of their apparent absence may be that field archaeologists are simply not looking for them (Brady et al 1997: 736-737).

Spindle Whorls. Spindle whorls are weights on spindles used to make thread. Spinning and weaving was an essential part of Colonial period life not only because cloth could be worn, but also because it was an important trade and tribute items (Landa 1941: 94; Tozzer 1941: 64). Among many recent Maya groups, women generally conduct spinning and backstrap weaving (Prechtel and Carlson 1988: 123; Tozzer 1907: 55-56). Cosmogony was partially achieved through weaving (Tedlock and Tedlock 1985:126-130). Ixchel, the moon goddess, is depicted weaving in the Madrid Codex (Taube 1988: Figure 25). In some areas, the process of weaving is associated with childbirth and the moon goddess is believed to have woven humans (Prechtel and Carlson 1988: 123-124). The Lacandon also made offerings of spindles and cotton to god pots during female initiation ceremonies (Boremanse 1993: 339-340). In a Colonial ceremony, female ritual

specialists led rites in which spindles were painted blue (Landa 1941: 159). Numerous spindle whorls were found in a cache in Balankanche Cave near Chich'en Itza and several had been painted "Maya blue" (Andrews 1970: 47). The parts of the Tzutujil backstrap loom are power objects, associated with 13 female deities, used by female shamans, who virtually "become the moon" as they serve as midwives (Prechtel and Carlson 1988: 123). Recent research has documented that discarded spindle whorls are often recovered by modern Quiché ritual practitioners as divination objects (Brown 2000: 330).

Stingray Spines. Stingray spines are serrated spines on the whip-like tails of stingrays, which contain strong venom that can be fatal (Benson 1988: 179-181). These and other sharp objects were used to draw blood from the tongue, penis, and ears for offerings (Landa 1941: 113-114). Stingray spines found in burials at Mayapán were usually encountered near the pelvis, but were also used for utilitarian purposes (Proskouriakoff 1962b: 378). Stingrays, like sharks, were dangerous and powerful beings of the watery Underworld and since they appear to "fly" through the water, they are liminal as well (Benson 1988: 179). In Yucatán, the spines were kept by the priests, who obviously oversaw the blood-sacrifices (Landa 1941: 191). Several stingray spines were found at Zacpetén. They were exotic since they were obtained through trade.

Turtle Shell. Turtle shell was not distinguished from miscellaneous bone in the sort, but concentrations were described in the field. It had multiple uses and turtles were symbolically multivalent as well as an important food source. Turtle shells could have been used as rattles 1941: 93), containers, or decoration, but Tozzer (1941: 114) notes that turtles were occasionally sacrificed as offerings to "idols." Human effigy censers,

such as those in the alcove of Str. 605, may have been the sacred effigies that the Spaniards referred to as idols (Rice 1996: 11-15). In Maya cosmology, the Maize God was reborn by emerging through a cracked turtle shell (Freidel et al. 1993: 65) representing the earth (Taube 1993: 67), thereby associating turtles with creation and rebirth. Freidel el al. (1993: 214-215) note a Classic period structural relationship between turtle shell and offering vessels based upon the significance of both as doorways between the material and supernatural realities. The cracked carapace symbol was also present during the Late Postclassic Period at sites such as Mayapán (Proskouriakoff 1962: Fig. 1 and 2), Topoxté (Hermes et al. 1995), Santa Rita Corazol (Chase and Chase 1988: Fig. 9), and Nixtun-Ch'ich' (Pugh 1996: 212-215). A close association existed between turtle imagery and sacrifice (Proskouriakoff 1962: 331-333).

Summary

The excavations at Zacpetén were designed to control the spatial location of artifacts to the degree that activity areas could be related to architectural features. Activities associated with specific artifact types were reconstructed from behaviors described in Colonial and ethnography documents and those defined by previous archaeological research. The activity areas discerned through this methodology, architectural plans, and test unit profiles are the primary data of the present dissertation. These data revealed activity areas and architectural forms and histories in both residential and ceremonial groups at Zacpetén.

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure.

Structure			601	602	603
Type			raised shrine	temple	sakbe
Platform	**Terraces**		5	4	1
	Height*	(m)	3.42	3.61	0.28
	Basal Depth**	(m)	12.2	17.1	45
	Basal Width***	(m)	10.2	14	2
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	271.33	639.07	25.20
Superstructure	**Present**		p	p	a
	# of Rooms		1	1	
	Depth**		2.6	5.5	
	Width***		4.6	12	
	Orientation	(east of north)	1.0°	269.0°	
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)	3.64	3.68	
	Interior Area	(square meters)	9.24	55.37	
	Plaster Surface		p	p	
	Bench Shape		none	L	
	Medial Shrine		a	a	
	Medial Altar		p	p	
	Medial Niche		a	p	
	Interior Wall/Altar		a	p	
	Other Features			3 stairways columns	
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**		a	a	a
	Height*	(m)			
	Plaster Surface				
	Interior Area	(square meters)			
	Features				

*= above the surface of the plaza

**=Depth will refer to the distance between the front and the back, where the front is the direction the building faces.

***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			605	606A	606B and C	607A
Type			oratorio	open hall	open hall	shrine
Platform	**Terraces**		1	1 or 2	see 606a	1
	Height*	(m)	1.1	1.8		0.25
	Basal Depth**	(m)	13.3	17.5		1.8
	Basal Width***	(m)	18	38.9		7.07
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	263.34	980.28		3.18
Superstructure	**Present**		p	p	p	?
	# of Rooms		1	1	2	1
	Depth**		6.3	8.3	10.25	1.8
	Width***		12.3	24.3	35.25	7.07
	Orientation	(east of north)	254.0°	182.0°	181.5°	356.0°
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)	1.3	1.92	2.4	0.25
	Interior Area	(square meters)	68.44	178.60	270.72	12.73
	Plaster Surface		p	p	p	p
	Bench Shape		L	C	C	none
	Medial Shrine		a	a	a	a
	Medial Altar		a	a	a	a
	Medial Niche		p	a	p	a
	Interior Wall/Altar		a	a	a	a
	Other Features		2 or 3 altars		2 or 3 altars	
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**		a	a	p	a
	Height*	(m)			2.4	
	Plaster Surface				p	
	Interior Area	(square meters)			49.44	
	Features				none	

*= above the surface of the plaza

**=Depth will refer to the distance between the front and the back, where the front is the direction the building faces.

***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			607B	614	615	664
Type			indep. altar	oratorio	open hall	residence
Platform	**Terraces**		0	0	1	1
	Height*	(m)	0.25		0.1	0.45
	Basal Depth**	(m)	0.87		8.67	5.15
	Basal Width***	(m)	1.84		21.62	7.85
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	0.40	0.00	18.74	18.19
Superstructure	**Present**		a	p	p	p
	# of Rooms			1	1	2
	Depth**			6.5	8.67	5.15
	Width***			12.1	21.62	7.85
	Orientation	(east of north)	86.0°	174.0°	84.9°	175.0°
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)		0	0.13	0.45
	Interior Area	(square meters)		67.76	167.06	21.45
	Plaster Surface			a	p	a
	Bench Shape			C	C	I
	Medial Shrine			a	a	a
	Medial Altar			a	a	a
	Medial Niche			p	p	a
	Interior Wall/Altar			a		a
	Other Features				2 altars	rectangular platform
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**		a	a	a	p
	Height*	(m)				0.45
	Plaster Surface					a
	Interior Area	(square meters)				16.485
	Features					none

*= above the surface of the plaza

**=Depth will refer to the distance between the front and the back, where the front is the direction the building faces.

***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			719	720	721	732
Type			residence	shrine/altar	temple	residence
Platform	**Terraces**		1	1	1	1
	Height*	(m)	0.33	0.2	0.23	0.15- 0.4
	Basal Depth**	(m)	11	1.45	5.7	8.2
	Basal Width***	(m)	23.5	3.4	9.8	11.3
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	85.31	0.99	12.85	25.50
Superstructure	**Present**		p	a	p	p
	# of Rooms		2		1	2
	Depth**		9.6		5.6	8.2
	Width***		23.5		9.2	11.3
	Orientation	(east of north)	181.0°	89.0°	269.0°	37.5°
Superstructure:	**Height***	(m)	0.83		0.4	0.15-0.4
Front Room	**Interior Area**	(square meters)	93.24		41.31	42.74
	Plaster Surface		p		p	p
	Bench Shape		L		none	L
	Medial Shrine		p		a	p
	Medial Altar		p		p	a
	Medial Niche		a		a	a
	Interior Wall/Altar		a		p	a
	Other Features		small square altar		small square altar	none
Superstructure:	**Back Room**		p	a	a	p
Back Room/	**Height***	(m)	0.78			0.15- 0.4
Side Room	**Plaster Surface**		a			a
	Interior Area	(square meters)	102.12			39.96
	Features		metate altar?			rectangular platform

*= above the surface of the plaza

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***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			747	748	758	764
Type			residence	unknown	residence	temple
Platform	**Terraces**		1	1	1	3
	Height*	(m)	0.2	0.3	0.1	2.5
	Basal Depth**	(m)	8.2	9.9	4.75	15.5
	Basal Width***	(m)	12.8	unknown	7.1	17.75
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	20.99	unknown	3.37	607.23
Superstructure	**Present**		p	a	p	p
	# of Rooms		2		2	1 or 2
	Depth**		7		4.75	6.9
	Width***		13.6		7.1	14.7
	Orientation	(east of north)	107°		79.0°	270.0°
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)	0.5		0.1	2.5
	Interior Area	(square meters)	32.38		17.75	89.70
	Plaster Surface		p		p	p
	Bench Shape		L		I	L
	Medial Shrine		a		a	a
	Medial Altar		a		a	p
	Medial Niche		a		a	a
	Interior Wall/Altar		p		a	p
	Other Features		none		none	stairway columns
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**		p		p	a
	Height*	(m)	0.5		0.1	
	Plaster Surface		fragment		a	
	Interior Area	(square meters)	42.38		19.17	
	Features		metate altar?		none	

*= above the surface of the plaza

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***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			765	766A	766B	767
Type			shrine	shrine	indep. altar	open hall
Platform	**Terraces**		1	1	0	1
	Height*	(m)	0.24	0.16	0.36	0.25
	Basal Depth**	(m)	5.7	1.8	1.5	8.3
	Basal Width***	(m)	5.85	9.45	1.8	34.2
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	8.00	2.72	0.97	70.97
Superstructure	**Present**		p	?	a	p
	# of Rooms		1	1		1
	Depth**		2.17	9.45		8.3
	Width***		2.7	1.8		34.2
	Orientation	(east of north)	180.0°	258.0°	88.0°	8.0°
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)	0.24	0.16		0.25
	Interior Area	(square meters)	3.36	17.01		187.00
	Plaster Surface		p	p		p
	Bench Shape		none	none		L
	Medial Shrine		a	none		a
	Medial Altar		p	see below		a
	Medial Niche		a	a		p
	Interior Wall/Altar		a	a		a
	Other Features		none	2 or 3 altars		3 or 4 altars
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**		a	a	a	a
	Height*	(m)				
	Plaster Surface					
	Interior Area	(square meters)				
	Features					

*= above the surface of the plaza

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***=Width will refer to the distance between the sides perpendicular to the front and back sides (left and right sides).

Table 6-1. Architectural Features by Structure (Continued).

Structure			799	1002	1003
Type			unknown	oratorio	low platform
Platform	**Terraces**		0	1	1.00
	Height*	(m)	0.05	1.73	0.30
	Basal Depth**	(m)	1.97	17	16.00
	Basal Width***	(m)	1.5	9	4.30
	Appox. Volume	(cubic meters)	0.15	264.69	20.64
Superstructure	**Present**		a	p	a
	# of Rooms				
	Depth**			unknown	
	Width***			unknown	
	Orientation	(east of north)		west	
Superstructure: Front Room	**Height***	(m)		unknown	
	Interior Area	(square meters)		unknown	
	Plaster Surface			unknown	
	Bench Shape			unknown	
	Medial Shrine			unknown	
	Medial Altar			unknown	
	Medial Niche				
	Interior Wall/Altar			unknown	
	Other Features			unknown	
Superstructure: Back Room/ Side Room	**Back Room**			a	a
	Height*	(m)			
	Plaster Surface				
	Interior Area	(square meters)			
	Features				

*= above the surface of the plaza

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CHAPTER 7: THE EXCAVATION OF GROUP A, ZACPETÉN

Group A (Figure 7-1) is located in the center of the peninsula and on its highest point, approximately 30 m above the surface of the waters of Lake Salpeten. The group contains a large ceremonial area surrounded by numerous domestic groups. Excavations focused upon the ceremonial area, which has a temple assemblage constructed similarly to those of Mayapán. The focus of the group is Str. 602, a temple, which lies on the eastern edge of the platform and faces west. To the north of the temple is Str. 605, an oratorio, which also faces west. Str. 606 sits perpendicular to Strs. 602 and 605, and is composed of two open halls, one set inside the other, and facing south. In front (west) of the temple lies Str. 607A, a long, low platform shrine, and Str. 607B, a small rectangular altar. These five buildings combine the necessary elements in the proper configuration to form a Mayapán-style temple assemblage. However, the Petén version of the assemblage is completed by the presence of Str. 601, a raised shrine, on the southern side of the plaza, facing north into Str. 606 (Pugh et al. 1997).

In addition to the Petén version of the Mayapán temple assemblage, several other ceremonial buildings rest in the central plaza of Group A. Str. 603, a very long low *sakbe*, extends north to south dividing the plaza into east and west halves. In the southwestern corner of the plaza is Str. 615, an open hall facing east. In the northwest corner of the plaza lies a large pit (Op. 1000) to the south of which is Str. 614, an oratorio facing south. The central plaza held several additional low platforms in its southeast

corner; however, these buildings were not investigated. All the structures mentioned above were excavated. In addition, the depression to the north of Str. 614 (Op. 1000) and a concentration of stones west of Str. 603 (Op. 1001) were investigated. Furthermore, numerous transects were cut across the plaza, exposing the latest plaza surface to search for plaza activity areas.

Str. 601

Str. 601 (Figure 7-2 and 7-3) rests on the southern side of the plaza of Group A and faces 1° east of magnetic north. It appears to be a raised shrine in a position uncharacteristic of most Late Postclassic temple assemblages, but, like Str. 765 of Group C, it is part of the Petén variant of the assemblage (Pugh et al. 1997). Unlike Str. 765, the superstructure of Str. 601 rests on top of a high stepped pyramidal platform. A 130 m^2 block of the structure was excavated. The vertical datum of Str. 601 was 41 cm below that of Str. 602. Looter's trenches were found on the west, north, and south sides of Str. 601. The stratigraphy of each of these trenches was recorded.

Architectural Composition of Str. 601

The stepped pyramidal platform of Str. 601 had five terraces topped by a low building platform. The walls were primarily formed of medium to very large limestone rubble, but the north wall, which was the front wall, was composed of coursed soft limestone blocks. In the back dirt of the northern looter's trench were encountered several large fragments of an uncarved stela (Stela 3) that may have been built into that wall. In the east wall of the first terrace was a carved Terminal Classic period stela (Stela 4) used as a construction block (Figure 7-4). It was placed on its side with the carved

portion facing outward and is 1.9 m long and 75 cm wide. Stela 4 depicts an ornately dressed human figure performing a scattering rite with a cloud rider performing a scattering gesture above his/her head. In front of the individual is a block of glyphs that are very eroded and most are not readable. The first glyph is an unknown *tzolk'in* day name with an "eight" prefix. If the day name is *ajaw* like most Terminal Classic scattering monuments associated with *k'atun* rituals, then its date could be 9.19.10.0.0 (May 6, A.D. 820). Stela 4 was removed from Zacpetén and placed in the nearby community of Ixlú to deter its theft (which had been attempted). When Stela 4 was removed from the terrace, the wall of an earlier, likely Late/Terminal Classic building was found behind it. The earlier wall was composed of medium-sized coursed cut soft limestone set as mortared veneer facing.

The Postclassic period construction of Str. 601 was remodeled at least once. While a test unit was not excavated into the building, the profile of the eastern wall of the first terrace (Figure 7-4a) reveals that its southern 1.7 m were an addition. The effect that this addition had on the superstructure, if any, is unknown.

The superstructure of Str. 601 is a small rectangular enclosure resting at the back of the fifth terrace. Two steps negotiate the 28 cm difference between the platform and the floor of the superstructure. The walls are heavily eroded and it is uncertain if the north side had doorjambs. Against the south/back wall of the structure is a bench or altar that extends across the entire length of the room. Within the southern portion of this bench/altar was found Cache 1, which included a tubular greenstone bead. In front of and centered upon the altar was a small circular stuccoed feature. Its edges are covered with stucco, but the stones of the upper portion were exposed, suggestion that part of it

has been removed or destroyed. The purpose of this feature is uncertain, but it may have been a pedestal or miniature altar.

Previous Constructions of Str. 601

Test pits could not be safely excavated into Str. 601; however, all three looter's trenches were cleaned, visible artifacts collected, and their profiles recorded. A large number of Terminal Classic sherds including censer sherds were encountered. Only the northern looter's trench produced useful stratigraphic information (Figure 7-5). This pit began as a trench, but became a tunnel as soon as it hit the main body of the structure. The tunnel extended at least 4 m into the structure, but this area was not explored or mapped due to its instability. The depositional strata are labeled "stages" and are numbered with Roman numerals in order to avoid confusion with excavated levels. The earliest visible construction (Stage I) was a Terminal Classic nicely coursed wall composed of soft cut limestone. The masonry corresponds with that recorded behind Stela 4. Given that Terminal Classic censer sherds surrounded Str. 601, this early building seems to have been a ceremonial structure. Upon this structure were built a low platform, building platform, and superstructure (Stage III to VI) with a thick plaster surface. Later, the lower platform was modified twice (Stage VII) becoming the lowest terrace of the final version of Str. 601 and the earlier building platform and superstructure were covered by the second terrace (Stage IX). Stage XI is difficult to interpret because it could be either patterned collapse or a very poorly preserved stairway. If the latter were true, then, instead of the stairway leading directly to the top of Str. 601, it may have led to the top of the first terrace and a second stair led to the superstructure of Str. 601. The latest construction was enclosed by collapse (Stage XII) and humus (Stage XIII).

Adjacent to the western side of the building were found at least four superimposed plaza floors. The relationship between the floors and the deposition stages of Str. 601 is uncertain, but the last is very thick (ca. 10 cm) and may be the Terminal Classic plaza surface. Excavations did not extend deeper than this floor.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 601

On and around Str. 601, most artifact types commonly used in domestic activities had very low frequencies. A heavy deposit of Patojo (Figure 7-6) and Pitufo Modeled image censer sherds, La Justa/Extrajeras censer sherds, and miscellaneous shell and ceramics were found concentrated in refuse next to Stela 4. A stingray spine and a human tooth were found in this deposit as well. The concentration appears to be ceremonial refuse and a similar deposit was found in front of Altar 1 in the wall of Str. 606. Numerous Classic period censer sherds surrounded the building without discernible patterning. Similar censers are found elsewhere in Petén in termination rites associated with royal burials (Rice 1999: 45). The earlier version of Str. 601 is the size of a shrine.

Activities within the superstructure appear to have been largely limited to the use of Gotas Composite censers (Figure 7-7), which are concentrated in the front part of the superstructure. An exception was a complete Benque Viejo Polychrome bowl found on the floor in front of the altar that was either recycled from a Late/ Terminal Classic period context or an heirloom. It may have been reused as an offering vessel.

The shape and size of Str. 601 is similar to that of raised shrines of Mayapán, but it is anomalous because it rests upon a relatively high platform. The building was built upon an existing Terminal Classic period building; therefore, its height was the result of the reuse of the mass of the earlier building, rather than an entirely new and labor

intensive construction. The use of Late Postclassic Gotas Composite spiked censers and a Classic period vessel to make offerings is the only behavior evident at the structure and may suggest continuity in meaning space between the Terminal Classic and Late Postclassic periods since the Stage I construction may have also been a shrine.

Str. 602

Str. 602 rests on the eastern side of the plaza of Group A and was constructed in the position and form of a temple in a Mayapán temple assemblage (Figure 7-1, Figure 7-8, Figure 7-9). It lies south of and connects to Str. 605, an oratorio. Str. 602 faces west at an angle of 268° to 269° east of north. A 214 m² excavation block was placed upon Str. 602. The vertical datum of Str. 602 was the highest in Group A resting 134 m ASL. Grid point 500, 600, near the center of Str. 602, lay at latitude 16° 59.182' North and longitude 89° 39.639' West.

Architectural Composition of Str. 602

The platform of Str. 602 had four terraces (Figure 7-9). The lowest course of the first terrace is comprised of hard, squared limestone blocks. The higher courses of the first terrace and most of the second terrace are composed of softer, better-shaped limestone blocks likely removed from Late Classic period constructions. Along the western side of Str. 602, a 2.6 m space lies between the second and third terraces. Ritual activities were likely conducted in this area, but it was eroded and few in situ artifacts were recovered. The lower western stairway is outset and provided access from the plaza to the top of the second terrace. This stairway is almost entirely comprised of well-

shaped, soft limestone slabs. The higher stairs were destroyed by erosion; therefore, the number of stairs is unknown.

The third terrace was a late modification built on top of the second terrace and against the fourth terrace. It was poorly constructed of large, unshaped, hard limestone rubble retained by a single course of large vertical slabs of squared hard limestone. On the western side of the structure, the third terrace is interrupted in the middle by a niche that leads to the upper eastern stairway. In this niche were numerous small charred areas on the plaster surface, which suggest that something was repeatedly burned in the area. Another relatively well preserved stairway on the northern side of the structure leads from the platform of Str. 605 to the top of the third terrace of Str. 602. The stairway was constructed of hard, squared limestone slabs and had nine to ten steps. A large tree rests at the top of the stairway; therefore, it is unknown whether its construction was contemporaneous with the second or third terrace. The lower portions of the balustrades are sloped, but the upper parts were destroyed.

A thick coat of stucco covers the face of the fourth terrace. The fourth terrace was built before the third and the face of the former intersects with the second terrace that lies below the latter. The upper western stairway is outset leading from the second terrace to the top of the fourth terrace at structure's medial axis. This stairway of five steps was constructed at the same time as the fourth terrace and was also covered with thick plaster. The balustrades are vertical, and have superior molding.

The superstructure of Str. 602 is enclosed by walls to the north, south, and east, but is open with two columns facing to the west (Figure 7-9). The interior of the building has a medial altar along the east wall and a bench along the southern wall and the

southern part of the east wall. An additional feature referred to as the interior altar extends north to south, nearly dividing the building in half.

The superstructure was distinguished from the fourth terrace by a low building platform, which raised its height 7 cm. The remaining portions of the two rectangular columns and the west walls were composed of hard limestone, but many of the stones of the collapse near the return walls and columns are soft limestone slabs, which likely decorated the upper portion of these features.

The plaster surface of the floor of the superstructure rests 3.7 m above the surface of the plaza. Plaster flooring is found in patches throughout the interior of the superstructure, but is best preserved near the medial altar. In this area, excavations revealed that the uppermost plaster surface (Level 3b) rested on top of an earlier carbonized surface (Level 3c). Apparently, the interior of this building was once burned and then reconstructed; however, no evidence of large-scale burning exists outside of the superstructure. In front of the altar was a small plaster patch, over the final floor that capped Cache 2, Cache 3, and Cache 4. Around the altar were numerous small circular burned areas on the plaster surface. Other burned areas found at the base of the upper western stairway and in the niche next to the altar. They seem correlated with the larger remnants of the plaster surface; therefore, they may have once covered the floor of the entire superstructure.

Excavation of the patched area in front of the altar revealed Cache 2, Cache 3, and Cache 4 (Figure 7-10). Cache 2 included a Chipotle Red vessel lid located 10 cm below the plaster cap. The lid is nearly identical to that of Cache 4. Sherds of a vessel similar to that of Cache 4 were recovered in the ceremonial refuse deposit to the east of

the northern stairway of Str. 602 and may have been the missing vessel of Cache 2. Objects found near the latter vessel, such as metal foil, and greenstone and beads are similar to those contained in Cache 4. After Cache 2 was removed and discarded, Cache 4 was deposited and the hole in the floor of the temple was covered with the plaster cap.

Cache 3 included a small ceramic cup. This object was probably not actually "cached," but was likely involved in the ritual placement of Cache 4. Similar cups were encountered in dedication caches located in or near shrines and altars at Mayapán (Shook and Irving 1955: 131). The cup may have been used for ceremonial drinking as part of the dedication rite. Alternatively, it may have held some sort of food or liquid offering.

Cache 4 was recovered 44 cm south of Cache 2 and 14 cm west of the altar. It was centered approximately upon the centerline of the altar. It included a Chipotle Red ceramic lidded vessel with a specular hematite slip. The vessel had two loop handles and the lid had one. Binding around the various loops might have sealed the vessel. The loops on the body of the vessel were oriented to the north and south while in situ.

Within the vessel of Cache 4 were 17+ stone, greenstone, copper, bone, and shell objects (Figure 7-11). The exact number of objects is unknown because numerous pieces of shell within the cache may have once been part of one or several artifacts. All of the objects within Cache 4 were concentrated in the center of the northern half of the vessel in a matrix of gray brown soil. Once the artifacts and the soil matrix within the vessel of Cache 4 had been removed, a residue was encountered in the base of the vessel. The residue is composed of a core of light yellowish brown material, surrounded by a very light yellow material, which is, in turn, surrounded by a brown material. The portion was the vessel beneath this residue was nearly completely disintegrated causing the vessel to

crack. Adjacent to the residue is a charred area, which may have resulted from the fire used to burn the residue. The spatial distribution of the objects in Cache 4 overlaps that of the residues in the base of the vessel. The objects were probably embedded in incense or another substance, which was burned in the vessel. Balls of incense with objects embedded in them were recovered in the cenote at Chich'en Itzá (Coggins 1984: 130-131). Along one-third of the interior edge of the lid of the cached vessel was a charred area, which rested above the charred area within the vessel. One might conclude, therefore, that the combustible was ignited and then the lid was placed upon the vessel, which was then interred.

Since there were two floors and two primary caches, Cache 2 likely was associated with the earlier carbonized surface (Level 3c) because both had been terminated. "Termination" is the ritualized destruction or killing of an object or place (Mock 1998: 3-10; Freidel 1998: 190-191). Cache 4, on the other hand, was deposited after the construction of the later plaster surface (Level 3b). Cache 3 was simply an offering or drinking cup included in the ritual deposition of Cache 4. It seems likely; therefore, that Cache 2 and Cache 4 represent two dedications of Str. 602, the latter of which was never terminated. For the Maya who constructed Str. 602, the building likely remained "living"---perhaps until the final cache was removed by archaeologists.

The extant portion of the interior altar is a long low platform running north to south, dividing the building in half. The interior altar was constructed after the initial floor of Str. 602 (Level 3c) had been burned, as it was built upon this earlier carbonized surface; therefore, its construction seems to have been part of a renovation event.

The medial altar lies in the rear of the building. Cache 1 was embedded just below the present surface of the northwest portion of the altar, but its true depth is unknown as this part of the altar is eroded. The cache included three chert objects, two of which are projectile points or knives, one with a tapered base and the other with a stemmed base. The points of both of these objects were directed to the west. The third object is a white, chert, eccentric oval-shaped biface with four notches, one on each side.

The bench of Str. 602 is L-shaped and rests along the south wall and the southern part of the east wall. Between the altar and the bench is a small 0.7 m wide niche. No artifacts were found in the niche, but there were small circular burn marks within it. Because of the heavy erosion on the eastern part of the structure, it is uncertain whether the niche was closed by the eastern wall or if it was an additional access point. If the latter were true, then it is possible that the feature is not actually a ceremonial "niche," but a secret door that allowed "idols" to "speak." The priests of Late Postclassic period Cozumel entered ceremonial buildings through secret entrances to create the illusion of speaking idols (Freidel and Sabloff 1984: 64-65)

Previous Constructions of Str. 602

Two test units, an excavation block, and two looter's trenches attested to part of the construction sequence of Str. 602. The most illuminating test unit was Unit 502, 600, a 2 x 2 m excavation located adjacent to the western edge of the interior altar and to the southeast of the southern column (Figure 7-12). This unit did not reach bedrock as looter's tunnels extending from the two trenches weakened the unit's walls, thereby preventing deep excavations. The lowest excavated stratum was a layer of Preclassic fill (Level 17), the base of which lay 4.37 m b.d. on top of a gray-brown soil which was not

excavated. At this depth, a looter's tunnel extending from the western looter's trench was encountered in the northern wall of Unit 502, 600. The fill visible in the looter's tunnel extended at least a meter deeper than the test unit. The base of the test unit was at the same level as the Late Postclassic period plaza surface; therefore, Preclassic constructions were buildings rather than plazas. Upon Level 17 were placed two subsequent Postclassic fill layers (Level 16 and Level 15). The surface of the latter appears to have been an unprepared activity floor as a burial pit (Burial 602-2) originates there. Burial 602-2 was encountered in the southwest corner of the unit. The burial pit was lined with a crude retaining wall of small to medium-sized limestone rubble and filled with light gray-brown soil with limestone inclusions. Upon the human remains lay large sherds of a red slipped plate, which have not been analyzed. The test unit fell on the extreme eastern edge of the burial pit and the remains lay just above a looter's tunnel; therefore, it was not investigated any further.

Upon the fill (Level 15) and burial pit was placed a Preclassic fill (Level 14) and crushed limestone floor (Floor 3). The deposition of Burial 602-2 seems to have directly preceded this construction. A Late Postclassic fill was laid upon Floor 3. This fill underlay a building and associated surface. The building, which is not visible in the west profile, covered the eastern 1.4 m of the unit and stood 40 cm high. At the base of the western face of the building surface composed of flat limestone slabs (Floor 2). This surface as well as that of the structure was covered by a two Late Preclassic fill layers (Level 10 and 11) followed by a Terminal Classic/ Postclassic fill (Level 9) and ultimately a Late Postclassic fill (Level 4), which was capped by the floor of the temple superstructure (Floor 1/ Level 3).

Notably absent from Test Unit 502, 600 is a Late/ Terminal Classic period construction layer such as was observed in the looter's trenches, described below. It is probable that some of the fill layers with Preclassic refuse were actually Terminal Classic construction fill; however, the absolute absence of later materials is suspicious. An alternative explanation is that the Late Postclassic construction involved the partial dismantling of Terminal Classic constructions.

The western looter's trench lay to the north of the lower western stairway (Figure 7-8 and Figure 7-13). It extended 6.3 m east of the western edge of the stairway, and then became a tunnel. This tunnel was not closely examined as its ceiling was loose and dangerous; however, it extended at least an additional 3.5 m as it was encountered in Test Unit 502, 600. The south and east walls of the trench were cleaned, examined, and drawn. The earliest deposit encountered was a structure composed of large, squared, dressed, and mortared soft limestone veneer facing over a core of medium-sized limestone rubble (Stage I) with a thick plaster surface. While this construction is referred to as Stage I, there were earlier, yet unrecorded stages. Later, a masonry structure constructed similar to the earlier one was built upon the plaster floor (Stage II), but it was comprised of medium-sized stones. Two courses of stone that stood 63 cm high remained, but the upper portion of this addition appears to have been destroyed before subsequent constructions; therefore, it once stood taller. While no in situ artifacts were recovered to date Stage I and Stage II, they were constructed similarly to a Terminal Classic wall (Level 20) encountered in Test Unit 531, 577 in Str. 606.

The next visible construction was a fill layer (Figure 7-13)(Stage IIIa) placed on top of the earlier building (Stages I and II). Stage IIIb was a terraced construction

retained by low walls. Five terraces were visible in the looter's trench. The construction sequence of Stage IIIb appears to have proceeded from west to east with each terrace built upon the fill of the terrace to its west. The portion of this construction encountered in the looter's trench achieved a height of 1.6 m. After its initial construction, Stage III was modified at least twice. Stage IV and, later, Stage V were added to its west end.

A fill layer (Stage VI) covered the terraced construction (Stage III-V). This fill extended at least 4.1 m from the eastern wall of the trench, but the western edge of Stage VI was obscured by the construction of the lower stairway. Pit features in the fill suggest that it was heavily modified by subsequent construction stages. Along the western edge of the structure, a fill layer (Stage VIIa) anchored a small retaining wall that supported a ballast layer (Stage VIIb). Upon the ballast was constructed a thick plaster surface (Stage VIIc) that became increasingly eroded toward the western edge of the structure. The components of Stage VIII compose the primary construction of the Late Postclassic temple. The final construction stage evident in the trench was a 20 cm high terrace composed of a layer of medium-sized rubble (Stage VIIIa). This modification was the "third terrace" described above. Stage VIIIb is the northern balustrade of the lower western stairway. Once the building had been abandoned, its floor was covered by collapse and humus.

The only stratigraphic associations that could by drawn between the levels of Test Unit 502, 600 and the stages of the western looter's trench was that the floor of the superstructure (Level 3) was contemporaneous with Stages VII and VIII. More specifically, it seems likely that the primary floor (Level 3c) was contemporaneous with the original construction of the temple (Stage VII). The secondary floor (Level 3b) and

Stage VIII were part of a renovation event that may have also involved the removal and replacement of the medial cache (see Caches 2 and 4). The rest of the strata of Test Unit 502, 600 cannot be associated with those of the trench on the basis of available evidence.

The eastern looter's trench destroyed the eastern part of the medial altar of Str. 602 and extended 11.4 m to the west (Figure 7-8 and Figure 7-14). This trench was less enlightening than the western one as there were fewer visible architectural features, as one would expect at the rear of the building. The earliest discernible construction (Stage I) included three terraces, each topped by a thick plaster floor. Stage I was covered by another series of terraces (Stage II), each of which was also capped by a thick plaster surface. The uppermost terrace underlies the medial altar of Str. 602, but was not evident in Test Unit 502, 600. The strata in the eastern looter's trench cannot be matched with those of the test unit. However, the elevation of the second terrace (Stage IIb) corresponds to that of the second terrace of the platform of Str. 602 as well as the floor above Stage VIIb in the western looter's trench. Stage IIc seems to be the eastern edge of the fourth terrace of the platform.

Excavations at the southwestern corner of Str. 602 uncovered a ceremonial refuse pit (Feature 602-1b)(Figure 7-15). The pit was excavated into the plaster surface of the plaza. It was approximately 1.4 m long, 1.2 m wide and 0.38 m deep. Within this pit were numerous sherds, including large portions of a Patojo Modeled var. Patojo image censer and spiked censers and a nearly complete Saca Polychrome tripod vessel. A deposit of incense was found in association with the sherds. A sample of the incense was dated with AMS analysis (Beta - 112316) (Table 1-1) and determined to have a conventional age of 540 +/- 50 B.P., calibrated to A.D. 1306-1367 and A.D. 1383-1441

(2 sigma, 95% probability). The ceremonial refuse pit intruded upon a human burial. Burial 602-1 contained disturbed but articulated human remains including parts of a pelvis, the femurs, tibias, fibulas, and some of the bones of the feet. An adult and a juvenile were included in the deposit.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 602

Numerous scatters of artifacts upon the floor of Str. 602 were the primary refuse of activities that took place in the structure. Unlike the open halls, primary refuse was found in high frequency on the floors of the temples at Zacpetén. A total of 883 Patojo Modeled var. Patojo (Figure 7-16) and 132 Patojo Modeled var. Moza sherds (Figure 7-17), all of which tended to be large, were encountered on the floor of Str. 602. Three large scatters of censer sherds were encountered within the boundaries of the superstructure, each of which represented a pair of human effigy censers. One pair was located between the two columns, but skewed toward the northern column at the top of the upper western stairway. This pair included Vessel 1 and Vessel 2, both of which were Patojo Modeled var. Patojo censers. The effigy of Vessel 1 was a female deity, perhaps Ixchel, as it wore a *huipil*, while the effigy of Vessel 2 wore a loin cloth/ sash and was male. A second pair of censers was found between the northern return wall and the northern column. Vessels 7 and 11 were both Patojo Modeled var. Moza censers. The effigy of Vessel 7 was a Chac and that of Vessel 11 was an old male deity, perhaps God D (Itzamna). The third pair of censers included Vessels 9 and 3, which lay between the interior altar and the southern bench. Both of these censers were Patojo Modeled var. Patojo censers. The effigy of Vessel 9 depicted a figure wearing a serpent effigy helmet, a matted breastplate, and a loin cloth/ sash, with two lightning bolts running down the

sides of its face. A similar figure encountered in a Postclassic period intrusive cache in Structure 2 at Dzibanché was believed to be the deity Itzamná (Nalda and Camancho 1995: 23). The second censer of the pair was a male deity missing its face. These three pairs of censers were involved in the final ritual(s) conducted in Str. 602, but parts of other censers, perhaps from earlier ritual events, were found in the superstructure. Three arms with different decorative motifs indicate that a minimum of three other individual censers was encountered in the excavations.

In addition to being paired, the Patojo Modeled image censers were spatially limited (Figure 7-16). The vast majority of the sherds were found on top of the superstructure and west of the interior altar. This appears to have been the location of their use. A moderate concentration of these sherds was found northeast of the northern stairway in a secondary refuse deposit. This deposit included other types of image censer sherds, non-image censer sherds, and almost all of the more common artifact types such as miscellaneous ceramics, bone and shell. Also included were rare items such as two pieces of gold foil and a nearly complete, though smashed, Topoxté Red drum. Several sherds from this drum also lay inside the superstructure north of the medial altar; hence, it had been smashed, and then deposited north of the temple. Fragments of a quincunx cup, similar to one found in Str. 764 in Group C, were also found northeast of the northern stairway. The artifacts in this area seem to be former cache items and objects used within the temple superstructure.

Very few artifacts were found upon the medial altar, but a spindle whorl was located above Cache 1 (Figure 7-18). Only one such artifact was encountered on the surfaces of Str. 602 and they are also found in the niche of Str. 605 and the shrine of Str.

732; therefore, they seem to have had a ceremonial purpose. It is impossible to specify their purpose because, as mentioned, they were associated with female initiation rituals, protection, creation, Ixchel, etc.

Also within Str. 602 was a concentration of small balls of incense, found between the southern portion of the medial and interior altars. Evidence of ritualized burning outside the god pots was encountered both inside and outside of the superstructure during the excavation of Str. 602. As mentioned, adjacent to the medial altar and the lower western stairway, numerous small circular burn marks, were found on plaster floor. These features are found in areas where the floor was preserved and the structure might have been once been covered with these features.

At least five small (8 to 10 cm tall), cylindrical, ceramic cups were found on the floor of Str. 602 (Figure 7-18). An association between effigy censer and ceramic cups has been described of Santa Rita Corozal (Chase 1981: 121). Among the Lacandon Maya, drinking *balché* was crucial because the drink purified the participants and prepared them to interact with the gods and it was a common offering to supernatural beings (Tozzer 1941: 91; Landa 1941: 114; McGee 1990: 73). Therefore, these cups may have been used both for ceremonial drinking and to give offerings to the deities. It should be pointed out, however, that the cups could have been used to offer food and drink other than balché. Also overlapping with the distribution of god pots in Str. 602 were several stone and/or shell beads. The color of these beads was limited to green, red, and black---the same color beads used by the Lacandon to awaken their god pots.

Numerous fragments of marine shell were found along the southern portion of the interior altar (Figure 7-19). It is unknown whether these fragments formed one or several

artifacts. These items were also found to the northeast of the northern stairway and may have been a terminated cache.

While Patojo Modeled censers were concentrated on the interior of the superstructure, other censer types were found outside on the ledges formed by the various terraces and especially on the second terrace which provided a relatively wide surface to the north of the superstructure and an extremely wide open space in front or to the west of it. For the most part, these were non-image censers (Figure 7-20); however, very low frequencies of Patojo, Idolos, Kulut, and Pitufo Modeled effigy censers were recovered. A total of 212 sherds came from a minimum of 19 non-image vase and 5 ladle censers that were found on the edges of Str. 602.

Str. 602 is the tallest building in Group A and rests in the privileged medial eastern location. The primary artifacts within the building were large god pots, indicating that the building was a god house of multiple deities. It also had offering containers such as cups, a "quincunx" cup, and a ceramic drum. While drums are not usually considered "offering containers," the sound they produced was an offering. A dichotomy can be observed between the artifact types encountered in the superstructure and those on the platform of Str. 602. The interior contains large censers with effigies of deities while non-image censers were found on the exterior (Figure 7-16 and 7-20). The presence of the censers with effigies representing deities on the inside of the superstructure along with offerings of incense and balché to them, which they were believed to have consumed, suggests that this was their house. The temple platform most likely represented the natural setting of the house, a mountain or hill.

Str. 603

Str. 603 is a long low platform with the long axis running north/ south from the northwest corner of Str. 601 to Str. 606 (Figure 7-1). It divides Group A in half and is oriented 1° west of magnetic north. It is approximately 45 m long and 2.5 m wide. The location of the southern edge of the structure is uncertain as it was disturbed by a looter's trench into Str. 601. The excavation of Str. 603 extended up to the edge of this disturbance. The vertical datum of Str. 603 was located 4.17 m below that of Str. 602. A 204 m^2 area covering 80 to 85% of the building was excavated (Figure 7-19).

Architectural Composition of Str. 603

After the removal of the humus layer (Level 1), it was discovered that the latest surface of Str. 603 lay only 5 to 10 cm below the present ground surface. The surface was composed of occasional fragments of a thin plaster surfacing a ballast of gray soil with limestone inclusions. This construction was 2 m wide and approximately 45 m long. It rests 28 cm higher than the latest extant portions of the plaza surface lying to the structure's east. The surface of the structure eroded and settled, thereby slightly exaggerating its width. With the exception of areas of Str. 603 that lay adjacent to the south wall of Str. 606, no collapse layer (Level 2) was found on top of the construction.

Previous Constructions of Str. 603

To investigate earlier constructions of Str. 603, a 6 x 6 m block was opened in the middle of the structure and a 1 m wide trench was excavated 4 m south of the block. The northeast corner of this block was at 503N, 572E. Both the block and trench excavations maintained the 1 x 1 m collection integrity. The block excavation revealed that the fill

(Level 3) of the latest construction was comprised of a 10 cm deep ballast of soil and gravel that lay on top of a 10 cm deep fill layer of medium-sized limestone rubble in a soil matrix (Level 4). The limestone rubble only exists in a meter-wide area along the north/ south centerline of the structure. Levels 3 and 4 are portions of the same fill event. Level 3 in Str. 603 was the same fill event as Level 3 in Op. 1001, which lies to the west; therefore, artifact distributions associated with Str. 603, Level 3 are discussed with those of Op. 1001, below. Under Level 3 lay an earlier construction of Str. 603 (Level 5), which had the same shape as the latter construction, but was covered by a well-preserved plaster surface. The earlier structure was 2 m wide and its highest point rose 17 cm above the associated plaster surface of the plaza to its east and west. The block excavations did not continue below the plaster of the earlier construction.

The trench excavation was a 1 x 3 m trench that was excavated in 1 x 1 m units. The long end extended east to west with the northeast corner at 493, 573. This trench revealed that Level 4 did not underlie all of the latest construction of Str. 603. In the trench, only a layer of soil with gravel (Level 3) lay below the surface of the structure. The plaster surface (Floor 2) covering the substructure was 3 cm thick and overlay a Preclassic soil and gravel fill (Level 5). Despite the date of the artifacts in the fill, this was most likely a Postclassic period construction because the excavation block revealed censers from the latter period (Figure 7-56) associated with the surface above the fill. This fill was 22 cm deep and ended when a former plaza surface (Level 6) was encountered. The trench was not excavated deeper as the base of Str. 603 had been encountered and nearby test pits had already tested the plaza fill.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 603

Str. 603 had the lowest frequency of artifacts of all buildings at Zacpetén, with 13.4 artifacts per m^2. For the most part, objects were distributed without observable patterning, but miscellaneous bone was clearly concentrated around 501N (Figure 7-23). This area is the point where the medial axis of Str. 602 meets with Str. 603. This concentration matches that of Patojo Modeled sherds (Figure 7-24), but the latter is oriented slightly to the south. The single greenstone axe found in Str. 603 was also found in this area. This region does not appear to have been a general refuse area because shell and lithics are not concentrated there. It seems likely, therefore, that this was primary refuse associated with ritual activities extending from the medial axis of Str. 602. However, since the materials were primarily located just west of the structure they may have been swept off it. It is difficult to categorize this as a primary or secondary deposit because sweeping itself was often a ritual performance. Prior to excavation, this part of the structure had a higher elevation and it was believed that a small shrine might have rested in this location. While no such building was found, the higher elevation may have inscribed an area of greater ritual importance.

A second concentration of Patojo Modeled sherds was found on the northern end of Str. 603 (Figure 7-24). This is the edge of the concentration associated with Altar 1 noted in the description of Str. 606.

The shape of Str. 603 is unusual and similar structures are not known at Late Postclassic sites in Petén. Three possible uses seem most likely. First, it could have been a ceremonial *sakbe*. A feature similar to Str. 603 in Group C22-87 of Cozumel is believed to have been a small ceremonial *sakbe* oriented east to west (Freidel and Sabloff

1984: 83; Fig. 23) and another may be located at Tipú. The feature could also have been a large bench for an audience during communal ritual events. Third, it may have been a divider splitting the plaza in half. The presence of one open hall on each side of the line provides some support it function as a divider. Colonnaded halls are believed to be mat houses, which were council halls (Carmack 1981: 192), therefore, the centers of two distinct, yet unified corporate groups could have been located on opposing sides of Str. 603. It is also likely that this building served all three of the suggested purposes. The light artifact scatter suggests that it was cleaned and that it was the location of ceremonial activities. The sweeping of ceremonial roads was an important part of *Wayeb* rites (Tozzer 1941: 144) and in modern Yucatán, it is a part of boundary maintenance rites (Hanks 1990: 337-364).

Str. 605

The position and size of Str. 605 (Figures 7-24 and 7-25) conforms to that of an oratorio in a Mayapán-style Late Postclassic temple assemblage. The west facing structure was oriented 16° west of magnetic north and rests on a low platform that has a small inset stairway in the medial portion of its western edge. In 1995, a 48 m^2 block was excavated on the southern side of Str 606. The following year, the rest of the structure was excavated with a 131 m^2 block. These two excavations had slightly different orientations because the 1995 work was oriented with Str. 605 and the latter with a larger Group A grid that was established in 1996. The use of two different excavation grid orientations did not cause problems in the analysis of data with Surfer®. The vertical datum of Str. 605 was located 2.35 m below that of Str. 602.

Architectural Composition of Str. 605

The platform of Str. 605 has one terrace. The east and north sides of the platform are heavily disturbed by erosion and root disturbance. The southern edge of the platform is defined by the northern edge of Str. 602 and the western side by a retaining wall. The platform appears to have been 1.1 m higher than the plaza to the west, but to the east is the side of the hill upon which Group A was constructed, resulting in a 4 m drop in that direction. An inset stairway that provided access from the plaza to Str. 605 rests on the west side of the structure. Adjacent to the top of the stairs is a final step constructed to access three directions rather than one---a double return stair formed by the entire platform. This triple stair led to Str. 606 to the north, Str. 605 to the east, and Str. 602 to the south of the feature.

The superstructure of Str. 605 rests on the rear of the platform and is a C-shaped building facing west at an azimuth of 254° east of north. The angle of the south wall is 10° north of east as opposed to the east wall and bench, which are 254° east of north. There are approximately 54 m^2 of apparently empty platform space to the west of the superstructure. Str. 605 has an L-shaped bench along the east and north interior edges. No masonry walls rest on the exterior edges of the bench; however, a perishable wall may have enclosed the space. An interesting feature in the center of the eastern wall and bench is a niche oriented 16° north of east. East of this opening, the platform drops several meters; hence, it was not an exit. Similar features were found on colonnaded halls and oratorios at Mayapán (See Smith 1962: Figure 11a and h; Proskouriakoff 1962: Figure 1, and 2; and 1957). The niches found in oratorios and colonnaded halls at Mayapán seem to have been interchangeable with shrines and altars as the various

features are all found in the same locations in different buildings. The plaster surface of Str. 605 is preserved in the southern half of the building, but largely eroded in the rest.

The superstructure's orientation 254° east of magnetic north is somewhat puzzling as it differs from the orientations of the rest of the structures in the group. Furthermore, it differs from "Mayapán city planning" oriented 17° east of north, which Carlson (1982: 56) suggested was evidence for Central Mexican influence. It is possible that the alcove oriented 16° north of east had some sort of astronomical function associated with the summer solstice.

Previous Constructions of Str. 605

The construction sequence of Str. 605 was tested by Unit 518, 603, a 2 x 2 m excavation placed to the west of the structure's medial niche (Figure 7-26). The unit reached bedrock 5.4 m below the datum of Str. 605. Upon the bedrock was a very dark gray-brown clay (Levels 23 and 24). In 1994, an identical deposit excavated in Test Pit 1 was dated to the Middle Preclassic Period (Rice et al. 1996: 47). Two fill layers followed the clay. Excavations did not reveal whether these resulted from two distinct constructions or the use of two fill sources in a single construction event, and none had diagnostic artifacts. Upon the second fill layer was placed the seventh plaster floor (Level 21a). Constructed on this floor was a retaining wall running east to west. To the south of this wall was retained fill (level 19), which was dated to the Preclassic period. The area to the north of the wall was later filled (Levels 20 and 18) and both the north and south sides of the wall were capped with the sixth plaster surface (Level 17c). This plaster surface was subsequently capped by a thin layer of fill (Level 17b) and the fifth plaster surface (Level 17a) which was in turn capped by another layer of fill (Level 16)

and the fourth plaster surface (Level 15). The fourth plaster surface was later covered by a Postclassic or Terminal Classic fill event (Levels 13 and 14). The fill layer was covered by a thin ballast (Level 11) and the third plaster surface (Level 9), which was dated to the Postclassic period. The third surface was capped by another fill layer (Levels 8 and 10) and the second plaster surface (Level 6). The second surface was covered by a fill layer (Level 4) within which were encountered Late Postclassic period censer sherds and a copper bell, which may have been cached as it lay along the buildings medial axis. Upon this fill was the first plaster surface (Level 3), which was the building investigated by the block excavations of Str. 605.

Once Unit 518, 603 had been completed, an additional 2 x 2 m extension was excavated on the east side of the test pit. The purpose of Unit 518, 606 was to search for masonry associated with the sixth plaster surface. This excavation was placed on top of the eastern body and medial niche of the bench because it was expected that a previous construction of the bench and niche might lie under the later construction. The niche was targeted because it was the heart of ceremonial activities in Str. 605. Excavations revealed an earlier construction of the bench associated with the sixth floor, but only the bench fill remained as the stones lining its edges had been removed for the later construction. The earlier bench was oriented 16° like the later one, but a niche was not encountered in the test unit. The excavation of the test unit extension was ended once the earlier constructed was encountered.

Additional evidence of earlier construction was found 60 cm south of the south wall of Str. 605. In this area, the top of a previous wall was encountered at approximately the same height as the base of the later wall. The lower wall appears to be

parallel with the south wall of Str. 605. This wall is believed to have been the southern wall of the earlier construction of Str. 605 that was revealed in Test Unit 518, 606; thus, the contrasting orientation of the south wall seems to have been repeated.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 605

A heavy concentration of sherds from two Kulut Modeled censers was found in the southeastern portion of the medial niche (Figure 7-27). These censers differed from the Patojo Modeled censers of Str. 602 because they have a red slip, are much smaller, and the figure's torso recedes farther into the censer pot. The effigy of one of the censers was found in the concentration and depicted an individual with braided hair, pointed teeth, and possibly facial hair. The deity wore large ear spools and a reptile headdress. A nearly identical figure was found on a censer recovered in the medial altar of Structure 719, an elite residence, as well as at Topoxté (Bullard 1970: Fig. 21). The fact that two censers were recovered in the niche reiterates the importance of the pairing of censers observed in Str. 602. A heavy concentration of Patojo Modeled image censer sherds was encountered in the southwest corner of the platform of Str. 605, but these were part of a larger concentration at the base of the northern stairway of Str. 602.

Scattered across the floor of the building were two small serpentine/greenstone axe-heads, chert lance points (Figure 7-28), and obsidian and chert projectile points. One of the axe-heads was found in the medial niche. The projectile points are side-notched points 1.5 to 3 cm in length, which suggests that they were arrow points. These three objects are mentioned as objects associated with warfare (Landa 1941: 35). In addition, numerous fragments of long bones, presumably human, were found on the floor. Located on what remained of the bench were additional arrow points and a fragment of bone with

two glyphs carved in its surface. While the glyphs are not identifiable, at least one is part of a date or name as it includes a numerical superfix. During the Colonial Period in Yucatán, the bones of sacrificed prisoners were kept as trophies of war and used in warfare rituals (Landa 1941: 120).

Pieces of incised ocean shell, jade, and a fragment of a stingray spine were also found on the floor of Str. 605 adjacent to the medial niche (Figure 7-29). It is possible that all of these artifacts were cached in front of the alcove, but were scattered across the floor when the cache was ritually terminated. Also within the medial niche was a spindle whorl (Figure 7-30). This artifact could be interpreted as originating from collapse, but this was the only such artifact found in Str. 605 and lone spindle whorls were also found on the altar of Str. 602 and in the shrine of Str. 732.

The surface of the superstructure as well as the platform of Str. 605 contained a very high frequency of turtle carapace fragments. These could have been used as offering bowls, decoration, or may have been the remains of sacrificed or eaten turtles.

To the north of the northeast corner of the superstructure were two yellow crystals of an unknown type (Figure 7-30). A similar crystal was found near Str. 614.

The position and size of Str. 605 are similar to oratorios in temple assemblages at Mayapán. Like most buildings in Group A, the Late Postclassic stage of Str. 605 was built twice. The two major themes that can be discerned in the artifacts recovered from the surface of Str. 605 are warfare and the use of Kulut Modeled censers depicting a single deity. The pairing of censers in the niche may suggest the ritual transition from one god pot to another.

Str. 606

Str. 606 (Figure 7-31 and 7-32) is located on the northern side of the central plaza of Group A (Figure 7-1). It lies to the north of and extends upon the platform of Str. 605 and to the east of Op. 1000. Str. 606 is the most complex construction at Zacpetén and, in order to allow greater ease in spatial reference, the structure was divided into three sub-areas: 606A, 606B, and 606C. Str. 606A refers to the C-shaped hall that rested in the southeastern part of the larger body. North of or behind Str. 606A is a larger C-shaped hall, Str. 606B. West of 606B is a small end room, Str. 606C. Str. 606B and C composed the original construction and Str. 606A was a later addition that was partially constructed with material borrowed from the former. An 866 m^2 excavation block was placed upon the building covering approximately 95% of its surface. The vertical datum of Str. 606 was located 1.81 m below that of Str. 602.

Architectural Composition of Str. 606

The inset stairway of Str. 606 lies on the southern side of the building. It is not centered on Str. 606A, which lies adjacent to it, but roughly on the combined bodies of Str. 606B and Str. 606C. The stairway appears to have been modified after its primary construction. The original stairway construction was 2.5 m wide, but was later reduced to 1.3 m wide. It has seven or eight steps, at the base of which is the plaza surface. Along the eastern edge is a balustrade that is sloped at the base and vertical at the top.

The south wall of the platform of Str. 606 varies in both its masonry and plans (Figure 7-33). Despite the irregular sizes and lack of smooth coursing, the wall's surface is relatively flat and this along with the bulk of the stones gives it an ordered appearance.

Some of the height of the wall has been lost due to erosion, but the difference between the top of the fill and the base of the wall suggests a height of 180 cm.

The masonry of the south wall is partially composed of fragments of Terminal Classic period monuments. West of the stairway lay 60% of a carved circular altar (Altar 1) with the carved portion facing outward (Figure 7-33). The other 40% of Altar 1 lay 5.6 m west of this larger fragment and also faced outward. The complete altar had a diameter of 1.22 m and was 35 cm thick. It was carved with 36 glyphs surrounding a large complex figure comprised of glyphs and other elements. The carving is patterned in three concentric rings. The inner ring contains the large abstract figure. Surrounding the figure is a ring of 20 glyphs. The outermost ring is made of four panels, each containing four glyphs, aligned in a cardinal pattern, that are separated by mat motifs. In the areas occupied by the panels, the mat crosses around to the side of the altar, thereby allowing the mat encircle the entire monument. The altar appears to have been dedicated on 10.0.0.0.0 or March 15, A.D. 830 (Houston 1997: personal comm. to D. Rice). The translation of the monument is preliminary, but describes the birth of a noble with K'inich and Kalamte titles that occurs in a watery hole or the Underworld during the winter solstice (Houston 1997: personal comm. to D. Rice).

Between the two altar fragments were at least two other monuments, one of which (Stela 5) lay adjacent to the smaller half of Altar 1 (Figure 7-33). Stela 5 is a large uncarved monument. East of Stela 5 lies a small uncarved fragment of another stela. Adjacent to the east side of this fragment rests another extremely large stone that may or may not be a monument. A layer of light gray soil was found at the base of the collapse adjacent to the wall and appears to have been plaster and stucco that eroded from the

superstructure, but the various monument fragments do not appear to have been covered by stucco. Absolutely no stucco was encountered adhering to the south face or any other part of the substructure.

To the east of the stairway, the south platform edge is formed by a series of two terraces rather than by a single vertical wall (Figure 7-33). The north wall of the platform is also the north wall of Str. 606B and 606C. While this wall defined the edge of Str. 606, it actually rests upon an earlier platform that extends approximately 10 m to the north. The eastern edge of the platform blends into platform of Str. 605. The eastern walls of Str. 606A and 606B combine to form a continuous wall defining the rest of the eastern edge of the platform. The western edge of the platform was built up by two terraces. North of the southwest corner, the first terrace face is indented 34 cm, possibly forming a niche, which lies adjacent to a borrow pit containing a mass grave (Op. 1000).

Str. 606A is a 24.5 m wide colonnaded hall on the southeastern part of the body of Str. 606 and is part of the temple assemblage of Group A. This superstructure is elevated from the larger platform by a low building platform. Str. 606A has a C-shaped wall and bench, but does not have a medial altar or niche. It faces south at an azimuth of 182° west of north. The bench face is composed of vertical limestone slab facing stones, 50% of which are soft limestone.

Excavations were not conducted into the floor of Str. 606 to find column foundations, such as were encountered in Str. 615; however, one column was visible on the surface. It lies adjacent to the front wall of Str. 606 and 2 m west of the eastern bench. No other foundations were clearly visible, but if it followed the standard 3.4 m

spacing between the columns observed in Str. 615, there should have been four perishable columns holding the lintel of Str. 606A.

Located at the intersection of the north and east benches is a low rectangular masonry feature. Its northern and eastern edges are formed by the interior face of the northeast corner of the exterior wall. No associated artifacts suggest how this feature might have been used, but it may have been a plinth or altar. Three charred circular areas south of the masonry rectangle were similar to those encountered in Str. 602 and document the burning of offerings, perhaps indicating that this space was valued differently than others in Str. 606A

Two other rectangular features (Fea. 606-1 and 2) rest north of the stairway. Fea. 606-1 is a 100 by 80 cm masonry rectangle that stood 23 cm above the floor. A larger 1 x 2 m rectangle (Fea. 606-2) was later added to the western side of Fea. 606-1. It is composed of a single course of medium-sized vertical slabs. It stands 23 cm higher than the plaster floor surface that remains along its edges. Similar features were encountered in Str. 615 and 767, the other two open halls of Zacpetén. A high concentration of plaster inclusions was encountered in the soil surrounding the rectangular structure.

Str. 606B lies north of Str. 606A and was built upon an additional platform terrace and a low building platform. It is a large colonnaded hall with a C-shaped wall and bench that is interrupted by a large medial niche. The building faces west at an angle of 181.5° east of north; however, its entrance was blocked by Str. 606A, which was built in front of it. Str. 606B was originally 35.25 m wide, but reduced to 29.3 m when Str. 606C was constructed.

While the fill and quite a bit of the plaster surface of the northern bench of Str. 606B are preserved, very few of the stones that line its southern edge remains. Those that do remain form a single course of squared vertical slabs, 50 % of which are soft limestone. The missing stones of the bench appear to have been robbed for use in the construction of Str. 606A or other buildings. The stones of the bench wall would have been desirable because half were soft limestone and all were squared, which is the typical form of bench stones. This is supported by the fact that none of the stones of the western arm of the bench were robbed. This portion of the bench was solely constructed of hard limestone blocks, which were left in place, thereby confirming that squared vertical slabs were selected for recycling by later builders.

The medial niche lies 9.62 east of the western arm of the bench and 9.42 m west of the eastern arm; hence, it is well centered. It differs from the other niches at Zacpetén because the axis, which bisects the bench, is shorter than the width of the bisection. It is also known that this niche was not open to the north, a point uncertain in other halls at Zacpetén. The floor in the niche is relatively well-preserved and a circular charred spot is found on part of this surface likely indicating the burning of offerings.

Str. 606C is located west of Str. 606B and appears to have been an end room of the latter. Such features were common at Mayapán (see Proskouriakoff 1962: Fig. 1) and have been encountered in other Late Postclassic open halls in Petén, as well (Pugh 1996: Fig. 116). It has a western and northern bench, the latter of which connects with the northern bench of Str. 606B. The western face of the west wall of Str. 606B defines the imaginary division between the two buildings. The building is oriented the same as Str. 606B, facing 181.5° east of north.

Str. 606C has a very nicely preserved plaster floor. In addition, stucco was encountered on the western face of the west wall of Str. 606B inside Str. 606C. This stucco had been carbonized, but none of the floor or stones of the building were similarly charred; therefore, the burn was localized and controlled. The plaster floor and stucco were preserved by a layer of refuse, discussed below, that covered them.

Previous Constructions of Str. 606

Test Unit 531, 577 was a 2 x 2 m excavation placed on top of the north wall and bench of Str. 606A and floor of 606B (Figure 7-34). The purpose of the unit was to investigate the relationship between Str. 606A and 606B and to probe the construction sequence of Str. 606. Bedrock was encountered 3.5 m b.d. Upon the bedrock rested a very dark gray-brown clay (Level 41) that was found at the base of most test units in Group A and has been dated to Tzec 1 or the Middle Preclassic Period (Rice et al. 1996: 47). Level 41 was eventually covered by a Middle Preclassic fill layer (Level 40). Upon this material was placed a Middle Preclassic ballast (Level 39) and a thick plaster floor (Level 35, Floor 4). A 33 cm deep pit filled with dark gray-brown soil with small limestone inclusions (Level 38---not pictured) intruded upon the floor in the western 1.3 m of the unit. A low wall (Level 46---not pictured) was found in the pit feature in the northwest corner of the unit. The wall was oriented 6° east of north and its purpose is unknown. Following the filling of the pit, a 1.3 m high wall of large squared coursed rubble (Level 44) with the exterior face to the west was constructed upon the plaster surface. This construction ran north to south with a 3° to 4° east of north orientation and was embedded in the eastern wall of the unit. A second 1.11 m high wall composed of medium-sized to large squared coursed rubble (Level 45) with its exterior face to the

north was later built with its eastern end adjacent to the west face of the earlier wall. This construction was embedded in the southern wall of the unit and followed the azimuth of the earlier wall with a 3° to 4° south of west orientation. After the construction of the two walls a small pit (Level 36---not pictured), 37.5 cm in diameter and 19 cm deep, was imposed upon both the plaster floor and the earlier intrusive pit (Level 38). The pit contained gray-brown soil and an inverted Deprecio Incised jar dating to the latter part of the Middle Preclassic period. Within the vessel was a large obsidian blade that did not have observable use-wear. A thin layer of Late Middle Preclassic fill (Level 34---not pictured) was deposited upon the cache.

During the Late to Terminal Classic period, a 1.3 m deep fill of large limestone rubble (Level 31, 32, and 33) was deposited upon the earlier building, then covered by soil fill (Level 28) and ballast (Level 26). Upon the ballast was a thin floor (Level 22, Floor 3, N.D.), which was very fragmented and intruded by numerous Late Classic oval storage or refuse pits, such as Level 25. The third floor was also intruded upon by a human burial (Level 21) in the northeast corner of the unit. The burial was visible in the northern profile of the unit, but could not be excavated as it lay 30 cm outside of the unit; however, a Late Classic Saxche/Palmar Orange Polychrome bowl deposited with the individual was recovered. The base of the burial pit lay 75 cm below the third floor. Upon the fragmented third floor was constructed a Terminal Classic wall composed of square-cut soft limestone blocks with mortar (Level 20) running east to west oriented 2° to 3° south of east. Behind the wall was a core of medium to large limestone rubble in a soil matrix (Level 19). Portions of this wall were found in Unit 531, 592 and 531, 593, which had been disturbed by a large tree fall, which indicates that it is at least 16 m long.

After the construction of the wall, a thick Terminal Classic plaster floor (Level 22, Floor 2) was laid to its north. Upon this surface was deposited a large concentration of Terminal Classic ceramic sherds (Level 18) that lay in situ against the wall. A corresponding deposit encountered in the eastern part of Str. 606B is described below. The sherds were covered by Terminal Classic fill (Level 17) fill and possible collapse.

Following the placement of the fill, Str. 606B, then Str. 606A were built; however, the profiles did not provide conclusive results regarding the temporal relationships of the buildings. Ballast was laid to the north (Level 16) and south (Level 15) of the southern face of the wall and the northern face of the wall was placed on top of the ballast. The southern face anchored the wall and the northern face widened it to 40 cm. Next, thin plaster surfaces (Level 3) topped the surfaces of the floor of Str. 606B (Level 13a) to the north of the wall and the bench of Str. 606A (Level 14a) to the south.

Test Unit 535, 585 was a 1 x 1 m unit excavated in the medial niche of Str. 606B. The purpose of this excavation was to search for special deposits, such as caches or burials, below the niche. No special deposits were encountered. The unit ended when a thick plaster floor (Level 21) was encountered at 1.46 m b.d. This floor corresponded with Level 21 of Test Unit 531, 577, but did not have a deposit of large sherds upon its surface; thereby demonstrating that this refuse was concentrated against the wall of the earlier construction.

The relationship of Str. 606A, 606B, and 606C was not illuminated by the test pits excavated into the structures. However, the layout of the buildings, differences in the preservation of the various constructions, and artifact distributions have much to say about the latest construction sequences. First of all, Str. 606A was the latest

construction. This is evident in the fact that stones had been robbed from Str. 606B and 606C, but not from 606A. In addition, the stairway of the platform was aligned upon the combination of Str. 606B and 606C. Stairways tend to be aligned with their superstructures, therefore, it was not constructed to access Str. 606A. A fourth line of evidence is the ash that was dumped west of the west walls of both Str. 606A and 606B in the superstructure of 606C. It appears that Str. 606B and 606C were once a single, huge, 38.9-m long C-shaped building, as they shared the north wall and bench and the western bench of Str. 606B was build against the wall of the northern bench. The dividing wall and bench were later added to shorten the building and to add an end room. The use of the end room is uncertain, but they have been encountered in Petén at Tayasal and Nixtun-Ch'ich'. Through time, the width of Str. 606 decreased.

Artifact Distributions of Str. 606

Numerous censer sherds were deposited adjacent to the monuments built into the western side of the south wall of Str. 606, especially near the western part of Altar 1 and Stela 5. The censer sherds did not appear to be parts of in situ vessels, but rather a deposit of ceremonial refuse, because both image and non-image censer sherds, including some Classic period types, miscellaneous ceramics (Figure 7-35), obsidian and chert flakes, and miscellaneous shell were found in the concentration. A similar deposit covered Stela 4 in Str. 601. An 8.5 x 0.5 m trench was excavated in front of the monuments, below the sherds, in order to search for special deposits. The trench reached only to the depth of the Classic period plaster surface, which lies 23 cm below the latest platform surface construction and runs under the south wall of Str. 606. Half of a human mandible was cached in front of the western part of Altar 1.

Time constraints did not allow the excavation of the entire length of the north wall of Str. 606B, but a 2 m long area was excavated in the northeast corner and a 6 x 2 m strip was excavated northwest of the medial niche. A small concentration of censer sherds and animal bones were encountered in Units 539, 577 and 538, 577, north of the niche. Deposits of ceremonial garbage are commonly found associated with the rear of open halls. The sherds were secondary refuse from ritual activities conducted in all parts of Str. 606 and other areas.

Numerous long bones were encountered along the southern half of the western platform edge of Str. 606. These remains were either the result of a burial eroding from the deteriorating edge or were ceremonial refuse thrown on the side of the structure. A moderate concentration of charcoal was also encountered in this area. This concentration was fairly dense on the plaster surface at the base of the small niche in the first terrace. These concentrations may be related to the mass grave encountered in Op. 1000.

Similar to the other colonnaded halls at Zacpetén, Str. 606A was relatively clean of artifact concentrations. However, adjacent to the base of the northern bench was an interesting deposit of long bones that have not been thoroughly analyzed, but appear to be human. The deposit included three 21 to 28 cm long bones, each of which was charred and rested on the floor oriented 25° to 32° east of north. In addition to the similarity in orientation, the first lay 65 cm from the second which, in turn lay 78 cm from the third. The spacing of the bones and similar placement is intriguing and suggests some sort of ceremonial use of the bones. To the southwest of the westernmost long bone was a concentration of censer sherds and smaller fragments of bone. In the largest temple of Nojpeten, three "half-rotted" shinbones hung from the ceiling by different

colored ribbons (Thompson 1951: 394). Long bones were also used in male initiation ceremonies (Landa 1941: 105). The remains of sacrificed captives were often kept as trophies of war that were displayed during dances (Landa 1941: 120) and the spacing may reflect the spacing between the individuals on the bench who possessed the objects. In addition, the bones of ancestors, especially "crania and long bones," were often removed from mortuary contexts and brought back into the "systemic context" as powerful fetishes (McAnany 1995: 61).

While Str. 606B was disturbed by stone and fill robbing, a couple of in situ deposits were found within it. One of the deposits included a small concentration of Mumul Composite non-image sherds in the medial niche (Figure 7-20). This censer type was infrequent in the rest of the building and was not encountered in front of the altar and stela, like most censer types. As mentioned in the discussion of the niche of Str. 605, activities associated with niches were similar to those associated with altars and both can be considered doorways that transcend physical space crossing into supernatural space.

A second group of in situ artifacts in Str. 606B included sherds of two ceramic whistles or flutes encountered on the northern bench west of the medial niche. A female figurine fragment found nearby may have been a whistle as well. Whistles and flutes were among the musical instruments used in rituals and warfare.

Inside Str. 606C and adjacent to the west wall of Str. 606B was a concentration of ash and charcoal. While this material did not contain censer sherds, it was very similar to that found adjacent to the west wall of Str. 606A. It appears that Str. 606C was used as an ash dump and its use ended prior to the abandonment of the rest of the ceremonial

area. A moderate concentration of small projectile points was encountered at the southeast corner of the platform of Str. 606C.

Distributed throughout Str. 606 were numerous (n=11) small quartz crystals and a quartz bead (Figure 7-36). One of the crystals was a small geode-like formation that contained numerous small crystals. These objects were found inside the superstructures and generally not along the platform edges. Crystallomancy seems to have been a common activity in halls, as seen in Str. 615 and 767 and elsewhere.

The use of the area of Str. 606 began in the Middle Preclassic; was renewed in the Terminal Classic, and again in the Postclassic period. During the latter period, the structure was constructed as an open hall beginning with Str. 606 B and C and later, Str. 606A was added on top and in front. Str. 606A was the open hall of a Mayapán style temple assemblage. Like the two other halls at Zacpetén, Str. 606A contains small masonry rectangles. Activity areas in Str. 606 are sparse, but evidence of censer and crystal use was observed.

Str. 607

Str. 607 is a long, low building oriented 356° east of magnetic north (assuming the north side is its "front") lying west of the base of the east stairway of Str. 602 (Fig. 7-1, 7-37, and 7-38). The former structure is not precisely centered upon the stairway of the latter, but is skewed to the south. It was investigated with a 105 m^2 excavation block. The vertical datum of Str. 607 was located 4.17 m below that of Str. 602. Excavations revealed that Str. 607 is actually composed of two buildings, Str. 607A and Str. 607B.

Architectural Composition of Str. 607A

Str. 607A lies to the west of Str. 602. The masonry is primarily composed of squared vertical slabs set in a single course. Some of the stone was cut soft limestone. Tiny fragments of plaster on top of the fill demonstrate that the structure was once plastered. When Str. 607A was originally mapped in 1995, there appeared to have been three small masonry rectangles on top of it. Excavations did not encounter these rectangles; however, similar rectangles were found on Str. 766, a parallel building in Group C. It is likely these small altars were disturbed by foot traffic during the refilling of the western looter's trench of Str. 602.

Previous Constructions of Str. 607A

An earlier construction of Str. 607A was encountered within the later one. Portions of the primary construction were partially visible in the northern half of the structure after the removal of the collapse layer. The south wall of the later structure is also the south wall of the early construction. The later construction involved increasing the width of the building. The earlier construction was more off-center of the western stairway of Str. 602 than the subsequent construction. For the most part, the plaster surface of the plaza surface ended at the wall of the secondary construction; however, along the northern edge, some of these patches of plaster ran under the secondary construction of Str. 607A up to the wall of the primary construction. In areas 1 m from the structure the first Late Postclassic floor was separated from the second by a thin ballast (Level 3B). It appears that after the second construction of 607A, the plaza was resurfaced, but in the area adjacent to the structure, the new surface was placed on top of the old without adding a layer of ballast.