

*Archaeological insights on the contact
period lowland maya **

DIANE Z. AND ARLEN F. CHASE
(University of Central Florida)

The reconstruction of the economic, religious, and socio-political organization of the pre-contact Maya is a pivotal goal for archaeologists working in Mesoamerica. A correct definition of Late Postclassic or Protohistoric Maya society is crucial to understanding, first, the dynamics of culture change and acculturation following the conquest and, second, the transformed culture of the contemporary Maya. The pre-contact Maya additionally provide the only connection between the historic accounts, both native and Spanish, and the earlier Classic Period Maya. If we cannot establish the relationship between pre-contact Maya of the archaeology and the immediately post-contact Maya as described ethnohistorically, it would be ridiculous to presume to comprehend the relationship between the Classic Period Maya and the Post-conquest Maya, given the separation in time of at least 500 years compounded by the problems of disease, famine, and the introduction of a new culture. Thus, a correlation of the ethnohistory and archaeology for the contact period and a resolution between any differences in these bodies of data is clearly desirable and significant.

Sources for studying the contact Period Maya are many and include archaeology, native documents, ethnohistory, and ethnography. Archaeology of the Maya just before the advent of the Europeans was, in the past, limited to work at a few sites, in part

* *Acknowledgements.* The research at Santa Rita Corozal was funded during 1984 and 1985 by Grants BNS-8318531 and BNS-8509304 from the National Science Foundation.

due to a focus on the more spectacular and earlier Classic Period sites and finds. Recent efforts by a host of researchers has expanded the archaeological coverage to include a series of Late Postclassic sites in the Northern and Southern Lowlands (see A. Chase and P. Rice 1985 and J. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V n.d.). Together these investigations are serving to provide a new and more comprehensive picture of the pre-contact Maya.

There are problems in studying the contact Maya archaeologically, not the least of which are the difficulties of locating sites and determining excavation loci; many Late Postclassic sites are marked by their low-lying architecture, in contrast to the earlier Classic Period sites, and are difficult to isolate based on surface investigation. Identification of key places noted in the ethnohistory have likewise proved problematic, particularly given the almost invisible remains and the often vague descriptions of their locations.

Native Maya documents are likewise not as plentiful or useful as might be wished. The majority of the precontact or early contact period pictorial texts or codices were burned at Mani by Bishop Landa. The remaining three codices (Madrid, Paris, Dresden) have yet to be thoroughly understood, although valiant attempts have been made (Thompson 1972a; Villacorta and Villacorta 1930). Post-contact Maya documents such as the various *Chilam Balams* provide pre-contact historical information in the form of cyclical histories and prophecies (A. Chase n.d.). These are difficult to use, however, as their interpretation is open to question.

There are a wide variety of historical documents available concerning the contact Maya. These include accounts of early explorers which are significant in that they provide our first glimpses of the Lowland Maya from European eyes, but disappointing in that they often describe very little of the native culture [see for example Cortes' (1908) own descriptions]. Slightly later materials include bureaucratic documents such as census and tax lists (see Fariss 1984) and other materials such as the *Relaciones de Yucatán* (1898-1900). Of the Historic Period documents, Landa's *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* is perhaps the most detailed in its reference to Maya lifeways. Unfortunately all of these accounts were written long after first contact between the Spanish and the Maya and thus describe an already modified culture due to acculturation and depopulation. Inherent in each is also all of the traditional problems of dealing with manuscript sources, in-

cluding individual biases and viewpoints. Perhaps not surprisingly, new archaeological data and interpretations can now be used to check the validity of certain ethnohistoric statements about the lowland Maya, and often with unexpected results.

Ethnographies of the contemporary Maya obviously also have their place in reconstructions of the ancient pre-contact period Maya. It should be evident, however, that reconstructions of pre-contact organization based solely on ethnographic data are obviously not correct (see for example Reina 1967).

Archaeology and ethnohistory (together with the Maya documents), then, provide the bulk of the information used in reconstruction of contact period culture. While certain authors have attempted to directly translate ethnohistoric statements into Post-classic or Classic Period Maya fact, rigorous scientific methodology clearly requires more controlled comparisons and assumptions, particularly given the changes that Maya society went through immediately following first European contact. In the following sections contact Maya society will be reviewed first from the perspective of the written post-contact record and then from the archaeological perspectives of two contact period sites: Santa Rita Corozal in Belize and Tayasal in Guatemala. Following these necessarily brief presentations, interpretations, conclusions, and problems concerning the nature of pre-contact Maya society will be addressed.

MAYA SOCIETY AT CONTACT: ETHNOHISTORY

A synthesis of the ethnohistoric view of Maya society at the time of contact can best be found in the various works of Ralph Roys. Roys' work was concerned with the nature of Maya society prior to European contact and provides us with what has become the accepted view of the pre-contact Maya. For this paper, three areas of contact society are of prime interest: political organization, settlement pattern, and religious organization. What Roys does not discuss can generally be found in the work of Bishop Landa who wrote his *relación* circa A.D. 1566 (Tozzer 1941).

Roys (1957, 1965), using a variety of sources, reconstructed the political organization of the pre-contact Yucatan Peninsula, archaeologically known as the Northern Lowlands. At the time that first Europeans were shipwrecked along the coast, there were appa-

rently at least 16, and up to 19, *cuchcabals* or «jurisdictions». These were independent territories, each of which had its own internal political organization and all of whom apparently considered themselves to be Maya. The Yucatan Peninsula had previously been under the dominion of a single site, Mayapan, but this *multepal* reportedly fell apart ca. AD 1450 (Roys 1927: 4).

There were apparently differing internal organizations within the provinces. Roys (1957: 6) distinguishes three. In the first, found in such *cuchcabals* as Cepech, Mani, and Sotuta, a *halach uinic* or «real man» ruled the entire territory. He resided in the capital city of the *cuchcabal* and doubled as the *batab* for that city. There were *batabs* or local rulers below him in each of the other towns within the territory. In the second kind of political organization, found in such *cuchcabals* as Ah Canul and perhaps Cupul, rather than a *halach uinic*, governing was carried out by a series of *batabs*, all or most of whom belonged to the same lineage and who appear to have acted more or less in unison as a council. In the third type of territory, such as the *cuchcabal* of Chakan, there were only loose confederations of groups of towns.

There are a number of other political offices which were readily transformed into useful positions in colonial society (Roys 1957: 6,7). The *batab* was the head of each town. There was a war chief or *nacom*. There were deputies for the *batabs* called *ah kulels* as well as *ah cuch cabs* or heads of wards or barrios in a town. Roys notes that the smallest political organization in the post-contact period was the *cuchteel* or ward.

Not only were there slightly different organizations within the territories, but there were also apparently differing degrees of cooperation and warfare between them (see D. Chase n.d.). Obviously, these three kinds of political organization and the integration between them should be visible in the archaeological record, particularly in the associated settlement patterns.

Intra-town (or site) settlement is difficult to tackle from the ethnohistory. Landa very clearly describes the situation as he finds it:

their dwelling place was as follows: — in the middle of the town were their temples with beautiful plazas, and all around the temples stood the houses of the lords and the priests, and then (those of) the most important people. Thus came the houses of the richest and of those who were held in the highest estimation nearest to these, and at the outskirts of the town were the houses of the lower class (Tozzer, 1941: 62).

There are, however, alternative possibilities, particularly in the intermixing of classes within the town by *cuchteel*, for as Roys (1965: 664) noted, «...we know that many towns were divided into barrios, or wards; it is altogether probable that the powerful head of each barrio lived in his own district, as we know he did in colonial times». All of the descriptions of Maya towns are significantly post-contact and it may be that archaeology will eventually provide a final solution to the problem of their actual organization.

Religion was clearly important to the pre-contact Maya, but was also among the first aspects of the native culture that colonial clergy sought to change. In their zeal to missionize and destroy paganism, much of traditional Maya religious culture was left unrecorded. One good example of such destruction is Landa's burning of all of the available Maya codices at Mani, probably in 1562. Yet it is also Landa who provides some of our best descriptions of pre-contact Maya beliefs. Landa's accounts are, however, of unequal quality and sometimes internally inconsistent—at least to the mind of a 20th century archaeologist. He was, however, doing his best to overcome ethnocentrism.

Landa's descriptions of Maya religion allow for two different conclusions. Either the Maya were individualistic idol-worshippers or they were integrated into an extremely well organized series of calendric rituals which served to unite members of society. He describes the idols follows: «They had such a great quantity of idols that even those of their gods not enough; for there was not an animal or insect of which they did not make a statue and they made all these in the images of their gods and goddesses» (Tozzer 1941: 110). Similar statements can be found in the *Relaciones de Yucatán* (1898: 1: 52): «the common people also had private idols to whom they sacrificed, each one according to his calling or occupation which he had». In contrast, however, Landa also describes specific calendric rituals, such as *Uayeb* or New Year's rites which pertain to specific dieties. Any discrepancies in Landa's account should not be surprising given the fact that his role in Yucatan was as a member of the clergy and that Maya religion must have seemed very different indeed. Again, archaeology can make inroads into these interpretations.

From the very brief review above, it should be evident that there is much to be learned about the Maya from the ethnohistory, yet even the best ethnohistoric descriptions still leave much

uncertain about the nature of pre-contact Maya society. Archaeological excavations and interpretations are the only likely source to fill in these gaps and resolve any inconsistencies in the record. In an effort to fill the perceived archaeological gaps and ethnohistoric inconsistencies, our research has focused on the sites of Tayasal and Santa Rita Corozal. These are two extremely different Maya sites, both occupied at the time of contact, each of which offers a few unique pieces to the puzzle of contact Maya culture.

MAYA SOCIETY AT CONTACT: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TAYASAL

Hernan Cortes crossed through the central Peten of Guatemala in A.D. 1525 on his way to Honduras. He was not overly impressed with the villages he encountered - in contrast to the glowing statements by individuals who visited the area almost one hundred years later, such as Fuensalida and Orbita, and at an even later date, Avendaño. Cortes' brief stay in the central Peten likely had severe side effects in the overall health status of the indigenous population. The fact that Fuensalida y Orbita could find the rotting remains of Cortes' horse being worshipped in the Peten in A.D. 1618 as «Tzimin-Kax» or «Thunder-God» may not refer, as previously thought, to the powerful discharge of a Spanish arquebus (for the Itza were clearly not afraid of the Spanish), but rather to the devastating effects of disease that likely struck the Itza community Cortes visited soon after his departure. In fact, the ethnohistoric descriptions of Itza society (see Villagutierre 1933 and Thompson 1951) that we have may, in actuality, be an amalgam of a host of different refugee populations, some non-Maya, that appeared in the reclusive Peten subsequent to Cortes' visit.

Traditional sources have placed the location of ethnohistorically-known Tayasal in Lake Peten-Itza; yet the archaeology of this region does not accord well with what we know of the Postclassic Maya from the Northern Lowlands (A. Chase 1976, 1982, 1983, 1985a, 1985b, n.d.), from whom the Itza claimed direct ancestry (see for example Thompson 1951). We believe that other archaeological work that has been done on the Postclassic Period in the central Peten better conforms to the patterns found in the Northern Lowlands (see Johnson 1985 and D. Chase n.d.), although this has not been the interpretation of other researchers (Jones,

Rice, and Rice 1981; D. Rice & P. Rice 1984; P. Rice & D. Rice 1985; P. Rice n.d.).

The Tayasal Peninsula in the Peten of Guatemala was selected for excavation by the University of Pennsylvania in 1970 in an attempt to define once and for all the Postclassic populations and their relationship to the earlier Classic Period. A single summer field season was carried out in 1971; this was augmented by further work at Tayasal and Flores in 1977 and briefly in 1979. A wealth of information was garnered through these investigations, much of it pertaining to earlier periods of Maya prehistory, but much of this data was attributable to the Postclassic Period (see A. Chase 1983).

Postclassic occupation was found in over half of the 99 areas tested at Tayasal; most of this, however was attributable to time periods earlier than contact. No standing architecture datable to the Late Postclassic period was found; instead, the majority of the remains, even for earlier parts of the Postclassic, appeared to be small dispersed house platforms which were not organized into formal groups. The pottery found in the Lake Peten area were predominantly from the Augustine and Paxcaman ceramic groups, a ceramic tradition indigenous to the central Peten and first appearing in the transition from the Classic to Postclassic Periods. The artifactual repertoire corresponding to all phases of the Postclassic was fairly meager with few trade goods represented in the recovered sample. The emphasis on modeled censerware found in the Late Postclassic Period of the Northern Lowlands (D. Chase 1984) and in the lake areas of the eastern part of the Peten (Bullard 1970; P. Rice 1979) was not found either on the Tayasal Peninsula or on the island of Flores.

Overall, the recovered archaeological data from Lake Peten-Itza raise more questions than they have solve. Organizational principles seen in the settlement patterns of Postclassic populations to the east of Lake Peten (D. Rice & P. Rice 1981; D. Rice n.d.) do not occur in the Lake Peten-Itza area. As the Postclassic eastern patterns may be related to more general Late Postclassic Yucatec forms of settlement pattern (D. Rice & P. Rice 1981; Johnson 1985), this raises the question as to the relationships of the Postclassic archaeological remains in the Lake Peten-Itza region. The extant archaeological data demonstrates that they must go back to at least time of the Maya collapse, but were likely arranged along different organizational principles than those spe-

cified by Roys for the Yucatan Peninsula. Little can be stated with regard to religious organization in the Lake Peten-Itza area, other than it, as well, was clearly along principles that differed from those in use among the Late Postclassic Maya of the Northern Lowlands. This is particularly seen in the de-emphasis in the use of effigy censerware in the Lake Peten area and in the absence of modeled caches, like those known from Mayapan and Santa Rita (D. Chase 1981).

In summary, Cortes's visit to the Peten region in 1525 probably severely disrupted the then existing Maya lifeways and may have resulted in a very changed area when it was next visited years later. However, the archaeology of the Lake Peten area make several things clear. First, the Tayasal region exhibits an indigenous tradition dating to the period of the Maya collapse. Second, the Lake Peten region was largely outside the purview of the Northern Lowlands. Finally, the archaeology of the Postclassic Peten is complex and difficult to reconcile with ethnohistoric statements; this may be partially ascribable to population movements and disruptions as a result of contact following Cortes' 1525 visit to the Peten.

MAYA SOCIETY AT CONTACT: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SANTA RITA COROZAL

Santa Rita Corozal rings modern Corozal Town in northern Belize. The site is strategically located on Chetumal Bay between the two navigable rivers: the Rio Hondo and the New River. This situation was obviously important in the development of the site given both a local and pan-Maya focus on long-distance trade. Santa Rita Corozal is also the most likely candidate for the Maya capital of the province of Chetumal and the location of the short-lived Historic Spanish community of Villa Real (Thompson 1972b; D. Chase 1981, 1982; Jones 1984).

Archaeological excavation at Santa Rita began at the turn of the century with the work of Thomas Gann, a British medical doctor stationed in Corozal (Gann 1900, 1911, 1914, 1918; Gann & Gann 1939). Gann roughly mapped the site and conducted a series of excavations. Santa Rita Corozal's niche in Mesoamerican archaeology comes largely from the unusual Late Postclassic wall murals and ceramic figure caches that he unearthed. While Gann clearly established the importance of Late Postclassic Santa Rita, his

work is difficult to use as compared to more recent and more thoroughly reported Late Postclassic sites. Several groups of archaeologists returned to Santa Rita following Gann's work (Green, 1973; Pring, 1973: 62-67; Hammond, 1974: 24; Sidrys, 1976: 332-344; 1983: 124-179), but until Corozal Postclassic Project began in 1979 there had been no intensive investigations at the site by archaeologists.

Corozal Postclassic Project investigations at Santa Rita were first initiated in order to attempt to archaeologically define the Postclassic Period for northern Belize. Excavations were undertaken in two phases. Phase I investigations were oriented toward reconnaissance and mapping, as well as toward structural excavations in 1979 and 1980 clearly indicated the relatively large size of the site (4 square kilometers) and the abundance of Late Postclassic architecture and special deposits when compared to the site's destruction due to the increasing size of modern Corozal Town. Phase I investigations likewise allowed for re-interpretations of Gann's earlier findings in the light of new and more tightly controlled excavations. More importantly, however, the initial C.P.P. investigations showed that Santa Rita Corozal was capable, even in its partially destroyed state, of providing archaeological data directly relevant to the nature of contact period Maya society. Certain preliminary interpretations were made concerning the nature of late Maya society (D. Chase, 1982, 1985a, 1985b).

Phase II excavations at Santa Rita in 1984 and 1985 accordingly sought to use archaeological work at this site to define Lowland Maya organization during the Late Postclassic. In particular, investigations were selected in order check the reliability of certain ethnohistoric descriptions concerning Maya site, ritual, and social organization at contact and to test hypotheses concerning the nature of this organization at contact and to test hypotheses concerning the nature of this organization based on Phase I work. The 1985 investigations were particularly successful in isolating a heavily occupied Late Postclassic sector of the and in allowing for interpretations concerning the layout and makeup of a Maya capital city.

Combined Phase I and Phase II investigations at Santa Rita provide an excellent sample of excavated buildings, burials, caches, and refuse deposits. While excavations focused on the Late Postclassic Period, investigations revealed a site with a long history of occupation, beginning in the Early Preclassic Period (ca.

2000 B.C.) and continuing into the Historic Period. There appears to be only one break in the archaeological record, immediately following the first Spanish presence at the site (ca. 1532).

Architectural remains at Santa Rita Corozal consist primarily of low-lying foundations for constructions rather than standing buildings. There are platforms raised one or more meters above the ground surface upon which rest other constructions, but in general, buildings were placed directly on unraised floor surfaces either singly or in groups. Because they are low-lying, constructions at Santa Rita are difficult to discern from surface indications. Complete clearing of growth is necessary in most cases to distinguish underlying Postclassic occupation. Even after clearing, large buildings may be discernable only by one or two stones in line or by a slightly flattened area. Once topsoil has been removed, quite variable building plans are revealed, from single rooms to multi-roomed constructions. Regardless of size, all are marked by stone foundations and plastered floors; buildings were made of perishable materials. Remnants of stucco indicate that many of the walls were modeled and painted.

Varied amounts and kinds of artifacts and burials are found associated with Late Postclassic buildings at Santa Rita Corozal. Pottery includes abundant redware (most commonly Rita Red jars and tripod bowls) and effigy incense burners, both derived from the Mayapan tradition. Other ceramics include unslipped ollas, modeled and painted figures from caches, and rarer polychrome pottery. There are abundant broken mano and metate fragments, numerous notched sherds and ceramic beads, and many, diagnostic, small chert notched points. There are a number of trade items within the excavations at Santa Rita, from the shorter-distance chert to the longer-distance traded obsidian, *spondylus* shell, copper, paleite, turquoise, gold, and foreign pottery (one piece from as far south as Ecuador). These items support the notion of Santa Rita Corozal as an important capital city and, possibly, as a port of trade (Chapman, 1957).

Possible lines of interpretation from the excavations at Santa Rita are many and varied. Certain questions concerning the Protohistoric Maya are relatively easily answered based upon these data. For example, Santa Rita Corozal did not have a concentric organization during its Late Postclassic occupation. While this does not rule out the possibility of concentric arrangements of buildings and plazas at other late or early Maya sites, it does

suggest that Landa's and others' descriptions of this type of planning in towns should not be assumed to be the case. Possible reasons for the incorrectness of his generalized assertion include the time lapse between his writing and initial culture contact or the use of extant Central American data not relating to the Maya (D. Chase n.d.). Architecture and artifactual distributions suggest that Postclassic Santa Rita Corozal was composed of a series of sectors (or barrios) which were located almost linearly along a ridge of higher land encircling Corozal Town. There is no «site-core» per se and, importantly, elite residences and burials are located at a variety of distances from the middle portion of the site; the most impressive of these are actually located close to the site limits rather than around any central, focal plaza area. In not having a central focus on a specific group, Santa Rita differs from Mayapan, yet Mayapan also exhibits outlying barrios with dispersed elite residences, rather than fitting a concentric model. Both Santa Rita and Mayapan appear to have administrative units throughout the site. It is also important to note that there is no evidence of economic specialization by barrio, indicating that organization and integration mechanisms were probably along other avenues.

Evidences of Maya religious activities abound at Santa Rita and include a multitude of modeled pottery incense burners and caches as well as specialized ritual buildings. All of these indicators suggest a vigorous religion; analysis of the archaeology suggests that these Postclassic religious components derived largely from Classic Maya antecedents. Spatially repeated patterns of the deposition of ritual items, specifically censers and caches, suggest not the innumerable idols and decentralized religion ascribed to the Postclassic Maya by some researchers (cf. Freidel & Sabloff, 1984: 183), but rather a limited number of idols integrated into a centralized and rigidly organized religion in which the recovered archaeological deposits mirror the Maya conception of time as cyclical. Certain of these deposits may correlate with specific festivities described by Landa (Tozzer, 1941: 135-149), such as those taking place during the *Uayeb* or five unlucky days at the end of each year (D. Chase 1985b). Other Santa Rita cache figures highlight certain traditional aspects of Maya belief such as ritual blood-letting and the importance of the four directional aspects of different deities.

The overarching political organization of the Late Postclassic Maya of Santa Rita Corozal is difficult to get at, but the site is clearly related to Mayapan ceramically. Roys (1956: 669) noted that a *halach uinic* probably ruled Chetumal and the burial of what is interpreted to be such an individual was unearthed during the 1985 season. Rather than following Landa's (Tozzer, 1941: 130-131) recorded practice of cremating such Maya elite, this individual was in a bundle burial accompanied by another sacrificial victim and a host of jewelry. Gold and turquoise mosaic earflares accompanied this person and attest to his probable ties to Aztec society, as the use of analagous earflares in Aztec society was restricted to the highest elite and priests of that society (Noguera, 1971: 260, 267). Had Cortes not launched his own conquest of Mexico in A.D. 1519, the Aztecs were poised for their own conquest of the Maya realm. If the high status earflares are a symbol of the political connections of the Santa Rita *halach uinic*, it is clear how much the Aztecs valued Chetumal's location as a trading entrepot on the eastern Maya seaboard. At the same time, the interment and its accompanying items also demonstrate the participation of the *cuchcabal* of Santa Rita / Chetumal in networks of communication and trade extending far beyond the Maya region.

CONCLUSIONS

Postclassic Maya archaeology is only recently coming of age. Our lack of knowledge concerning the period of time immediately prior to contact is largely due to two factors. The first is the nature of the Late Postclassic remains themselves, which can lead to a characterization of Late Postclassic Maya remains as being almost «invisible» to archaeologists. The second factor contributing to the neglect of the Postclassic Period is the very nature of the archaeological field which has tended to favor investigation of the more easily found and visually spectacular Classic Period.

Characterizations of Maya society based solely on ethnohistory overlap to some degree with the general picture of the Late Postclassic Maya garnered from archaeology. Yet, in many instances, the differences in interpretation derived from these two data bases can result in widely divergent characterizations of the same Maya society. The socio-political organization of the Maya at contact

would appear to have been highly complex. Archaeology, however, indicates that the organization of Maya towns was not necessarily in the concentric mode indicated by Landa. This is a particularly important fact, given the present argument in the literature over the projection of Landa's concentric model backward in time for Classic Period site organization (see Arnold and Ford 1980; Ford and Arnold, 1982; Ashmore, 1981: 461-462; Folen et al., 1982). Religious organization of the pre-contact Maya was apparently far more tightly organized than indicated by miscellaneous Historic Period statements. It would appear that religion was, in fact, a unifying and organizational force during the Late Postclassic Period.

That discrepancies exist between ethnohistory and archaeology is understandable, particularly given the complex situations involved. The colonial manuscripts were generally written well after the initial period of contact. This allows a significant period of time for culture change due to both acculturation and to depopulation from disease and famine, which we know was prevalent during early Colonial times. The resettlement of the Maya by the colonial powers also fostered culture change both through forcing a reorganization of their culture and through the syncretism of the Maya and Catholic religions. Thus, there were ample possibilities for changes between pre and post-contact native culture. In addition, differences between both European and Maya society are such that problems in interpreting religion in particular are likely. Native political groupings were likewise viewed, translated, and interpreted with European models, units, and leaders in mind—a practice which would undoubtedly obscure Maya distinctions.

The organization of both Tayasal/Flores and Santa Rita Corozal should be analogous, for both have been suggested as the loci of Maya capitals of *cuchcabals* ruled by *halach uinics* (A. Chase, 1985b; D. Chase n.d.). The site of Santa Rita fits the image well. The site has a relatively dense population, variation in buildings and burials, many long-distance trade items, and indications of elaborate and unifying ritual activity. The Lake Peten area, to the contrary, provides a somewhat less impressive picture during the Late Postclassic. Flores does not appear to be heavily occupied during the Late Postclassic Period and the population from this era at Tayasal is scattered and generally limited to the lakeshore. The populations in the Tayasal area are neither organized concentrically nor exhibit plaza groupings, something that is probably

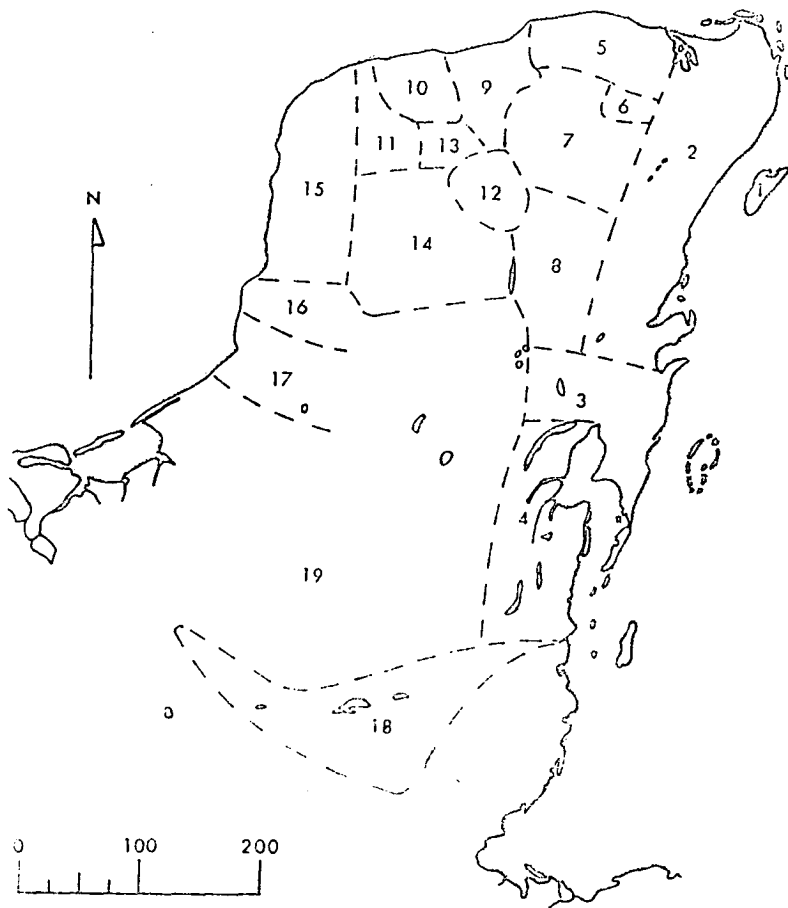


FIG. 1.—Map of Yucatan Indicating Boundaries of Native Maya Provinces in Existence at the Time of Conquest (after Roys, 1957: Map 1).

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Cozumel of Cuzamil | 11. Chakan |
| 2. Ecab or Ekab | 12. Sotuta |
| 3. Uaymil | 13. Hocaba or Homun |
| 4. Chetumal or Chactemal | 14. Tutul Xiu or Mani |
| 5. Chikincheel of Chauaca | 15. Ah Canul |
| 6. Tazes | 16. Canpech |
| 7. Cupul | 17. Champoton |
| 8. Cochuah | 18. Tayasal or Tah Itza |
| 9. Ah Kin Chel | 19. Cehaches (?) |
| 10. Ceh Pech | |

true of Flores as well. The material remains from the Lake Peten region also indicate that trade items are far from abundant in the Late Postclassic Period. The area also contains little, if any, indication of pre-contact Yucatec-style religion in the form of effigy incense burners. While these features do not necessarily rule out either Flores or Tayasal as the *cuchcabal* capital city of the same name, the Lake Peten region does not appear to correlate well with the ethnohistoric descriptions of the populous Itza stronghold.

Tayasal and Santa Rita Corozal provide different pictures of pre-contact Maya society - one that is not uniform, but rather varies from region to region. In both instances, however, these late Maya can be viewed as a vibrant people and the material remains of their cultures can be used to provide a detailed description of these peoples that in some cases match the ethno-history, but in other cases contradict it entirely.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARNOLD, J. E., and A. FORD:

- 1978 Settlement patterns at Tikal: A Statistical Examination of Status and Proximity, Paper Presented at the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Los Angeles.

ASHMORE, W., ed.:

- 1981 *Lowland Maya Settlement Patterns*, School of American Research, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

BULLARD, W. R., Jr.:

- 1970 Topoxte: A Postclassic Maya Site in Peten, Guatemala, *Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology* 61: 245-308, Harvard.

CHAPMAN, A. M.:

- 1957 Port of Trade Enclaves in Aztec and Maya Civilizations, in Polanyi et al., eds., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*: 114-153, Free Press, Glencoe.

CHASE, A. F.:

- 1976 Topoxte and Tayasal: Ethnohistory in Archaeology, *American Antiquity*, 41: 154-167.
- 1982 Con Manos Arriba: Tayasal and Archaeology, *American Antiquity* 47(1): 167-171.
- 1983 *A Contextual Consideration of the Tayasal - Paxcaman Zone, El Peten, Guatemala*, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
- 1985a Archaeology in the Maya Heartland, *Archaeology* 38(1): 32-39.
- 1985b Postclassic Peten Interaction Spheres: The View From Tayasal, in A. Chase and P. Rice, eds., *The Lowland Maya Postclassic*, pp. 184-205, University of Texas Press.

- n.d. Time Depth of Vacuum: The 11.3.0.0.0. Correlation and the Lowland Maya Postclassic, in J. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V, eds., *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, University of New Mexico Press.
- CHASE, A. F., and P. M. RICE, eds.:
 1985 *The Lowland Maya Postclassic*, University of Texas Press.
- CHASE, D. Z.:
 1981 The Maya Postclassic at Santa Rita Corozal, *Archaeology* 34 (1): 25-33.
 1982 *Spatial and Temporal Variability in Postclassic Northern Belize*, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
 1984 The Late Postclassic Pottery of Santa Rita Corozal, Belize: The Xabalxab Ceramic Complex, *Cerámica de Cultura Maya* 13: 18-26.
 1985a Ganned but not Forgotten: Late Postclassic Archaeology and Ritual at Santa Rita Corozal, in A. Chase and P. Rice, eds., *The Lowland Maya Postclassic*, pp. 104-125, University of Texas Press.
 1985b Between Earth and Sky: Idols, Images, and Postclassic Cosmology, in 1983, pp. 223-233, Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, San Francisco.
- n.d. The Land of Cacao and Honey: Spatial Frames for Lowland Postclassic Social Organization, in J. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V, eds., *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, University of New Mexico Press.
- CORTÉS, H.:
 1908 *Hernando Cortés: His Five Letters of Relation to the Emperor Charles V*, Translated by F. A. MacNutt, New York.
- DÁVILA, A.:
 1533 Relación, in *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de las posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía*, 1st series, vol. 14: 97-128 (1864-1884), Madrid.
- FARRISS, N.:
 1984 *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*, Princeton University Press.
- FOLEN, W.; E. R. KINTZ, L. A. FLETCHER and B. H. HYDE:
 1982 An Examination of Settlement Patterns at Coba, Quintana Roo, Mexico, and Tikal, Guatemala: A Reply to Arnold and Ford, *American Antiquity* 47: 430-436.
- FORD, A., and J. E. ARNOLD:
 1982 A Reexamination of Labor Investments at Tikal: Reply to Haviland, and Folen, Kintz, Fletcher, and Hyde, *American Antiquity* 47: 436-440.
- FREIDEL, D. A., and J. A. SABLOFF:
 1984 *Cozumel: Late Maya Settlement Patterns*, Academic Press.
- GANN, T.:
 1900 Mounds Northern Honduras, *Nineteenth Annual Report, 1897-1898, Bureau of American Ethnology*, Smithsonian Institution, Part 2: 661-692, Washington, D. C.
 1911 Explorations Carried on in British Honduras in 1908-9, *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 4: 72-87.
 1914 Report on Some Excavations in British Honduras, *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 7: 28-42.

- 1918 The Maya Indians of Southern Yucatan and Northern British Honduras, *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, No. 64, Washington, D. C.
- GANN, T, and M. GANN:
 1939 Archaeological Investigations in the Corozal District of British Honduras, *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, No. 123: 1-57, Washington, D. C.
- GREEN, E. L.:
 1973 Location Analysis of Prehistoric Maya Sites in Northern British Honduras, *American Antiquity* 38 (3): 279-293.
- HAMMOND, N.:
 1974 Preclassic to Postclassic in Northern Belize, *Antiquity* 48: 177-189.
- JOHNSON, J.:
 1985 Postclassic Maya Site Structure at Topoxte, El Peten, Guatemala, in A. Chase and P. Rice, eds., *The Lowland Maya Postclassic*, pp. 151-165, University of Texas Press.
- JONES, Grant D.:
 1984 The Last Maya Frontiers of Colonial Yucatan, *Belcast Journal of Belizean Affairs*, vol. 1.
- JONES, G. D.; RICE, D. S. and P. M. RICE:
 1981 The Location of Tayasal: A Reconsideration in Light of Peten Maya Ethnohistory and Archaeology, *American Antiquity* 46: 530-547.
- NOGUERA, E.:
 1971 Minor Arts in the Central Valleys, in G. F. Ekholm and I. Bernal, eds., *Handbook of Middle American Indians* 10: 258-269, Univ. of Texas Press.
- PRING, D.:
 1973 Op 8 - Santa Rita, in *British Museum - Cambridge University Corozal Project*, 1973 Interim Report: 62-67, Hammond, ed., Centre of Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge.
- REINA, R. E.:
 1967 Milpas and Milperos: Implications for Prehistoric Times, *American Anthropologist* 69 (1): 1-20.
- RELACIONES DE YUCATAN:
 1898-1900 *Relaciones de Yucatán*, Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar, 2nd series, vols. 11 and 13 (I, II), Madrid.
- RICE, D. S.:
 n.d. The Peten Postclassic: A Settlement Perspective, in J. A. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V, eds., *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, University of New Mexico Press.
- RICE, D. S., and P. M. RICE:
 1981 Muralla de León: A Lowland Maya Fortification, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 8 (3): 271-288.
 1984 Collapse to Conquest: Postclassic Archaeology of the Peten Maya, *Archaeology* 37 (2): 46-51.

- RICE, P. M.:
- 1979 Ceramic and nonceramic artifacts of Lakes Yaxha-Sacnab, El Peten, Guatemala, Part I, The Ceramics, Section B, Postclassic Pottery from Topoxte, *Cerámica de Cultura Maya et al.*, No. 11: 1-86, M.
 - n.d. The Peten Postclassic: Perspectives from the Central Peten Lakes, in J. A. Sabloff and E. W. Andrews V, eds., *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, University of New Mexico Press.
- RICE, P. M., and D. S. RICE:
- 1985 Topoxte, Macanche, and the Central Peten Postclassic, in A. Chase and P. Rice, eds., *The Lowland Maya Postclassic*, pp. 166-183, University of Texas Press.
- ROYS, R. L.:
- 1957 *The Political Geography of the Yucatan Maya*, Carnegie Institution of Washington Pub. 613, Washington, D. C.
 - 1965 Lowland Maya Native Society at Spanish Contact, in R. Wauchope, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians 3*: 659-78, University of Texas Press, Austin.
- SABLOFF, J. A., and E. W. ANDREWS V, eds.:
- n.d. *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, University of New Mexico Press.
- SIDRYS, R.:
- 1976 *Mesoamerica: An Archaeological Analysis of Low-Energy Civilization*, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
 - 1983 *Archaeological Excavations in Northern Belize, Central America*, Monograph 17, Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.
- THOMPSON, J. E. S.:
- 1951 The Itza of Tayasal Peten, in *Homenaje al Doctor Alfonso Caso*: 389-400, México.
 - 1972a *A Commentary on the Dresden Codex*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 93, Philadelphia.
 - 1972b *The Maya of Belize: Historical Chapters Since Columbus*, The Benex Press, Belize, 36 pages.
- TOZZER, A. M.:
- 1941 *Landa's Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*, Papers of the Peabody Museum, vol. 18, Harvard University.
- VILLACORTA C., A. J., and C. A. VILLACORTA R.:
- 1930 *Códices Mayas: Dresdensis, Pereseianus, Tro-Cortesianus*, Tipografía Nacional, Guatemala City.
- VILLAGUTIERRE SOTO MAYOR, Juan de:
- 1933 (1701) *Historia de la Conquista de la Provincia de El Itzá*, Guatemala.