The Sacred Landscape of Mayapan, A Postclassic Maya Center

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SUMMARY

The northern Maya region of the Yucatán Peninsula has been the site of urban development for over 1,000 years. Some of the greatest Precolumbian cities in the New World were built in the area and today the Yucatán peninsula still hosts a vibrant Maya culture. The Yucatán peninsula is therefore a place rich in history, and the exceptional preservation of many of its Precolumbian cities provides excellent opportunity for art historical and archaeological study. Unfortunately, however, study of the region has too often been eclipsed by research dedicated to Maya cities in Chiapas, Mexico, the Petén of Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize.

In response to the relative lack of information we have for Postclassic (12th through 16th centuries) urbanism in Yucatán, the present study focuses on the influential city of Mayapán. Located in the interior of the peninsula, Mayapán rose to power in the 13th century and fell roughly seventy years before the Spanish arrived. It was the most powerful Maya city of its day with extensive trading networks reaching as far as Guatemala, the Gulf Coast and central Mexico. Mayapán's urban identity is marked by such internationalism, especially in the city's ritual core. There, structures and art reference both Maya and central Mexican worlds. Its major buildings, for example, are close copies of those at earlier Maya centers and many of its murals and sculptures are similar to those from central Mexican cities. However, Mayapán was far more than a reference to other places. It was, instead, a center *into* which outside elements were anchored and physically bound. As this dissertation explores, it was the landscape upon and through which Mayapán was built that ultimately dictated Mayapán's urban design and formalized the city's visual identity.

1   INTRODUCTION:

INTEGRATION AND THE POSTCLASSIC CITY OF MAYAPÁN

1.1   <u>Introduction</u>

The late 12th to early 16th centuries in Mesoamerica, referred to by scholars as the Postclassic Period, represents the last period during which indigenous societies of the New World flourished in the absence of transatlantic interaction with European cultures. The time was also an era of increasing sociopolitical change. There were, therefore, few cities powerful enough to maintain lasting control in the area during this time. Because of its great power, and its wealth, the most intensely investigated and documented Postclassic Mesoamerican city has been the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. This was the famed island city located in the Valley of Mexico and conquered by Spanish invaders in 1521. Far less attention has been given, however, to the dozens of other important Postclassic cities of Mesoamerica. This is particularly true of the large city of Mayapán (c. 1220-1440 CE) located in the heart of the Yucatán peninsula (Figure 1.1).

In addition to being overshadowed by scholarship about Aztec Tenochtitlán, Mayapán and other cities of the Yucatán peninsula receive considerably less art historical attention compared to Classic Period (3rd through 9th centuries) Maya sites in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. This is likely because Postclassic Maya cities were historically considered to represent examples of poorer artistic and architectural quality when compared to Classic sites. Writing for the Carnegie project, the first major archaeological investigation at Mayapán, H.E.D. These designations and comparisons were at the very least unfair in their trans-geographic and temporal comparisons, and at their worst detrimental.

Figure 1.1   Mayapán, Mexico. Caracol Seen (left) and Castillo/Temple of Kukulcan (right). Author's photograph, July 2016.

The use of such descriptors for decades clouded our understanding of how Maya Postclassic art and architecture functioned in relationship to the dynamic social context of the time. Recently, scholars have been working exceedingly hard to turn the conversation away from these designations of decline and decadence. The epoch was, after all, one of the last times large indigenous cities would exist unaltered by European interaction. The Postclassic therefore represents a particularly important period in the history of the Americas and is an example of some of the greatest urban complexity then known to the continents. This dissertation focuses specifically on Mayapán, the largest and arguably most important Maya site in Mesoamerica during the Postclassic. It was also one of the most artistically and architecturally eclectic urban centers in the whole of the New World. My goal is to highlight why Mayapán's central/ritual

precinct developed the way it did and what such development meant for the city's identity as a powerful urban center.

Given the hierarchical structure of ancient Maya society, it cannot be denied that the urban design of Mayapán's central precinct, Quadrant Q, was in part motivated by advantageous economic, religious, and political connections with other powerful past and contemporary urban centers. These included ties with large cities in the Maya region and in central Mexico. Major buildings at Mayapán, including the principal pyramid, were closely modeled on earlier forms at the Maya center of Chichén Itzá, for example (to the extent that some of Mayapán's buildings have been understood as copies of those at Chichén Itzá). Additionally, style and subject matter in Mayapán's murals and sculpture reflect the city's relationships with distant non-Maya groups in central Mexico. However, the practices of integrating these visual forms and subject matter from foreign places into Quadrant Q at Mayapán were largely dictated by the unique landscape upon which Mayapán itself was founded.

The term *landscape* is used in this dissertation to refer to the interconnections between topographic environment, built architectural structures, and also the plants, animals, and humans that were part of, and helped to shape, that landscape. It is important to consider as well that Mesoamerican landscapes were most often a visual manifestation of shared cosmological beliefs about primordial place and sacred time (Chapter 2 discusses this fully). These urban places were an extension of, and an extension into, that non-physical and ordered world.

Important to such a discussion and understanding of landscape is considering the human body in relationship to it. I argue that the meanings embedded within landscapes are derived not only from seeing those places, but from experiencing them in a holistic and corporeal way. Following Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (2013) discussion of phenomenology, I suggest that we

must consider that meaning in relationship to landscape is created and interpreted *through* our bodies. In other words, the mind cannot be disembodied from a corporeal experience. As Christopher Tilley and Bennett (2004:2) also review in *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology,* "Precisely because people are physical objects we are able to perceive the world, but there is no purely objective 'outside' vantage point for doing so." In this manner, as Tilley and Bennett imply, our bodies structure the way we create and understand landscapes.

Considering the discussion of landscape laid out above, it follows that the creation and perception of Mayapán's own landscape was therefore inherently unique in many ways. Furthermore, those responsible for designing the urban core of the city were especially sensitive to the powers of that landscape. As this study will demonstrate, rather than being a simple copy or referent to other places, Mayapán's Quadrant Q reflects a synthesis of political, economic and religious themes that were physically bound to (and experienced in) the new city in selective ways. The practices reviewed in this dissertation are ultimately examples of the complex choices and agency wielded by Mayapán's leaders as they actively constructed the urban identity of one of the most powerful cities in the New World. Mayapán was not a simple or modest copy of other places nor was it the resultant product of more commanding cities (as has been discussed in the academic discourse).[1] It was instead a unique center in its own right.

My position on the artistic and architectural agency at Mayapán stems from Postcolonial discourse surrounding the concept of hybridity. Certainly, to use the terms "hybrid" or "hybridity" recalls the work of Homi K. Bhabha (1994)— particularly as those terms are reviewed in his work, *The Location of Culture*. There, Bhabha explains that colonial societies

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[1] See Chapter Three.

should not be defined and understood based on monolithic, organic and immutable ethnic traits. Rather, such cultures must be understood based on the *processes* taking place in the mixing of culture resulting in the hybrid (the colonizer and the colonized). Culture, in Bhabha's view, is not an object, but rather a *site.* In this space of process, new social memory, traits and ultimately identities can be formed via the commingling of different people coming into contact with one another. Bhabha attempts to deconstruct immutable categories of identity that reflect assumptions of binary conditions that cannot, and will not, change. Generally speaking, Bhabha's early work, as well as later Postcolonial studies discussing hybridity, give agency to subaltern voices over their own history, define culture as process-related and in-flux, and can be used to critique and even destabilize dominant power systems (Prabhu 2007).

Because such concepts are widely applicable in a global world where colonization has occurred so frequently, the term hybridity has come to have divergent meanings and uses (and is sometimes understood as a problematic term). In *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity,* anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (1995:239) defines hybridity as the "sociocultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects and practices." Garcia Canclini cautions, however, that prior hybridization gave rise to these discrete structures. Therefore, we must be wary of fabricating "pure points of origin." This is, perhaps, what is cautioned by Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn (2003) in their review of visuality and culture in colonial Spanish America. In "Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," Dean and Leibsohn discuss the term hybridity, along with closely associated terms including syncretism, convergence, and pastiche. They suggest that each of these terms assumes, at some level, a pure or authentic origin once existed before mixing occurred. They argue that terms like

hybridity automatically privilege what existed before the processes of mixing. Dean and Leibsohn also suggest that using the term "hybrid" to discuss visual culture and urban development assumes that the forms that existed before mixing took place were themselves somehow homogenous (existing as "pure" or unmixed forms).

In thinking of Spanish and indigenous American interaction during the Colonial period, for example, there has been a tendency to ignore the dynamic cultural make-up of each of those places. Moorish influence would have been intensely present in Spain during the early 16th century, for example, and the area of modern Mexico was by no means a region of widely unified indigenous groups. Therefore, homogenous or "pure" points of origin never truly exist when speaking in terms of culture. Using "hybridity" or its close cognates to discuss the past also tends to privilege certain mixings over others. For example, employing hybridity to discuss colonial Spanish America automatically assumes the mixing of two dominant groups – 16th century Catholic Spaniards and Native Americans. This focus stemmed from nation-building movements during the early 20th century in Mexico and Peru. Labeled *indigenismo*, such movements were led by intellectuals and political leaders who sought to champion the role indigenous culture played in the development of successful Latin American nations. As Dana and Leibsohn (2003:7) note, these movements made "room" for the contemporary Indian in ways that were non-threatening to the Hispanic elite of those nations. Intellectuals and political leaders tied themselves to the glories of ancient pasts, including that of the Aztec in Mexico and Inca in Peru by suggesting that they, as contemporary cultural and political leaders of powerful Latin American nations, were the inheritors of the greatness of an indigenous past.[2] Juxtaposed against

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[2] These sentiments are clearly materialized on currency from both Mexico and Peru with both depicting temples from Precolumbian empires as well as the portraits of great indigenous monarchs and leaders.

"the European Colonizer," "the Indian" became a category wherein both time, geography and general cultural diversity was homogenized.

Certainly, understanding Colonial Latin America as a binary product can be problematic for a number of reasons. Not only does the term homogenize the diversity within each group, but it also ignores other groups who were in some way part of trans-Atlantic interactions during the time. In other words, by assuming only Spanish/Native American cultural and artistic interaction, there is no room to consider the global reality of the world during the 16th through 18th centuries. Spain, for example, had extended trade networks throughout Europe, Africa and Asia during the 16th century. Each of these places greatly influenced artistic production and culture in the Americas during the Colonial period. Asian silks, lacquered goods, porcelain, and ivory quickly became popular imported goods in the Americas beginning in the late 16th century. Dress in New Spain sometimes mimicked that from Japan and folding screens could be found in elite homes (Souza 2006).

People, of course, were also brought to the New World—primarily from the African continent. In her analysis of Colonial-era Brazil, for example, art historian Cecile Fromont (2013:185) discusses West African culture and its influence on art and society in the Americas. Fromont specifically focuses on King of Kongo performances in Brazil between the 15th and 18th centuries. These performances reenacted the election of Christianized Kongo courts dressed in both Portuguese and Kongo fashion (Christianization by the Portuguese began on the African continent in the late 15th century). While sanctioned by the Portuguese in Brazil as "innocuous" representations of Christianized West African culture (and thereby the success of Portuguese Christianization of Africans), Fromont argues that the festivals instead represented "independent conceptions of collective identity, political power, and social unity" of the enslaved Kongo

people. Extending into the modern era, paintings and photographs depict King of Kongo performers wearing West African costume including painted cloth skirts, hats with raffia and feathers and metal adornments along with clothing inspired by the Portuguese (including silk blouses). Performances related to King of Kongo celebrations are a clear reference to the manner in which African culture existed within and influenced Colonial Latin American society and art.

Exploring the dynamism of culture and artistic creation in Colonial Latin America should continue to be a focus of art historical research. Moving away from understanding the area as a hybrid will no doubt provide us with a better understanding of the complexities of the time. It will also lead to more informed discussions about human agency in relationship to artistic traditions. Discussing culture, and its resultant visual productions as hybrid *products* tends to ignore the role of process. As Dean and Leibsohn (2003:8) say:

> The processes that produce cultural mixing with their concomitant political and economic negotiations emerge as incidental. The implication is that mixing simply happens. Suppressed are the ways in which particular mixtures are created, imposed and resisted as are the accounts of the human acts responsible for shaping both the conditions and forms of specific mixtures.

Following Dean and Leibsohn, the present work considers some of the problematic connotations using terms such as hybrid and hybridity can have. Therefore, while acknowledging the ability of Postcolonial studies of hybridity to deconstruct power systems, I have chosen instead to use the term and concept of *integration* to describe processes of cultural and artistic development and synthesis at Mayapán. The term integration refers specifically to the methodically-planned bringing together of sacred cosmology and political ideology via artistic and architectural practices. At Mayapán, these practices included copying and spoliating important architectural forms and building materials from other places, binding important

buildings to sacred geological and celestial elements of the landscape, and using sacred and politically-infused materials in art.

Following the definitions and discussion above, instead of seeing the artistic and architectural reality of Mayapán as a resultant product, I discuss the city's urban identity as the result of processes of purposeful, dynamic, and informed choosing. Therefore, in this study, a focus on integration attempts to show how and why Maya and non-Maya artistic elements, and their associated ideologies, were *actively incorporated* into the sacred landscape on and through which the city was founded.

Discussed alternatively as the "corporate" model by Richard Blanton, Gary M. Feinman, Stephen A. Kowalewski, and Peter N. Peregrine (1996), integrative practices at Mayapán are not without some parallel in ancient American cities. In their model, the Aztec state succeeded by first appropriating existing ideological systems to function within the framework of Aztec myth-history and political history, and second by doing away with those frameworks that were in direct conflict with Aztec ideological systems. Tenochtitlán was then reconceived as the center of this new world order, manifested as such through the art and architecture of its central precinct (Blanton et al., 1996: 11).

Corporate architecture and art occupying Tenochtitlán's central precinct are particularly impressive because of their massive scale. However, Mayapán's systems of integrative practice rival Tenochtitlán's given the sheer frequency and creativity with which Mayapán's stewards undertook integration. Mayapán's leaders, artists and architects borrowed ideologies and artistic and architectural concepts from Classic Mesoamerican cities as well as from later Terminal Classic (800-950/1000 CE) Maya polities. These patrons and creative authorities were also keen to use Postclassic central Mexican ideas, iconography and style at Mayapán, therefore suggesting

an interest in contemporary cultures to the north including the Aztec and Mixtec of central

Mexico. The effect was that this eclectic "remembering" and "re-presentation" of different

places at Mayapán legitimized the city's own sociopolitical, religious and economic presence

and power in the wider Postclassic Mesoamerican environment.

Guided by the city's own landscape, these processes of "mixing," as building and artistic

practice, became major defining features of Mayapán's own urban identity. The shared

experience of this urban place through communal ritual reinforced the city's importance in the

collective/social memories that resulted. Architecture and art at Mayapán, together linked with

sacred landscape made manifest through shared ritual (both religious and political), connected

people to a shared past, present and future. It also elevated certain people above others and

legitimized political authority. As discussed by Ruth Van Dyke and Susan Alcock in

Archaeologies of Memory, social memory strengthened through connection to urban

environments is a powerful thing. They note,

> People remember or forget the past according to the needs of the present and social memory
> is an active and ongoing process. The construction of social memory can involve direct
> connections to ancestors in a remembered past, or it can involve more general links to a
> vague mythological antiquity, often based on the re-interpretation of monuments or
> landscapes. (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003:3)

Place, as defined as the interrelationship between time, space and self (Merleau-Ponty

2013), is perhaps the most important aspect of how humans remember.[3] As Ömür Harmanşah

(2015: 1) states, "place can be a site of memory and belonging, and in a sense important to those

of the local community, and various classes, and may also be appropriated and monumentalized

by political elites with their own agendas…both space and place are continually in flux…not just

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[3] I use aspects of Henri Lefebvre's (1974:85) discussion of social space in relationship to thinking about the city.
Lefebvre says "Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, it [space] is also a means of production; a network of
exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Space is therefore at the
same time product and production."

fixed in the past". By building and moving through places, ideologies and relationships are created, reinforced and made concrete (Lefebvre 1974). As Pierre Bourdieu (1977) suggests, we as humans understand through practice and experience. Actions related to these practices and daily experiences transform empty spaces into significant places, the significance of which are intensified when practice, experience and recollection of practice and experience is communal.

Urban sites across the world evidence the importance and power of shared recollection. We know from written texts, for example, that many New Kingdom Egyptian statues and funerary works were focal points of communal, ritual practice designed to memorialize deified pharaohs. Paul Connerton (1989: 7), the social anthropologist who has written extensively on social memory, argues that recollection primarily operates within the realm of commemorative ceremonies and bodily practice. New Kingdom rituals fit this description exactly. Such events, (for example, those recorded for the New Kingdom Pharaoh Amenhotep) required the presence of the deified ruler in the material form of statues and other objects (Meskell 2004). Such rituals were powerful in their ability to create and solidify social memory as sets of shared ideologies because they were both dedicatory and involved the ritual movement of the practitioner's body in the presence of the pharaoh (as he was materialized in his objectified form).

Closer to Mayapán in both time and geography, builders at 11th century Chaco Canyon, in the American southwest, utilized both landscape and architecture to create new social structures that legitimized Chacoan leaders and strengthened the bonds of community (Van Dyke 2003). Large architectural structures referred to as "Great Houses" were often reused and remodeled over the course of Chaco's nearly 300-year tenure. These structures seem to have had multiple functions as they housed several rooms and were often connected to ritual features including plazas and circular kivas. In one case, two elite men were buried with lavish grave

goods in one of Chaco's Great Houses.[4] What is perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that the men were buried in part of the structure that pre-dated their deaths by two hundred years (rather than being buried under part of the structure that was built during their lifetime).

Architecture can reinforce the importance of people and social structures, and thus the memory of those people and the structures they were part of. This suggests that a living memory of the older portion of the structure (and likely the rituals undertaken there) was palpable even two hundred years after it was constructed (Meskell 2004: 38). It is particularly remarkable that the descendants of those living at Chaco still use architecture as a mechanism for marking and remembering the past in a communal way. Contemporary kivas or round ritual structures, for example, are built with a sipapu or small round hole in their floors. These holes function as the navel of the structure. This opening creates a portal through which earlier times and places become synthesized with the present (Van Dyke 2003).

Like places in New Kingdom Egypt and the Precolumbian southwest, Mayapán's own urban environment was carefully orchestrated by the city's stewards. These leaders relied on the power of collective experience and memory to solidify a strong sense of that place as an influential center. The importance of the city was certainly felt by those within its walls, and its power and influence extended to the larger sociopolitical and economic dynamics of 13th- 15th century Mesoamerica. Perhaps most telling of its iconic position is the fact that Mayapán was never an unknown place. Notably, the importance of the city was even attested to after the city fell. We have, for example, written accounts of Mayapán that were provided by indigenous informants during the Colonial period. Several of these references to Mayapán are discussed in this dissertation. Even today, Mayapán continues to be important to local Maya communities.

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[4] There burials were found in Room 33 of the Great House named *Pueblo Bonito*.

The site's guardians and caretakers live in the nearby village of Telchaquillo and many of the archaeologists who have excavated and interpreted Mayapán's ruins are also Maya who live in the region. Certainly, since its existence, Mayapán has always been, and continues to be, a sacred and remembered center in its own right. The following sections and chapters of this dissertation seek to illuminate the power of this important place.

1.2   A View of Mayapán's Ritual Center

The ancient city of Mayapán is located in what scholars refer to as the northern Maya region, an area of the northern and eastern Yucatán peninsula. The area now primarily incorporates the Mexican states of Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo. The ruins are roughly thirty miles southeast of the modern capital city of Mérida and eighty miles west of the popular site of Chichén Itzá. The entire area of Mayapán encompasses roughly 4.5 square kilometers (Figure 1.2).
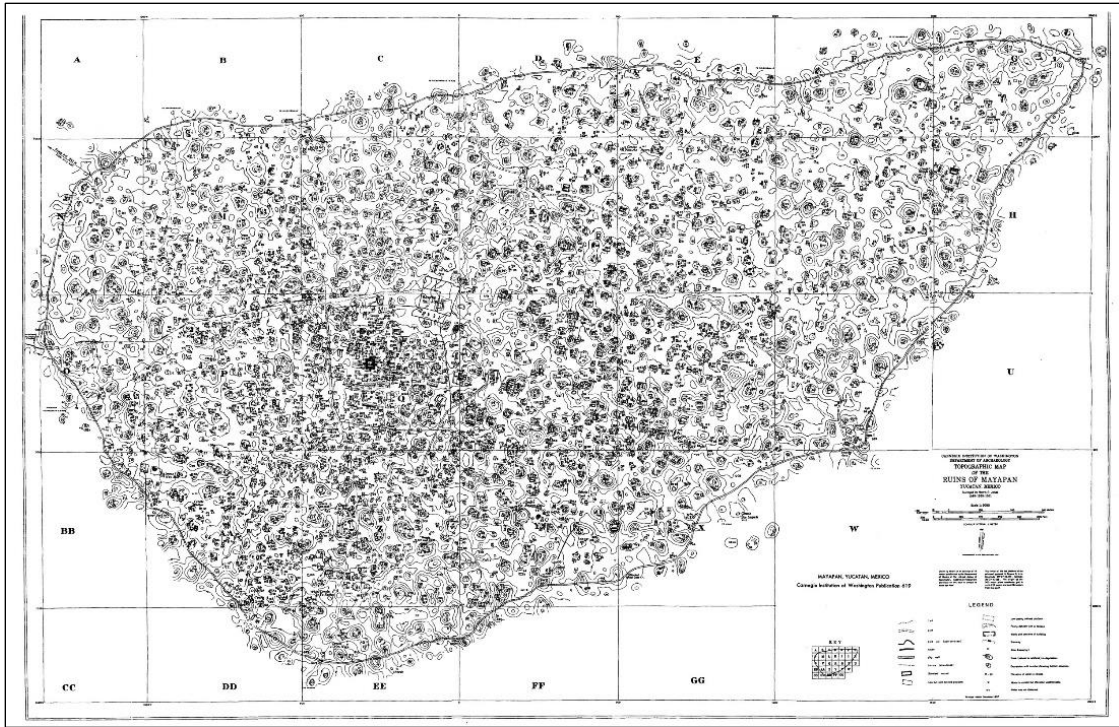
Figure 1.2   Carnegie map of Mayapán, indicating structures and walls. Map by Morris Jones in Weeks 2009: fig. 1.1

Most of the city, including walled residences, religious and governmental buildings, is located within a large surrounding wall. The largest religious and political buildings of the city are found in the central precinct or "ritual center" (or Quadrant Q), but many other important public buildings and shrines were placed outside of this area (Pollock et al. 1962:15; Proskouriakoff 1962:99-140; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014).[5] This study focuses on Quadrant Q and specifically the structures and works reviewed below (Figure 1.3).

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[5]For Masson and Peraza Lope (2014) see Chapters 2, 3, and 4 for a description of urban layout and location of ceremonial structures at Mayapán.

Figure 1.3   Plan of Quadrant Q at Mayapán. The central precinct at Mayapán.
Map by Pedro Delgado Ku and Bárbara Escamilla Ojeda in Masson and Peraza Lope
2014: fig. 11.

The largest structure at Mayapán, Structure Q 162, is the large pyramid dedicated to the

city's cult deity, the feathered serpent Kukulcan (Figure 1.4). It is in the southern sector of

Quadrant Q. The temple that can be seen now encases an earlier temple, Q 162a, that was

embellished with a stucco frieze. The frieze can still be seen on the partially excavated and

restored southeastern corner and is further discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 1.4   Mayapán, Mexico. East façade of the Castillo/Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán.
Thatched areas protect a sculptural frieze (seen left) and murals (seen right). Author's
photograph, July 2016.

The larger second-phase temple (built over the first temple with the frieze) is a four-sided

radial pyramid with each of its four sides nearly exactly oriented to the cardinal directions. Each

side boasts a long staircase. The front of the temple faces north, and it is on this side that serpent

balustrades, depicting the cult deity Kukulcan, were carved along the staircase (a famous and

important feature that will be discussed in later chapters). At the base of this pyramid is a

sinkhole or *cenote*. Cenotes were an important feature of Mayapán's sacred landscape. They

served as sources of water in addition to functioning as sites of ritual significance and are

discussed at length in Chapter 4. Ch'en Mul, the cenote located at the base of Mayapán's Temple

to Kukulcan, enjoyed particular importance and will be an important element in the dissertation

(Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5   Mayapán, Mexico. The Cenote Ch'en Mul. The edge of the Temple of
Kukulcan can be seen toward the viewer's right. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Just to the east of Cenote Ch'en Mul, and connected to it, is a rectangular plaza that is

situated just in front of a ritual hall often referred to as "The Hall of the Chaak Masks" and

known archaeologically as Structure 151 (Milbrath and Peraza 2003: 9-10) (figure 1.6).[6] The

hall's name derives from the row of masks that once adorned its façade. In previous scholarship,

these masks were thought to be the Maya rain god Chaak and were designated to be in the "Puuc

Style," a style originating in earlier Terminal Classic cities in the Puuc Hills (Milbrath and

Pereza Lope 2003: 9-10).

Figure 1.6   Mayapán, Mexico. View of Structure 151. The Caracol is in the background and the rectangular plaza is in the foreground. Author's photograph, July 2016.

This building and its masks are discussed fully in Chapter 5. Just to the north of Structure

151 is the Templo Redondo or Structure Q152. This building was an important structure used to

chart astronomical observations (Aveni et al. 2004: 123-143). Both it, as well as the Temple of

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[6] See Milbrath and Peraza (2009b: 581– 606) for the interpretation of these masks as the rain god Chaak. Milbrath and Peraza also see the masks as functioning as a visual signification of Puuc style and iconography. This topic is also more fully addressed in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

Kukulcan, are strikingly similar to buildings at Chichén Itzá, a Maya city in the Yucatán

peninsula that preceded Mayapán in time. These similarities are analyzed in Chapter 5 and have

important implications for Mayapán's architectural practices in integration.

Beyond these larger structures, the eastern section of Quadrant Q also has several temples

built in the "East Coast Style", a style shared with its contemporary Maya cities on the coast of

the Yucatán peninsula. Iconography from the important "Mural of the Fisherman" in this sector

reinforces the watery associations Quadrant Q's eastern section had. Discussed more fully in

Chapter Four, the mural is executed in a style associated with Postclassic central Mexican

painting. However, its subject matter is clearly associated with the eastern direction and the

Caribbean Sea (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7   Mayapán, Mexico. The mural from the Temple of the Fisherman.
Looking west. Author's photograph, July 2016.

In reality, the Temple of the Fisherman Mural more accurately occupies the northeastern portion

of Quadrant Q. Topographical elevation in the north is noticeably higher than that of the south,

with rock outcroppings jutting from the ground. Many of these outcroppings were deliberately

incorporated into built structures in Precolumbian times. The extent to which this was done is a

unique building practice at Mayapán and another important focus of this study. The practice is

especially apparent in the Temple of the Painted Niches or Structure Q-80, discussed more fully

in Chapter 4 (Figure 1.8). The marriage of built architecture and living rock in the Temple of the

Niches provides an undeniable example of how Mayapán's architects frequently bound the

terrestrial world directly into built structures.

Figure 1.8   Mayapán, Mexico. The Temple of the Painted Niches, north façade.
Author's photograph, July 2016.

Moving westward from the Temple of the Niches, one meets a large plaza and surrounding pyramids, temples, and colonnaded halls. Perhaps the most important of these structures was Structure Q163, the Hall of the Kings. The hall likely served bureaucratic purposes and was purposefully connected to the western base of the Temple dedicated to Kukulcan (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 84-86). Although not completely preserved, stucco sculpture was modeled onto the columns of the Hall of Kings (Figure 1.9). These sculptures give the hall its name, although it is unlikely that they depicted kings in the sense that Classic Period Maya sites had rulers with singular and divine authority. Further discussion of this hall, and its relationship to integrative practices, is also provided in Chapter.4

Figure 1.9   Mayapán, Mexico. A partially preserved figure's right leg and foot from the Hall of Kings. Author's photograph, July 2016.

1.3   <u>**Mayapán in Context**</u>

The above is an abbreviated review of the major works to be encounter

ed in this study. It is meant to provide the reader with an initial familiarity with Mayapán, and in

particular, its ritual center. In the chapters to follow, these, and other examples of art and

architecture, are used to reflect the reality of Mayapán's complex social and urban situation.

Politically speaking, Mayapán was one of the most important Mesoamerican cities to exist

during the 13th through 15th centuries and rose to power in a politically tumultuous time.

Preceding Mayapán in the Yucatán peninsula was the city of Chichén Itzá, which, while

exhibiting influence from central Mexico, was still deeply Maya. Chichén Itzá was one of the

last in a long line of Maya cities to survive into the Terminal Classic Period. It rose to power

after Classic Period cities fell in the areas now encompassed by parts of Mexico, Guatemala,

Belize and Honduras. Chichén Itzá lost its political power toward the end of the 10th century. At

this point, it was up to the stewards of Mayapán to maintain and expand economic and political

connections with the Gulf Coast and central Mexico—a process of trade and cultural exchange

that Chichén Itzá's patrons, leaders and merchants had begun, but which intensified to a greater

degree at Mayapán during the subsequent period.[7] Mayapán succeeded in doing so for at least

two hundred years during which time it became the most powerful city in the Maya world. While

the nature of Mayapán's own collapse in the 15th century is still contested, it was at least partially

due to political infighting.

Mayapán was undeniably anchored between distinct times and places. It was first an

inheritor of Maya culture, via its connections to Chichén Itzá and earlier southern cities.

However, its patrons and politicians were also increasingly attracted to central Mexican

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[7] The exact dates of Chichén Itzá's decline and collapse are still contested. However, the most recent scholarship shows that no new major construction episodes were begun after 1000 CE (Ringle 2017: 119).

society—even possibly including Aztec groups. Because of this temporal and geographic position, Mayapán developed cultural connections and an associated art tradition that were neither completely Maya nor entirely central Mexican in character (even though it was occupied and controlled by Maya-speaking lineages). Its urban character was a unique mixture of forms, symbols and subject matter selectively brought in to the city from throughout the Mesoamerican world, both past and present.

Guiding the city were powerful families who sponsored and controlled the integrative visual and architectural practices discussed throughout this dissertation. Such practices are robustly apparent in the public art and architecture of Quadrant Q (the central precinct and major focus of this study), and also exist in more private contexts from elite residences near that area. In the space of the public central precinct, integration frequently took form in copying or close adaptation of architectural forms from Chichén Itzá, copying of iconography and deliberate spoliation of building materials from Terminal Classic Puuc sites, incorporating of style and iconography from central Mexico (as seen particularly in murals and relief sculpture), and in the synthesis of Mayapán's landscape into public architecture. In private domains, integration occurred via the reinterpretation of Classic Maya iconography and sacred materials into new Postclassic forms. Together, public and private systems of elite-sponsored integration became the hallmark of Mayapán's central urban setting, the defining feature of its art, and the spatial, visual, and ideational underpinning of its social practices.

1.4   **Chapter Layout**

This dissertation treats Mayapán's practices of integration by considering a variety of artistic media, architecture and the landscape itself. Altogether, the dissertation is comprised of

seven chapters, with the present chapter serving as an introduction to the problem and subject

matter. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to the Yucatán peninsula by providing a condensed

review of its Precolumbian history. Chapter 3 follows with a literature review of previous

scholarship on Mayapán. Chapter 4 begins a focused analysis and discussion of integration and

embodied experience as related to the sacred landscape Mayapán occupied. This chapter relies

on a phenomenological approach. It guides the reader through an understanding of the central

precinct's layout while focusing on how integrative practices involved major architecture, art,

and landscape features including cenotes, rock outcroppings, cardinal directions and celestial

bodies.

 Using iconographic methods and formal analysis, Chapter 5 documents how non-

Mayapán architectural forms and materials, styles and iconography were synthesized at

Mayapán. Through a discussion of copied, spoliated or otherwise adapted iconography, styles,

and forms at Mayapán, this chapter addresses the relationships Mayapán had with ancestral Puuc

cities and with Chichén Itzá. In doing so, it demonstrates how Mayapán's artists and architects

created a specialized Postclassic context that reflected certain ways of making, seeing and

experiencing art and architecture. These practices included a propensity for copying, reusing,

reinterpreting, and/or destroying non-Mayapán building elements and art forms (spoliation) in a

variety of ways to transfer, revise, and/or own important ideological concepts.

 Chapter 6 concludes the major chapters of the study by addressing the private rather than

public context of art in the central precinct. Focusing particularly on meaning as it is presented

through materiality, this chapter describes how integrative practice led to the establishment of

Mayapán's important Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex (SSTC). These stone turtle sculptures,

found in elite ritual and residential shrines (often with sacrificial implements), are important to

our understanding of how once-public ritual became increasingly privatized during the Postclassic and anchored to the landscape of Mayapán. The chapter especially focuses on how stone, as material, reinforced leaders' ability to privatize and harness religious power. Lastly, Chapter 7 serves as an epilogue and review of the study, providing a summation of the methods and major findings of the dissertation and suggesting future avenues of related study.

2   MAYAPÁN AND THE NORTHERN MAYA REGION

2.1   <u>Before the Postclassic: Northern Maya Polities that Predate Mayapán</u>

As a setting for some of the most important Maya polities, the Yucatán peninsula seems a harsh environment (figure 2.1). Geologically, the topography is a karst (limestone-based) material upon which only shrubs and stunted trees can easily grow, given the shallowness of the soil. Except for the Puuc region, defined by the area south of a range of hills in the southwestern portion of the state, and northeastern Campeche, the peninsula is quite flat. There are no rivers in the peninsula, but fresh water is found by way of the cenotes that dot the terrain. Vegetation is therefore highly dependent on the fluctuation between the environment's two seasons—the rainy and dry periods (Pollock et al. 1962: 1; Dunning 1992: 3).[8] The former generally runs from June through October with the dry season beginning in November and ending in May.

Since Preclassic times (1000 BCE-250 CE), even despite the challenges posed by the environment, the Maya established villages and cities in this northern Maya region. The area continued to be densely inhabited throughout the subsequent Classic Period, Terminal Classic, and Postclassic Periods. Descendants of these populations still live in this area, now defined as the Mexican states of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and Campeche (Figure 2.2).

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[8] Nicholas Dunning's study is concentrated on the Puuc region (located roughly 66 kilometers west of Mayapán). However, his discussion of climate and the landscape is also useful as a general description of the larger peninsula.

PENINSULA OF YUCATAN

GULF OF MEXICO

Cape Catoche

ISLA CONTOY

ISLA BLANCA

ISLA MUJER

ISLA CANCUN

CHIKINCHEL

Loche (Chauaca)

(Ecab)

(Conil)

Dzonotake

(Sinsimato?)

Panaba

AH KIN CHEL

CEHPECH

Cansahcab

Buctzotz

Tizimino

Sodzil

Tixcancal

TASES

MOTUL

Temax

Chancenote

Kantunilkin

Caucel

Cacalchen

Tekal

Hunucmao

TECOH

CUPUL

Kinchil

Tetis

Mérida

Izamal

ECAB

Puerto Morelos

Uman

Acanceh

HOCABA

Tunkas

Dzitas

Nabalam

Playa Carmen

Chochola

CHAKAN

HOCABA

Valladolid

Tikuch

(Pole)

(San Miguel)

Tecoh

Homun

Tabi

SOTUTA

Chichen Itza

Chemax

ISLA DE COZUMEL

Maxcanu

Mayapan

Yaxcaba

Cetelac

Xocen

Coba

Tuchican

Muna

Tekit

Cantamayec

Tixcacalcupul

AH CANUL

Ticul

Chumayel

SOTUTA

Tulum

Calkini

Uxmal Dzan

Teabo

Tiholop

MANI

Hecelchakan

Chikindzonot

Tekax

Peto

Tepich

Tenabo

Ichmul

MANI or TUTUL XIU

TIHOSUCO

R. Homtun

COCHUAH

CAMPECHE

Hopelchen

CANPECH

La. Chichankanab

Tabi

(Bahía de la Ascención)

Seiba Playa

Tixmucuy

Chunhuhub

Chacmool

Sihochac

CHAMPOTON

(Chable?)

(Bahía del Espiritu Santo)

CHANPUTUN

UAYMIL

Pacha

Bacalar

Ichpaatun

CHETUMAL

○ Town, residence of territorial ruler

○ Town

⊥ Ruin

☵ Pond

– – – Doubtful boundary

( ) Located from description

Ucum

R. Hondo

New River

Bahía de Chetumal

CARIBBEAN SEA

Indian Church

ITZA

Belize R.

Belize

Sibun R.

La. Yaxa

El Cayo

(Tan-xuluc-mul)

La. Peten

0   25   50   75   100 KM.

Estancia del Rio

Figure 2.1   Map of the Yucatán peninsula, showing major northern Maya sites. After H.E.D. Pollock, R. Roys, T. Proskouriakoff, and A.L. Smith 1962.

Figure 2.2   The remains of an ancient Maya dwelling alongside a main highway in the Yucatán peninsula. Author's photograph, July 2014.

Mayapán, while an unrivaled polity in the northern Yucatán peninsula during the Postclassic, was preceded by several other polities that rose and fell throughout the centuries. These earlier sites evidence a range of artistic and architectural styles throughout a considerable time-depth, thereby demonstrating a long and complex history of artistic and sociopolitical development in the northern Maya region. While Mayapán did not have direct contact with these Classic and Pre-Classic Maya cities, Mayapán's Maya identity was influenced by conceptions of time, the cosmos, and myth history that had developed in earlier times.

Some of the most well-known sites in the area include Acanceh, Aké, Dzibilchaltún, Ek Balam, Cobá, Uxmal and Chichén Itzá. While some of these sites may have served as more conscious and deliberately-chosen models for Mayapán, others may represent more ancient precedents for long-lived forms that survived or were revived as parts of a more common architectural "syntax" and "vocabulary" at Mayapán. The purpose of this section is to provide a

short discussion of the many choices available to Mayapán's artists, architects and patrons via

the cities that preceded and were contemporaneous with it. In doing so, the chapter will highlight

the concepts of spatial organization, building types, artistic forms and styles, and iconographic

elements that Mayapán's stewards deliberately chose to appropriate or ignore.

The Preclassic and Early Classic center of Acanceh, located roughly 30 km south of

Mérida, was established between 200 and 300 CE and occupied steadily through the Classic

Period (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3   Acanceh, Mexico. The major pyramid at Acanceh.
Photograph courtesy of Virginia E. Miller.

Although much of the Precolumbian site now lies under the modern town of Acanceh, its

principal radial pyramid with finely detailed stucco deity masks remains partially preserved and

recently consolidated (figure 2.4). The pyramid is in a style like that of E-VII-Sub, from the

Preclassic/Early Classic site of Uaxactún in the Petén region of Guatemala. Large stucco masks,

apron moldings, and staircases on each of its four sides attest to affinities with Uaxactún and

other early sites from the Petén. Three hundred meters southeast of the principal pyramid at

Acanceh is the Acropolis. This substructure served as a base upon which several buildings,

including "The Palace of the Stuccos" was located (V. Miller 1991). The palace has special art

historical significance because of the stucco frieze that once adorned its façade. Stylistic and

iconographic elements including deities and animals place its design within a wider tradition

shared with cities located much further north, including Xochicalco, Cacaxtla and Teotihuacán

(V. Miller 1991: 1).

Figure 2.4   Acanceh, Mexico. A stucco deity mask on the Preclassic pyramid
at Acanceh. Author's photograph, July 2014.

Located about an hour northwest of Acanceh and roughly 40km due west of Mérida is the

Classical site of Aké, dated between 250 and 800 CE and shown in Figure 2.5 below (Roys and

Shook 1966). Some of the first structures date to 250 CE and are built in the iconic style referred

to as the "Megalithic" (Espinosa Vázquez 2013: 11-29; Mathews and Maldonado Cárdenas

2006: 95-118). First defined and described by Karl Taube (1995: 23-58) in the Yalahau region of

Quintana Roo, megalithic construction incorporates large boulders with rounded corners (figure

2.6). Even tall columns are constructed in this manner as "squat" boulders can be found in all

levels. Such construction gives the overall structure a robust look.

Figure 2.5   Aké, Mexico. A colonnaded temple at Aké. The large stones are examples
of the "megalithic style." Author's photograph, July 2014.

Figure 2.6   Aké, Mexico. A column from Aké, depicting the squat and robust stones of the "megalithic style." Author's photograph, July 2014.

Arguably, the robust nature of columns would also have been apparent even when covered with stucco and paint in Precolumbian times. Aké was an impressive site in its day. Structures including public architecture and residences covered over 4km. Two large city walls were also erected at Aké. One surrounded the central buildings of the site, including the chief structure referred to as Structure 1 or "The Palace" (Roys and Shook 1966: 7).[9] The second wall surrounded the residences that stretched outward from the ritual center. There are two cenotes at

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[9] See Roys and Shook (1966) Chapter Two for a discussion of Aké's major structures.

Aké as well as sacbehs or "white roads" that connected the city to allied polities, including the contemporary site of Izamal (Espinosa Vázquez 2013).[10]

Other large cities in the Yucatán peninsula include the Late Classic centers of Dzibilchaltún and Ek' Balam in the Yucatán peninsula, and the large city of Cobá in Quintana Roo. With estimates of its population reaching over 55,000 people, Cobá was one of the largest Late Classic sites in the area and it ruled over vassal states stretching over an 8,000-sq. km region (Folan et al. 1983: 2; Robles and Andrews 1985). Its major pyramid, Ixmoja, is the tallest in the peninsula and is only one of several large structures expanding over 80 square km. Nojoch Mul, for example, is another of Cobá's massive temples (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7   Cobá, Mexico. The large pyramid dubbed Nojoch Mul at Cobá, Quintana Roo, west façade. Author's photograph, July 2012.

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[10] Sacbehs (white roads) were built as roads within and between ancient Maya sites. See Shaw (2008) for a discussion of these structures in the Maya region.

Major areas of Cobá are connected by intra-site sacbehs and the site itself was connected

to allied polities including Yaxuná and Ixil via these roads (Folan et al. 1983: 6). Royal portrait

stelae depicting images of rulers and Long Count calendrical dates with Maya hieroglyphic text

can be found throughout the site, attesting to the city's autocratic political structure (figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8   Cobá, Mexico. Royal portrait
stela at Cobá. Author's photograph, July 2012.

These royal portrait stelae, as well as much of Cobá's building style, demonstrate

similarities with Late Classic polities in Chiapas, Campeche and Tabasco in Mexico, as well as

in Guatemala. Toward the end of the Classic Period, the city underwent a period of decline and

at least partial abandonment with a reoccupation during the Postclassic (Folan et al. 1983). By

the 11th century CE, however, its power had already been greatly reduced, following a pattern of collapse echoed at other Late Classic sites.

Located roughly 25 km north of the small city of Valladolid, the Late Classic site of Ek' Balam was a contemporary of Cobá. Ek' Balam reached its peak between the late 8th and mid-9th centuries and was one of the most massive cities of its time. Based on information from the *Relaciónes Geográficas* taken down in the 16th century, Ek' Balam was a powerful city with other, smaller polities under its control. Ek' Balam is notable for its great size in addition to its well preserved sculptural frieze. As George Bey, Craig Hanson and William Ringle (1997:239) discuss, it is likely the largest site in the northeastern peninsula. The monumental core, consisting of three large buildings, originally had two large surrounding walls. The largest of the buildings, GT-1 measures 165 x 65 m and rises 31 m. Structure GT-2, is comparatively large and is additionally notable for similarities shared with Casa Colorada at Chichén Itzá and the Governor's Palace at Uxmal.

Perhaps the most defining feature of Ek' Balam is the unrivaled preservation of the large stucco mask that forms the doorway to the tomb of Ukit-Kan-Lek-Tok. This building is located on the Acropolis, the largest structure in Ek' Balam's ritual center (Figure 2.9). The mask is in the shape of an "earth monster" with a giant and toothed open maw. This figure is a type of personified mountain identified as a Witz Monster ("witz" meaning "mountain" in Maya) by David Stuart (1997: 13-17) or close variant called Flower Mountain by Karl Taube (2004a: 69-98). Both perspectives are discussed more fully in Chapter 5. Earth monsters such as Ek' Balam's served to animate Maya temples and functioned as communication points between this world and the underworld (Vogt and Stuart 2005; Schele 1998: 479-517). Such symbolism, along with royal portrait stelae, suggest that Ek' Balam, along with Cobá, shared affinities with

earlier and contemporary Maya traditions in the Yucatán peninsula, but also with cities in the

Petén and highlands of Guatemala.

Figure 2.9   Ek' Balam, Mexico.
Stucco monster mouth on the acropolis at
Ek Balam, south façade. Author's
photograph, July 2014.

Although its ceremonial architecture was not as massive or extensive as that of Cobá or

Ek' Balam, the longevity of Dzibilchaltún cannot be rivaled. With a population size that

eventually rivaled that of Ek' Balam, Dzibilchaltún was first inhabited in the Early Formative

Period (1,000 BCE). Construction continued through the Colonial era, although the city

experienced a downturn during the Late Formative to Early Classic and then again in the

Postclassic. The site is best known for a well preserved radial temple referred to as the Temple of

the Seven Dolls (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10   Dzibilchaltún, Mexico. The Temple of the Seven
Dolls at Dzibilchaltún, west façade. Author's photograph, July 2015.

Built in the 7th century CE, the temple was constructed on a rectangular platform with a

staircase defining each of its four sides (Coggins 1984). There is some evidence that the

building, which lies at the eastern end of a long east-west sacbe, was oriented so that the sun

would be seen framed by its doorway on the day of the summer equinox (Figure 2.11). Clemency

Coggins (1984) has shown that the iconography on its upper façade and central tower seems to

represent the concept of the central world tree rising above the waters of the underworld,

referring to the pyramid as a center of quadripartite terrestrial space.[11]
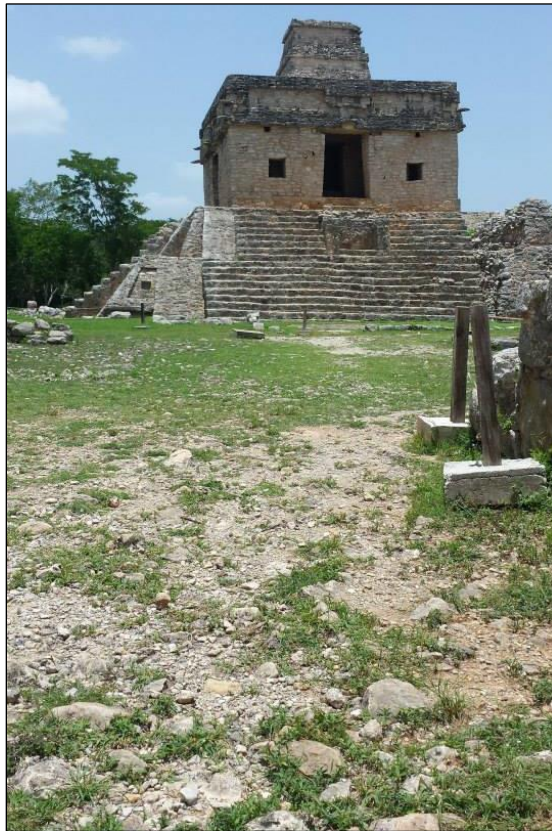
Figure 2.11   Dzibilchaltún, Mexico.
The Temple of the Seven Dolls, showing
the sacbeh, or "white road," on which it is
situated, west façade. Author's photograph,
July 2015.

The Temple of the Seven Dolls was surrounded by nine other rectangular buildings, also

built on platforms, and a low wall (E.W. Andrews 1981). During the Classic Period, corbeled

[11] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 2017.

vaults were incorporated in several buildings and over twenty stelae have been found at the site.

Many examples of these monuments depict royal portraits, Long Count dates and Maya

hieroglyphics, typical of other Classic sites including those in the Petén. Like Cobá,

Dzibilchaltún also has architecture from the Terminal and Postclassic period, much of which

encased earlier Classic examples (E.W. Andrews 1981).

2.2   Uxmal and Chichén Itzá

Roughly 90 km south of Dzibilchaltún, and nestled within the undulating Puuc Hills, the

Terminal Classic site of Uxmal rose to power as Cobá, Ek' Balam and other Late Classic centers

declined. In their visual analysis of stelae and relief sculpture from the site Kowalski (1987;

2009) and Kowalski and Nicholas Dunning (1999) have found that Uxmal served as one of the

last Maya polities in which a paramount ruler or king (known as Chan Chaak K'ak'nal Ajaw at

Uxmal) ruled. While Uxmal was probably occupied for at least 200 years, it seems to have

achieved dominance in the area only during the late ninth through early tenth centuries.

Uxmal is the largest in a series of sites within the Puuc Hills (Figure 2.12). Kabah, for

example, is another important Puuc site discussed in this dissertation, but others include Nohpat,

Sayil, and Labna. These sites reached their peak population during the Late through Terminal

Classic periods largely due to the fertile soil of the Puuc region and through the use of *chultuns*

or artificial cisterns (Dunning 1992: 154).[12]

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[12] See chapters Two and Three for a discussion of geology, water resources, climate, soils and vegetation in the Yucatán peninsula.

Figure 2.12   Uxmal, Mexico. The Temple of the Magician, south façade. Author's photograph, July 2014.

Major buildings at these sites are built in the iconic "Puuc style." Puuc building façades feature finely cut, relatively thin stone slabs over rubble and concrete cores. Rectangular doorways are typical as are vaulted entrances leading to expansive courtyards. One feature of these doorways are the boot-shaped stones that function to hold lime concrete cores in place and finely cut facing stones over rubble the cores (Kowalski 1987; Gendrop et al. 1998) (figures 2.13 and 2.14).

Figure 2.13   Uxmal, Mexico. Stone vaulting with "boot-shaped" construction stones. Author's photograph, July 2014.

Figure 2.14   Uxmal, Mexico. Evidence of a rubble core faced with cut stone. Author's photograph, July 2014

The marked difference between the lower and upper façades of many Puuc buildings gives the viewer the impression of distinct "registers." The lower façades of these buildings often appear austere while the upper façades are decorated with masks, step-frets, lattice work and other geometric designs and symbols, as shown in Figure 2.15 (Kowalski 1987).[13]

Figure 2.15   Uxmal, Mexico. The west building in the Nunnery Quadrangle.
Author's photograph, July 2015.

The lattice work recalls mat and textile weaving. For the pre-conquest Maya, mats were associated with royalty (Kowalski and Miller 2006: 146; Kowalski 1987: 220, 223, 224). Maya kings and sometimes queens are often depicted sitting on mats in Precolumbian imagery. Associations between royalty and mats are reinforced by Colonial accounts as well. In the Maya Chilam Balam of Chumayel, a Colonial period book of sacred knowledge, the term mat (*pop* in

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[13] See Kowalski (1987) Chapters Twelve and Thirteen for a discussion on frets and lattice work.

Yucatec Maya) was associated with a royal throne. Upon world creation, the deity Bolon-ti-ku

came to sit on a mat upon his arrival to the world (Roys 1967: 103, note 3; Kowalski 1987: 224).

In a telling discussion from the Chumayel Chilam Balam, it is noted that when the Itzá people

fled the area upon the introduction of Christianity, they arrived at a place where there were "their

beds, their mats, their thrones" (Roys 1967: 83; Kowalski 1987: 224). In the Popol Vuh, the

K'iche'' Lord is referred to as "Lord of the Mat," and iconography from the Late Classic Period

often depicts rulers sitting on woven mats (Lintel 3 of Temple I at Tikal is one example).[14]

Beyond mat motifs, serpent iconography is also common in Puuc architecture as is the

reproduction of miniaturized houses or huts in stone and both occur on the upper façade of

buildings in Uxmal's Nunnery Quadrangle (Figure 2.16 and Figure 2.17).
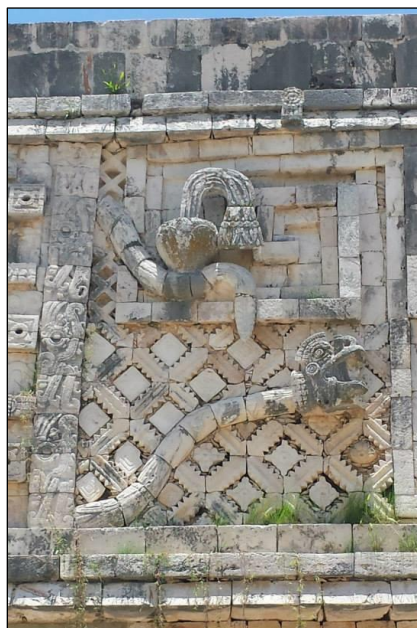
Figure 2.16   Serpent and textile motifs on the upper façade of the west building. Author's photograph, July 2015.

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[14] See Kowalski (1987: 224-228, fig. 191) for further discussion regarding the relationship between mats and rulership.
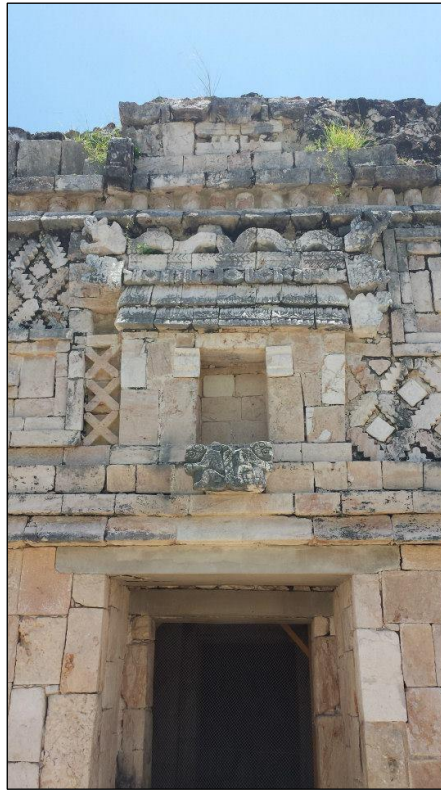
Figure 2.17   House and serpent
motif on the north building's façade.
Author's photograph, July 2015.

These façades can also feature long-snouted mask motifs, although such imagery is more

common on corners of Puuc buildings (Figure 2.18). Kowalski (1987) interprets these masks as

being related to the rain god Chaak. Such masks have also been interpreted by Linda Schele and

Peter Mathews (1998: 267-268) as Itzam Yeh, the "magic-giving bird," an avatar of the creator

deity Itzamná. Alternatively, Karl Taube (2004a: 13-17) and Erik Boot (2004) discuss them as

witz or mountain manifestations—thus naming the buildings they occur on as sacred mountains

(figure 2.19).

Figure 2.18   Uxmal, Mexico. A building from the Nunnery at Uxmal depicting long-nosed masks on its corners. Author's photograph, July 2015.
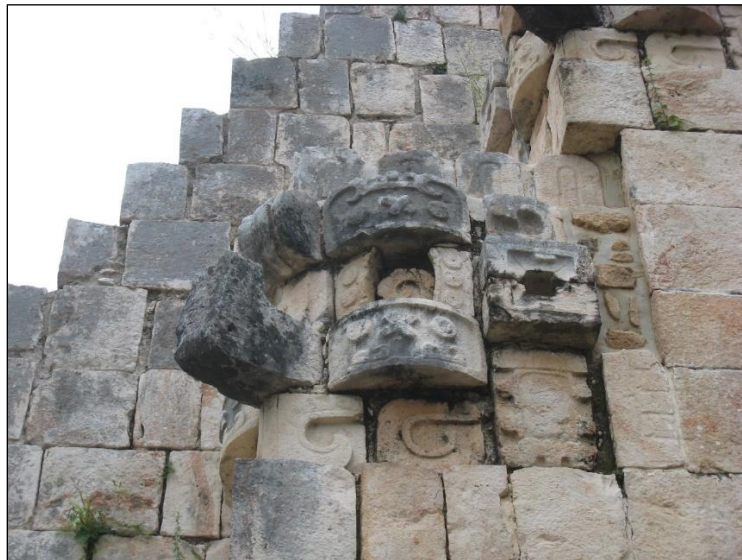
Figure 2.19   Uxmal, Mexico. Masks on the Temple of the Magician. Photograph courtesy of Virginia E. Miller.

As Late and Terminal Classic sites fell one by one in Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, the Late Terminal Classic site of Chichén Itzá, located roughly 40 km west of Valladolid, ascended (figure 2.20). Evidence suggests that major architectural projects were undertaken at Chichén Itzá beginning around 900 CE. These include the construction of the large and last episode of the major pyramid dedicated to Kukulcan, the construction of the Temple of the Warriors and expansion of the Great Ballcourt.[15]

Figure 2.20   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The "Castillo" or Temple of Kukulcan. Author's photograph,   July 2016.

Ultimately, the site reached more than 25 square km during its apogee between the late 9th through late 10th centuries with a dominion sprawling from Campeche into northern Quintana Roo (Ringle 2017; Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2011: 20; A. Andrews 1990: 26; A. Andrews

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[15] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 2017; Bey and Ringle (2011: 299-342).

et al. 2003: 151-156). As Cynthia Kristan-Graham (2001: 323) states, the city was populated by "outsiders" including the "Itzá." The Itzá were likely a Maya-speaking group or groups from other regions possibly including those populations from the southern lowlands in Chiapas and Guatemala (Schele and Matthews 1998: 201-203) or Chontal Maya of the Gulf Coast in present-day Tabasco and Campeche (Thompson 1970; Andrews and Robles Castellanos 1985: 64-67; Kowalski 1999; Kristan-Graham 2001: 322).

The presence of these new populations in the Yucatán peninsula, and at Chichén Itzá particularly, is expressed through changes in artistic and architectural styles, iconography and forms. Although Chichén Itzá has buildings in the Puuc style and shares some stylistic and iconographic similarities with Uxmal (Kowalski 2011: 204), what is immediately apparent is that a new range of artistic and architectural elements was incorporated into Chichén Itzá.[16] Interestingly, many of these elements were shared with cities in the Valley of Mexico, and particularly the site of Tula, Hidalgo. They include the construction of stepped pyramids combined with colonnaded halls and skull racks or *tzompantlis*, on which the heads of sacrificial victims were likely strung (Figure 2.21). Other similarities are apparent in shared subject matter as is exemplified by the representation of Chaak mools or reclining human figures, and sculptures of the feathered serpent deity, as shown in Figure 2.22 (Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2011: 1-60; Kowalski 2011: 195-248; V. Miller 1999: 340-360; M. Miller 1985: 7-17; G. Kubler 1982: 93-115).[17]

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[16] See Weeks and Hill (2006) for the Carnegie archaeological report on Chichén. See Kowalski (2011: 251-314) for a discussion on some shared stylistic and iconographic similarities between Chichén Itzá and Uxmal including round buildings and feathered serpent iconography.

[17] See Kowalski (2011: 251-314) and Kristan-Graham (2011: 429-468) for an introduction to shared subject matter between Tula and Chichén Itzá, see V. Miller (1999) for a discussion of the tzompantli or skull rack, see M. Miller (1985) for a review of the Chaak mools and G. Kubler (1982) for information on the feathered serpent columns.

Figure 2.21   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The tzompantli.
Author's photograph, July 2015.

Figure 2.22   Chichén Itzá, Mexico.
Feathered serpent iconography on
the balustrade of a temple. Author's
photograph, summer 2016.

Especially of note are the parallels between Pyramid B at Tula and the Temple of the

Warriors at Chichén Itzá (Kowalski 2011: 204-215; Kristan-Graham 1999: 162-175, 2001: 317-

369, 201: 428-468; Stone 1999: 298-319). In both cases, colonnaded halls form long "vestibules"

along the fronts of stepped pyramids. These pyramids were topped with temples in which the

supporting columns are rendered as feathered serpents (Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. Temple of the Warriors. Author's photograph, July 2016.

This basic similarity is strengthened by the mutual presence of distinctive sculptural

motifs such as the jaguar-bird-serpent motif, the presence of Chaak Mools, and shared warrior

outfits worn by figures on carved pillars. Notably absent from Chichén Itzá are the numerous

royal portrait stelae that can be seen at Cobá and other Late Classic sites. In place of a focus on

individuals, many scholars have argued that Chichén Itzá's political imagery reflects groups of

people and therefore systems of joint rule referred to as a *multepal* (Schele and Freidel 1990;

Schele and Mathews 1998; Barrera Vasquez et al. 1980: 540; Barrera Vasquez and Morley

1949). While this theory has also been contested by some in favor of a more traditional

"kingship" model (Lincoln 1990; Cobos 2011; Ringle 2004; Kowalski 2011; Wren 1994), it is

clear that whatever Chichén Itzá's political system, the site and its stewards could amass a

considerable degree of power with connections throughout the Yucatán peninsula and into

central Mexico.

Désiré Charnay, the man responsible for first documenting the distinct similarities

between Chichén Itzá and the central Mexican Toltec city of Tula, suggested a Toltec conquest

of Chichén Itzá (Charnay 1887). This accounted for the "non-Maya" architectural styles and media (and perhaps political players) at Chichén Itzá. These included, for example, colonnaded halls, serpent iconography and tzompantlis. More recently however, as discussed in the edited volume *Twin Tollans* (Kowalski and Kristan-Graham 2011), the complex relationship between Tula and Chichén Itzá reveals that the northern Maya were actively appropriating aspects of central Mexican iconography and building style to suit their sociopolitical and religious needs.

In truth, there are several examples in which Chichén Itzá's art and architecture reflect the city's own artistic uniqueness, its burgeoning economic and political power, and ultimately its Maya identity. The site has, for example, the largest ballcourt in all of Mesoamerica (Figure 2.24). For the Maya, ballcourts were not only locations of popular sport, but were simultaneously locations in which primordial creation stories, including that retold in the 18th century Quiché Maya Popol Vuh, could be ritually reenacted. In this story, a set of Hero Twins venture into the underworld to do battle with the Death Lords by playing ball. They do so to resurrect the maize god and are successful, but not before one twin is decapitated (Tedlock 1996: 125-126).

Figure 2.24   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The Great Ballcourt, looking north. Author's photograph, July 2016.

The friezes of Chichén Itzá's court depict a similar episode in which two opposing armies face one another (Figure 2.25). One of the protagonists is kneeling and has been decapitated. A skull is depicted in the centrally placed ball between the opposing lines in Figure 2.26 (Cohodas 1978; V. Miller 2008: 165-189).[18] Such death symbolism is explicit and frequent at Chichén Itzá and reflects a heightened interest in cults surrounding death and decapitation. In addition to the ballcourt, with its beheaded protagonist, Chichén Itzá also has, as Virginia E. Miller (1999: 350) states, "the largest, most complete, and most elaborate *tzompantli*" in Mesoamerica.

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[18] The Hero Twin Hunahpu's head is taken off by a bat in the Popol Vuh. However, there are similarities to the iconography at Chichén Itzá 's Great Ballcourt as Hunahpu is decapitated in the underworld and his head is then used as a ball in a ballgame with the Death Lords. See Tedlock (1996: 128-129) for the discussion of Hunahpu's head as the ball.

Figure 2.25   The protagonists in the Great Ballcourt frieze at Chichén Itzá, Mexico. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 2.26   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The ball with a skull in it from the Great Ballcourt frieze. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Evidence of warfare and sacrifice continue throughout the sculptural programs at Chichén Itzá. "Skull-faced figures" donning cross bone skirts are depicted on piers from the Lower Temple of the Jaguar and warrior figures with skeletal limbs occur on the extensions and balustrades of the *tzompantli,* which incidentally also depicts rows of skulls in relief (V. Miller 2008: 173, 178). While Charnay argued that such imagery reflected a central Mexican invasion of the "peaceful Maya", the practice of human sacrifice and decapitation in ancient Maya culture has a long history, as is attested to by Classic Period skeletal remains, relief sculpture, murals and hieroglyphics (Schele and Miller 1986; V. Miller 2008: 165-183; Vail and Hernández, 2008: 120-164).[19]

Benjamino Volta and Geoffrey Braswell (2014: 392-402) developed a convincing chronology for Chichén Itzá based on their excavations at the Great Terrace structure there. Their analysis of ceramic and architectural styles suggested that Maya elite commissioned buildings in styles similar to other Late Classic Maya cities such as Cobá in the late 9th century. This was also a time period during which Classic glyphs were employed. These Maya used a pottery type like that being used in the Puuc region during roughly the same time. Volta and Braswell (2014) argue that there was a lull in building during the early 10th century for reasons that yet remain contested. They proposed that architectural construction intensified toward the middle of that century, noting that major occupation is apparent until even until the 12th century, during which time Sotuta ceramic wares replaced previous types that were shared with Maya neighbors in Puuc cities (Volta and Braswell 2014: 392-402). It was during this "second golden age" as Volta and Braswell term it, that Chichén Itzá's building styles more closely referenced

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[19] Schele and Mathews (1998) is the book published in connection with the exhibition *The Blood of Kings: A New Interpretation in Maya Art*, opened at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth May 12-August 24, 1986. The book and exhibition highlight the ritual art of human sacrifice and the importance of blood in Classic Maya religion and culture.

those seen at places such as Tula in central Mexico. These are the buildings commonly referred to as "New Chichén." Considering that the first phase of Chichén Itzá's growth is stylistically (and therefore undoubtedly culturally) more like other Terminal Classic Maya cities, Volta and Braswell (2014) have suggested that that phase be deemed Chichén Itzá's Terminal Classic phase with late 10th/early 11th century construction and material culture marking the Early Postclassic.

Eleventh century occupation and construction at Chichén Itzá is further supported by late dates derived from the structure and underlying grave known as "The High Priest's Grave" at Chichén Itzá. This structure is dated to 998 C.E. (Thompson 1937: 186). The late 10th century date would mean that major architectural projects were still being undertaken at the turn of the century thereby providing for major occupation of the site into the 11th century. This is further supported by the fact that the Temple of the Warriors, which seems to postdate the last construction phase of the Temple of Kukulkan (itself dated to 900 C.E.), has more than 120 layers of plaster added it to. This would mean that the Temple of the Warriors was used for many decades after it was originally built in the 10th century.[20]

Very recently, however, this chronology has been contested. William Ringle (2017), following work by Fernando Robles Castellanos (2009), argues that no monumental construction was begun after the 11th century. Ringle (2017) suggests instead that monumental construction had ceased by the time of the second golden age cited by Volta and Braswell (2014). According to Ringle (2017), "International Style" architecture (that associated with feathered serpents and building styles similar to Tula), was not constructed between the mid-10th through early 12th centuries. Rather, based on recent excavations and archaeological seriation of architecture

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[20] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 2017.

reflecting this style, Ringle (2017) argues that Chichén Itzá seems to have reached its fluorescence in the 10th century.[21]

What each of the chronological models do agree on is that while Chichén Itzá presents both Maya and central Mexican architectural styles, this by no means suggests that a central Mexican "take-over" of Chichén Itzá occurred, but rather is evidence for economic, religious and other social interaction between the regions. For the purposes of the present study, I discuss Chichén Itzá as a Terminal Classic site as it seems apparent that the majority of the site's major architecture (and by extension, major occupation) falls within the Terminal Classic. However, based on the late dates established for some important structures (i.e. the High Priest's Grave) it does seem likely that some major structures were being built and/or refurbished into the early 11th century.

Ultimately, Chichén Itzá, as a Maya city engaged in trade with the Mesoamerican world beyond the Maya region, had a tremendous impact on its contemporaries and would continue to impact Maya cities after its fall. Its ascendency and connections with central Mexico arguably caused the downfall of other powerful sites, including Cobá, and possibly even Uxmal and various Puuc sites. Once Chichén Itzá did fall, its power vacuum would be filled in the 13th century by the rising polity of Mayapán.

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[21] Most of this work has focused on the Temple of Kukulcan, Temple of the Chaak Mool, the Great Ballcourt and the Temple of the Warriors.

3   LITERATURE REVIEW:

URBANISM AT MAYAPÁN; POLITICS, RELIGION, AND ECONOMICS

3.1   Previous Work at Mayapán

The earliest Spanish documentation of Mayapán comes to us from the 16th century documentation of Friar Diego de Landa and his Maya informants. Landa noted that Mayapán was founded by a leader known as "Kukulcan." This figure came from Chichén Itzá and entered into a pact with lords at Mayapán, according to Landa. Landa briefly describes the city as having a principal pyramid similar to that at Chichén Itzá that was also named the Temple of Kukulcan. He also mentions a round building with four entrances (now named the Caracol) and noted that within the low wall to the city were located the houses of the lords who ruled over assigned villages (Landa 1941: 23-27).

It was not until the expedition led by John L. Stephens and Frederick Catherwood in 1841, however, that a careful documentation of the city's central structures was carried out. This work was followed by the studies of Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg (1870: 234-249), Augustus Le Plongeon (1882), Antonio Garcia Cubas (1885), and Carl Sapper in 1897 (Pollock et al. 1962: 2-3; P. Delgado Ku 2004: 18; Masson and Peraza Lope: 2014: 16). Lawrence Roys (1941) also reviewed some of the site's central architecture, as did E.W. Andrews IV and R.T. Patton in 1938 (L. Roys 1941; Pollock et al. 1962: 3; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 18).

The first intensive and comprehensive excavation was the archaeological project conducted by the Carnegie Institute of Washington during the 1950's and published in 1962 (Pollock et al. 1962). This project produced the first large-scale map of the city (shown in Chapter 1, Figure 1.2). The map includes the city's central buildings, residential architecture and

surrounding wall (Jones 2009: 3-8). The Carnegie project also provided detailed excavation

reports and illustrations of the city's civic and religious architecture (Proskouriakoff 1962: 87-

164), residential and associated structures (Smith 1962: 165-320), and artifacts (Proskouriakoff

1962: 321-427). These reports were later updated and supplemented with an edited volume

referred to as the *Carnegie Maya II: Current Reports* (Weeks 2009). Chapters in the volume

have revisited and reinterpreted monumental and residential architecture, artifacts, and landscape

discussed by the original Carnegie study while providing additional interpretation and

comparisons with other sites.[22] Robert E. Smith (1971) later published a study of Mayapán's

ceramics, coupled with that of the ceramics of Uxmal, Kabah, and Chichén Itzá, for the Peabody

Museum of Harvard University.

Following the work by the Carnegie and Current Report researchers, the Instituto

Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) has surveyed and excavated at Mayapán since

1996. Under the stewardship of director Carlos Peraza Lope, field directors Pedro Delgado Ku

(2004) and Bárbara Escamilla Ojeda, field archaeologists Miguel Angel Delgado Ku (2009) and

Mario Garrido Euan (Delgado Ku 2004: 26), and ceramicists Wilberth Cruz Alvarado and Luis

Flores Cobá, this work continues to present (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 20). Work by the

INAH project is mostly dedicated to surveying, excavating, analyzing and interpreting the site's

monumental core. Site reports from excavation seasons beginning in 1996 are currently housed

in INAH's offices in Mérida, Mexico (Peraza Lope et al. 1997; 1999b; 1999c; 2002; 2003;

2004).

Four theses reviewing monumental architecture, tool use, mural traditions and pottery

types have also been produced as a result of INAH's work at Mayapán (Delgado Ku 2004;

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[22] See Weeks (2009: V-VI) for a list of topical contributions and individual authors.

Escamilla Ojeda 2004; Delgado Ku 2009; Cruz Alvarado 2010). Other research projects,
including Clifford T. Brown's (1999; 2005; 2006) dissertation and later articles, focus on the
relationship between social organization and Mayapán's geological and built landscape. By
reviewing artifact assemblages in domestic households and the layout of cenotes in relation to
those households, Brown has convincingly shown that neighborhood organization at Mayapán
was guided by the location of cenotes (as opposed to Mayapán's residential neighborhoods being
haphazardly laid out).

Beginning in 2001, the ongoing Economic Foundations of Mayapán Project (PEMY) has
surveyed and excavated elite and commoner residences within and outside Mayapán's Great
Wall. The project is directed by University of Albany SUNY archaeologist Marilyn Masson and
has been carried out jointly with Peraza Lope's INAH project. The major focus of PEMY is to
create a better understanding of the economic underpinnings of both commoner and elite
residential sectors at Mayapán in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of Postclassic
city life.[23] Together with the ongoing INAH project that continues to document, analyze and
interpret the site's ritual core, PEMY research has resulted in over ten years of survey and
excavation at Mayapán, several published reports, a GIS database (Hare 2008a; 2008b), and the
recent book, *Kukulcan's Realm* (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Some notable contributions of
the joint studies from the INAH and PEMY projects include the recent LiDAR work undertaken
by PEMY members Timothy Hare and Bradley Russell in their efforts to push beyond the
original Carnegie maps and document structures outside of the Great Wall (Masson and Peraza
Lope 2014: 18-19).

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[23] See PEMY's website at: http://www.albany.edu/Mayapán/PEMY.shtml

Most work at Mayapán has relied on anthropological and archaeological methodologies. However, important work by art historian Susan Milbrath has also been conducted since the beginning of INAH's work at the site. Research by Milbrath (2011) and by Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003; 2009a) has focused on much of the architectural and artistic remains from the city's ritual center. Principal among her publications are those that focus on murals, effigy censers, ritual architecture and the relationships between such visual culture and sociopolitical and religious organization. Milbrath has argued, for example, that the presence of Puuc-style architecture at Mayapán, together with architecture inspired by forms at Chichén Itzá, are reflections of divisions between the two most important factions at Mayapán –the Xiu and Cocom (Milbrath 2011; Milbrath and Peraza 2003; 2009a).

Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b) contend that Puuc styles at Mayapán are related to a "Puuc revival" initiated by the Xiu family. This family claimed, and may have had, ancestral connections to Uxmal. Milbrath and Peraza Lope believe that building forms including radial pyramids, colonnaded halls, and round buildings, as well as Kukulcan or feathered serpent iconography, are related to the Cocom family with ties to Chichén Itzá and Central Mexico.[24] They suggest that the creation and purposeful destruction of these two different building styles at Mayapán reflects the contention between these groups.

Murals at Mayapán have also been an area of focus for Milbrath and INAH colleagues Peraza Lope and Delgado Ku (2009). Several of Mayapán's murals reflect the Postclassic International Style and Symbol Set.[25] In a seminal essay reviewing the Sala de los Símbolos

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[24] Milbrath and Peraza (2009b: 583) argue that the use of revival architecture served political and religious purposes. They suggest that architecture associated with the rain deity Chaak can be linked to the Xiu lineage (and Puuc sites) whereas, serpent temple complexes at Mayapán were commissioned by the rival Cocom lineage.

[25] This style and symbol set is discussed more fully in Chapter Three. However, as a brief review, it incorporates shared iconography and style between cultures in central Mexico and the Maya region further south. These include the representation of shared deities and symbols in addition to incorporating bold colors and more geometric, as opposed to naturalistic, line.

Solares (Room of the Sun Symbols) mural in Structure Q161, Milbrath, Peraza Lope and M.

Delgado Ku (2010) argue that not only does the mural reflect notable aspects of the central

Mexican sub-set of this style, but the mural has explicit Aztec elements (Figure 3.1). As noted by

Milbrath et al. (2010: 1), "relationships with the Mixteca-Puebla style are evident in Mayapán

murals that date between 1350 and 1400. Later, Aztec stylistic elements were introduced in

architectural sculpture and murals, dating circa 1400-1450, probably through itinerant artists

accompanying traders from the Valley of Mexico." Milbrath et al. (2010) compare this mural

with substyles of the region including the "East Coast" and "Mixteca Puebla style" of the

International Style and Symbol Set.

Figure 3.1   The remaining mural in Structure Q 161. Author's photograph, July 2014.

There are certain connections with the Mixteca-Puebla style that are apparent in the

mural including the use of stylized forms and bold colors that lay flatly over broad areas of

surface. However, black lines that form partitions in murals from the Mixteca-Puebla or East

Coast variant are not present in the Mayapán mural (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 29;

Robertson 1970). In part on this basis, Milbrath et al. (2010) have suggested the murals at

Mayapán share affinities with Aztec painting styles, which also eschew the use of such outlining.

      The authors believe the figures facing one another in the Mayapán murals, seen in Figure

3.2, are like those on either side of a sun disk on the Aztec Teocalli de la Guerra Sagrada

(Temple of the Sacred War) sculpture.[26] Milbrath et al. (2010: 2) also argue that early murals

from the second phase of the Templo Mayor at Tenochtitlán are mimicked via the costuming,

proportion and profile figures seen at Mayapán. Broad use of color in the background of the

Mayapán mural, as well as the use of bold red, blue, yellow and white, also recall Aztec mural

painting as Milbrath et al. (2010) have noted.
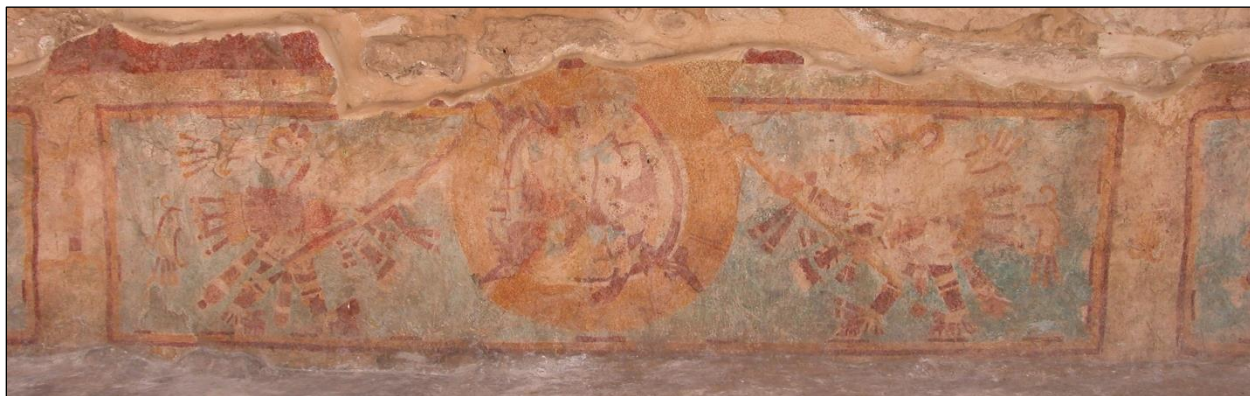
Figure 3.2   The mural in Structure Q 161. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

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[26] The Teocalli was likely a throne for an Aztec ruler. On the backrest of the throne stand two figures on either side of a sun disk. Below them are a flight of stairs and together with the backrest and armrest, the entire sculpture depicts a temple in miniature. See Townsend (2000: figures 4 and 5). The sun likely represents the current world era in Aztec belief and was a source of heat and life according to Townsend. The two figures on either side are identified as the deity Huitzilopochtli and the Aztec ruler Motecuhzoma I.

In addition to stylistic similarities to Aztec art, there are symbolic aspects that are also shared between the Mayapán and Aztec examples. Each of the eight sun disks represented in the Sala de los Símbolos Solares mural originally had a "diving figure" in its center. Given their "pinwheel poses" and location in the sun disks, these figures may be conflated with a sacrificed warrior as can also be seen in Mixtec and Aztec art. However, even as they call attention to similarities to Aztec art, Milbrath et al. (2010) also make note of important Maya themes in the mural, especially as they relate to cycles of Venus (Nuttall 1975: 9; Milbrath et al. 2010: 3).

Eight different figures were originally present on the eight sun disks. It has been suggested that the sun disks could symbolize eight solar years in the Venus almanac, with the deity figures representing sun avatars demarcating each of these eight solar years (Milbrath 1999: 58-59; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 28; Milbrath et al. 2010: 3). Anthony Aveni, Susan Milbrath and Carlos Peraza Lope (2004) argue that the eight original mural panels from Structure Q 161 have solar associations and are related to cardinal and intercardinal directionality, and the importance of the solstices and equinoxes in charting time. The eight panels depict eight suns with different diving figures within them. These refer, per Aveni et al. (2004), to the eight cardinal and intercardinal directions (also seen on the 260-day calendar on the Madrid Codex). The eight-fold representations in turn reflect the division of the solar year into four quarters by the equinoxes and solstices.

Notably, the Temple of Kukulcan, which is attached to Structure Q 161 but was finished *before* the attachment of Q 161, is a radial pyramid with sides oriented to the cardinal directions. Aveni et al. (2004) suggest that the directionality of the temple as well as the presence of eight solar disks and associated deities (divine figures) are also related to sacred time and space. Since the temple was finished before Q 161, it seems the importance of east/west directionality (in

accordance with the east/west perceived movement of the sun) was long in place at Mayapán. The importance of this orientation was then later reinforced by the murals in Q 161. This point is further explored in the following chapter.

The orientation of Structure Q 161, the position of its mural, and the close association and orientation of the later Temple of Kukulcan reinforce the Venus and solar associations embedded within the mural (Ruiz Gallut et al. 2001: 265-275; Aveni et al. 2004: 123-143). Milbrath et al. (2010: 3) propose a connection between the murals and the Venus cycle based on studies of the alignment of Structure Q 161. Observing times when the light of the rising sun illuminated the murals resulted in dates that divide the year into a 2/3 ratio in relation to the summer solstice, and these dates have been used to derive numerical coefficients that link the solar year with the synodic cycle of Venus by marking the dates that Venus could be seen behind the tower of the Templo Redondo (Q 152) when viewed from Q 161 (Ruiz Gallut et al. 2001).

Q 161 itself does not have an orientation to a significant horizon position for Venus, but its north and northwest walls are illuminated by the rising sun on the summer solstice, and its south wall is illuminated by the winter solstice sunrise. Observations made from the Templo Redondo, which functioned as an observatory, indicate that alignments toward the Temple of Kukulcan and the adjacent Q 161 mark important solar dates (Aveni et al. 2004). Milbrath et al. (2010: 4-8) also saw astronomical symbolism within other murals at the site, including the mural decorating the interior of the Temple of the Painted Niches (Figure 3.3), as well as in the mural on the bench of the Temple of the Fisherman (Figure 3.4). The relationship between calendrics and murals at Mayapán is more fully addressed in Chapter 5. However, it is important to note here that the possible connections between calendrical sequences and art at Mayapán extended beyond murals.
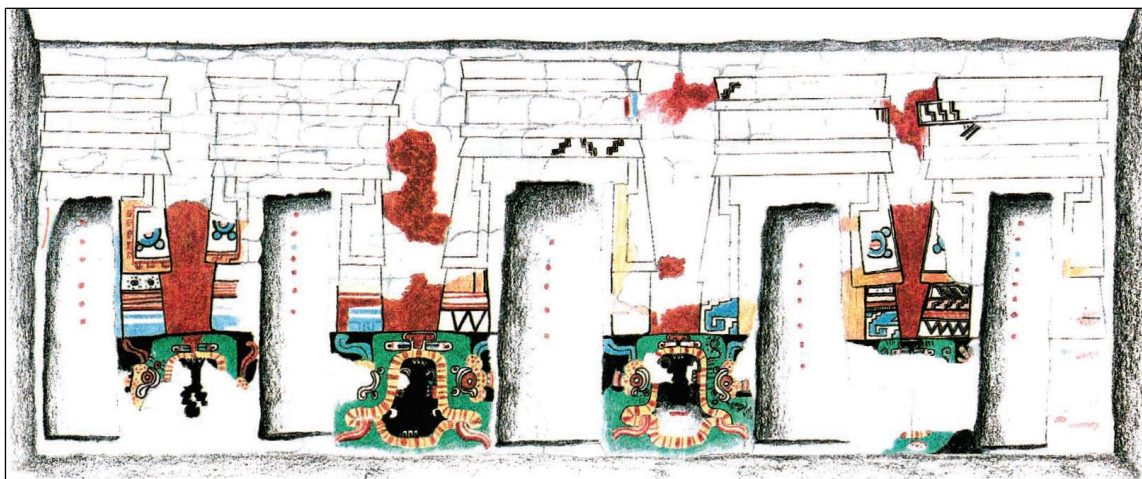
Figure 3.3   The mural in Structure Q 80, the Temple of the Painted Niches. After Barrera Rubio and Peraza Lope 2001: Plate 5.

Figure 3.4   A detailed drawing of the original Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Illustration by B. Escamilla in Milbrath et al. 2010: fig. 7.

Milbrath and Peraza Lope's (2007) article "Mayapán's Effigy Censers: Iconography,
Context and External Connections" reviews the functions of Mayapán's effigy censer cult in
relationship to temporal cycles at Mayapán. Milbrath and Peraza show that this effigy cult, in
which both Maya and central Mexican deities were depicted on vessels (Figures 3.5 and 3.6),
was deeply related to calendrical rituals at Mayapán, as first noted by Landa (1941) and
reinforced iconographically by the presence of effigy censer gods in Postclassic calendrical
almanacs.

Figure 3.5   Mayapán effigy incense
burner depicting aspects of
Quetzalcoatl, a central Mexican deity.
After Milbrath and Peraza Lope
2007: fig. 5

Figure 3.6   Mayapán effigy incense burner
depicting a Maya death deity. After Milbrath and
Peraza Lope 2007: fig. 1a

As Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 425-515) discuss in their chapter on religious practice at Mayapán, there is evidence that the censers were used in Ch'en or Yax monthly ceremonies or possibly also in day I Imix ceremonies from the 260-day almanac (Thompson 1957: 602; Graff 1997: 163-164). Masson and Peraza Lope (2014) and Russell (2000) also suggest that monthly rituals required idols as did ceremonies revolving around the division of the 260-year cycle, temporally planned hunting and agricultural ceremonies, Uayeb rites, the completion of the 52-year cycle, and passages of K'atuns or half K'atuns.[27]

Calendrical research at Mayapán is supplemented by a larger body of work reviewing the interrelationships between visual culture and ancient Maya conceptions of time in the Yucatán peninsula during the Postclassic. Meredith Paxton (2001) has written at length on the cosmological significance of codices and their relationship to Postclassic Maya iconography, as have Gabrielle Vail (2002, 2004, 2009), Harvey Bricker and Victoria Bricker (2011) and Christine Hernández (Vail and Hernández 2013). Karl Taube (1988, 1989, 1992, 2010: 145-192) has contributed substantial iconographic and epigraphic readings of Maya art and writing as they relate to calendrical rituals and religious ideology. Anthony Aveni (2001, 2010: 115-134) and Timothy Pugh (2001) have made important connections between architectural and solar alignments. Additionally, Prudence Rice (2008) and Don Rice (Rice and Rice 2004) have discussed pan-regional concepts of time as they are manifested in visual culture by the Postclassic Maya in the Yucatán peninsula and Guatemala.

The researchers reviewed in this section have contributed invaluable information about art, architecture and society at Mayapán. Their scholarship has provided a framework from which to begin an engagement with the city's art and architecture. Moving towards a more

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[27] See also Bricker (1997), P. Rice (2004: 246), D. Chase (1985, 1988).

specific discussion of Mayapán's visual culture, the following segment reviews the types of

structures found throughout the city and discusses these in terms of the important ideological

beliefs and political organization they materialized. While this conversation was begun in the

introduction, the discussion below will give the reader a more thorough account of Mayapán as

an urban and sacred center.

3.2   Art, Architecture and Sociopolitical Significance

Some of Mayapán's most common public structures include radial pyramids, temples,

colonnaded halls, plazas and palaces. Tatiana Proskouriakoff was the first investigator to

comprehensively describe and classify the structures at Mayapán and her architectural

categorization remains useful to this day. She states that an important, if not "principal" unit at

Mayapán was the colonnaded hall (Figure 3.7). As Proskouriakoff (1962: 90) describes them,

these were long rooms with open colonnades on the exterior and a second row of columns on the

interior. A bench often occurs near the end and rear walls and is interrupted in the middle by an

altar.

Figure 3.7   Mayapán, Mexico. A view of colonnaded halls and
the Caracol at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Often colonnaded halls were combined with raised shrines and an oratory to form a ceremonial group. Shrines are small enclosures that can occur as interior shrines, statue shrines or raised shrines (Proskouriakoff 1962: 90). Proskouriakoff states that interior shrines enclose smaller altars and are found within the colonnaded halls. Raised shrines are independent substructures that can be found raised on blocks. These face a colonnade when they are part of the ceremonial group. Such shrines can be one-room structures with benches and altars on their back walls. They can be simple structures or have doorways with columns and sometimes interior partitions (Proskouriakoff 1962: 90). Oratories, set further away than shrines, are structures with two columns that are generally attached to other structures and contain an altar and a low bench. A terrace is present in front of these buildings (Proskouriakoff 1962: 91).

Ceremonial groups consisting of colonnaded halls, shrines and oratories can be found independently of other groups or they can be found in association with temples. Proskouriakoff (1962: 91) refers to the interrelationship of ceremonial groups with pyramids as "temple assemblages". Typically, these assemblages feature serpent pyramid temples (those with columns in the shape of serpents) that stand at right angles to colonnaded halls. The shrine centered on the colonnaded hall "is turned to face the temple" (Proskouriakoff 1962: 91). As Proskouriakoff (1962: 91) further states, "Between the shrine and the temple, at the foot of the temple steps, is a low, irregular platform for stucco statues. The oratory is placed to the right of the temple, and in one assemblage another, smaller colonnaded hall is added on the left". These early distinctions and descriptions were largely adopted by the current INAH and PEMY projects at Mayapán when they began their work at Mayapán. However, these later projects have

provided additional information on architectural style, formation and layout at Mayapán. A brief

description of architectural assemblages in the ritual center of Mayapán is sketched below.

Mayapán's ritual core is dominated by the radial Temple of Kukulcan. However, several

other structure types can be found in the center (shown in Chapter 1, Figure 1.1 and also in

Figure 3.8 below).
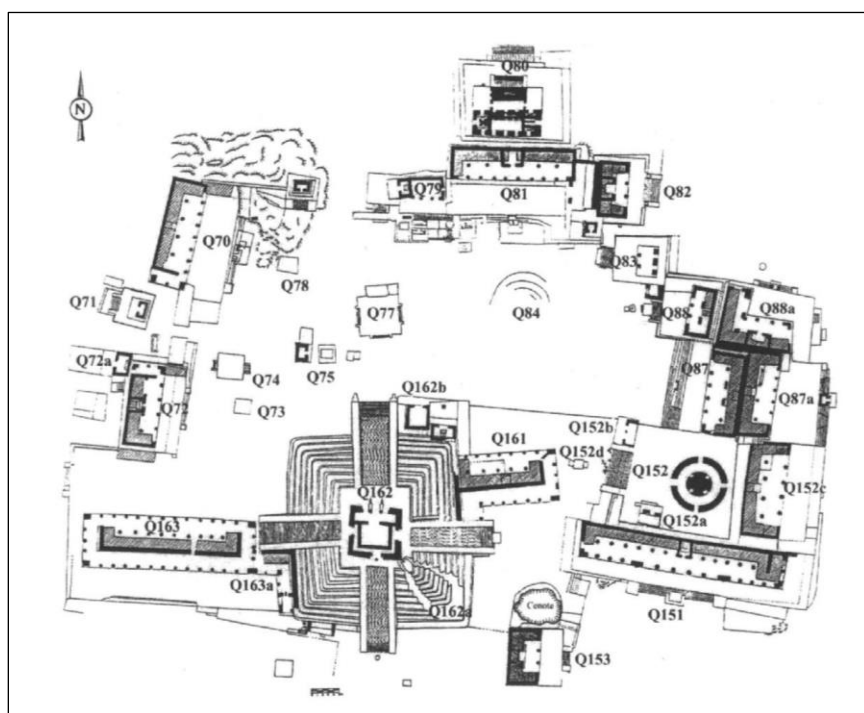
Figure 3.8   Map of Mayapán's central precinct. Depicted are the
Temple of Kukulcan or Castillo (Q 162), Hall of Chaak Masks (Q
151) to the east (viewer's right), and the Hall of the Kings (Q 163)
to the west (viewer's left). Map by Pedro Delgado Ku in Milbrath
and Peraza Lope. 2009a: fig. 9.1.

Ten other temples are present in the central precinct and have been separated into the following

types by Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 72-104): "(1) large pyramidal structures housing an

upper shrine room or two, (2) burial shaft temples housing an upper shrine room with an ossuary

shaft, (3) radial temples (two or four cardinal staircases), (4) round temples, and (5) twin

temples."

Other dominant structures include colonnaded halls (twenty-two), that were often part of

larger courtyards, oratories, sanctuaries, shrines and round altars (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014:

72-75; Proskouriakoff 1962: 91; P. Delgado Ku 2004: 135). Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 73)

suggest that unlike temples, oratories were used for funerary purposes. As for shrines and altars,

Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 73) note that these are sometimes freestanding structures but can

also be adjoined to other buildings. Alternatively, sanctuaries are always attached to buildings

(Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 73).

As Landa (1941), and the Carnegie, INAH and PEMY projects make evident, the entire

monumental center of Mayapán was dominated by the temple pyramid referred to as the Temple

of Kukulcan (or alternatively, the "Castillo"). According to Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 73),

the round temple, or Templo Redondo (Q 152), marks the eastern edge of the core, while Hall Q

81 is located toward the north (Temple Q 80 is located behind it). At the western edge of the

ritual center are three colonnaded hall groups including Q 70, Q 72, and Q 54. Plazas are formed

from the joining or alignment of these various groups (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 73). [28]

Beyond the ritual center, most residences were constructed of wattle and daub material

and had palm roofs. Most of these houses were surrounded by short rock walls and could be

grouped together in assemblages of two or three. House lots with bounding walls are common

and were originally mapped by the Carnegie project, although the present PEMY and INAH

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[28] This review of architecture in the site's core was synthesized from INAH field archaeologist Pedro Delgado Ku's comprehensive Master's thesis. This thesis reviews architectural style, type and layout at Mayapán. See P. Delgado Ku (2004: 99, 107, 111).

projects continue to reveal new evidence of residential groups. Residential structures were densely crowded, and some 15,000-17,000 people lived within the bounds of the city wall of Mayapán (Russell 2008; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 28). The wall itself was 9.1 kilometers in circumference with evidence of parapets at some locations (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2014: 154). As discussed by Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 154) and Edwin Shook (1952), 12 gates existed, of which seven were constructed with porticos and columns. Of those 12 gates, Ralph Roys (1962: 79) states that four cardinal gates were assigned to important priests as recorded in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel.

Originally, the city may also have had two walls with the second delineating the space of the ritual center. Landa (1941: 23-26) recorded that the site originally had a wall surrounding major architecture of the center, although to date, this wall has not been found. It may be that the wall Landa noted was simply architecture spaced closely together. It could also have been made of perishable material.

The construction of major ritual buildings, as well as residences, was in many cases guided by the natural landscape itself. More than 20 cenotes are located within Mayapán's wall and, based on both ethnographic and archaeological evidence, several of these cenotes served ritual purposes and were paired with public architecture (Smith 1962: 210; Brown 2005: 377). Cenote Ch'en Mul (shown in Chapter 1, Figure 1.5) was the major cenote located at the base of the Temple of Kukulcan and was closely associated ideologically with that temple; however, other cenotes have remains of ceremonial architecture as well.

Cenote Itzmal Ch'en for example, was a known site of religious activity and had a temple built near it (Proskouriakoff 1962: 115, 118; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 78; Brown 2005: 389-390). Clifford Brown (2005) has also found that many of Mayapán's residential barrios were

laid out according to the location of cenotes. These cenotes were focal points of ritual activity (particularly ancestor worship) in addition to serving as sources of water for lineage groups in the city (Brown 2005: 382-395). The affiliation of cenotes with both ritual and residential structures reinforces their significance and suggests that they were important nodes of religious activity at all social levels.

Brown's work demonstrates that the Maya at Mayapán adapted their social and religious settlement patterns to the karst environment upon which the city was built. His work shows that the pattern of settlement at Mayapán was not random. Based on archaeological observations, as well as Colonial accounts (Garza 1983: 218), the Maya at Mayapán preferred to build on higher ground when possible (therefore taking advantage of exposed rock as a base for structures). They also built near sources of water. At Mayapán, the area's karst geological character creates a series of dry caves, cenotes (holding fresh water), and exposed rock ridges. These underground realms became focal nodes for settlement and ceremonial purposes and guided the location of dwellings and ritual architecture in the city. Brown believes that settlement throughout the city was guided by the location of cenotes and similar underground sources with freshwater. Ancestor worship also seems to have been a factor in a group's relationship with cenotes. As Brown (2005: 382) discusses, lineage groups placed structures near cenotes or caves in order to use them as sources of water. However, evidence in the form of offerings and ritual sculpture also suggests that they were sites of religious activity.

Following a passage from the Chilam Balam of Tizimin as well as comparative examples from contemporary highland Maya of Chiapas, Guatemala, Brown (2005) believes the cenotes and caves of Mayapán were used as sites of ancestor worship. Brown (2005: 386-387) records the Tizimin inscription as, "the burden of the k'atun is finished, which is one moon over

Mayapán, the cycle seat, his setting, his lineage, *at the wells, at the welling fountains*, and there

occurred deer death, and painless death." This passage would suggest a lineage ritual taking

place at the site of a well or cenotes. Perhaps the civic-ceremonial architecture (such as shrines,

altars and temples) in and near Mayapán's Cenote X-Coton and Itzmal Ch'en were used for

similar events as outlined in the Chilam Balam of Tizimin. Notably, Cenote Itzmal Ch'en is still

used to this day by men from the nearby village of Telchaquillo who take part in *ch'a'ah-chaak*

or rain-brining ceremonies (Shook 1952; Brown 2005: 392).

Like any ancient Maya city, Mayapán's architectural projects also reflected its political,

economic and religious importance. Almost certainly, the city served as the seat of a *May* cycle

in which "the burden of responsibility for festivities and ritual observances associated with each

20-year K'atun of the 13 K'atun cycle of 256 or so years" was undertaken (Masson and Peraza

Lope 2014: 37). This responsibility would have contributed to much of the city's centrally-

located architectural and monument programs, the latter including the "setting" of large stone

altars near the main and north plazas (Masson and Peraza Lope: 2014: 37).

Several of the center's major monuments and structures are also reflections of the cult of

Kukulcan. The Spanish chronicler Diego de Landa (1941) noted that Mayapán was founded by

the cult figure Kukulcan or the Feathered Serpent, who was affiliated with the ethnic group of

the Itzá. It is unclear whether this figure was a real person as opposed to a deity in the Yucatán

peninsula. At Mayapán he was also recorded with the names Ah Nacxit Kukulcan or Hunac Ceel

(Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Whether man or god, Kukulcan seems to have been intimately

linked to the founding of important cities. Landa (1941: 34n172), for example, states that a figure

Kukulcan was responsible for founding Chichén Itzá and later moving the new center of the

Maya world to Mayapán. Lending to the confusion is the fact that he was also noted as the founder of cities in central Mexico.

H. B. Nicholson (2001) provides an extensive analysis and synthesis of various accounts of Kukulcan's story (known as Queztalcoatl in central Mexico), many of which come from Spanish accounts during and directly after the conquest of Tenochtitlán.[29] Perhaps the most famous of these is friar Bernardino de Sahagún's 16th century account *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. According to this story, Queztalcoatl was a lord who ruled over a sacred city referred to as "Tollan" after migrating there from the sacred Chicomoztoc (a lobed cave from which the Aztec also claimed descent). He ruled over the Toltecs at Tollan or a "place of reeds" (presumably, this is the city known archaeologically as Tula, in Hidalgo, Mexico). The Toltecs, as told to Sahagún by the Aztecs, were a culturally superior society with great talent in the arts, and cooking. They were also said to be accomplished athletes and were wealthy as well (Nicholson 2001: 36-37). The figure of Queztalcoatl therefore seems to be a great "civilizer" of people.

A figure named Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl is also mentioned in this account, and he seems to have been a priest to the god Queztalcoatl. He was believed to have taken his name from the deity and was himself worshiped as a god. Like Queztalcoatl, he also had certain powers related to divination and was even said to have created the 260- day ritual calendar and 365- day secular calendar (Nicholson: 2001: 36-37). [30] The story has many other twists and turns, but this short introduction should suffice in demonstrating the difficulty in knowing if Queztalcoatl/Kukulcan was human or deity.

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[29] Several other scholars have focused on this figure. See also Carrasco (1982), Gillespie (1989), Ringle, Gallareta Negrón and Bey (1998), Ringle (2004), Bey and Ringle (2011) and Pohl (2003).

[30] Nicholson provides a summary of Sahagún's original account in these pages. He states that most of the storyline for Queztalcoatl and Topiltzin Queztalcoatl is covered in Book III Chapters III-XIV.

Archaeology and art history have proven beyond any doubt that man or god, the figure was important to cities throughout Mesoamerica. Scholars have long noticed, for example, the architectural and iconographic similarities between Chichén Itzá and Tula and many of these similarities extend to Mayapán.[31] These include the use of radial pyramids, the presence of colonnaded halls and rectangular or square platforms, and feathered serpent iconography, especially as it was incorporated into major temples. It is likely that the spread of the feathered serpent cult followed lines of economic relationships and was perhaps most thoroughly expressed at the sites of Tula in the central Mexican highlands and at Chichén Itzá in the Maya region. Both centers have been labeled as early examples of sacred Tollans (Pohl et al. 2012: 15; Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2011: 1-60; Jones 1995). It is important to note, however, that worship of feathered serpents was not new in the Postclassic Period, but rather associated with earlier sites including Classic Period Teotihuacán, Epiclassic Xochicalco (700-900 CE) in Morelos, Mexico, Cacaxtla (c. 650-900 CE) in Tlaxcala, Mexico, and Terminal Classic Uxmal in the Yucatán peninsula (Hirth 1989; Brittenham 2015; Kowalski 1987; 2011).

Such time depth is impressive particularly since the cult of the feathered serpent extended well into the Postclassic with sculptural heads of Kukulcan appearing not only at Mayapán, but also well into the Late Postclassic at sites including Tulum and El Meco in Quintana Roo, Mexico. Obviously, given the time span (and distance) between these sites, one person could not have founded and governed all of them and so perhaps the figure of Kukulcan was more than one real person or perhaps he was a deity. For my purposes here, I understand the story as a "mythhistory"—a term borrowed from Elizabeth Boone (2000: 15). In such stories, there is a

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[31] For a recent review see various works in *Twin Tollans* edited by Jeff Kowalski and Cynthia Kristan-Graham. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2011.

conflation of myth and history that create and reinforce important social, political and religious narratives.

What cannot be contested is that the figure of Kukulcan, whether a real person or divine hero, was certainly one of the most important players at both Chichén Itzá and Mayapán. His cult was celebrated throughout both cities and is most iconically represented by feathered serpent iconography in public art and architecture such as in the columns and balustrades of the radially symmetrical Kukulcan temples from each of these sites (Aveni et al. 2004).[32] The cult of the feathered serpent was deeply related to aspects of both Chichén Itzá's and Mayapán's social, political and religious infrastructure and the cult's importance continues to be a topic of scholarship.

However, even given the undeniable importance of Kukulcan and the memory of Chichén Itzá at Mayapán, Mayapán's history is a complex one, with various and dynamic political, economic and religious variables. Examples of a panoply of gods and goddesses from both Maya and central Mexican traditions demonstrates that Kukulcan was not the only important deity at Mayapán. Effigy sculptures from several structures, for example, depict a range of supernaturals. This suggests that less unilineal control over the city provided for greater opportunity for new deities to be introduced into the pantheon. Such incorporation of new supernaturals and themes may not have always been unanimously favored, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest ruling factions were often at war with one another.[33]

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[32] Landa records that the major ritual worship of Kukulcan took place in the "month" Xul, and that after the abandonment of Mayapán it was re-centered at Mani, the newly established Xiu capital. A fairly detailed description of the types of activities associated with the Kukulcan rituals is provided, and their association with the Xiu, along with the fact that lords of other provinces sent delegates to participate in honoring the deity, suggests that the feathered serpent was particularly important as a patron of elite or noble families as well.

[33] This point is more fully discussed in Chapter Five.

Beginning possibly with Uxmal and Chichén Itzá, but certainly apparent in the decades of Mayapán's ascendency, Maya cities were not necessarily locked into political systems that demanded rulership by a divine king or queen. They instead developed systems of shared rule between noble households (Roys 1972: 58; Ringle and Bey 2001: 273; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 48-49; Hernández et al. 2010: 17-36; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 31-33). Maya cities of the Classic period, for example, were ruled by divine beings referred to as K'uhul Ajaw. These monarchs most often inherited their positions as a birth right. This system was largely abandoned in southern Maya cities between 800 C.E. and 910 C.E., though evidence shows that a similar form of monarchy was practiced at Uxmal up until the middle 10th century. [34] (Kowalski 1987, 2011: 241; Kowalski and Dunning 1999). That form of monarchy at Uxmal is outlined in the following paragraph.

Based especially on a discussion of the positioning of glyphs associated with place names, verbs, and the name "Chaak" on two different monuments (Stela 14 and Altar 10), Kowalski (1987: 70-72) deduced that the similar positioning of such glyphs on each of the separate monuments suggested the term "Chaak" did not refer to the Maya rain deity, but rather named a king of Uxmal, Chaak-Uinal Kan. The naming of kings and their associated kingdoms followed specific syntax in ancient Maya hieroglyphic writing (see Coe and Van Stone 2005). This was corroborated by evidence from the 1581 *Relación of Teabo* where a Hun Uitzil Chaak was said to be the founder of the city. This suggests that it was common for rulers of Uxmal to take the name Chaak as part of their own name. Furthermore, Kowalski argues that the figural

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[34] While hieroglyphic texts do make mention of secondary elites, important families and advisory councils in Classic cities, it is apparent that their power was eclipsed significantly by individual and divine monarchs known as the K'uhul Ajaw, or "Sacred Lord". These sacred kings (and to lesser degree queens) are the predominant subject on the dynastic sculptures (stelaes, lintels, wall panels, etc.) of Classic Period cities such as Palenque, Yaxchilán, and Tikal. See Schele and Miller (1986); Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 1017.

sculpture seen standing on the bicephalic jaguar throne on Stela 14 is Lord Chaak himself, the

person named in the associated glyphs from that stela (Kowalski 1987). The figure who sits

above the House of the Governor's central building is likely also Lord Chaak-Uinal Kan himself,

as a three-dimensional bicephalic jaguar sculpture is seen just in from of that temple and aligning

with the lord (see Kowalski 1987: fig. 119).

This system of divinely-sanctioned monarchy rule seems to have changed during the late

Terminal Classic or Early Postclassic Period. The exact nature of this system during the Early

Postclassic is not securely known. For example, some scholars believe that a system of joint rule

was firmly established at Chichén Itzá, while others argue it was still functioning more like a

monarchy. These arguments are largely based on artistic and architectural evidence from the site.

For example, the inclusion of large numbers of figures in Chichén Itzá's relief sculptures and

murals, and lack of clearly identified royal portrait sculptures, points to the site having a form of

corporate or council-based government (Schele and Freidel 1990). However, analysis of

architectural spaces and placement of bench-type thrones, reliefs interpreted as a royal accession

ritual in the North Temple of the Great Ballcourt, and iconography showing recurring paired

figures associated with a solar disk and a feathered serpent, have been interpreted as evidence for

a single king or paired paramount rulers at the site (Ringle 2004; Kowalski 2011; Cobos 2011).

The presence of joint-counsel rule at Mayapán can be discussed with more certainty. By

the 13th century, the system of divinely-sanctioned kings commissioning large funerary

monuments had greatly diminished.[35] Rather, buildings were erected as temples dedicated to

deities, as embodiments of cosmological principles, or to house sectors of the city's political and

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[35] Schele and Miller (1986) provides color illustrations of art dedicated to documenting the history of Classic Maya monarchs. Coe (2011) discusses the function of Classic Period Maya temples as funerary temple assemblages dedicated to housing and honoring the dead monarch. James Fitzsimmons (2009) discusses art and architecture associated with the death of Classic Maya monarchs in addition to reviewing funerary rites.

religious factions without overt references to singular and divine kings or queens (Landa 1941: 25-26; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 33-34, 2009b: 583 Ringle and Bey 2001: 286; Proskouriakoff 1962: 132, 135; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 48-52).[36] Such a system at Mayapán would have allowed for more patrons to commission a wider range of artistic and architectural works. Because these patrons were sometimes from different families, art and architecture became more diverse. That said, Mayapán was still a hierarchically-ordered polity and the theory of join-rule did not necessarily mean peace. This is likely because from its earliest stages, Mayapán was a landscape with many political voices.

Landa (1941: 23-26) states that several local lords governed their various holdings from the city's center. The city itself was populated through a practice of resettlement in which people from surrounding locations were moved to Mayapán by their lords.[37] Landa also records that three great houses eventually came to rule Mayapán. These groups included the Cocom, the Xiu and to lesser extent, the Chels (Landa 1941:40; Roys 1962: 60; Restall 2001:335-390; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014:50). The Cocom were originally in charge of the city (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2009b: 602) and may have moved to Mayapán after the fall of Chichén Itzá (Roys 1962: 81). Evidence for the Cocom name at Chichén Itzá is also attested to by Ringle et al. (1998: 190-191, 225). This suggests that this family was affiliated with the Itzá and the cult of Kukulcan. For a time, the Cocom family was said to live peacefully with members of the Xiu family who migrated from an area to the east (Landa1941: 31-32). While Landa states that this eastern place

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[36] While Classic Maya temples could be dedicated to particular deities, most public architecture at these sites was dedicated to divine rulers (as can be seen in stelae, relief art, palaces and funerary complexes for these rulers). At Mayapán, it seems certain architectural groups and associated artwork were related to ruling houses, rather than individual rulers.

[37] See also Masson and Peraza (2014: 48-49).

was somewhere in Chiapas, more recent evidence suggests that the Xius had ties to the Puuc center of Uxmal (Kowalski, 1987; 2011).

Eventually, according to Landa (1941: 32), the Cocom became powerful and autocratic and began creating alliances with lords from central Mexican cities including those in Tabasco and Xicalango. Landa (1941: 36) wrote that increasing numbers of these foreign people, known as the Ah Canules, were invited into the city, to the chagrin of the Xiu who were "badly treated by the Cocom." Finally, the Xiu, who had as their mercenaries the Chel, plotted the overthrow of the Cocom and expelled them from the city. Such turmoil led to the decline of Mayapán in the mid-15th century CE (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 34-35).

Ralph Roys's (1962) review of the political landscape of the Yucatán peninsula after the Contact Period has provided much in the way of piecing together the political landscape of Pre-contact cities in the Yucatán peninsula and even Mayapán in particular. Several Cocom names are listed as dominating the city (Roys 1962) and Roys even supplies us with the names of high priests from Mayapán, including Ah Kin Cobá, Ah Kin Chel, and Ah Kin May (Roys 1962: 79; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 50-52). This evidence further reinforces the notion that religious power was also equated with political power at Mayapán. Both Ah Kin Chel and Ah Uitzil Dzul – or Hun Uitzil Chaak Tutul Xiu, according to Roys (1962) – a Xiu leader, are credited with organizing the revolt that led to the final decline and depopulation of the city (Roys 1962: 72, 74-75; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 52; Quezada 2014).

In his approach to defining the political situation of the larger Yucatán peninsula, Roys's discussions focus on the roles of various political units. In *The Political Geography of the Yucatán Peninsula* (1957), for example, he proposes that at the time of the Spanish conquest, the Yucatán peninsula was divided into provinces. These included the provinces governed by one

centralized power, the *halach uinic* who in turn governed *batabs* or headmen of each village in the supposed province. Provinces could also be governed by *batab'ob* groups bound by lineage and lastly by batab'ob who were not related by lineage affiliation according to Roys.

More recently, Sergio Quezada (2014: 8), in *Maya Lords and Lordship*, has suggested that while affiliation to place was important, the political geography of the Colonial situation may not have been just as Roys described. Quezada instead points out that throughout time, Maya possession in relationship to land and political affiliation is person-focused. Quezada notes that pronouns of possession are common in Colonial documentation of village, territory or political office. Quezada states that *u cahal* means "his village" and *cuchteel*, the smallest unit of political organization refers to those dignitaries who "belonged" to that governing body. In both cases, it is the person or people (and relationships) who are signified rather than arbitrary, but fixed, spatial boundaries as might be understood by using the word "province" or "state" as Roys does. In my interpretation, Quezada's thesis rests on the suggestion that it was through a series of familial and non-familial alliances and connections that space was drawn on the Yucatán peninsula at least at the time of the Spanish conquest. Furthermore, spatial boundaries were not hard and fast, but rather quite dependent on the shifts in alliances maintained or broken through human relationships.

I find that interpretations by both Roys (1957) and Quezada (2014) are helpful in thinking about how the 15th century Maya of the Yucatán peninsula would have considered a sense of "home" and belonging. Work by Matthew Restall (1997), while not referencing Mayapán as often as Roys (1957), has also been vital to this topic. Restall (1997: 21) states that Mayapán's general population likely lived in extended family compounds, much as was the case in the 16th

century. This is corroborated by archaeological evidence from Mayapán that shows a great

number of shared house compounds were often surrounded by a wall.

These compounds were designated as a *cah* or the "fundamental unit in Maya society and

culture" at the time of the conquest (Restall 1997: 13). The term *ah canal* referred to a person

who was part of a given *cah*. The term is important to consider as it not only tied a member to a

patrilineal group, but also to the place that the group occupied. Based on evidence provided by

Brown (2005, 2006), the idea that a unit and person could be bound and belong to place was

important at Mayapán. There, the many internal walls of the city encircled and bound family

compounds together associating them with a particular part of Mayapán. Many of these families

were also linked to particular cenotes based on Brown's findings. Such close associations to

place would remain important, particularly for elite groups, when descendants from Mayapán

tried to convince the Spanish of their rights to certain areas of the Yucatán peninsula (a point

discussed further in Chapter 7).

As presented in the examples above, it is apparent that Maya sociopolitical organization

on the Yucatán peninsula was complex and organized by a range of hierarchical familial and

non-familial relationships. During the Postclassic, the political, religious and economic situation

was perhaps even more complex as cities in the Yucatán peninsula were part of a larger pan-

Mesoamerican system. For much of Mayapán's tenure, for example, its ruling groups remained

deeply invested in the economic system of the larger Mesoamerican world. Several noble

households functioned as nodes of surplus production in which goods were produced both for

consumption within the walls of Mayapán and abroad. As Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 415-

418) have found, elites almost certainly oversaw the types and frequencies of production and

were often patrons of these works. The city both imported and exported goods from and to cities

on the Gulf Coast and in central Mexico. This market environment at Mayapán, and the larger

Postclassic economy of which it was a part, are discussed more fully in the following section.

3.3   Economic Foundations of Mayapán

Features of the Postclassic Mesoamerican economy are reviewed at length in Michael E.

Smith and Frances F. Berdan's (2003: 4) *The Postclassic Mesoamerican World*. The authors

discuss the various cities of the time as being involved in a "world system" in which micro- and

macro-regional trade networks fueled an international economy connecting the northern Maya

region to central Mexico, Central America and the Gulf Coast. According to Smith and Berdan

(2003: 4) the Postclassic world system "was a large-scale zone of economic and social

interactions that tied together independent polities, and these interactions had significant impacts

on the participating societies." While similar interactions occurred in the Terminal Classic and

Classic Periods of Mesoamerican history, Smith and Berdan (2003: 6-13) argue that certain

features of the Postclassic created a markedly different social environment. These features

included the following 1) the intensification of economic commercialization, 2) drastic growth in

population, 3) proliferation of small polities, 4) diversification of trade goods, 5) new forms of

writing and iconography and 6) new patterns of stylistic interaction.

It was therefore toward the end of the 11th century that the political and economic make-

up of Mesoamerica changed in several ways. Environmental factors may have led to some of

these changes. There is evidence, for example, of a significant increase in highland rainfall that

effectively ended a five-year drought which, in turn, led to population increases in the 12th

century (O'Hara and Metcalfe 1997; Sanders et al. 1979). Agricultural demands changed,

leading to an intensification of new farming systems including raised gardens or *chinampas* in

central Mexico, increased investment in irrigation systems, and terracing (Sanders et al. 1979; Smith and Price 1994).

At the same time, many cities were divided into much smaller polities that were guided, according to Smith and Berdan (2003: 6), by "hereditary political rule, territorial control, specific flamboyant rituals, and specialized economic interests." The smaller size of most Postclassic cities was; however, complemented by the far-reaching interaction they had with other places throughout Mesoamerica. As Smith and Berdan (2003: 6) discuss in their introduction, "The Postclassic period … witnessed the largest numbers and greatest diversity of trade goods, the greatest volumes of exchange, and the greatest access to imported goods by communities of all sizes in all areas." [38]

Smith and Berdan's volume provides a helpful chronology for visualizing these interactions by suggesting the Postclassic should be divided into three smaller sub-divisions. These include the Early Postclassic (late 11th through mid-13th centuries), Middle Postclassic (mid-13th through mid-15th centuries) and Late Postclassic (mid-15th century to the Spanish conquest). This dissertation is most concerned with the social and cultural setting of the Middle Postclassic, the time in which Mayapán rose to and fell from power. Throughout this period, Mayapán and other Mesoamerican cities interacted with one another in systems of exchange. Based on Smith and Berdan's (2003) interpretation, these systems were materialized in the following spatial patterns: (1) core zones, (2) affluent production zones, (3) resource extraction zones, (4) exchange circuit zones, and (5) style zones (see Appendix 1.1).

Berdan et al. (2003: 96-108) believe that during the Middle Postclassic, the volume of long distant trade increased, as did the number of professional merchants taking part in this

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[38] Also see Kepecs and Kohl (2003) Chapter Two of *The Postclassic Mesoamerican World.*

system. Gasco and Berdan (2003: 109-116) also argue that local markets and international trade centers developed throughout Mesoamerica in response to this increase. Cities of the Yucatán peninsula flourished due to intensification of maritime trading routes along the Caribbean and Gulf Coasts (Rathje and Sabloff 1975: 107-113). These trade routes, and the markets they populated, facilitated the supply and demand between production zones, extraction zones, and core zones within exchange circuits. Such factors had several important consequences for material culture, including the art and architecture that was produced during this time.[39]

Overall production of trade goods intensified as did the diversity and specialization of objects. Objects were increasingly bought and paid for with currencies including metal objects such as copper bells and cacao beans. At the same time, resources and objects grown, mined or constructed could be put to local use, given as tribute payment to core centers or used in local and long distant trade. The great abundance of circulating objects, the relative openness of political boundaries, and the lack of staunch political control over extraction areas allowed for more members of Middle Postclassic society to have access to both utilitarian and luxury goods that were, in previous centuries, only accessible by divine kings and queens (Braswell 2003:131-158).

Masson and Peraza Lope's (2014: 269-424) discussion of the Postclassic Mesoamerican system as it materialized at Mayapán specifically has been particularly important to this study. Their discussion is based on the findings of more than 10 years of excavation by the INAH and PEMY projects in elite, commoner, public and private settings. Their excavations suggest that

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[39] Kepecs, Feinman, and Boucher (1994), Kepecs (2003, 2011), West (2002) and Braswell (2010) argue that increase in trade routes along the Yucatán peninsula began during the Terminal Classic period. However, Mayapán seems to have inherited this tradition and amplified it by way of social, political and ideological connections elites maintained with posts in Honduras and Tabasco, Mexico. See also Masson and Peraza (2014: 270), Ringle, Negron, and Bey (1998) and Ringle (2004).

Mayapán was a hub for material production where part-time crafting households turned imported raw materials into finished products. Some examples of imported raw material include salt, obsidian, a variety of shells, greenstone, copper, cacao, and cotton. These products were used by Mayapán's population and were also reinvested in the larger Mesoamerican exchange system.[40]

According to Landa (1941: 26), Mayapán, like other powerful Postclassic cities, required tribute payment. Tribute was obtained from both Mayapán's own population and also from vassal cities.[41] Archaeological investigation seems to support Landa's record. A major difference between tribute demanded at Mayapán and Classic Maya sites was that more valuable goods could be owned by more people (from varying levels of society). Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 291) have found, for example, that both local and foreign goods were present in both commoner and elite structures, suggesting that valuable materials permeated all social classes even if elite households exhibited a greater abundance of such objects.[42]

It seems, therefore, that commoners were invested in the Postclassic market system both because they paid tribute to elite members of society, but also because they acquired many objects for themselves. This made the overall populace of Mayapán deeply invested in the larger Mesoamerican market system. Furthermore, Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 291) have suggested that crafting households were "part-time" businesses based on the relative lower amount of debris in Mayapán's workshops compared to other cities, such as the contemporaneous city of Colha in modern-day Belize.[43] They note, however, that multi-crafting,

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[40] These are the page numbers noted form Chapter 6, "Economic Foundations" in Masson and Peraza's *Kukulcan's Realm.* See pages 299-396 particularly for a discussion of the specific production industries at Mayapán.

[41] Antonio Gaspar Chi, a Maya nobleman who is thought to have been the informant for much of Landa's writings, states that nobility at Mayapán were not required to pay tribute. See Landa (1941: 230) and Roys (1962: 64).

[42] Elite members of society still owned larger quantities of valuable objects (including shell ornaments, greenstone beads, serpentine axes or copper bells); however, these objects were also found in non-elite contexts. See Masson and Peraza (2014: 291).

[43] The authors compared lithic debris at both sites and found Mayapán's amount to be considerably lower.

where a given crafting location might produce an array of different objects, although in smaller

quantity, was commonplace. Crafting households were therefore interdependent and also

dependent on obtaining raw materials from beyond Mayapán. Together with tribute demands

(placed internally on non-elite members and externally on foreign cities) Mayapán's livelihood

was anchored deeply in an international economy.

Before ending this section, it is vital to discuss the creative developments that occurred in

tandem, and possibly because of, increasing economic and likely political correspondence among

these regions. Not surprisingly, Postclassic styles and symbols were shared across these

economic trading zones. Sub-sets include the Aztec style, Mixteca-Puebla style, the coastal

Maya mural style, and the south-west Maya style (Boone and Smith 2003: 186-193). Masson

(2003: 194-200) discusses the presence of these styles in the Maya region specifically and

Milbrath and Peraza (2003) and Milbrath et al. (2010) analyze the International Style at

Mayapán.

Briefly, the International Style can be described as less organic and more stylized than

Classic Period Maya art. Figures, for example, are not rendered with the same curvilinear lines as

are Late Classic depictions such as those from Bonampak in Chiapas. Bold swaths of color are

applied within clearly defined spaces and that space appears shallow and flat. Human figures

occupy their own spaces against the ground rather than touching one another. As Boone and

Smith (2003: 189-193) note, these figures are sometimes rendered in physically impossible

positions. For example, torsos will be rendered frontally while the head and appendages will be

in profile. The focus seemed to have been on providing the best angles from which to define the

figures' features and gestural movements (particularly those associated with heads and hands).

The International Style was accompanied by a symbol set as well. Major figures include deities

such as Xipe Totec, Queztalcoatl, Tonatiuh, Tlaloc and Tezcatlipoca with other common symbols including sun and moon signs, hill and cave signs, stylized temples, flint knives with faces, plumed serpents, crocodiles, stellar eyes, stepped lines, date and name glyphs, among many others.

Attested to by this brief survey, engagement in a pan-Mesoamerican economic and artistic system, in addition to political maneuvering within the city, were important aspects of life at Mayapán (and particularly, elite life). Powerful families anchored their lineages to the city center and surrounded themselves with the public works they sponsored. They maintained their wealth and political positions through long-reaching trade networks as well. However, the shape of the sociopolitical system at Mayapán (from its inception to its demise) was in many ways a precarious system of factional jealousies, betrayals, and brutal civil battles as is discussed further in Chapter Five. Precisely because of this, no one person (or even family) ever had complete control over the city for very long. This greatly affected the range of art and architecture commissioned.

However, if one thing was a constant about Mayapán's urban and visual identity (particularly in the central precinct), it was that its powerful families, regardless of sociopolitical affiliation, used practices of integration in commissioned art and architecture as tools to solidify their control. Because of this practice, Mayapán became a visually eclectic city. Woven into the fabric of Mayapán's landscape were the sacred mythhistories and political foundations of past and influential Maya places, together with references to increasingly powerful contemporary cities in central Mexico.

As the literature review from this chapter has shown, Mayapán's complex history, urban landscape, political, economic and religious organization demonstrate that the city was far more

than a strict copy or hybrid model of its predecessors and contemporaries. Its major public art and architectural styles attest to its leaders' ability to remain relevant within the dynamic sociopolitical and religious environment of the greater Mesoamerican world. The several large residential structures around and beyond the site core suggest more people had access to more wealth and political power, and the degree and diversity of trade goods being produced in workshops throughout the city show that the source of such wealth came from involvement in a pan-Mesoamerican trade network.

A critical inquiry into the city's urban development should continue to focus on what Mayapán's stewards were choosing to incorporate into their sacred center and also how and why these things were being adopted. Based on the findings presented in the chapters to follow, it has become apparent to me that Mayapán's leaders incorporated aspects of earlier Maya cities while also synthesizing elements from their central Mexican contemporaries. However, Mayapán's urban identity was far from a simple transplantation of other urban realities because the very practice of mixing created new forms, orientations and meanings. These practices were guided by the city's own landscape, the significance of which is addressed in the next chapter.

4   THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF MAYAPÁN'S CENTRAL PRECINCT

4.1   <u>Sacred Landscapes in Mesoamerican City Planning</u>

Perhaps the most important task Mayapán's leaders had in the design of their city was to create a central precinct that reflected and embodied shared cosmological principles. Mayapán's center would serve not simply as a stage for ritual performance but would function also as an animated and powerful environment. Here, built architecture and its associated artforms would be integrated into a powerful and sacred landscape that was itself defined by cosmological principles. Coupled with the consecrated actions of ritual performers in its space, the central precinct re-presented shared beliefs about the cosmos, the order of time, and the world as known to the Maya. This chapter focuses on how cosmological principles were understood and materialized in what became the sacred landscape of Quadrant Q at Mayapán. Before focusing on Mayapán, however, it is important to briefly review how cosmological belief systems influenced city planning in the wider Mesoamerican world.

The integration of cosmology into the landscape of urban centers is well documented throughout Mesoamerica. Caves and mountains were of particular importance to ancient Mesoamerican cultures beginning at least as far back as the Formative Period Olmec (1500 BCE-400 BCE). They symbolized places of origin, water and fertility and were often understood as birthplaces for deities (Brady and Prufer 2005; Heyden 2005; Vogt and Stuart 2005; Brown 2005). Evon Vogt and David Stuart (2005: 156) suggest that caves and cenotes were liminal spaces or boundaries between words. As such, they were pregnant with animate possibility and power. Such powers could be both malevolent or benevolent.

Caves were in many ways associated with ancestors. A cave scene on Altar 4 from the Olmec site of La Venta likely shows an ancestor figure emerging from the mouth of a cave-like entrance (Figure 4.1). He holds a twisted cord (perhaps symbolic of an umbilicus) that is tied to several other figures carved in relief around the side of the monument (Grove 1984: 130).

Figure 4.1   La Venta, Mexico. Altar 4. Author's photograph, July 2010.

In another scene from the Olmec world, an ancestral or deity figure is also associated with a cave. The famous petroglyph on the cliff face at Chalcatzingo depicts a figure sitting in its interior. The figure faces toward the cave's mouth which opens up as the maw of a stylized earth monster. Precious rain falls from above and plants (likely maize) grow throughout the scene, further associating caves and mountains with fertility (Fuente 1992: 133; Grove 1984: 25-27).

The relationship between caves and mountains is especially apparent at the Classic city of Teotihuacán, located just north of Mexico City (Headrick 2007; Heyden 1975; Pasztory 1997;

Sugiyama 1993; Cowgill 2015). Here, caves and mountains retained their significance as watery abodes and places of divine emergence. In the so-called Great Goddess mural from the Tepantitla apartment complex at Teotihuacán, water gushes from a mountain/cave symbol below a register featuring a principal deity. Water also drips from the deity's hands and falls from the tree above her, effectively connecting this sacred figure, the tree, and the mountain/cave symbol with agricultural fertility (Pasztory 1997: 86-94).[44]

Teotihuacán's overall building plan also reflects these preoccupations with caves, mountains and watery places. The Pyramid of the Moon, which defines the northern culmination of Teotihuacán's main thoroughfare, the Avenue of the Dead, mirrors the mountain Cerro Gordo, located behind it (Pasztory 1997; Tobriner 1972: 103-116).[45] The Pyramid of the Sun, the largest temple at the site (and one of the largest in the world), is likewise designed as a stylized mountain (Figure 4.2). This pyramid is associated with a four-lobed artificial tunnel built underneath it.[46]

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[44] Paulinyi (2006: 1-15) argues instead that interpretations of this deity as "the Great Goddess" may be incorrect in that there were at least six different gods and goddess worshiped at Teotihuacan. Paulinyi suggests that so much focus on one, important figure in the Teotihuacan pantheon is misleading.

[45] Upon approaching the Pyramid of the Moon from the south and looking north, it appears that the Pyramid of the Moon is a smaller rendition of Cerro Gordo, located behind and to the north of it.

[46] Recent work by Linda Manzanilla (1990) and Nawa Sugiyama, Saburo Sugiyama and Sarabia G. Alejandro (2013) shows that the "lobed cave" was built entirely by the Teotihuacanos, rather than being partially modified from an existing, natural cave. Originally, Heyden (1981) noted that the cave was partially modified from an existing cave.

Figure 4.2   Teotihuacán, Mexico. Pyramid of the Sun. Author's photograph, July 2010.

Caves (and cenotes, which are associated with and often produce caves) played a major role in guiding Classic Maya city planning as well. Both archaeological and ethnographic studies suggest that Maya villages and cities were often laid out to incorporate caves in particular ways. According to ethnographic work in the Maya region by Redfield and Villa Rojas (1962: 114),

> The world, the village and the milpa are thought of as squares with four corners lying in the four cardinal points of the compass and with defined central points. It is for this reason that pairs of wooden crosses are erected at only four of the seven actual entrances to the village; these are the four corners of the pueblo ... The center of the village is marked by the cenote; in most villages it is usual to erect one cross near its edge; this marks the middle point.

Cenotes and caves, as breaks in the earth's surface, were thought to be portals to the underworld. They could therefore function as centering and organizing elements because they connected, or as James Brady (1997: 603) discusses, they *transcended* world levels.

In a recent and extensive study related to site organization and cave use, the Petexbatun Regional Cave Survey, part of Vanderbilt's Petexbatun Regional Archaeological Project, surveyed and recorded the location of caves at the Preclassic to Late Classic site of Dos Pilas in

Guatemala. The project's goal was to document the degree to which cave location determined the placement, orientation and construction of architecture. According to Brady (1997: 605), major pyramids at Dos Pilas were built over major cave systems (major meaning large or long) with smaller architectural structures associated with smaller caves. In some cases, these architectural structures not only incorporate cave systems, but were also synthesized with other geological features, such as hills. The Duende Pyramid (the largest structure at Dos Pilas) for example, is positioned over a long cave. Its base was constructed from the natural hill upon which it is positioned—thereby effectively joining the pyramid, the hill and the cave together.

Even after the fall of Teotihuacan and Classic Maya cities, caves continued to have significant importance in Mesoamerican city planning. The later Aztecs believed their ancestors emerged from the mythical Chicomoztoc (Seven Caves) and they continued to associate caves and mountains with emergence and fertility (Townsend 2000: 57-63). The Aztec also associated the concept of the watery mountain cave complex with civilization itself. Fifteenth and sixteenth century Aztec and Mixtec toponyms in codices, for example, are depicted as stylized mountains like the mountain/cave symbol from the Tepantitla Great Goddess mural at Teotihuacán, as shown in Figure 4.3 (Boone 2000: 52, 53). Their symbolism encodes the memory of these places as "civilized" locations.
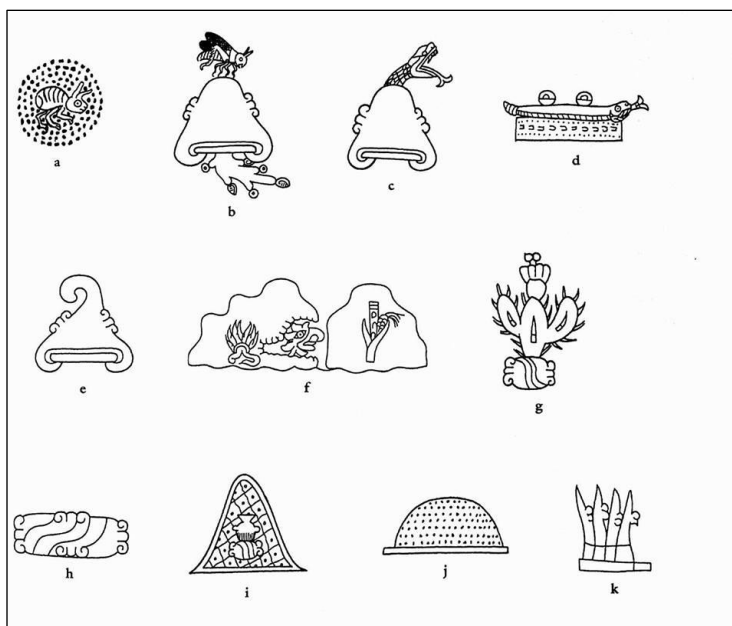
Figure 4.3   Aztec place signs referring to (a) Chapultepec
(b), Coatepec (c), Culhuacán (e) and Cuauhtinchan (f).
Drawings by Elizabeth Boone in Boone 2000.

Beyond caves and mountains, cardinal directionality played an important part in

Mesoamerican city planning. Teotihuacán and Tenochtitlán not only incorporated water and

mountain symbolism, for example, but were also cities organized to embody cardinal

directionality. Teotihuacán, for example, was planned on a grid with its main axis-oriented

northeast/southwest along the "Avenue of the Dead." To the north, this avenue culminated in the

Pyramid of the Moon while its southern end provided access to the Temple of the Feathered

Serpent. The Temple of the Sun, situated along the Avenue of the Dead, faces an east/west

direction. Saburo Sugiyama (1993: 120-121) argues that the northern portion of Teotihuacán

represents the upper world whereas the southern end, near the Temple of the Feathered Serpent,

represents the underworld. Sugiyama has suggested that the upper world, found in the north, was

equated with dry, mountainous spaces where the principal (and largest) buildings from the site

are located. Alternatively, the southern section of the site (just beyond where the San Juan River cuts across the Avenue of the Dead) represents the underworld. This sector of the site, compared to the north, has far fewer monumental buildings. Those that are in this sector, including the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, are marked with water iconography referring to this place as a watery underworld abode (Pasztory 1997: 127). Notably, the southern end of the main thoroughfare descends in elevation, marked off by succeeding architectural walls and plazas.

The later Aztec at Tenochtitlán adopted elements of Teotihuacán's North/South/East/West grid-type urban plan. The Aztec's principal pyramid, the Templo Mayor, was aligned to face east/west. This allowed for the perceived passage of the sun overhead and between the two upper temples during the equinoxes. (Matos Moctezuma 2009: 435; López Luján 2005: 72). As 16th century missionary Bernardino de Sahagún records, the Aztec also believed the south represented the underworld. They referred to that place as "Mictlán" (Sahagún 1950-1969: Book 7:21; Nicholson 1971: 403-404).[47]

For the Aztecs, who were not native to the Valley of Mexico, the long-abandoned city of Teotihuacán provided a source from which to establish legitimacy. At the time of the Spanish Conquest, according to 16th century Spanish chronicler Bernardino de Sahagún the Aztec claimed that Teotihuacán was the place where their gods, Nanahuatzin and Tecuciztecatl, sacrificed themselves in order to create the world of the Fifth Sun.[48] This was the world in which the Aztec, and all other people, lived. Teotihuacán remained a sacred place to the Aztec and Aztec rulers made scheduled journeys to Teotihuacán every twenty days to offer sacrifices (Heyden 1975: 140). As Heyden (2000: 168) suggests, Teotihuacán's gridded layout and slightly

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[47] Mixtec codices are also known to reference the underworld as being a place associated with the southerly direction (Codex Borgia 1963: 52, Codex Cospi, 1968: 13; Codex Fejérváry Mayer1971: 34).
[48] See Sahagún (1950-1982, book 3: 1), Sahagún (1950-1982, book 7: 4-8, 42-58), and Boone (2000: 372-373).

skewed north/south orientation of the Avenue of the Dead likely provided inspiration for urban

planning at Tenochtitlán. Heyden argues that chinampas or floating gardens on the southern

outskirts of Tenochtitlán were laid out in similar orientation to the Avenue of the Dead. She

states that they, and the canals that bordered them, could have provided the base of the grid

system within Tenochtitlán.[49] Beyond central Mexico, strong north-south orientations are found

at several Maya sites including Tikal, Copán, Xunantunich, Naranjo, Calakmul, Sayil, and Labná

(Ashmore and Sabloff 2002). Several of these sites, most notably Tikal with its twin temple

complexes, also have buildings aligned to mark the perceived movement of the sun from east to

west.

      Cosmological principles that stressed architectural alignment along cardinal axes were

not new to Classic and Terminal Classic sites, however. Several of these ideas were already in

place at much earlier Preclassic Maya cities. The site of Uaxactún in the Guatemala lowlands, for

example, features the radial pyramid called "E-VII Sub" (Figure 4.4). This pyramid is aligned

with a platform and temples across a plaza to site the rise and set of the sun over the smaller

temples on equinoxes and solstices. Such an alignment of temples, referred to as "E-Groups,"

also appear at other important centers including Nakbé and Tikal in Guatemala. These E-Groups

functioned to chart important junctures in the agricultural year and provided for the planning of

religious rituals surrounding these events (Aimers and Rice 2006: 79-96; Kowalski 2017: 151-

162).

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[49] See discussion in Heyden (2000: 169-170).

Figure 4.4   Uaxactún, Guatemala. Looking out toward the platform and temples from the top of E VII Sub. Author's photograph, January 2014.

In many cases, east/west and north/south orientations reflect a pan-Mesoamerican emphasis on quadripartite space. Ritual architecture was oftentimes located within one of four quadrants associated with a cardinal direction. The most important structure was often built at the spot where these directions converged. These orientations were tied to important calendrical sequences and associated ritual events (Aveni 2001; Aveni et al. 2004; Coggins 1980; Cohodas 1980; Kowalski 1999). Both Teotihuacán and Tenochtitlán city planning reflects this concern as does the main plaza at Monte Albán in Oaxaca (Joyce and Henderson, 2010). The Nunnery Quadrangle (Figure 4.5) from the Terminal Classic Maya site of Uxmal in the northern Maya region also embodies quadripartite division (Kowalski and Dunning 1999: 280-288). As Kowalski and Dunning have proposed, at the Nunnery Quadrangle different sectors of the rectangular building layout reference an upperworld, middleworld, and underworld. According

to Kowalski and Dunning (1999), the north structure with its thirteen doorways signifies the thirteen celestial layers and therefore refers to the upperworld.

Figure 4.5   Uxmal, Mexico. The ballcourt and Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal. Photograph courtesy of Virginia E. Miller.

Kowalski and Dunning (1999) believe both the east and west structures refer to the middleworld, with the latter featuring sculptural Pawatun or God N earth deities in the form of anthropomorphized turtles. Lastly, according to this interpretation, the south structure with its nine doorways and maize iconography refers to the underworld. The number nine here symbolizes the nine levels of the underworld. Iconography depicting sprouting vegetation from this section of the building may reference maize and the myth of the Maize God who journeys into the underworld to be resurrected and reborn again.

4.2 <u>**Religious Rituals in Sacred Landscapes**</u>

The previous discussion is far from an exhaustive list of the ways cosmologies were manifested in the built environment of Mesoamerican cities. However, the discussion should provide a brief introduction to the most common ways major Mesoamerican cities were oriented. In summary, caves (or other sources of underground water), mountains or hills, celestial bodies and cardinal directions guided major aspects of city planning in the largest Mesoamerican polities. These elements carried in and with them sacred powers. Designing urban centers along these lines resulted in the creation of animate stages or rather, sacred landscapes upon which religious rituals were performed.

Relationships between built space, ritual performance and religious meaning are perhaps best articulated through the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 90). He argues that religion is: "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." Geertz believed that symbols could be images, objects, actions, events and relationships. By this interpretation, symbols – as visual forms for the encoding of meaning – function as key elements that are reflected and enacted through ritual, and in the overall cosmology manifested through religious architecture.

Ritual, in turn, is a performance with designated actors, spaces and an audience. Performances rely on symbolism produced through action in consecrated space. In his multi-dimensional review of performance theory, Richard Schechner (2003) offers some useful ways for understanding how the body, through performance, functions as a spectacle, embodying and communicating notions of sacred time and place. These places and times refer not only to the

experience of the actual presented performance, but to the contexts that are represented *through* the act of performing. The first element to consider when thinking about how such representation occurs is symbolic time. Schechner suggests that symbolic time oftentimes represents a longer or shorter version of more vernacular time (Schechner 2003: 8). Time is an important element of performativity that aids in pushing the performer into sacred existence.

Together ritual performance, architecture, art and landscape re-presented sacred cosmologies and shared religious experience. Ritual acts in these places provided for the embodiment of divine principles (deities, concepts, etc.) by ritual actors. Maya performances in ritual centers, such as Mayapán's Quadrant Q, were therefore not "play acting" or simple "re-enactments" of myth or divine acts. Furthermore, architecture from that space was not simply a stage and its art was not a "prop" or decoration. These elements, guided by and bound to the animated cosmologies of Mayapán's landscape, were instead contexts through which the identities of deities, spirits, and sacred powers were materialized and manifested.

The consecrated body, its engagement in ritual performance, and the cosmological context upon which it was set and interacted, could easily function as an element of sociopolitical maneuvering in the ancient Maya world. Catherine Bell (1992: 98) has discussed the ritual body as a social body, noting that the ritual body, together with environment, functions as a "strategic form of socialization." Bell believes that it is through the body's interaction with a "structured and structuring environment" that a "ritualized body," as a body capable of guiding shared ritual experience, is produced.

Bell states that it is in the dialectical relationship between body and environment that such power is acquired (Bell 1992: 98-101). The space, structured as a sacred environment, permits mythic-ritual oppositions to be made explicit. Additionally, ritualized movement within

that space is sacred movement also juxtaposed with that which is not ritual movement. Thereby, both environment and bodily movement together create the sacred or ritualized body, and, in turn, the ritualized body and its movements simultaneously call attention to (and thus create) sacred space in the mind of the viewer. Both ritual bodies and ritual spaces exist in cyclical relationships, with one reinforcing the other's existence and power. Given these intimate relationships between ritual bodies, art, architecture and landscape, reimagining the body in the spaces and places of Precolumbian cities is an important next step in our understanding of Mesoamerican culture.

4.3 <u>The Precolumbian Maya Body and Urban Space</u>

Much of what we know of Precolumbian Maya ritual comes from research on Late Classic cities. For the Late Classic Maya, public spectacle was highly ritualistic and took place in the sacred spaces of central precincts similar to Quadrant Q at Mayapán. Unlike spectacle at Mayapán, however, kings and queens were the focal point of public spectacle as they undertook elaborate rituals held in these conscripted ritual centers. Monarchs re-presented sacred events and embodied deities in front of gathered subjects and other audience members (Martin and Grube 2008: 14-23; Schele and Miller 1986: 63-174; Houston and Stuart 1996: 289-312; Stuart, 2005: 263-270). These events took place in carefully constructed architectural spaces that, through layout, façade sculpture and mural programs, replicated and recalled sacred cosmology (B. Fash 2009; Houston and Inomata 2009; Koontz et al. 2001; Kowalski and Dunning, 1999; M. Miller 1998).

Archaeologist Takeshi Inomata (2006b: 187-222) discusses these places as contexts in which built environment and human bodies were bound together in a sacred landscape. Through

ritual events, monarchs communicated and maintained religious and political ideologies. These displays were also ways to maintain world order and establish the monarchs' own power. More specifically, public performances were undertaken to sanctify and dedicate new temples and monuments, they functioned to celebrate royal births, marriages and accessions, and were highly important in the festivities surrounding military victory and the sacrifice of prisoners.

Through the formal movement of the royal body (clad in ceremonial costume) within the sacred landscape his (sometimes her) religious, political and economic power was demonstrated to a gathered public composed of subjects, but also other royalty and nobility. As Inomata (2006a: 805) states, "these considerations call attention to the political implications and consequences of theatrical performances in public events in which many individuals sense and witness the bodily existence and participation of other members and the cultural and moral values of the community are objectified and embodied."

Stephen Houston's and Tom Cummins's (2004) "Body, Presence, and Space in Andean and Mesoamerican Rulership" is a particularly useful cross-cultural case study that draws from the scholarship presented above. The article attempts to reconstruct the presence of the royal body in the space of both Mesoamerican and Andean palaces. The authors show that the lived, royal body creates and reinforces meaning just as much as the architecture itself does. Houston and Cummins believe that the body functions as a symbolic example for proper social and cosmological organization and that together with architectural space (i.e. the palace), "right ways of functioning" were made manifest. This is true not only in the presence and adornment of the body, but especially in its use of public gesture and ritualized interaction with architecture. In a sense, it was the overall performative nature of the body on and within the stage of architecture

(itself an organizing mechanism) through which ordered space and time were embedded, expressed, and subsequently consumed by viewers.

Maya, as well as other Mesoamerican royal bodies (such as that of the Aztec emperor), for example, were considered to be "heated" entities that were pregnant with the possibility of manifesting cosmological and life forces. Such heated energy, present and even disseminated in and through their performing bodies, materialized these forces – the very forces that were illustrated in the iconographic programs of the architecture the royal bodies performed within (such as palaces and temples). Therefore, the common term, *k'inich* (meaning sun)*,* used as an epitaph for Maya lords, was not simply a metaphor for the ruler, but referred to his embodiment of this heated force. Concentrated at the forehead of royal bodies, this force was often emphasized by elegant headdress and representations of the sun god himself (Houston and Cummins 2004: 265). Other parts of the ruler's costume, including back-racks with extensive featherwork, reflected his personification of the maize god as well, another deity associated with fertility and procreation. When this vibrant and animating figure acted in ritualized dance in architectural worlds that also materialized creation ideologies, the effect was that primordial times and places were thought to be re-presented in those spaces. In this manner, ritual movement, ritual adornment and architectural iconography were not simply symbols of the divine, but together, brought the divine to life.

Considering that the art and architecture of Maya cities was so intimately tied to the body as a performing entity, interpreting ritual spaces in ways that concentrate on bodily experience is very useful. Anthropologist Christopher Tilley's definition and use of phenomenology has proven especially influential to this end. In reviewing rock art, architecture and natural and modified landscapes in Europe, Tilley (2008: 19) interprets archaeological sites by focusing on a

kinesthetic experience. Namely, he is interested in illuminating how each of the five senses might have been affected in response to, and as a part of, the experience of place. In a succinct, but powerful sentence, Tilley (2008: 19) argues that "the image is never enough." He suggests that one must consider not only subject matter reproduced in imagery, but materiality and the bodily experience of art, architecture and otherwise modified spaces associated with such images.

Tilley argues for a reconnection of the act of bodily experience with the object of experience. These sentiments are articulated particularly well when Tilley (2008: 19) states, "what is curious about this approach [iconography], from a kinesthetic perspective, is that the power of visual imagery becomes dematerialized because it is simply an opaque representation of something else: individual intentions, societal culture and values, history myths and cosmologies, gender relations, or politics and power."

Lindsay Jones (1993: 315) has taken a similar methodological approach in relationship to architectural studies in the Mesoamerican world by focusing on the meaning of buildings in relationship to "ritual architectural *events*" that involved bodies—rather than seeing architectural structures as static forms. Focusing specifically on the architectural similarities between forms at the Maya site of Chichén Itzá and the central Mexican site of Tula, Jones argues that the experience of these structures in those different environments created very different realities.[50] As Jones (1993: 313-315) shows, although forms and iconography might be reproduced between the sites, the experience of those elements, and even the different reasons for creating them at each place, makes their realities entirely different. He argues that we are blinded to a more

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[50] Discussed at length in Chapter Five, Chichén Itzá and Tula share a variety of similar architectural forms, especially as expressed in Chichén Itzá's Temple of the Warriors complex and Tula's Pyramid B structure. Early scholarship suggested shared forms represented the overthrow of the Maya at Chichén Itzá by central Mexicans living at Tula. See Morley and Brainerd (1956: 79).

critical understanding of each site and its art and architecture if we continue to interpret meaning without considering phenomenological experience. As an example, Jones (1993: 339) suggests that Tula's architecture, while formally like Chichén's in some ways, reflects very different practices. Jones (1993: 339) states that the architecture at Tula was "shoddily constructed" but "grandiose." Jones believes the latter reflects leaders' interests in creating a symbol that worked to unify disparate ethnic populations after the fall of Teotihuacán. In turn, unification of the population at Tula would help the city stand against the many outside threats it faced from other central Mexican polities.

Chichén Itzá, on the other hand enjoyed far more economic and political security and for Jones, its massive, well-constructed architecture reflects this. For leaders at Chichén Itzá, a chief concern was to recall important and archetypal forms in order to reinforce its urban legitimacy to traveling populations including merchants and pilgrims (Jones 1993: 339). Jones's argument demonstrates that while architectural forms were shared between Tula and Chichén Itzá, the experiences forged by those forms once in their separate sociopolitical contexts differed. This argument demonstrates that a focus on the lived experience of place is vital to our understanding of ancient sites and sacred landscapes. A study that only focuses on iconography and form can easily overlook important evidence that could be derived from phenomenological approaches. Therefore, in its focus on Mayapán's own sacred landscape, the following section combines both iconographic and phenomenological methods in order to provide an interpretation of lived experience in the city's ritual center.

4.4   Mayapán's Sacred Landscape: Upperworlds, Underworlds, and the Sun's Journey

Like several of its Maya and non-Maya predecessors, many of which were reviewed in the previous section, Mayapán's central precinct was laid out according to cosmological principles. The precinct was designed to share many architectural forms with other powerful places throughout the Mesoamerican world. However, like the spaces of Chichén Itzá and Tula, Mayapán's precinct provided for site-specific experiences that were unique to that time and place. Quadrant Q, for example, was constructed within an animate landscape specific to Mayapán. This landscape guided not only architectural design and layout, but also ritual art and performance.

The terrestrial environment was a particularly influential element of this landscape and directly guided the placement of the urban core's major architecture. To the north, the first buildings erected at the site were deliberately placed atop rocky outcroppings. Because of these exposed rock features, the northern sector makes the elevation in that portion of the site higher.[51] It is a place where, physically speaking, a person must respond to changes in topography. The outcroppings are noticeable in this sector and even left unadulterated in some cases (meaning their natural state was valued in addition to their unification with architecture). This is a place that lets the body feel and work within natural inclines and "rockiness". One also sees the apparent elevation changes in addition to the rock outcroppings and can read iconography associated with upperworld beliefs.

The area of the Temple of the Painted Niches provides an excellent example of the presence of rocky outcroppings at Mayapán. It clearly demonstrates the relationships between architecture and terrestrial features so iconic of Quadrant Q. The important Temple of the

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[51] Pedro Delgado Ku, personal communication, June 2014.

Painted Niches was built over an expansive outcropping and was also anchored with large boulders at its base—almost as if to mark or reinforce the terrestrial identity of the building. Incorporation of the living rock must have been a chief concern for this building in particular. The building bends and shifts in response to the undulation of the rock beneath it (Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10). Had this visual and physical effect not been a primary concern, architects and planners could have easily placed the building on a flatter area in the city's ritual center, as they did with several other buildings.

Figure 4.6   Mayapán, Mexico. A close-up of the rock outcropping upon which the Temple of the Niches at Mayapán was built (part of it is seen in the foreground). Author's photograph, July 2016

Figure 4.7   Mayapán, Mexico. Part of the outcropping on the east side of the Temple of the Niches. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.8   Mayapán, Mexico.Rock outcropping from the northeast side of the Temple of Niches. Author's photograph, July 2016

Figure 4.9   Mayapán, Mexico. Rock outcropping on the northwest side of the
Temple of the Niches. Author's photograph, July 2016
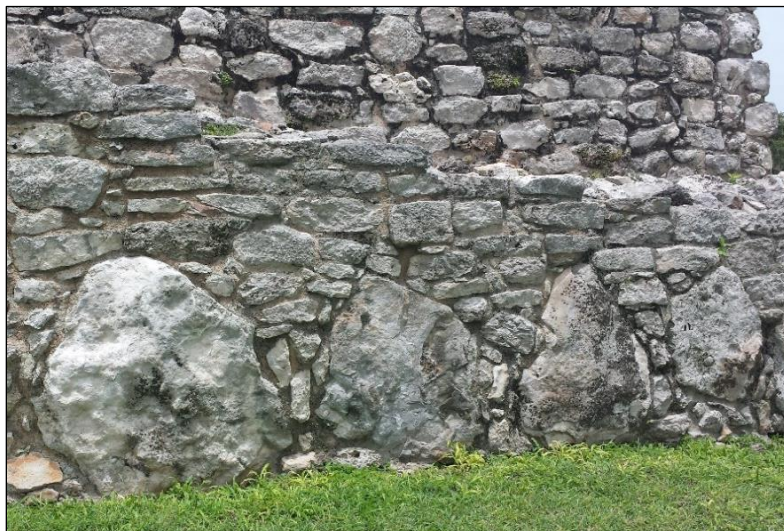
Figure 4.10   Mayapán, Mexico. Large boulders that were
placed at the base of the Temple of the Niches. Author's
photograph, July 2016

In the larger Mesoamerican world, similar practices were also undertaken by the Aztec. The temples at Malinalco, in the modern state of Mexico and roughly forty miles south of the city of Toluca, beautifully take advantage of the living rock. Structure I of Malinalco (Figure 4.11) is carved nearly entirely from the face of a cliff (Pasztory 1983: 135-138). The building appears as part human-made and partially a manifestation of the living rock—with both anchored together and one reinforcing the other. The bounds between living rock and human-made architecture have been woven together, and one is imbued with the powers of the other.

Figure 4.11   Malinalco, Mexico. Temple 1.
Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham.

Originally, Malinalco's entrance depicted the open maws of a snake. Toward the back wall, a semicircular bench curved around the expanse of a large chamber and the backs of jaguar or mountain lion and eagle effigies were sculpted onto the bench and the floor (Figure 4.12). These chairs corresponded to seats of Aztec authorities including the positions of *tlatoani,* "the one who speaks" or leader, and high-ranking nobles (oftentimes related to the royal family) with the offices of *tlaccatecatl* or *tlacochcalcatl and etzhuanhuanco* or *tillancalqui*. A rectangular depression behind the central eagle functioned as a place of offerings where sacred blood from an ascending tlatoani or head ruler would be poured (Townsend 2000: 108-112). In essence, the ritual offerings together with the binding of living rock and human-made architecture invested the authority of the ruler within the governing and religious body of the Aztec state.

Figure 4.12   Malinalco, Mexico. Effigy sculptures inside Malinalco Temple 1. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham.

In the Americas, the binding of rock outcroppings, boulders, hills and mountains to architecture is perhaps most famously articulated in Inca examples from the Andean region. Unlike many of their predecessors, for example the Wari, the Andean Inca carefully wove buildings and living rock together (Dean 2010: 81) Several cases of Inca structures including walls at Tambomachay and more famously the Temple of the Sun at Machu Picchu incorporate rock outcroppings into their built structure (Figure 4.13).
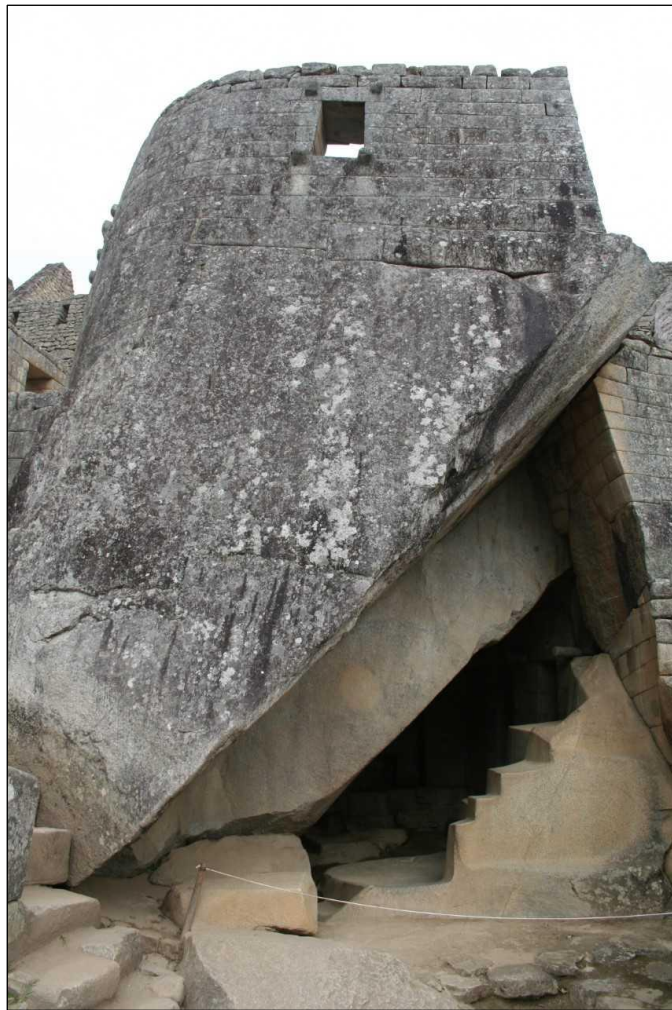
Figure 4.13   Machu Picchu, Peru. Temple of the Sun (Torreon). Photograph courtesy of Carolyn Dean.

As Dean (2010: 85) states, "the integrated outcrop is the place where Inka ordering meets the randomness of nature … The integrated outcrop, like a terrace wall, is a tinku, a coming together of natural and built environments." For the Inca, such integration symbolized a coming together of ordered and unordered or "wild" places. In many ways, this conjoining legitimized Inca authority and rule. Rock outcroppings, as incorporated into state-sponsored architecture, legitimized Inca domination. Pachamama, the Inca earth deity, was "married" to Inca architecture via the integration of rock outcroppings into human-made structures. Integration was therefore the visual testament to Inca political power.

In returning to Mayapán, it is noteworthy that paintings within the Temple of the Painted Niches (Structure Q 80) may demonstrate a relationship to ruling houses or lineages as well. The mural within this structure depicts five painted temples with niches replacing the doorways, shown in Chapter 3, Figure 3.3 (Delgado Ku 2009). The mural also depicts four reptiles seen between each of the five temples. Pugh (2001: 254-255) and Milbrath et al. (2010: 4) suggest that these reptiles were linked to foundation mythology in the city (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). As noted by Marilyn Masson (2003: 200), these murals may even represent Kukulcan's role in bringing together and uniting from heaven the four principal lineages at Mayapán. Timothy Pugh (2001: 255) suggests that the murals may function like toponyms in Mixtec codices such as that depicted on page 9 of the Codex Selden.[52] On that page, the toponym is constructed of a temple and associated reptilian creature. These are similar to the temple and related reptiles in the Structure 80 murals. Pugh believes the painted temples in Structure Q 80 depict the five actual serpent temples at Mayapán. These were once marked by serpent sculpture

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[52] In reviewing page 9 of the Codex Selden (Caso 1964: figure 7), the toponym of a town on that page is translated as "Temazcal-Cave of the Flowered War" per Caso (1964:85). That toponym closely resembles the temples on the mural at Mayapán.

and were located in different parts of the city. In turn, these temples may have been related to lineages at Mayapán, considering that toponyms refer to place and also social groups.

The rock outcroppings at Mayapán served to unite these lineages with powerful forces of the rock itself— thereby anchoring sociopolitical structures to the space of city. The effect that rock outcroppings had on bodies moving into this space would have reinforced these upperworld connections. In essence, it would have been a binding of architecture and associated political structures to sacred landscape. Such binding would legitimize the connection between lineage rule and the physical space of Mayapán at the same time that outcroppings symbolized the upperworld via their rise in elevation.

The relationship between rulership, rocky topography and their water properties is supported by the connection between earth/mountain/cave masks and the bodies of rulers in earlier Maya art. In the Tablet of the Temple of the Foliated Cross, from the Classic Period site of Palenque, for example, ruling figures are associated with an embodiment of the hieroglyphic K'an Nahb (precious sea) which in turn is positioned on a water band beneath (Stuart and Stuart 2008). Stuart and Stuart argue that the plant rising from the creature is Kan Nahb Ixiimte' (precious sea maize plant). This glyph maintains characteristics of crocodilian/reptilian/earth creatures suggesting the glyph could act symbolically as an earth symbol, as the Maize God was often depicted rising out of such a creature in his resurrection from the earth (Taube 1988). Toward the left of the tablet a reptilian head appears beneath the ruler Kan Bahlam's feet. Previously named a *cauac monster*, this creature has been identified by Stuart and Stuart (2008) as *Yaxhal Witznal*, "sacred mountain of sustenance" from which emerges maize plants. Beyond Palenque, the ruler depicted on Bonampak Stela 1 is also shown above a similar reptilian creature suggesting the ruler there too is associating himself with earth/water/fertility symbolism

(Figures 4.14 and 4.15).[53] Such representations depicting rulers standing over rocky

environments suggests a link between political power and the earth.

Figure 4.14   Bonampak, Mexico. Stela 1. Image credit: Ferguson-Royce: Precolumbian Photography, University of Texas at Austin, ID: 07-02942 v.7, 6-78-4-24.

Figure 4.15   Bonampak, Mexico. The earth or cauac monster below the ruler on Stela 1. Image credit: Ferguson-Royce: Precolumbian Photography, University of Texas at Austin, ID: 07-02942 v.7, 6-78-4-24.

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[53] Further discussion of the iconography and etymology of cauac monsters and witz or mountain imagery is given in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

Such markings are not used during the Postclassic in the Yucatán peninsula; however, I suggest that similar cosmovisions and political statements were still manifested in the Temple of the Niches at Mayapán. In the case of Mayapán, the serpent temples depicted in the mural, and their relationship to lineage houses in the city, are bound to the rocky outcropping beneath the temple itself. The ruling houses are therefore tied to the earth at that point and the properties associated with rocky/hill/cave environments. As was previously discussed, such topography in Mesoamerica is associated with rain-making, watery places and therefore agricultural fertility. At Mayapán, it is the particular karst geology that allows for the existence and frequency of caves and cenotes. Ruling houses depicted (via the mural) atop and literally tied to the earth in such a way would have been a powerful sign of those houses' legitimacy, political power and sacredness. In a sense, no cauac marker was needed as the rock outcropping forming the base of the temple made the associations explicit.

If the north served as the upperworld and was associated with rulership in this manner, the south was undeniably symbolic of the watery underworld and primordial beginnings. Walking south from the Temple of the Niches there is a notable drop in elevation and no rock outcroppings are apparent to the south. At the same time, buildings become larger and more overwhelming in relationship to human scale. The largest building at the site, the Temple of Kukulcan, is located in this southern section, for example. Both the lower elevation and taller and more massive buildings of the southern section create the effect that one is traveling from the upperworld into the underworld. Based on my own experience in the center, I would argue that the architecture in the southern sector of Quadrant Q was created to make viewers feel smaller. Certainly, it is the massiveness of built structures that takes over visual and physical perception

in this southern sector. Iconography, forms and terrestrial elements associated with underworld beliefs confirm visually what one feels phenomenologically.

Previous sections have reviewed the relationships between Mesoamerican cosmology and caves. Along similar lines at Mayapán, cenotes were a major guiding principle for important structures. As Brown (2005: 373-402) notes, lineage groups were often congregated around and associated with these fresh-water wells. Groups of related houses were marked off by surrounding walls in close proximity to certain cenotes. Brown believes that these groups practiced ancestor worship at several of these cenotes and suggests that ritual architecture and objects found with cenotes points, in part, to these practices. Additionally, in ancient Maya thought, cenotes were considered the abode of rain deities or Chaak'ob.[54] There is evidence that as such they were considered sources of "virgin water" where they were used in ceremonies dedicated to Chaak while also functioning as portals to the underworld (Heyden 1976: 134; Vogt and Stuart 2005: 155-185; Stone 2011).

Chichén Itzá provides a well-known example of the importance of cenotes in the area. The value of the Sacred Cenote there is especially attested to by the amount of precious sacrificial offerings (including artifacts made of gold, other metals, jade, wood, stone, copal incense, textiles, and humans) tossed into it (Landa 1941; Coggins 1984). Of the Sacred Cenote, Eduardo J. Pérez de Heredia (2008: 2) states, "this natural feature is a part of a ritual north-south axis that connects El Castillo or Kukulcan Pyramid, the platform of Venus, Sacbé no. 1, and the famous Well of the Sacrifices." More recently, researchers from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (Boletín 2015) have argued that they located a large cenote under the

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[54] The addition of the "ob" to the root term makes it plural.

Temple of Kukulcan itself suggesting the temple's location and orientation were at least partially influenced by the cenote found there.

Fittingly, the most important cenote at Mayapán, Ch'en Mul, is located in the southern sector of Quadrant Q. This cenote marks one of the most important features associated with water in the southeastern section of the site. Situated to the east of the Temple of Kukulcan, the cenote's cave systems pass underneath the temple and connect it with Structure Q 151, the Hall of the Chaak Masks. As with the newly-discovered cenote at Chichén Itzá, Ch'en Mul undoubtedly dictated the position of Mayapán's Temple of Kukulcan. As such, it also functioned as a portal to the underworld. The placement of the Temple of Kukulcan near the cenote (and over its tunnel system) is also similar to the artificial lobed tunnel found under the Temple of the Sun at Teotihuacán. Mayapán's Temple of Kukulkan, as the site's most important temple, served a number of symbolic functions. Its four-fold plan identified it as a central world axis through which upper, middle and underworld could be linked. Its role as an underworld marker and conduit is made explicit via its nine levels and location over a major cenote."[55]

Even before the construction of the Temple of Kukulcan, however, the site of its location held deep connections to the underworld. Encased within the Temple of Kukulcan is Structure Q 162a, the first structure built on that spot. While not a radial pyramid, it also had nine levels and was embellished with stucco sculptures depicting underworld scenes (Figures 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 4.24 and 4.25). The sculptures are positioned on two terraces of the southeast corner of the temple. These scenes depict alternating episodes of fleshed and de-fleshed figures with some figures who have niches rather than sculpted heads. The presence of maxillary fragments in one of the niches suggests that human skulls would once have been

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[55] The number nine, as presented in Maya architecture, was expressive of the nine levels of the underworld. See Aveni et al. (2004: 129).

placed there (Peraza Lope et al. 1999a: 82; P. Delgado Ku 2004: 79; Serafin and Peraza Lope 2008).
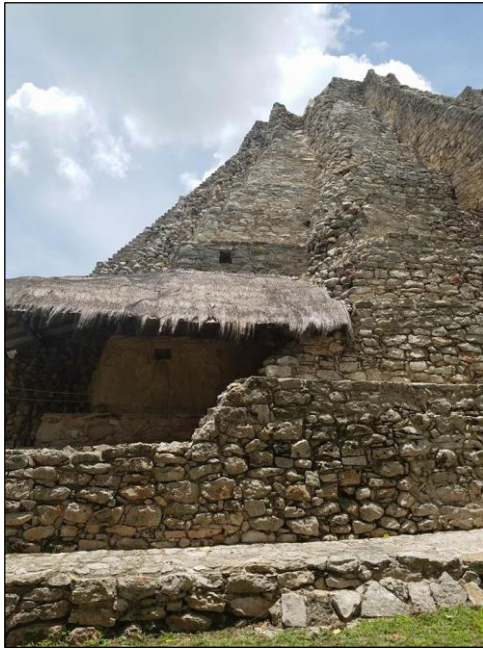
Figure 4.16   Mayapán, Mexico. The first and second construction phases of the Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán. Image also shows levels with the sculptural frieze. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.17   Mayapán, Mexico. The sculptural frieze on the first construction episode of the Temple of Kukulcan. Both south facing and east facing sides are shown. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.18   Mayapán, Mexico. The Temple of Kukulcan figures as the viewer faces west. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.19   Mayapán, Mexico. The partially de-fleshed figure on the lower level of the Temple of Kukulcan. Looking west. Two vultures flank the figure and the figure has a niche for a head. Originally, the crania of a human would have been placed in the niche. The figure stands on a band of water with a jaguar head seen to the viewer's lower right. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

Figure 4.20   Mayapán, Mexico. The jaguar head seen in the lower right-hand side of the image depicting the partially de-fleshed figure who stands on a band of water. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August, 2005.

Figure 4.21   Mayapán, Mexico. Figures on the south-facing side of the Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán. Looking north. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.22   Mayapán, Mexico. Figures on the south-facing terrace of the Temple of Kukulcan frieze at Mayapán. Lower tier and looking north. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.23   Mayapán, Mexico. A close-up of the fleshed figure depicted on the lower level of the Temple of Kukulcan. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.24   Mayapán, Mexico. The fleshed figure with a head who approaches the fleshed figure with a niche for a head. Lower tier and looking north. Author's photograph, July 2016.
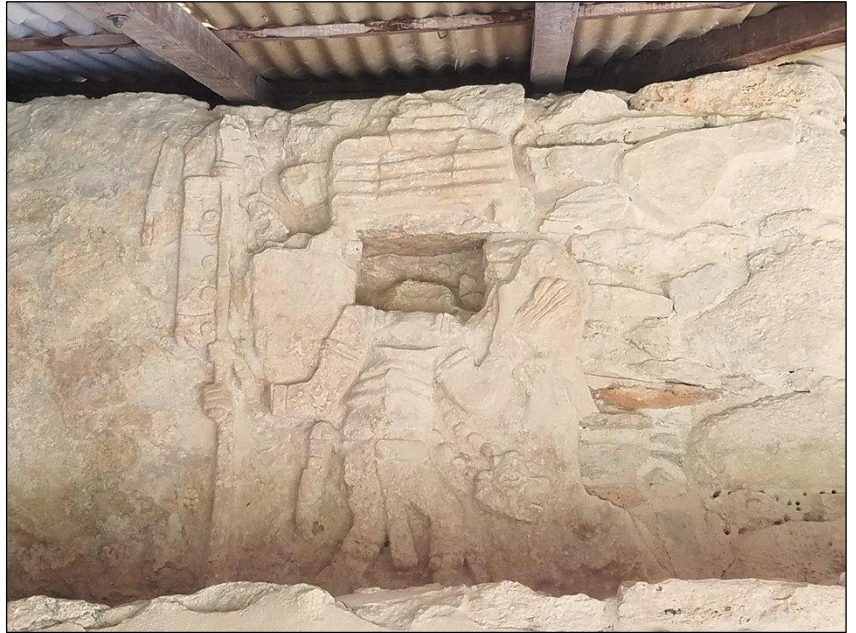
Figure 4.25   Mayapán, Mexico. The figure on the upper frieze of the Temple of Kukulcan. Looking north. Author's photograph, July 2016.

The largest figure of the frieze is partially skeletal. He is positioned on the eastward facing southern corner of the temple (viewer facing west) in Figures 4.18 and 4.19. The figure has a skeletal torso, but all other parts of the body appear fleshed. Like other figures that form part of this frieze, the figure (seemingly male as it wears a loincloth) has a square niche where its head should be and a sacrificial knife appears near his right arm. The figure is flanked by vultures and dances or stands on a water band which also features a decapitated jaguar head—all iconography that serves to represent the underworld (Figures 4.19 and 4.20). Milbrath and Peraza

Lope (2003:18) have argued that the figures attached to or next to the figure's torso (on each side) are bee wings like those depicted in the Madrid Codex. These authors also believe the vultures resemble those in the Madrid Codex and Dresden Codex.

Three more figures have been preserved on the south-facing, eastern extremity of the pyramid as well (Figure 4.21). On the same terrace level as the skeletal figure (but around the terrace corner and facing south rather than east) are two figures. Both are fleshed and do not appear to have any skeletal attributes (Figure 4.22). One, although smaller than the skeletal figure on the south-facing side, is positioned in a similar frontal pose as its skeletal counterpart (Figure 4.23). At least one of its arms is outstretched although it appears slightly more raised than the skeletal figure's arms (its left arm has not been preserved). This figure also wears a loin cloth and while it is not extensively clothed, it does have what appears to be cloth around its neck and scrolls that appear near its right arm. Approaching this figure from the viewer's left (from the figure's right side) is a fully fleshed figure, possibly a dwarf (Figure 4.24).

This figure is considerably smaller and shown in profile. The figure also has a fully modeled stucco head as opposed to a niche. Immediately above this scene is another stucco figure (Figure 4.25). Its torso and arms are frontal; however, its lower extremities appear in profile suggesting the figure is moving. The figure's torso is skeletal and it also has a niche for a head. In this case, the niche is topped with a rectangular hat. The being holds a staff in its right arm like those depicted in highland codices. Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003) have noted that the figure has a mask or trophy head tied to its torso.[56]

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[56] The niches have led Carlos Peraza to compare the Mayapán figures with niches in Oaxacan tombs. He suggests that the individuals depicted at Mayapán may be venerated warriors from particular political groups. The presence of the flag banner may reinforce this idea (at least in the case of some of the figures presented). See Peraza Lope (1999: 52-53).

Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003: 18) believe that the figures were used in sacrificial or ancestor worship cults. As noted earlier, Peraza Lope et al. (1999: 82) found cranial fragments in one of the niches. The crania could have been related to ancestor worship cults as was typical of Cocom practices. Notably, the Cocoms at Mayapán made offerings of food to the skulls of ancestors displayed in household oratories with statues containing their funerary ashes (Landa 1941: 131). Alternatively, the figures could have been part of sacrificial rituals involving decapitation, as is explicitly articulated via Chichén Itzá's tzompantli or "skull rack," but was common practice throughout the Maya world (V. Miller 1999: 340-354). Based on the evidence gathered in this study, I believe the skulls were related to sacrificial rites.

The Mayapán Q 162a figures, together with the Temple of Kukulcan, the Cenote Ch'en Mul and the lower elevation of the southern sector, did not simply reference, but embodied the underworld. The south was, in the end, the underworld re-presented. The movement of the sun through this underworld from the east to the west, necessitated human sacrifice.

Evidence suggests that several Mesoamerican cultures, including the Maya and Aztec, believed that such sacrifice was necessary to ensure that the sun would be "reborn" or rise in a consistent fashion and to ensure the general order of the cosmos (Matos Moctezuma 1988: 39-46; Caso 1958: 32-27; Schele and Miller 1986: 1-17; Taube 1993: 51-77). One ancient Maya conception of the sun was that it was transformed into the jaguar of the underworld upon its descent into that dark place and was resurrected with ritual sacrifice as the glowing sun (M. Miller and Taube 1997). As anthropologist Miguel León Portilla (1988: 70) explains, "*Kinh* [k'in], which is the divine sun, day, and time, in his never-ending journey, travels daily through the heavens above the earth and through the dark regions of the underworld."

The scene on the east-facing side of Q 162a is most telling of the frieze's role in sacrificial rituals used to ensure the sun's course. In that scene, the largest partially skeletal figure stands on the band of undulating water, with a sacrificial knife near his side and a jaguar head on the water band. The connection between sacrificial knives, human skulls and death is obvious. The Maya practiced heart extraction and decapitation regularly with sacrificial victims (Tiesler and Cucina 2007: 1-13; Vail and Hernández 2008: 120-164; V. Miller 2008: 165-189; Serafin and Peraza Lope 2008: 232: 250).

Decapitation and subsequent caching or display of heads was particularly common and widely celebrated. The most explicit examples of these practices are in the form of tzompantlis or "skull racks," briefly introduced earlier. Tzompantlis were recorded by the Spanish at Tenochtitlán in the 16th century and archaeological excavation in the central precinct has confirmed their existence there (Durán 1967). In fact, as of this writing, a new tzompantli was uncovered in the central precinct at Tenochtitlán. Mexican archaeologists Matos Moctezuma and Raul Barrera concluded that at least thirty-five skulls were discovered mortared together. These were arranged in a circular form on the upper level of the structure (Matos Moctezuma 2017).[57] Chichén Itzá also has a skull rack located near its large ballcourt. In her discussion of decapitation and display practices in the Maya world, Virginia E. Miller (1999: 348, 355) has shown that the Maya had a long history of head-taking, caching and display. Caches of skulls are present at the Terminal Classic site of Colha, Belize, Dos Pilas, Guatemala and from the highland Guatemalan site of Iximché. The cache at Dos Pilas, containing 16 skulls, was less than 100 meters from the ballcourt. This proximity, like that of the tzompantli and Great Ballcourt at Chichén Itzá, suggests that the heads come from sacrificial victims who may have been forced to

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participate in the ballgame and were subsequently beheaded. Iconography from the Great

Ballcourt at Chichén Itzá depicts this act.

Although Mayapán does not have a ballcourt (no Postclassic northern Maya sites do),

there is ample evidence that sacrifices were undertaken in the central precinct. It is likely that

decapitated victims' heads were displayed at Q 162a, in the niches of the figures sculpted there.

The sacrificial knife near the partially fleshed figure supports this as do the flesh-eating vultures

that frame the figure. The undulating waves the figure stands on reference the watery underworld

and the jaguar head symbolizes the night sun's journey through that dark place.

This interpretation is further supported by the materiality and composition of the frieze

itself. Stucco is a material that mimics real skin. It is malleable, but capable of containing and

safe-guarding sacred liquids. It is very likely that the sculptors of the frieze thought of stucco in

the same ways. Similar mediums such as clay were often used to create human effigy vessels in

the Precolumbian Maya world. They, like human bodies, served as organic containers of

precious fluids (Joyce 1998: 148). Along these lines, a skull from a private collection in

Guatemala was once used as a support for modeled stucco. In that case, the artist attempted to

recreate a stuccoed human face around the skull support (V. Miller 1999: note 21).

At Mayapán, the ability for stucco to serve as a skeuomorph for human skin is further

articulated by the fact that a human head placed in a niche would visually connect a stucco body

to a human fleshed head, thereby binding both materials together in one composition. Such a

focus on the properties of skin is perhaps even more poignant in the depicted absence of it. It is

important, I believe, that the figures with skeletal torsos are not entirely skeletal. Flesh is still

seen on their arms and legs, for instance. It is as if we, as viewers, are being cued to different

moments in a sacrificial ritual wherein a victim, perhaps dressed to personify a deity, is in the

process of being flayed. The sacrificial knife near the figure's right arm (and very close to his de-fleshed torso) supports this interpretation.[58]

It seems, therefore, that the heads placed in the niches of the frieze were not revered ancestors, but sacrificial victims killed to ensure the sun's journey from the east to the west and through the dark underworld. The victims' heads, freshly decapitated, were most likely still fleshed in which case flesh would eventually fall off the bone beneath, much in the same way the body of the niche figure is partially fleshed and partially skeletal. These acts probably took place on or near the temple's staircase. While the sacrificial altar for Q 162a remains to be uncovered (the temple has not been fully excavated), a conical sacrificial altar was found near the north staircase of the later Temple of Kukulcan (Shook 2009: 237).[59]

Based on the discussion thus far, it is clear that the space of Q 162a and the Temple of Kukulcan was the most important and powerful part of Quadrant Q's sacred landscape. The underworld associations there are strongly articulated in the form and iconography of both temples. However, those associations and powers were there before either of the pyramids were built. The temples, the frieze and the rituals involving them were only integrated into a sacred landscape already pregnant with the powers of the underworld and sacred directionality. In particular, the location of both pyramids was dictated by the Cenote Ch'en Mul, the ultimate underworld marker and portal. The cenote is located just to the temples' eastern side and, notably, the most important scene on Q 162a's frieze is also oriented to face it.

Just as Ch'en Mul anchored Q 162a and the Temple of Kukulcan to the landscape and to underworld powers more specifically, it also functioned to guide much of the architecture

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[58] Such presence and absence is similar to the scene depicted on Chichén Itzá's tzompantli as the walls of that structure also depict de-fleshed figures. Virginia Miller, personal communication, October 2017.

[59] See Shook's discussion in John Weeks' (2009) edited review of Mayapán.

associated with the east and west. The cenote itself, located near the eastern side of the major temples, was also a referent to the watery eastern direction (the Caribbean Sea is located east of Mayapán). This was the place and direction of the sun's rise or "birth" and in line with the cenote's location, the entire eastern half of the central precinct at Mayapán contains references to water and the sea.

In walking the eastern sector of the center, one comes across several temples built in the "East Coast Style", an architectural style shared with coastal sites near the Caribbean, as seen in Figure 4.26 (Delgado Ku 2004). Some famous examples include Tulum in Quintana Roo and San Geravasio on Cozumel Island. Typical of this building style, as reflected at Mayapán, are oratorios of one level set on a rectangular base with a single post and lintel entrance. At Mayapán, these feature a relatively plain lower façade (although these would have been painted) that slopes slightly upward and outward. A single or double molding encircling the building creates a clear separation between the lower façade and upper façades and upper façades are generally decorated with stucco sculpture (A. Miller 1977, 1982; A. Andrews 1983: 19-20; A. Andrews and E. W. Andrews 1975; Freidel and Sabloff 1984).

Figure 4.26   Mayapán, Mexico. Mayapán temple in the "East Coast Style" seen under the most recent construction episode. Note the stones that formed part of the upper façade facing outward toward the viewer as opposed to being flush with the rest of the façade. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Easterly associations are further reinforced by the presence of Mayapán's round building or "Caracol" in that sector. This building was dedicated to the wind deity Queztalcoatl-Ehecatl, a derivation of the deity Queztalcoatl or Kukulcan. Queztalcoatl-Ehecatl was also associated with Venus and the eastern direction (Nicholson 2001: 263). The Caracol was designed to track the movements of Queztalcoatl-Ehecatl in his guise as Venus, a point discussed further in Chapter Five. Directly to the south of the Caracol and east of the Temple of Kukulcan and Cenote Ch'en Mul is Structure Q 151 with its line of deity masks (shown in Chapter 1, Figure 1.6). These masks were originally referred to as the Maya rain deity Chaak by Susan Milbrath and Carlos Peraza Lope (2003). It is appropriate that this hall is in the *southeastern* half of the section as both the south and the east embody watery associations. The east was understood as the place of

the sun's birth and the south, as reviewed previously, was a direction associated with the underworld.

The important watery associations of the southeast are reinforced by the rectangular sunken plaza abutting Structure Q 151, located just to the south of it (also seen in Chapter 1, Figure 1.6). The plaza is in turn connected to the cenote Chen Mul. The plaza is of lower elevation naturally than sections from the northern part of Quadrant Q, but the plaza may also have been artificially enhanced for its water holding properties. What is apparent is that the plaza *did* flood and flooded regularly during the rainy season. A hole leading to the cenote functioned as a drain for the plaza and allowed water to be carried off into the cenote (Figure 4.27).[60] It seems reasonable to assume that this hole could also have been plugged. This would have allowed for water to pool in the plaza, just in front of the masks, thereby recreating a rectangular underworld with sides all oriented to cardinal directions.

Figure 4.27   Mayapán, Mexico. The square drainage hole that leads to the cenote Ch'en Mul. Author's photograph, July 2016.

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[60] Pedro Delgado Ku, personal communication, June 2014.

Karl Taube and Polly Schaafsma (Schaafsma and Taube 2006) have noted in recent years that Mesoamerican ballcourts may have been purposefully flooded in a similar manner (Taube 2004b: 11; Schaafsma and Taube 2006). At the Middle Formative site of Teopantecuantitlán, in highland Guerrero, a ballcourt has a stone aqueduct system with holes on the northwestern and northeastern corners (Schaafsma and Taube 2006). Additionally, a Late Classic vessel recovered from Kaminaljuyú in the Guatemalan highlands depicts a ballcourt with a drain for liquid (Whittington 2001: fig. 32). In that vessel, liquid would pass from the spout into the court at its basin.

Stephen Houston (1998: 359) has found similarities between the Kaminaljuyú vessel and iconography from rock carvings featuring the flooding of ballcourts at El Planchon de las Figuras, a Late Classic Maya site in Chiapas. More recently, Jeff Kowalski has informed me that he believes the floor of the courtyard of the Nunnery at Uxmal would have filled temporarily with water during rainy season thunderstorms, and then drained through a large stone-lined conduit that ran through the center of the portal arch of the south structure, creating a stream running down the monumental southern stairway to the more public plaza and the main ballcourt below – perhaps also associated with an underworld locale, as most ballcourts are thought to be.[61]

Rocio González de la Mata, José Osorio and Peter Schmidt (2005: 5-6) also argue that Chichén Itzá's plazas flooded. These authors believe that plazas were purposefully constructed there to create "drops" that worked to guide flooding water in certain directions. González de la Mata and her colleagues suggest this is the reason plazas within the city were so thoroughly stuccoed.

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[61] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 2017.

It is therefore entirely reasonable to think that controlled flooding and catchment occurred in the plaza in front of Structure Q 151 at Mayapán. The plaza as a rectangular "lake" (itself a reflection of an ordered, cardinally oriented space) could have served as a symbol of the primordial sea and a reference to creation. This theory is supported by the incised drawing on the plastron of a stone sea turtle sculpture recovered from Structure Q 151 (Figure 4.28). This turtle, discussed more fully in Chapter 6, was found in an interior altar of the building. Its incised drawing depicts a set of circumscribed rectangles. It is tempting to suggest this drawing is the plaza with associated architecture. Such drawings are not without parallels in the Maya world. The image on the Mayapán turtle is similar to an incised drawing of a ballcourt from a Late Classic Veracruz pectoral (also discussed in Chapter 6). As explained further in Chapter 6, turtles were associated with watery, primordial environments, agricultural fertility and creation events. It is therefore fitting that a flooded plaza would be inscribed on a turtle sculpture.

Figure 4.28   A stone turtle from Mayapán. The deity Itzamná is shown emerging from its mouth. Photograph by Tatiana Proskouriakoff in Proskouriakoff 1962: figures 2e and 2f.

The relationship between the east and primordial seas and beginnings is further reinforced via a major mural located in Mayapán's Structure Q 95. The mural is deemed "The Temple of the Fisherman Mural" and is painted on a large bench within the temple (shown in Chapter 1, Figure 1.7 and in Chapter 4, Figures 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35 and 4.36). Laid out on a blue background indicating the sea, several protagonists float or swim about in the water. These characters include two fish, what appears to be a sea snake, a human or deity figure, and a bound crocodile.

Figure 4.29   Mayapán, Mexico. Close-up of the Temple of the Fisherman Mural, looking west. The sea serpent and a fish are in the foreground, crocodile and possible Quetzalcoatl figure in the middle ground, and a fish in the background (left). Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.30   Mayapán, Mexico. The Fisherman Mural looking north.
Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

Masson and Peraza Lope (2007) have suggested that the composition is related to the

Aztec myth of the Fifth Sun wherein the fifth world or "sun" is destroyed. In this myth,

Quetzalcoatl (who is likely the human figure in the mural) transforms himself together with the

Aztec deity Tezcatlipoca into a sea serpent. Together the deities slay a crocodile. According to

the myth, the earth was covered by water at that time and Quetzalcoatl's subsequent mission was

to retrieve the bones of humans born in a past creation. Masson and Lope note that, "these

humans had since been turned into fish" (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 95-96; Taube 1993: 37-

39; M. Smith 2003: 194).

Miguel Delgado Ku (2009: 197) has identified the principal figure in the mural as

Queztalcoatl (Figure 4.31 and Figure 4.32). Milbrath, Peraza Lope, and Delgado Ku (2010), Karl

Taube (1992) and Masson and Peraza Lope (2014) have each noted that iconographic similarities exist between the figure in the Mayapán mural and Queztalcoatl/Kukulcan figures in the Maya Dresden and Mixtec Nuttall codices. Quetzalcoatl's relationship to central Mexican as well as Maya codices speaks to the attraction of the International Style and Symbol Set in Postclassic culture. It also reflects the ability of the style and symbol set to be transferred, fluidly, from one medium to another.

Figure 4.31   Mayapán, Mexico. The human or deity figure (possibly Quetzalcoatl) in the Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Looking west. Author's photograph, July 2006.

Figure 4.32   Mayapán, Mexico. The human or deity figure (possibly Quetzalcoatl) in the Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Looking north. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

Figure 4.33   Mayapán, Mexico. The crocodile figure in the Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Looking west. A fish is seen in the background. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.34   Mayapán, Mexico. Close- up of crocodile.
Looking north. Photograph courtesy of Claudia
Brittenham, August 2005.

Figure 4.35   Mayapán, Mexico. The serpent figure in the
Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Photograph courtesy of
Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

Figure 4.36　Mayapán, Mexico. The fish figure in the Temple of the Fisherman Mural. Photograph courtesy of Claudia Brittenham, August 2005.

This transference is further supported by several of the other figures in the Mayapán mural that reference characters from codices. The sea serpent figure, for example, is similar to Chicchan serpents and possibly has Venus associations as seen in the Madrid Codex (pages 11-14) as Milbrath, Peraza Lope, and Delgado Ku have noted (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 28; Milbrath et al. 2010: 7). Alfredo Barrera Rubio and Carlos Peraza Lope (2001: 34) further suggest that the symbols are similar to those seen in the Temple of the Painted Niches (Structure Q 80) at Mayapán. [62] Susan Milbrath (1999: 261) has proposed that the Madrid Codex imagery references a link between rain, serpents and Venus. She argues that Chicchan serpents, in particular, are rain serpents that recall ideology associated with the cardinal directions among

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[62] Both of these examples depict parallel lines and serpent spots seen in the celestial snake "Chicchan" according to these authors.

contemporary Chorti Maya living in Guatemala and Honduras (Milbrath 1999: 36; Milbrath et al.

2010: 7).

The Fisherman mural at Mayapán is also strikingly similar to iconography depicted on

folio 75 of the Codex Nuttall (Figure 4.37). Here three warriors (left to right: 9 Water, Lord 8

Deer, and 4 Jaguar) travel over a body of water, via canoe. They journey toward a stylized hill,

which functions as a toponym for a city or place. The toponym has been visually "conquered" by

the spear thrust into its side. Below the warriors is a crocodile like the one rendered in the

Mayapán mural. There is also a water serpent who appears feathered, and a fish creature.

Figure 4.37   Codex Nuttall. After Z. Nuttall 1975: 75

It is tempting to see these Mixtec creatures as counterparts of the Chiccan and

Queztalcoatl/Kukulcan figures argued for in the Temple of the Fisherman. Formally, the

connections are undeniable. The protagonists are rendered in the same stylized manner in both the Nuttall and in the Fisherman mural. The Fisherman mural, together with the small rectangular temple it is a part of, functions as a three-dimensional model of the rectangular two-dimensional Nuttall Codex scene. To the left of the water is a "cosmic frame" in the shape of a stylized temple. Here a celestial sky band is located at the top with star eye/rosette symbols rendered in the International Style (Masson 2003: fig. 25.4b). The lower portion of the stylized temple references part of the sea.

The containment of figures in flat, defined space was an iconic trope in Postclassic art, especially as presented in codices, and it is something shared also by the Fisherman mural. Containment of figures in a bound space, such as in blocks of blue (i.e. water), was a way of communicating a narrative that was part of a longer story. In the case of the Nuttall, the water scene with the three figures amounts to the phrase, "they traveled over water." Combined with other symbols including a stylized pierced hill and the temple, the sentence becomes, "they traveled over water to a civilized place that was conquered."

While the scene at Mayapán does not depict warriors traveling via canoe, ritual "travel" could have been physically practiced in the form of real people traveling across or around the mural. In this manner, the physical human body would become the animator of the story in performance. Ritual practitioners could have walked over the mural and acted on it. Alternatively, they could have acted or moved around it in the clockwise or counterclockwise reading orders noted for Classic Period art by Joel Palka (2002: 424). This is entirely likely, considering that the mural is on a large bench, as opposed to a wall. Moreover, not all characters face the same direction and some even appear "upside down," suggesting the mural necessitated multiple vantage points. In Bárbara Escamilla's (2004) drawing, the fish and serpent are "upside

down" and travel the opposite way compared to those creatures below them. All the characters shown on page 75 face and travel from right to left. At Mayapán, both the Quetzalcoatl or human figure and the crocodile follow this convention and face and travel right to left when the mural is seen horizontally from the east (longest side parallel to viewer). However, the fish do not face this direction. Instead, they travel left to right and appear "upside down" to the two main protagonists. This suggests that there was not one single vantage point used by the viewer. The mural was meant to be seen from multiple directions and therefore was traveled around, or perhaps crossed over (the sea serpent's face is not present so it is difficult to known what direction it originally faced).

There are also places within the larger architectural complex of the Fisherman Temple that correspond to the Nuttall (1975) tale and suggest the mural's direct association with ritual performance. In the storyline of the Nuttall (1975), the figures on the canoes are journeying to a celestial place. They cross a great and dangerous body of water (also seen in Colombino 22-23) on their way to the realm of the Sun God. In later pages of the same story, the figures give offerings and jewels to the Sun God (ZN 78bc). This deity then directs the travelers to drill a fire (ZN 78c) and afterward motions them to look into an opening within an architectural platform (ZN 79abc) (Boone 2000:116-119).[63]

Boone (2000: 118) states that the long shaft in the platform could have symbolized or referred to "looking into the future." Interestingly, Structure Q 95 (Temple of the Fisherman) at Mayapán also has a long, deep vertical chamber (Proskouriakoff 1962:133), as shown in Figure 4.38. This shaft was filled with dozens of human skeletons (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 96).

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[63] Nancy Troike (1974:276-283) has suggested that the water in the Nuttall scene may not refer to an actual place. She suggests that the water is a glyphic trope used to symbolize or signify a "crossing over" into a supernatural realm.

Figure 4.38   Mayapán, Mexico. The Temple of the Fisherman. The mural is located under the thatch awning. Author's photograph, July 2016.

As Edwin Shook (2009: 175) has noted, the shaft (excavated as Lot C 29) included more than 40 different human bodies. Children, adolescents and adults of both sexes were recovered from the shaft along with ashes, charcoal, the bones of birds and animals, broken pottery and debris of metal, bone and shell. Shook believes these victims were sacrificed on the tapered stone altar associated with the temple. Such an altar was found in the collapsed part of the shaft's north side. According to Shook, the bodies appeared to have been "tossed in" over the course of several years. No funerary offerings were included. The content and context of the shaft points to a disregard for the dead and suggests that they were not honored family members or individuals, but sacrificial victims.

It seems likely that the shaft in the Temple of the Fisherman served a similar purpose as the hole "peered down into" in the Nuttall story (meaning that the Nuttall image was meant to suggest, to its reader, that bodies were located down the shaft that 8 Deer and his companion are

instructed to peer down into). Other shafts in temple structures from Mesoamerica have been known to contain skeletal remains. A shaft with bodies occurs, for example, in the structure referred to as the High Priest's Grave or Osario at Chichén Itzá. In that case, the long shaft was extended down to the base of the pyramid and seven graves, complete with offerings of pottery, copper bells and jade were found within it (Thompson and Thompson 1968). If the Temple of the Fisherman shaft relates to that pictured in the Nuttall (1975) story, this suggests that the mural was part of ritual performances related to themes of journeying to sun realms and involving human death as part of that process.[64] The Temple of the Fisherman mural provided a context for ritual reenactment and that reenactment almost certainly required the performer to move across or around it. These rituals necessitated human sacrifice.[65] Important iconographic aspects including the crocodilian creature, serpent, speared fish, and precious jewel symbolism associate the mural with acts of fishing and the subsequent act of "raising water" from the dark earth. This is an analogy to early morning mist seen when the sun is newly risen in the east. The rituals surrounding the Temple of the Fisherman mural were most likely rain-making performances involving journeys, via ritual experience, to the realm of the new sun.

The placement of the temple in the eastern half of the central precinct is therefore highly appropriate in associating it with the morning or newborn sun. The inclusion of the central Mexican deity Queztalcoatl also relates the mural to the eastern direction as that deity was understood to have disappeared to the east and subsequently reappeared as the morning star, and/or the avatar *Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli* "Lord of the House of Dawn" (Nicholson 2001: 150). These rain-making rituals required sacrifice and the mural seems to have been part of these

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[64] Masson and Peraza (2014: 95-100) have also linked the mural and burial shaft together. However, they argue that they functioned together in relation to the Aztec myth of the Fifth Sun.

[65] Shook (2009: 175) also notes the presence of a sacrificial stone that may have once been in front of the Temple of the Fisherman. It was found broken in the collapsed part of the burial shaft's north side.

related performances as well. The shaft with sacrificial victims in the Temple of the Fisherman reinforces the ancient Mesoamerican belief that new life went hand-in-hand with death.[66]

If the east was related to beginnings, it follows that the west was associated with endings. As has already been mentioned, west was the direction in which the sun "sank" or "died." Aligning with the Temple of Kukulcan's west staircase, the stucco sculptures from the colonnaded Hall of Kings further reinforce the west's death associations (Figures 4.39, 4.40 and 4.41). Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003:26), Peraza Lope (1999: 51), and Peraza Lope et al. (2003: 26) have identified several of the figures on the columns. Peraza Lope et al. (2003: 26) describe these as follows: "one deity with fangs, one column with the monstrous clawed feet of *Tlaltecuhtli* (central Mexican earth Lord), one *Xochipilli*, one *Xipe Totec*, and one youthful pregnant female goddess (perhaps *Tlazolteotl*). Three male faces lack distinctive deity face markings." [67]

Notably, at least three of the identified gods and goddesses have aspects related to death or dying. The god Tlaltecuhtli, for example, embodied the chaos that existed before creation. In Aztec mythology, he was torn apart by Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca in order to form both the earth and heavens. Given these attributes, the deity was closely related to human sacrifice and demanded blood (Pasztory1983: 81; Miller and Taube 1997). Xipe Totec is also a deity recognized in the Aztec pantheon. His persona was related to fertility and renewal but also to the human sacrifice that was necessary for these processes. His priests were said to wear the skins of their de-fleshed victims during ceremonies dedicated to the deity (Acosta 1950). Caso (1958: 73)

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[66] Death god sculptures were uncovered from the temple in addition to five skull caps and two skeletal face censers (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003). The plaza immediately to the south of Structure Q 95 holds Structure Q 89 (thought to be a skull rack or *tzompantli*) in which nine skeletal stone heads projecting from the building were found (discussed first by Peraza Lope, Delgado Ku, and Escamilla Ojeda 2003: 107). An ossuary tomb just to the west of Q 95 also held human remains (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 98).
[67] See discussion in Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 85).

states that victims killed in honor of Xipe Totec were sometimes tied to scaffolding or other types of framework and "riddled with arrows." Their blood spilled to the ground in order to make it fertile.

Figure 4.39   Mayapán, Mexico. Looking east along the stuccoed columns in the "Hall of Kings". Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.40   Mayapán, Mexico. Some plaster that remains on the Hall of Kings at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 4.41   Mayapán, Mexico. Stucco and plastered sculpture that once covered the columns from The Hall of Kings at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Lastly, the figure of the pregnant goddess may have also symbolized fertility and renewal in addition to disease and death. Her name, Tlazolteotl, was associated with disease and filth, and as such she was a deity associated with adultery and sin, in addition to being tied to the purification of sins related to sexual misconduct (Miller and Taube 1997: 168). Tlazolteotl was not only associated with such impurities, but with the cleansing of them as well. According to Alfonso Caso (1958: 56), she was said to consume these impurities and thus made people clean once more.

Together these figures were modeled in stucco over a set of stone columns that functioned as support for the thatch roof of the structure. It is interesting that when looking toward the east, they align with the Temple of Kukulcan's west staircase (Figure 4.39) in a manner that is similar to Structure Q 151's mask alignment with the Temple of Kukulcan's eastern stairs on the other side of the temple (Figure 4.42). [68] This alignment reinforces the complementary bond, or perhaps more aptly, the journey, between life and death that has been discussed throughout this section. [69]

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[68] The Temple of Kukulcan was built after both Q 151 and the Hall of Kings. It seems its east and west staircases were deliberately aligned with the columns in both of those buildings.

[69] See Figure 3.14. The Temple of Kukulcan is positioned between Structure Q 151 and Q 163 or the Hall of Kings. The east and west staircases of Q 162 face out toward each of these buildings and align with the sculptures discussed (the Chaak masks and stucco figures).
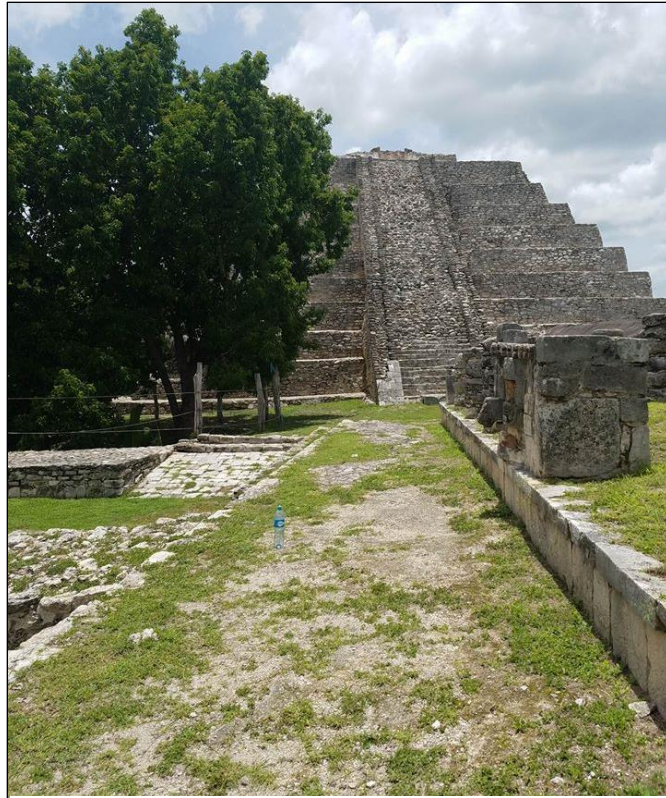
Figure 4.42   Mayapán, Mexico. Looking west toward the east-facing staircase of the Temple of Kukulcan. The line of masks from Structure Q151 can be seen in the foreground and Cenote Ch'en Mul can be seen just under the trees. Author's photograph, July 2016.

4.5   Cosmological Integration in the Central Precinct

A major goal of this chapter was to describe how Mayapán's planners and patrons integrated sacred cosmological beliefs from a variety of sources into the ritual center of the city. In explicating the above, the chapter clarifies why the city cannot be understood as a simple hybrid or inactive "product." Certainly, as is attested in the sections here, Mayapán's planners and patrons considered and chose from a variety of important ideas and practices. The reasons

for and execution of these choices were couched in the social, religious and political complexities of life in a Postclassic city.

To review, Mayapán's artists and architects created architecture and art that referenced non-Maya and Maya ideologies via form, style, symbolism and subject matter. The Temple of Kukulcan, for example, is a radial pyramid with nine levels to reflect its embodiment of the Maya underworld. The Temple of the Fisherman mural features stylistic techniques and iconography similar to central Mexican mythhistories told via codices. Furthermore, the mural's subject matter is symbolic of journeys to primordial times and places told of in Maya, Mixtec and Aztec mythhistories.

In addition to these formal, stylistic, symbolic and iconographic practices, Mayapán's architects took care to place certain types of buildings in special parts of the city's landscape. The north, south, east and west sectors of the sacred precinct each held important cosmological powers and by placing certain structures (and associated art) in these places, the Maya at Mayapán integrated the landscape's strength into the very fabric of their city plan. The powers of creation and agricultural fertility enriched the east, sacrifice ensured the sun would rise again after its western descent, the north testified to ruling lineages and the south was a fertile, watery underworld realm. These directional powers were reinforced by the anchoring of important buildings to the living landscape itself. Rock outcroppings reach up from the earth and bind important architecture such as the Temple of the Niches to powerful earth essences. Cenotes pair with temples and flooded plazas to create underworld portals and primordial seas. Rising from these watery realms are the Temple of Kukulcan and Q 162a before it. These chief edifices, along with associated art and ritual practice, guided the sun from life and through death.

5   ARCHITECTURE IN MAYAPÁN'S CENTRAL PRECINT

5.1   <u>Integration and Architecture, an Iconographic and Formal Perspective</u>

The previous chapter discussed Mayapán's ritual center in terms of an embodied experience of its architecture, art and landscape. Together, these three elements materialized sacred cosmology at Mayapán. The present chapter builds from this point but focuses specifically on the formal and iconographic symbols available to that experience. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 90) believed that symbols as visual referents to intangible ideologies could be images, objects, actions, events and relationships. By this interpretation, symbols – as the visual and performative building blocks of religious ritual – function as key elements in the manifestation and experience of sacred cosmology. One particularly important symbol type discussed in this chapter is the radial pyramid archetype. Archetypes are here defined as reproduced forms that maintain and communicate shared ideology. As such, these forms can also be interpreted as copies of earlier examples.

As early as the Carnegie project at Mayapán, researchers noticed and commented on the close similarities between structures at Mayapán and those at Chichén Itzá. As was explored in the literature review for this dissertation, Mayapán was often considered a "copy" of Chichén Itzá. It is important to consider that the often-negative associations we give to the term "copy" did not exist for the ancient Maya in the same way. Rather, replication functioned as an embodiment of sacred forms and associated ideologies. Reproduction in a sense "brought forth" these powers into a new place and time.

In discussing archetypes and architectural forms in the Mesoamerican world, Andrea Stone (1992) argued that such forms and their reuse were politically motivated. She believes that distinctive architectural forms and accompanying art, were inspired by elements and rituals

undertaken in the world beyond the community – the wilderness, as Western society might term

it. It is Stone's belief that the performance of ritual in relationship to topographic symbols

spurred the development of human-created "copies" or "archetypes" that embodied the powers of

these topographic forms and brought those powers into the city's center. Stone (1992: 116)

stated,

> Emergent ceremonial architecture, supported by painted and sculpted images, attempted
> to recreate the ritual setting of the wilderness. This strategy provided a way to "capture"
> ritual from "out there" and thus appropriate its accompanying power and status. By
> "capturing" wilderness space through its symbolic recreation, ritual was brought into the
> built environment where it could be directed and manipulated by the elite.

While it may be difficult to prove whether or not the ancient Maya thought of such

appropriation as "capturing," it is logical to assume that inspiration for important forms came

from the terrestrial and celestial worlds. As was previously discussed, several Mesoamerican

cities created pyramids that mimicked mountains surrounding them. Pyramids that were paired

with tunnels or cenotes acted as symbols of fertility and civilization. It will be recalled from

Chapter 4 that the Pyramid of the Moon and the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán are instances

of these associations, for example.

The most important copied form or archetype to be discussed in the present chapter was

the radial pyramid (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). As was previously addressed, radial pyramids were

those that included a staircase on each of the structure's four sides. These pyramids were closely

associated with the sacred structure of time in Mesoamerican belief. Coggins (1980: 731) has

noted that the Maya visualized the sun's rise, zenith, set and nadir as a four-point k'in sign, the

sign referencing the completion of one day (Figure 5.3). This sign closely replicates what a radial

pyramid looks like in an aerial plan. Thereby, the orientations of the pyramids' sides toward the

cardinal directions synchronized sacred time with sacred space.
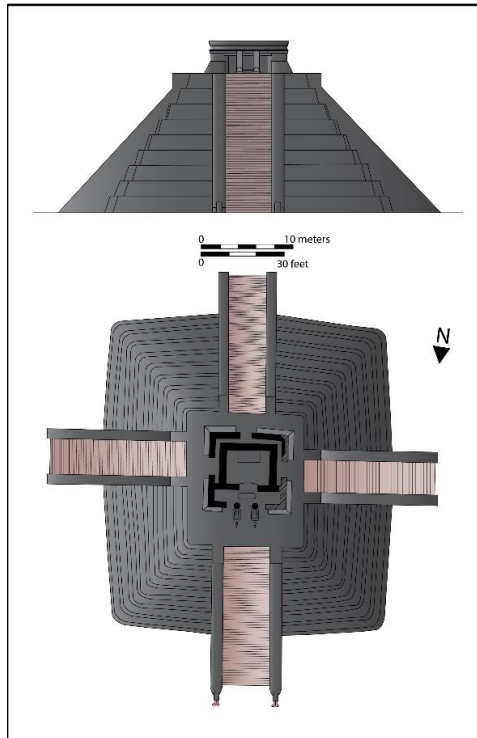
Figure 5.1   Aerial and elevation drawings of Chichén Itzá's main pyramid (before 1050), "The Castillo" or Temple of Kukulcan as an example of a radial or four-sided pyramid with staircases on each side. Image credit: re-drawn by Pete Geraci after University of California, San Diego. ID: ARTSTOR 103_41822001435088.
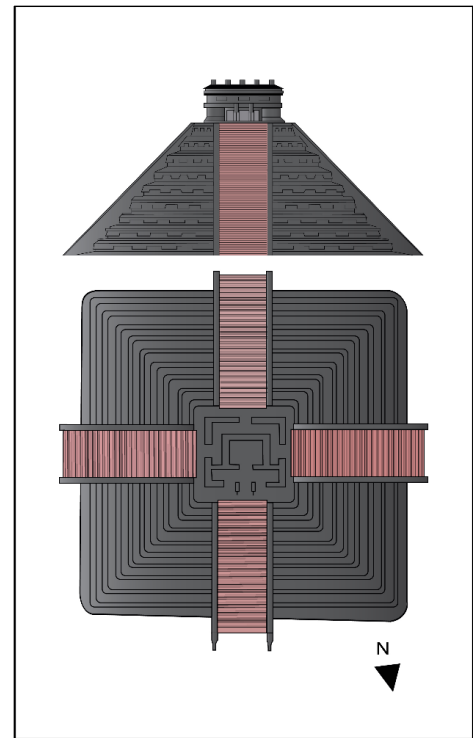
Figure 5.2   Aerial and elevation drawings of Mayapán's main pyramid (after 1250), "The Castillo" or Temple of Kukulcan as an example of a radial or four-sided pyramid with staircases on each side. Image credit: re-drawn by Pete Geraci after University of California, San Diego. ID: ARTSTOR 103_41822001440146
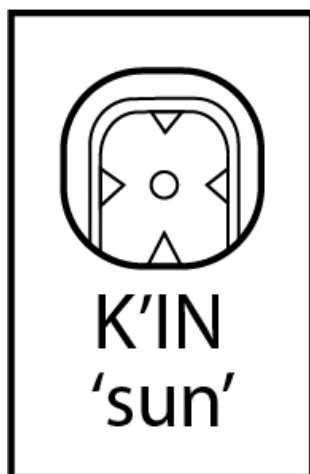
Figure 5.3   K'in sign.
Re-drawn by Pete
Geraci after Coe and M.
Van Stone 2005.

In Preclassic times, the radial pyramid was a component of E-groups and comprised the

western structure opposite three eastern structures aligned to chart the equinoxes and solstices, in

addition to marking sacred geography and solar zeniths (Aimers and Rice 2006: 87). Since that

time, radial pyramids were associated with time, celestial bodies and sacred geography. They

materialize, in a sense, "the shape of time" as has been discussed by Coggins (1980: 731;

Cohodas 1980: 208). Coggins states,

> The shape of time may . . . in one way, be conceptualized as a vertical four-point diagram
> within the ecliptic band (including a fourth point below). These points or places are:
> where the sun rises; where it reaches the top; where the sun sets; and where it reaches
> bottom. This is the equivalent of one day, which the Maya denote with the four-point Kin
> sign—a two-dimensional figure that is equal to the completion of a cycle.[70]

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[70] The steps involved in this quadrangular journey vary somewhat according to Postclassic sources, but it is known
that the sun was believed to ascend by steps or levels into the highest heaven, then to descend, and finally to trace a
similar pattern in reverse in its journey through the underworld.

In the case of radial pyramids, then, preservation of forms expressed perhaps an even deeper continuity in cosmology and provided for a visual and experiential space of social and religious stability and political legitimacy (Kowalski et al. 2002: 87-111; Kristin-Graham 2011: 429-468; Kowalski 2017: 151-162). During the Terminal and Postclassic Periods when the cult of Kukulcan became ever more important, iconography associated with that deity was added to these ancient and repeated forms. Similar iconography was also closely reproduced between both central Mexican and Maya sites (notable examples discussed in this chapter include Tula in Hidalgo, Mexico, Chichén Itzá, Mayapán, and Tulum).

Radial pyramids are only one archetype of many in the Mesoamerican world that communicate a deep desire to connect, materialize and preserve shared cosmovision. Other examples include round buildings and I-shaped ballcourts (Figure 5.4). The former will be important to this chapter as well. These structures manifested the order of the cosmos in a space controlled by the political and religious elite and sanctioned for sacred ritual experience. These structures tied a given city not only to sacred time and place, but also to other cities in which such models were constructed.

Spolia, while functioning similarly to archetypes or copies in some cases, provide for more divergent interpretations. In many cases, the original meaning attached to spolia was lost or reinterpreted entirely at Mayapán (Figure 5.5). The reuse of stones occurred in a variety of ways at Mayapán, for example, with the effect that sets of ideologies (communicated through the stones' iconography, form and style) were not transferred wholesale in every case. Certainly, in some cases, the memories attached to spolia were destroyed altogether.

A careful tracing of the choices made between copies and spolia at Mayapán is an important step in articulating how and why the patrons of that city, at a given time, decided to

use one method over the other. Such a study helps us to avoid seeing Mayapán as a hybrid

resultant from the creativity of other places. Instead, we can focus on *why* certain iconography,

form and style were chosen and why certain objects were either copied or spoliated. Such a

refocusing ultimately helps us to better define the architectural, artistic and cultural relationships

Mayapán had with Chichén Itzá, Puuc cities, and central Mexican polities.

Figure 5.4   Copán, Honduras. The sunken "I-shaped" ballcourt typical
of Classic Maya cities. Author's photograph, July 2014.
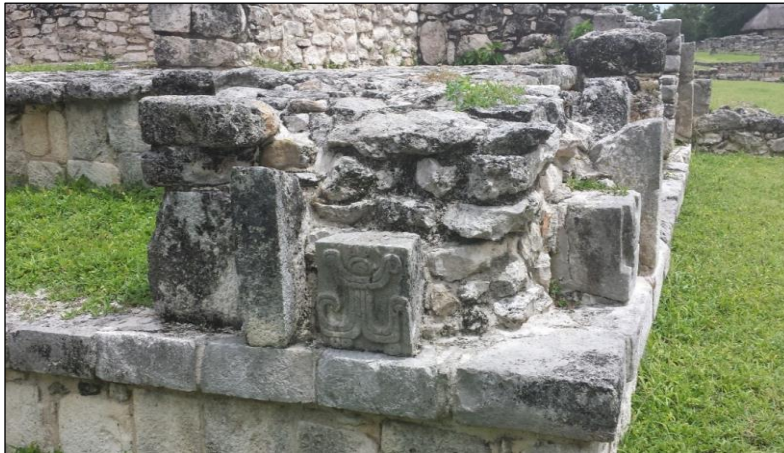
Figure 5.5   Mayapán, Mexico. A Puuc spolia (the curvilinear motif) placed on a Mayapán building. Author's photograph, July 2016.

5.2   Mayapán's Architectural Relationship with Chichén Itzá: the "Copy"

As noted in previous chapters, the relationship between Mayapán and Chichén Itzá is especially obvious in the architectural similarities between the two cities. The main pyramids at each of the sites, both designated the "Castillo" (in Colonial times), share many of the same elements as do the two round buildings or "Caracols" at each of those sites. Susan Milbrath and Carlos Peraza Lope (2009b) have argued, following Ringle and Bey (2001), that several structures in the style of Chichén Itzá's building assemblages are associated with the Cocom-Itza, a powerful lineage at Mayapán who sought to "revive" Chichén Itzá and the cult of Kukulcan at Mayapán when they came to power in A.D. 1250-1300. Structures Q 58, Q 143, Q 159, Q 162, and Q 218 at Mayapán, for example, are closely modeled on Serpent Temple assemblages also found at Chichén Itzá. Serpent temples have been described by Howard Winters (1955: 412) and Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b: 596-597) as having a pyramidal base that is terraced, a single staircase defined by balustrades and a superimposed temple positioned at

the structure's summit. Balustrades on these temples generally terminate in serpent heads and post and lintel construction on the summit temples also feature serpent iconography at their bases (Kubler 1982) (Figure 5.6).

The major serpent temples at Mayapán and Chichén Itzá are also radial pyramids. In total, four pyramids at Mayapán reflect this model (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2009b). Although an obvious reference to Chichén Itzá specifically, radial pyramids at Mayapán represent an archetypal form that was adopted throughout Mesoamerica beginning in the Preclassic. In the Yucatán peninsula, they occur at the Preclassic city of Acanceh, Classic Period Dzibilchaltún, and Postclassic El Meco. Radial structures are also present at sites including Preclassic Uaxactún and Tikal in Guatemala, and they appear in the highlands of Mexico at the Terminal Classic site of Tula. Although styles differ depending on temporal and geographical contexts, all of these structures have four staircases, one on each side, and are designed to recall the importance of cardinal directionality and space and the structure of temporal sequences (Coggins 1980; Kowalski et al. 2002: 87-111; Kristin-Graham 2011: 429-468; Kowalski 2017: 151-162; Cohodas 1980: 208; Aimers and Rice 2006: 87).

Radial pyramids at Mayapán certainly functioned to encode and therefore preserve these ancient associations. However, the very specific similarities between the radial pyramids at Mayapán and Chichén Itzá suggest that Mayapán's architects and patrons were explicitly trying to preserve aspects of Chichén Itzá's identity. Arguably, this was done as part of an effort to demonstrate Mayapán's position as a legitimate inheritor of the political power and authority long associated with Chichén Itzá (a close neighbor in the Yucatán peninsula). This is most apparent in Structure Q 162 (the Temple of Kukulcan), the radial serpent temple that encases the

earlier Q 162a. Those who commissioned the new Q 162 went to great lengths to orient the new

temple in ways similar to Chichén Itzá's. The major staircase, for example, was placed on the

north side of the temple. The terraces were also numbered to have nine levels to match those at

Figure 5.6   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The Chichén Itzá serpent heads on the Temple of Kukulcan's northern balustrades. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Chichén Itzá. See Chapter 4 for a full discussion. (Aveni et al. 2004: 130, fig. 6). The serpent

iconography that was added to Q 162 (and which is absent from Q 162a underneath) is also

similar to that of Chichén Itzá.[71] Balustrades culminating in feathered serpent heads were once

present on Q 162's north staircases. Although they are no longer in-situ, they would have

appeared similar to those still present at Chichén Itzá. Additionally, serpent columns also occur

as posts on Q 162's upper temple as they do at Chichén Itzá. Unfortunately, only the tongues of

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[71] Q 162a is not a radial temple and does not have serpent iconography, but it does have nine levels just as Q 162 does.

the columnar doorway serpents remain at Mayapán, as shown in Figure 5.7 (Aveni et al. 2004: 129).

Figure 5.7   Mayapán, Mexico. Plaster snake tongues and flooring on top of Mayapán's Temple of Kukulcan. Author's photograph, July 2016.

In their physical marking of primordial time and place, both Chichén Itzá's and Mayapán's structures ultimately functioned as "axes mundis" or "centers of the world." It was this powerful ideology, along with specific transference of iconography from Chichén Itzá to Mayapán, that was preserved. That said, Chichén Itzá's identity was not preserved exactly from that earlier site at Mayapán. Although concerted effort was made to reproduce some aspects of form and iconography, other formal and material differences between the two temples are apparent. These differences reflect the role Mayapán's landscape played in the planning of its architecture.

The most obvious differences between the temples are their sizes and proximity to other structures. Mayapán's is much shorter and located near several other important structures, including the Caracol. The Temple of Kukulcan at Chichén Itzá also has 91 stairs on each of its four sides making the total 364 stairs, a reference to the Haab or solar year (M. Miller 2012: 215-230). During the equinox, the sun casts a shadow down the northern balustrade creating the effect of an undulating serpentine form that culminates in one of the balustrade's serpent heads. At Mayapán, however, steps on the Temple of Kukulcan number closer to 260, rather than 364. This reflects greater interest in the Tzolkin, or ritual calendar, over the 365-day Haab or agricultural calendar.[72]

The alignment of both pyramids provided for the illusion of a "feathered serpent" shadow to appear on the northern balustrades during certain times of the year. Chichén Itzá's pyramid produces the famed effect during the equinoxes. Mayapán's alignment, alternatively, produces a similar effect on the winter solstice (Aveni et al. 2004: 130-131). Aveni et al. (2004: 132) argue that these changes echo a shift in the importance of the ritual calendar between the Early Postclassic and later Postclassic periods. These changes may have been spurred by the supposed reappearance of the god Kukulcan during a festival celebrated in the Yucatec town of Mani during the winter solstice.[73] These formal differences are important as they provide evidence for some of the reasons Mayapán's patrons and architects chose to recreate and re-present the radial

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[72] Aveni et al. (2004: 130 see note 24; figure 12) tallied a mean of 65.5 steps on the three remaining staircases of the Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán.

[73] According to Aveni et al. (2004: 132) Landa describes a "new fire" ceremony held in honor of Kukulcan at his temple in the town of Mani in which celebrants "placed the banners on top of the temple. . . .(Landa 1941: 158). The festival began on the sixteenth day of the month of Xul, which coincided with the winter solstice in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Kukulcan was said to come down from heaven on the last day. Mayapán's Castillo [Temple of Kukulcan] was probably constructed in the fourteenth century (Milbrath and Peraza 2003: 23). The festival calendar described by Landa applies to the period around the conquest of the Yucatán peninsula and the date of ceremonies in that calendar would presumably shift in relation to the solar events as one moves back through time, if there were no adjustment to the Postclassic Yucatec festival calendar.

pyramid. The association with Chichén Itzá surely remained; however, the major pyramid at

Mayapán was adapted for social and religious needs particular to a new city. These seemed to

have been guided by the perceived movement of the sun during the solstices at Mayapán. This

different alignment and association may also be why the pyramid at Mayapán is smaller than

Chichén Itzá's Temple of Kukulcan.

Similar things may be said for Mayapán's round building referred to as the Caracol

(shown in Chapter 3, Figure 3.8). This building also has a counterpart at Chichén Itzá. At

Chichén Itzá, the circular building is set on a rectangular basal platform with two levels (Figure

5.8). Its main, west doorway is set slightly off-center (in a counterclockwise direction) from the

base of the staircase. The structure, like that of Mayapán, has four doorways. However, the

doorways are not oriented in exactly the same manner as those at Mayapán.

Figure 5.8   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. The Caracol at Chichén Itzá. Author's
photograph, July 2016.

At Chichén Itzá, the doorways lead to an upper passage where there are four more doorways (the double set of doorways are likewise not seen at Mayapán). A solid core at Chichén Itzá is located at the center of the tower.[74] The four inner doorways give access to a passage way winding up to a small chamber that formed the interior of a second story. Small slot-like openings in the wall of this chamber open to outside and allow for the observation of astronomical phenomena.

Several scholars have noted that round buildings were related to the wind god Ehecatl, also considered to be an aspect of Quetzalcoatl who was simultaneously associated with the planet Venus (Pollock 1936: 8-18; Pugh 2001, 2003; Miller and Taube 1997: 84-85; Milbrath 1997: 117; Landa 1941: 25, note 134). In the Aztec world, it has been suggested that round buildings were associated with Quetzalcoatl's guise as the wind god because the wind could pass around the structure's curved sides "without disturbing it" (Szymanski 2010: 56; Miller and Taube 2007: 84-85; Pollock 1936: 8-18).

In his close documentation and description of the astronomical alignments of the Caracols at both Mayapán and Chichén Itzá, Aveni (2001: 273-283), mentions that both buildings served to chart the movements of Venus as the planet associated with the deity Queztalcoatl. Aveni states that traces of red and black on Chichén Itzá's Caracol's upper platform columns reference the flight of Queztalcoatl from Tula to the mythical city of Tlillan Tlapallan. Tlillan Tlapallan literally means, "the land of black and red". These colors are also directional colors in Maya cosmovision with the east associated with red and the west with black (Aveni 2001: 274; Caso 1958: 25).[75] According to Aveni (2001), the painted platform in the east

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[74] Aveni et al. (2004: 127) states that the west doorway is not lined up with the direction of the stairway of the upper platform. These outer doorways do not correspond with the cardinal directions. The three remaining windows occur on the western side of the tower.
[75] Chaak ek', in Maya refers to the morning star and means "red" or "great" star (Aveni 2001: 274).

could have served as a shrine to Queztalcoatl/Venus as the morning star and the western

stylobate to his role as the evening star.

The orientation of each of the Caracols is also important for the Venus/Queztalcoatl-

Ehecatl association. Aveni and Milbrath have both noted that the northern and southern extremes

of Venus setting can be marked through the windows of the Caracol at Chichén Itzá and that the

building was useful in determining the 584-day Venus year as is discussed on pages 24 and 46-

50 of the Maya Dresden Codex (Aveni 2001: 184-196; Milbrath 1999: 163-174). Aveni (2001)

also suggests that buildings and related structures at the Terminal Classic site of Uxmal were

oriented to chart Venus's maximum southern rise and set, as well as that planet's maximum set

in the north, south and west.[76] In addition to these astronomical associations, Aveni convincingly

argues that important sight lines could orient buildings to structures at another city. This is

visible in the intersite alignment between Uxmal and Cehtzuc. This sight line extends from the

doorway of the House of the Governor directly over the double-headed jaguar throne on its

platform and across the forest to a building at the site of Cehtzuc.[77] The alignment, according to

Aveni, also marks the "southerly extreme of Venus" (Aveni 2001: 285).

Mayapán's Caracol very closely reproduces these formal qualities which in turn allow for

similar astronomical observations.[78] The diameters of both structures are comparable for

example. Mayapán's Caracol measures 10.2 meters while Chichén's is 11 meters in diameter

(Aveni et al. 2004: 128). The Caracol at Mayapán, like that of Chichén Itzá, also sits on a

rectangular basal platform, but Mayapán's base is one level, as opposed to two. The main

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[76] See Aveni (2001: fig. 106).

[77] Aveni states that previous fieldwork by his team showed that the site was Nohpat, but that information was corrected more recently by Ivan Sprajc and the site was found to be Cehtzuc. See Aveni (2001: fig. 107).

[78] Four round buildings were once present at Mayapán reflecting a heightened interest in the cult of Ehecatl-Queztalcoatl. Smaller examples include the round shrine (H-18) of the Izmal Ch'en group, the two round altars of Q-58, and the round altar of Temple T-70 (Masson and Peraza 2014: 92). The largest example at Mayapán, Structure Q 152, is most comparable to that at Chichén Itzá.

doorway at Mayapán is located toward the west side and is skewed in a counterclockwise direction from the stairway. The platform faces northwest. Aveni et al. (2004: 135) states, "this [platform] base alignment targets sunsets on the date pair April 30, August 13. Such alignments duplicate the orientation of the axis of Window 1 in the Caracol of Chichén Itzá."

Such alignments suggest that the Caracol at Mayapán embodies many of the attributes also contained within the Caracol at Chichén Itzá, including the ability to track Venus. This reference to Chichén Itzá simultaneously focuses on the round building as a pan-Maya archetype, however. Via this archetype, the relationship to Chichén Itzá as a powerful place, and between round buildings and Venus and Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl ideology, was encoded and integrated into Mayapán's landscape. However, as with Mayapán's Temple of Kukulcan, Mayapán's Caracol differed in some ways from the version at Chichén Itzá and these differences were largely guided by Mayapán's own landscape.

Unlike the layout between Chichén Itzá's Caracol and Temple of Kukulcan, Mayapán's Caracol is notably closer to its Temple of Kukulcan (by roughly 350meters in distance). These two large structures at Mayapán could therefore have been used together, particularly in the tracking of the spring equinox as a method for dating the important "burn period," in which fields are burned in preparation for planting as Aveni et al. (2004: 135-137) suggests. The north stairway of Mayapán's Temple of Kukulcan, for example, shares an identical alignment with the doorway of the Caracol. Aveni, Milbrath and Peraza also found that during equinoxes at Mayapán, the sun disappears over the mid-point of the Temple of Kukulcan when it is viewed from the center of the west doorway of the Caracol.[79] This reinterpretation of powerful

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[79] Such use would coincide with the solar orientation of Mayapán's Temple of Kukulcan, and the slight shift that occurred in Maya religion from the Terminal to Postclassic Periods. As Susan Milbrath and Carlos Peraza have suggested, the increased importance of solar deities and solar events in the Postclassic is further corroborated by the

archetypes including the radial pyramid and round building was a way to embed Mayapán's cityscape with these ancient structures and their cosmological significance while also referencing tangible cities. However, their position within Mayapán's different landscape made the experiences of both buildings very specific to that later center, especially as those experiences related to celestial phenomena.

As Ben Marsh and Janet Jones (2014: 174) state in their chapter, "Ruins within Ruins: Site Environmental History and Landscape Biography," close reuse of building forms (as in the case of copied archetypes) function as an explicit form of preservation. While copies are not the physical reuse of a building, they do reflect, in many ways, a reuse of the same ideas that are symbolized by the original. They may serve as a place where repeated or mirrored events occur, such as rituals whose performance adheres closely to those performed in similar buildings over many generations.

Copies are in part evidence of the choices made by patrons and architects regarding the formal and iconographic qualities that are considered most important to preserve. These qualities relate to the sacred (and political) ideologies associated with certain forms. As has been seen here, those responsible for several of Mayapán's major public buildings, including the Temple of Kukulcan and Caracol, were absolutely interested in copying, and thus preserving, many elements from Chichén Itzá's urban setting while at the same time relying on formal archetypes including the radial pyramid and round building to communicate ancient, shared ideologies. In turn, these forms were firmly identified as part of an experience of Mayapán. As was discussed

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solar mural in the Sala de los Símbolos Solares (Q161), the structure that closely abuts the Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán. Described by Milbrath and Peraza, this mural in Structure Q161 depicts pairs of standard-bearers who frame a sun disk that is similar in style to central Mexican iconography. There are eight sun disks and solar companions that form the completed mural program (Milbrath and Peraza 2003: 32).

in Chapter 4, Mayapán's landscape largely dictated the placement and orientation of these buildings. The Temple of Kukulcan was placed near the Cenote Ch'en Mul and the Caracol was positioned in the eastern sector of the city as a referent to the sea and Venus.

5.3   Copies vs. Spolia in Integrative Practices

While a copy will tend to communicate a preservation of an original idea or meaning, spolia often have more variable uses, purposes and outcomes. Ben Marsh and Janet Jones (2014: 174) note, "while the individual reuse of components in a building destroys the structure, the reuse of an entire building will preserve it." This statement suggests that the idea of a copy (or a largely-preserved idea from one state to the next) functions somewhat as a preservation system, whereas spoliation (or the physical taking of a building's pieces) is a function of destruction. Surely the latter does physically destroy the original building it was from. However, there are various ways these pieces function once in their new settings.

The term *spolia* (Latin for "spoils") typically refers to objects and/or building material (usually stone) that are taken from one site and reused in a new context. In most cases, the act functions as a political statement (Bassett 2005). In some cases, spolia can preserve memory, albeit in a piecemeal fashion. However, spoliation more often occurs as an affront to memory, whether that be a total destruction or an "ownership" of one society's visual culture by another. As Maria Fabricius Hansen (2003: 23-24) has noted in her discussion of spolia in Early Christian Rome, older material can be exploited quite explicitly and reused in a fashion that does not salvage its original design or function. Stones, for example, might be used as internal fill or burned into lime plaster.[80] In other cases, some aspects of a work's style, iconography and

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[80] Jeff Kowalski has recently informed me that in some cases at Uxmal the late C-shaped "foundation brace" structures that were built after the decline of the site include reused whole or partial pieces of carved sculptural

materiality are preserved and presented in a visual fashion within the new structure. In such cases the works might be used in ways that are quite similar to their original context or they can be repurposed.

The section to follow addresses these practices at Mayapán. However, the use of spolia as political propaganda is evidenced at sites throughout time and space and it is helpful to review some external examples first. The reuse of objects and monuments in the Byzantine world is particularly notable and made explicit in the Hippodrome in Constantinople. This structure was a racing venue originally built by the emperor Septimius Severus in 203CE and renovated significantly during the reign of Constantine I from 324 to 337 CE (Yerasimos 2005). While the Hippodrome took on many functions throughout both its Byzantine and Ottoman existence, it was initially intended as a place for public chariot racing and for the collection and exhibition of monuments to those gathered there. These monuments were largely spoliated objects – artifacts taken from the ancient cultures of Egypt and Greece and used as media through which an imperialistic vision was manifested to a consuming public eye. Among the figural spolia were sculptures of pagan deities, such as Artemis and Zeus, as well as wild animals and fantastical creatures (Bassett 2005). These were erected alongside important symbolic monumental forms including Greek columns and Egyptian obelisks.

In the case of Byzantium, the concept of the state was, of course, closely aligned with the political and religious power of the imperial family. Imperial agents erected monuments in public places in order to glorify the accomplishments of the emperor as head of the Byzantine state. The

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"mosaic" pieces from the facades of later Terminal Classic buildings such as the Nunnery. In no case are the pieces arranged to form a complete image (as in the case of the Puuc-style mask panels at Mayapán) suggesting that the builders lacked respect for their original context and meaning, seeing them more as pre-cut building stone rather than symbolically significant images (although their purely functional use may have signaled the lack of respect their users had for the political order that had overseen the construction of the buildings from which they had come). Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, June 2017.

monuments of the Hippodrome therefore functioned as mnemonic devices. As artifacts or spolia

from ancient empires, a monument's main strength, at least as understood by imperial design,

was couched in its ability to reference different times and places in one visual field and re-

present those to a contemporary audience. As Amy Papalexandrou (2003: 56) has said of

spoliated building materials in Byzantine churches,

> Spoliation was an activity at once subversive and constructive: whether or not its perpetrators were conscious of it, the use of spolia cunningly enable, then as now, both the suppression and endorsement of past memories while simultaneously re-ordering them into a fresh "memory network" of altered meanings.

The taking of building materials, statuary, and other architectural spoils was not new to

the Byzantine context. This practice was well established in pagan Rome. Upon conquering

Greek territories, Romans often took statues made of bronze and other materials with the

intention of setting these objects up in the imperial Roman capital (Hannestad 1994). As

Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway (1984: 19) has noted, such plundered objects reflected the political

and militaristic dominance of Rome over Greek culture. Simultaneously, this practice established

and reinforced the belief that Romans were the "rightful" inheritors of ancient Greece.

During the decline of the Western Roman Empire, the monuments within Rome itself

became subject to spoliation, even by other Romans. Writing of the survival of Roman

antiquities in the Middle Ages, Michael Greenhalgh states that Byzantines saw the fall of the

Western Roman city as a unique opportunity for spoliation. Building materials as well as

monuments and other objects were frequently taken from the former Western capital and used in

Constantinople (Greenhalgh 1989: 145-182). By the reign of Theodosius, the practice of

spoliation had become such a socially shared exercise that the emperor had to establish edicts to

monitor it.[81] Ultimately, even the Hagia Sophia itself became a site of spoliation as it was reused

as a mosque beginning with the Ottoman make-over of Constantinople in 1453 and repurposed

as a museum in the 20th century, a function it serves to this day.

In Mesoamerica, spoliation was also a common practice. Both the Aztec and Maya

"curated" antiquities from more ancient cultures. Olmec objects seem to have been collected for

hundreds of years in the Mesoamerican past. In her article reviewing the collection of antiquities

in ancient Mesoamerica, Emily Umberger (1987: 64-65) states that re-carved Olmec jades with

Maya inscriptions are present in Classic Maya contexts and jade was also depicted in murals

from both Cacaxtla in central Mexico and at Bonampak in the Maya lowlands. Umberger has

noted that battle scenes from Cacaxtla's and Bonampak's murals depict defeated warriors

wearing Olmec pendants.[82] A small Olmec basalt sculpture was also found in a Mayapán

residence. The sculpture depicts a face and seems to have been reworked in later times. It had

two holes drilled in the back of the left ear and the eyes seemed to be drilled to allow for the

inlay of another material.[83]

The later Aztecs frequently collected both tribute objects and objects they revered from

antiquity. According to Bernardino de Sahagún in his Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950-1982:

book 11, 221-222), the Aztec were known to make regular pilgrimages to sacred sites,

particularly Teotihuacán. At the sites and along the way, they routinely collected antiquities and

brought them back to Tenochtitlán. In excavations at the Templo Mayor, archaeologist Eduardo

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[81] In an edict from 382 CE, it was stated that, "no man shall suppose that municipalities may be deprived of their own ornaments, since indeed it was not considered right by the ancients that a municipality should lose its embellishments, as though they should be transferred to the buildings of another city…" and in 365 an edict prohibits the robbing of monuments. This edict was especially directed at those "officials who, to the ruin of the obscure towns, pretend that they are adorning the metropolitan or other very splendid cities, and thus seek the material of statues, marble works, or columns that they may transfer them" (Greenhalgh 1989: 146).
[82] See also Schele and Miller (1986: 119-120, plates 31-32).
[83] See Pollock et al. (1962: figure 25d) and Weeks (2009: 562). The figure was found in Lot A-67, Structure K-52c in an altar shrine. It was approximately 6.5 x 7cm. and made of nonlocal greenstone.

Matos Moctezuma found that at least 80 percent of the offerings in the temple were of foreign

origin (Matos Moctezuma 1979, 1988: 91). These objects included several examples of finished

goods and animal remains from cities that owed tribute to the Aztec state – particularly those

from the present-day states of Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guerrero as well as areas along the Gulf

Coast (López Luján 2005: 100-101; Matos Moctezuma 1987, 1988: 88-91).

Practices of spoliation extend to the Colonial period as well. Linnea Wren, Travis

Nygard, and Kaylee Spencer (2015) discuss this phenomenon as it occurred with the reuse of

Late Classic stelae from Toniná, Chiapas in Christian-era baptismal fonts. Discussed further in

Chapter Six, Late Classic stelae depicted, and in many ways materialized, divine Maya

monarchs. In the cases of spoliated stelae analyzed by Wren and her colleagues, the figures were

cut at the waist and the bottom portion made into the bases for baptismal fonts in nearby

Ocosingo. Although these authors do not deny that such spoliation was intended as an act of

cultural domination by Christian missionaries, they also remind us that such spolia could have

served more than one purpose simultaneously. Wren et al. suggest that in Colonial Chiapas, the

Maya were particularly active in synthesizing pagan belief systems with Christianity. The

Precolumbian Maya, for example, ritually bathed children in sacred water once they reached the

age of five (Landa 1941: 104).

Baptism in the Christian fonts (with iconography that also reflected the Maya past) was

therefore possibly perceived as a positive practice by the Maya. The Maya would have

understood, because of the use of royal stelae as a base, that the water in the baptismal fonts (set

atop the stelae) held sacred or special water.[84] Therefore, rather than simply representing a

domination of Christian power over Native culture, the spoliation of Late Classic stelae likely

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[84] Importantly, it has been shown that in Late Classic belief, the Maya assigned certain prestige to lower extremities, especially the thighs (Burdick 2010: 122).

reflects a greater multiplicity of intention, effect, and outcome. As discussed by Ruth Van Dyke and Susan Alcock (2003: 3) in *Archaeologies of Memory,* the present often dictates what is remembered or forgotten and processes of remembering and recalling are always in flux.

Based on this discussion, spolia may have numerous functions and those functions can change over time. In many ways, spolia bring physical, visible references to old memories and identities, albeit in pieces, into new contexts. In this manner, their integration into new settings functions, to degree, as a type of preservation. However, this type of preservation is not as complete as that seen in a copy. This is because spolia, as pieces, and not wholes, are more vulnerable to translation, alternation and change. They are also objects that can be woven into the fabric of another building and context, a practice that in many ways, given the new iconographic and formal context, will negate their original value and meaning. At the far end of this spectrum is the destruction of the visual properties of spolia altogether. This occurs when spoliated objects are hidden from view (either plastered over or used in fill) or are destroyed completely, as occurs when they function as the plaster or mortar in building construction. The tribute objects and even venerated antiquities in the Templo Mayor serve as examples of this practice in the Mesoamerican models reviewed here. In following these wider examples, the next section looks closely at practices of spoliation within the walls of Mayapán.

5.4   Mayapán's Architectural Relationship with Puuc Sites: Spolia

While two of the arguably most important structures at Mayapán are copied from Chichén's models and formal archetypes, Mayapán's cityscape is also scattered with Puuc stones. It is important to note that while it may be impossible to say that *all* stones at Mayapán

featuring Puuc design were spoliated as opposed to being local copies of Puuc design, certainly the mass presence and multivalent uses of these stones suggest many were taken objects.

Practices of spoliation varied at Mayapán, reflecting the different purposes they served and meanings they evoked. There are three major patterns: (1) the use of spolia as a destruction of identity; (2) the use of spolia as an ownership of identity; (3) and the use of spolia, in a manner like copies, in the preservation of identity.[85] Puuc spoliation in any of these categories is most easily identified in examples of "facing stones" integrated into Mayapán architecture. These stones, a hallmark of Puuc architecture, were delicately carved and fit together over a rubble fill in Terminal Classic buildings typical of those in the Puuc hills. Many were embellished with carved relief and originally placed together to form rhythmic complex geometric and symbolic patterns, but most of the stones had smooth, plain exteriors. The precise shapes of these objects, as well as their intricate designs suggests that they required greater artistic attention than stones that were not employed in Puuc facades.

In their original use as Puuc facing stones, where their smoothness, precise fitting, and decorative patterns would have been appreciated, extra care mattered. However, at Mayapán, hundreds of these stones were used in fill or concealed under plaster (Proskouriakoff 1962: 95-96). Certainly, as all archaeological projects there have attested, Mayapán was a city that lavished attention not on stone superstructures, but on painted plaster facades and stucco

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[85] It should be noted here that such "identities" were likely orchestrated by ruling lineages who commissioned buildings in the ritual center (as well as in other ritual nodes in the city) and held performances in those spaces. It is impossible to know to what degree the greater populace accepted the religious and political ideologies encased in public iconography. However, excavations by INAH and PEMY point to the production and use of religious objects in several elite residents throughout the city and in public ritual architecture. Mayapán's effigy cult depicting both Maya and non-Maya deities modeled in clay incense burners is one example. These objects are found within public ritual architecture and in the homes of elite residents (Masson and Peraza 2014: 427-429). The stone turtle cult discussed in Chapter Six of this dissertation is another example.

sculpture. This was unlike the city's Classic and Terminal Classic predecessors whose architects

and artists concentrated more on the use of stone as a communicative medium.[86]

The use of Puuc stones with relief designs is especially interesting in the context of

unseen spolia. Taken from Puuc buildings and then deposited as rubble fill at Mayapán meant

any symbolism encoded in original patterns was not preserved. Certainly, this type of spoliation

severely destroyed any original Puuc meaning. Such spoliation does not reflect reverence for the

Puuc past as very little care was given to protecting the designs. Original meaning was also

broken when Puuc stones, used as façade stones (not covered), were still visible, but were

organized in new patterns at Mayapán (see Figures 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13). This is

particularly apparent with a set of stones in the guise of birds, scrolls and geometric motifs in the

façade of a Mayapán structure (Figures 5.9 and 5.10). Such use, although not reflecting a

complete negation of their existence and perhaps even some admiration for their skilled carving

and imagery, communicates ownership of and control over Puuc style and associated meaning.

In Figure 5.10 for example, the spolia seem to have come from different Puuc sites (or at least

different buildings at one site). While some of the stones appear pink, the scroll motif in the

center is a grey color, an indication that the stones may have come from different places. This

suggests that this pattern was not original to its primary context.

Perhaps the most famous example of the possible reuse of Puuc sculpture at Mayapán

occurs in Structure Q 151.The largest and most notable carved stones from this building include

designs of a deity with a projecting elongated upper snout or "nose" who is also commonly seen

on the façade of Puuc buildings and at Chichén Itzá (Figure 5.14).[87] Milbrath and Peraza Lope

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[86] See Proskouriakoff (1962: 95-96) and accompanying illustrations listed in Figure 5.
[87] Similar figures are present on the Las Monjas structure at Chichén Itzá, at the Kodz Pop structure from Kabah (a Puuc site) and from the North Structure at the Nunnery at Uxmal. See Kowalski (1987: fig. 137, 141, 158).

(2003: 9-10) believe the long-snouted masks on Structure Q151 are depictions of the Yucatec

Maya rain deity Chaak. They suggest that such iconography associated Q 151 with Puuc society

and culture. Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003: 9-10) note: "the arrangement of masks in the Hall

of the Chaak Masks [Structure Q 151] displays a reverence for Puuc forms, while the carved

blocks with birds and scrolls on the bench seem to be randomly placed as though the original

designs were no longer considered important."
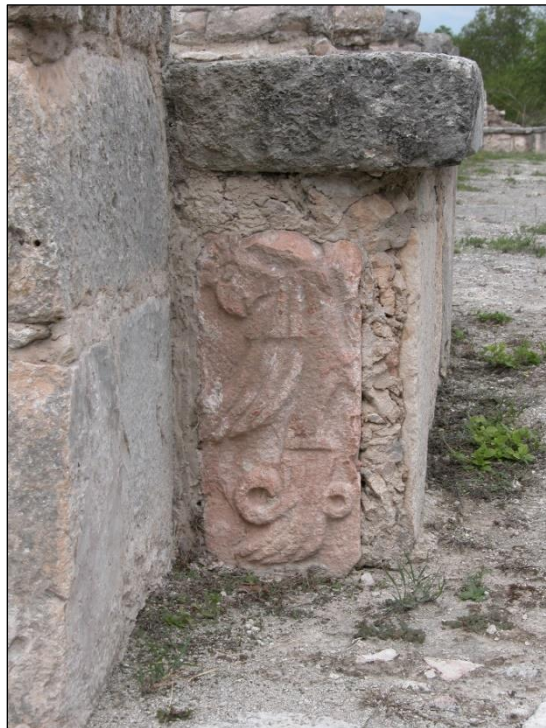
Figure 5.9   A spoliated Puuc block at
Mayapán. Author's photograph, July
2016.

Figure 5.10   Mayapán, Mexico. Re-patterned Puuc stones at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 5.11   Mayapán, Mexico. A haphazardly placed Puuc stone (with the interlace pattern) in a Mayapán building. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 5.12   Mayapán, Mexico. A wall with a Puuc stone (the "x" motif) haphazardly placed. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Figure 5.13   Mayapán, Mexico. Re-patterned Puuc stones (with the interlacing patterns) in a colonnaded hall at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.
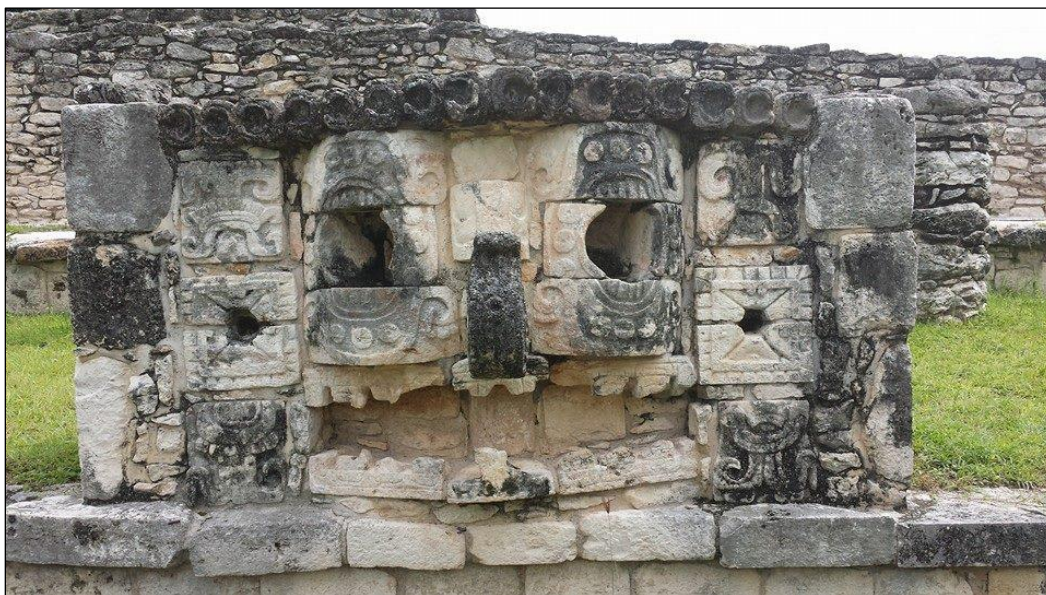
Figure 5.14   Mayapán, Mexico. A mask from Structure Q 151 at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

Interpretation of these long-nosed creatures as Chaak or "God B" has been recorded by several authors. Paul Schellhas (1904) equated God B with Queztalcoatl (because of the deity's association with serpents) and noted that Brasseur de Bourbourg (1870: 117) and Seler (1886) had earlier interpreted God B as Chaak (Taube 1992: 17). There are striking similarities between the long-nosed mask figures and God B in the Postclassic codices, including the pendulous long nose. These early discussions of "long-nosed deities" in relationship to God B were followed by later studies including that of Spinden (1913: 18), Proskouriakoff (1959: 32), Gendrop (1983; 1985a; 1985b), Pollock (1980) and Sharp (1981).[88]

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[88] Kowalski (1987: 182-202) provides an overview of mask interpretations as well as noting the continuity of mask traditions from earlier Preclassic and Late Classic traditions in the southern Maya region. Some important examples include the mask panels of Preclassic Maya architecture including the eighteen flanking the stairways of E-VII- Sub at Uaxactún and the corner masks seen on Structure 22 at Copán. See Kubler (1962: 123, 162, pl. 65) and Kowalski (1987: Fig. 155).

Although many of the scholars above equated the long-nose masks figures on Terminal and Postclassic architecture as Chaak, other interpretations for the long-nosed masks exist as well. Linda Schele and Peter Mathews (1998: 267-268) suggested that similar creatures on the corners of buildings at Uxmal were Itzam Yeh, the "magic-giving bird," an avatar of Itzamná. Other scholars including Claude-François Baudez (1999), Erik Boot (2004) and Karl Taube (2004a) have identified these figures as variants of *witzo'ob* or animate mountain figures (Figure 5.15). Their interpretations have relied on David Stuart's 1987 decipherment of the T529 Witz glyph meaning "hill" or "mountain." Based on a range of Classic Period iconography, Stuart interpreted *cauac* or *kawak* markings inside the T529 Witz sign (Figure 5.16).

These are the markings that appear as a series of dots to form an inverted triangle (this marker was discussed in Chapter Four in association with the Temple of the Niches). The dots and the curvilinear border of the glyph refer to rocky places, such as mountains and hills (Stuart 1987: fig. 27; Boot 2004: fig. 1). Kowalski (1987) has also discussed the term in reference to thunder, storm, and rain.
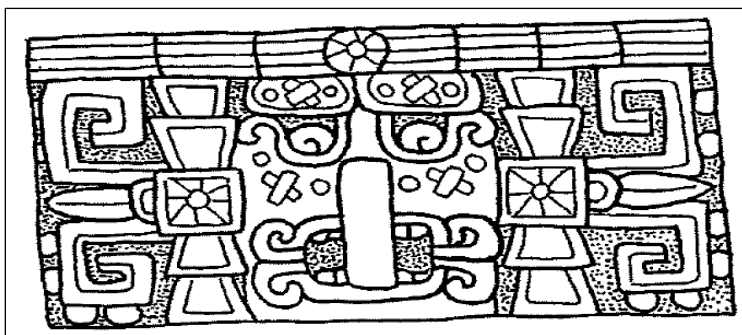
Figure 5.15   Drawing of a long-nosed witz figure from the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá. A flower symbol is seen at center in the headband. After Taube 2004a: fig. b.
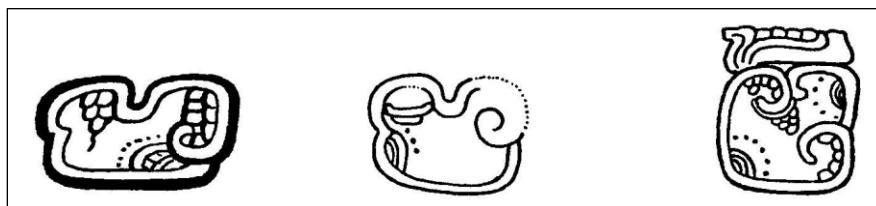
Figure 5.16   The T529 Witz Glyph. After Stuart 1987: fig. 28.

In imagery depicting the animated version of this glyph (a cauac or earth monster), similar dots appear on the creature's body, particularly around the creature's forehead and nose (Stuart 1987: fig. 27; Boot 2004: fig. 1). They also occur within the eyes as a symbol for Yaxhal[il] Witznal or "First Mountain Place" (Stuart 1987: fig. 27; Stuart 1997: fig. 5; Boot 2004: 1-2). Stuart (1997) identified these cauac creatures as corner masks on Copán's Structure 22 and Baudez (1999) extended identification of corner masks as "mascarones cauac" (cauac masks) based on his own interpretation of the glyph T 528 as cauac. Therefore, both authors, while focused on different glyphs in relationship to the corner masks, identified the masks based on the dotted cauac symbols. Boot (2004) expanded on Stuart's (1987) interpretation in his discussion of the witz hill or mountain symbol apparent in ceramics (also showing cauac dots) and Taube (2004a) identified similar iconography in the long-nosed deity masks he refers to as animations of "flower mountain."[89]

In her dissertation discussing Puuc architecture and the Kodz Pop at Kabah, specifically, Meghan Rubenstein (2015) argues that the masks of the Kodz Pop functioned to enliven the building. Following arguments above by Boot and Stuart, Rubenstein suggests that the building was animated by stone via the repetition of masks on its west façade. This is especially the case

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[89] Taube (2004a: 85-86) noticed the presence of flower motifs on the headbands of some masks as well as breath motifs near the creatures' mouths.

with masks occurring on the corners of this façade. In these cases, the masks conceal the shape or structure of the building and instead offer their own faces as symbols of repeated animation (Rubenstein 2015: 204). Rubenstein also believes that small concavities in some of the noses or snouts of the masks (which she suggests are witz creatures) could have been used for the burning of copal. She likens these to *candeleros,* objects that are used by the contemporary Maya of the Yucatán to burn copal. With the building smoking, the Kodz Pop could have been understood to "breathe."

Alternative interpretations of Puuc masks are given by Kowalski (1987: 182-202) and more recently in personal conversation. Noting the longevity of the use of masks in Maya building iconography, Kowalski (1987) has traced several similarities between mask panels at Uxmal, other Puuc sites (for example, Kabah) and Chichén Itzá. Kowalski (1987) suggested that panel masks at Uxmal could reference the rain deity Chaak particularly given the elongated snouts of these figures (Figure 5.17). Kowalski suggested these snouts are like those of Chaak or God B as depicted in Maya codices including the Madrid and Dresden (Kowalski 1987: figs. 152,159,161). Pages 36c, 39b, 67a and 74 of the Codex Dresden depict God B taking part in rain-making rituals wherein the figure pours water out of a vessel. Similar scenes are depicted on pages 9b, 13a, and 14b of the Madrid Codex.

Figure 5.17   Uxmal, Mexico. A long snouted
mask figure on the Temple of the Magician at
Uxmal. Photograph Courtesy of Virginia E. Miller.

Particularly important for the interpretations in this dissertation, are Kowalski's (1987:

201) discussions regarding relationships between the word cauac and the root word for Chaak.[90]

As Kowalski has suggested, the term "cauac", with its reference to rocky environments, rain and

fertility is linguistically related to the name for the present-day Tzotzil Maya rain deity, known

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[90] See J.E.S. Thompson (1960: 87) for an interpretation of the word cauac. Linda Schele (1974: 40, 50-53) has also reviewed the similarities between the cauac mask on the back of Stela B at and the mask located just under the figure of the Late Classic Period ruler Pakal in the tablet of the Temple of the Foliated Cross at Palenque. Vegetation sprouts from the masks on the Palenque tablet, associating this cauac creature with fertility and vegetation— concepts that can be applied to other cauac markings from other sites and also concepts that were related to the roles of rulership (since Pakal stands atop the cauac-marked creature). See also Kowalski (1987: 200).

as *Chauc*. This deity is associated with thunder, lightning and the thunderbolt and is also the

name given to the nineteenth day in the Yucatec 260-day ritual calendar. Thompson (1970: 251-

262, 267-270) further suggests an association between the contemporary Chauc deity and the

pre-conquest Chaak deities of the Yucatán peninsula. He suggested that both control rain,

thunder, lighting and are associated with serpents.

As of the writing of this dissertation, Kowalski has noted that the masks might have had

more multivalent uses for ancient viewers, although he believes the recent discussion of the

masks as witz creatures associated with rocky environments is convincing. According to

Kowalski (1987: 201),

> The natural domains, powers, and associations of Chaaks and Chaak'ob may be the more
> personified and active agents of rainmaking and distribution—while living within and
> drawing the rain from the subterranean sources found within the earth and mountains—
> embodied in the form of the Witz. The distinction could be compared to that of *Tlaltechtli*
> (Witz) and the Tlaloc (Rain/Lighting) in central Mexico. Tlalocs were likewise associated
> with mountains and caves, which were their abode and source of water with which they
> filled their pots to distribute the rains from above.[91]

The relationship between rocky environments (referenced through the term "cauac"),

water and the deity Chaak is also apparent in archaeological evidence. J.E.S. Thompson (1970:

267, 269, 273), in *Maya History and Religion*, states that gods of rain, wind and thunder were

thought to come from caves in ancient times. Effigies of the rain deity Chaak have been

recovered from a variety of cave/cenote contexts. La Pailita Cave in the central Petén of

Guatemala provides an early example. This Chaak effigy sat on a modeled throne and held an

axe to is chest (Graham 1997). Contemporary Maya throughout the region of the Yucatán

peninsula and the Petén still perform rituals in relation to these spirits (Bassie-Sweet 1991: 79;

Thompson 1950: 175; 1970: 268). The deity seems to have been particularly important at

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[91] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, December 2017.

Mayapán. In their report on effigy censers from rituals contexts throughout the city, Milbrath and

Peraza Lope (2007: 5) show that Chaak was one of the most common figures depicted.

In summary, Chaak functioned as an important pre-conquest deity in the Yucatán

peninsula. He was a major deity associated with caves, cenotes and watery abodes and was

ultimately responsible for bringing rain. Cauac signs in Classic times marked his abode as a

place of water and fertility. These markings associated architectural masks from the Classic

Period (such as that on Structure 22 at Cobá) with the powers of water, lightning, thunder, and

ultimately life. The masks marked the temples they were placed on as animated powerful

mountain/cave/earth abodes, abodes.

In later Terminal and Postclassic times, masks were not necessarily marked with cauac

signs but still maintained an association with watery environments, such as caves, karst and

cenotes. Following earlier interpretations by Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b: 583, 598), I

believe the masks on Structure Q 151 depict the rain deity Chaak. It is especially fitting that this

deity would be located in the eastern sector of the site. The masks also face the rectangular plaza

that likely flooded. Because the masks are positioned as such, they are also very near the major

cenote Ch'en Mul. Milbrath and Peraza Lope have specifically suggested that the masks reflect

rituals led by Xiu priests in the worship of the rain deity Chaak. They state that the masks were

likely taken from the Kodz Pop at Kabah (a point that counters Rubenstein's interpretation of the

masks there as she does not see them as Chaak). Milbrath and Peraza Lope see the masks as a

stylistic *revival* of Puuc culture. They note that Puuc style architecture at Mayapán reflects the

patronage of the Xiu family, a lineage which, according to Colonial period sources, had ties to

Puuc cities and claimed to have founded Uxmal.[92]

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[92] The terms "survival" and "revival" are used by Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b: 581). "Survival" refers to the
presence at Mayapán of certain forms, symbolism, and objects from earlier traditions. "Revival", as I interpret their

Although opinions differ regarding the accuracy of these accounts, the stories do indicate that the Xiu claimed such antiquity and ties to the Puuc region, giving the Xiu a reason to use recognizable Puuc-style mask panels. Milbrath and Peraza believe that the incorporation of different architectural elements later in Mayapán's tenure, including radial pyramids and serpent iconography, alternatively reflects the presence of rival lineage groups.

As was briefly discussed in the literature review, Landa (1941) records the presence of two major lineage groups at Mayapán. These were the Xiu and the Cocom. It is important to note here that Landa's chief informants were Maya men from each of these lineages. Gaspar Antonio Chi was of the Xiu lineage and Juan Nachi Cocom was a Cocom. Therefore, their divergent familial ties very likely influenced the information they provided to Landa about politics in the city. In any case, according to the accounts given, Landa (1941) recorded that both the Xiu and the Cocom lived together in relative peace for much of Mayapán's tenure. However, toward the end of the 14th century, according to Landa's (1941) records, the Cocom grew increasingly powerful and invested in central Mexican trade. They began to provide increasing political and economic opportunities to foreign merchants at that point (Landa, 1941: 36-37). Incensed by these actions, the Xiu purportedly revolted against their Cocom overlords, assassinating many heads of families and destroying architecture associated with the Cocom-Itza (Shook 1954a: 257).

Following these 16th century accounts, and archaeological evidence at Mayapán, Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b) believe that trade goods as well as central Mexican style and iconography at Mayapán, including radial pyramids and feathered serpent iconography, reflect the presence of the Cocom. They propose that the Puuc-style architecture (including Structure Q

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use of the term, suggests the deliberate revitalization of these forms, symbols and objects along with their associated political and religious ideologies.

151 with its Chaak masks), alternatively, is evidence of Xiu patronage. Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b) use the term "revival" to refer to the presence of these styles and different iconographic sets. For Milbrath and Peraza Lope, the radial pyramids and serpent iconography, for example, are revivals of Chichén Itzá's style whereas Chaak masks and Puuc stones are revivals of Terminal Classic Puuc culture.

I agree with Milbrath and Peraza Lope that the masks on Structure Q 151 represent Chaak, particularly given their positioning at the site. However, I believe it is also important to recognize how, in many cases, that reuse at Mayapán was very multifaceted and may not always have been intended as a cultural revival. It seems that in the case of Chichén, for example, architectural forms and iconography are more often copied at Mayapán, than they are spoliated. As previously discussed, there are very close copies of Chichén Itzá's Caracol and Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán. The temples dedicated to Kukulcan carry the most explicit similarities and a brief review of those structures is helpful here.

Both pyramids, for example, are radial structures with staircases on each of their four sides and both pyramids originally had nine levels with upper temples. These upper temples each featured feathered serpent posts that faced north. The temples' north-facing balustrades also had feathered serpent heads at their bases. Such attention to detail suggests that Mayapán's temple was built to be a clear referent to the earlier building at Chichén Itzá. Considering these strict similarities, the Temple of Kukulcan at Mayapán certainly encodes references to Chichén Itzá as a major site of Kukulcan's cult even as the Postclassic temple was built in response to Mayapán's own landscape (as concluded in Chapter 4). At the same time, the Temple of Kukulcan (and the Caracol) were pan-Mesoamerican archetypes that re-presented ancient cosmological beliefs about the order of place and time. In each of these cases, the copied or re-

presented architectural forms functioned to reference the memory of Chichén Itzá as a powerful place while also preserving more ancient religious ideologies. The same level of conservation, however, was not practiced in relationship to Puuc forms, building materials, and iconography. Puuc reuse was simply more variable than the reuse of forms or iconography associated with Chichén Itzá. The following discussion reviews these intricacies.

In returning to Milbrath and Peraza Lope's (2009b) discussion of revival styles at Mayapán, the Chaak masks in Q 151 are interpreted as examples of Puuc revival. Specifically, those authors suggest they were taken from the Kodz Pop, a structure at the Puuc site of Kabah. While similarities are certainly apparent, I do not agree that the masks are spolia from the Kodz Pop, but rather a Mayapán rendition based strongly after Kabah, but also models from other sites. To begin, there are important and undeniable similarities between the masks at Mayapán and the Kodz Pop at Kabah (Figure 5.18). The masks are roughly the same size and vary by only centimeters in their dimensions. They share the typical upturned snout of Chaak, eyes are roughly the same size and mouths are similar. However, the masks at Mayapán and Kabah are not exactly identical. First, the stone used to create the masks at Mayapán is courser and grayer in color than that at Kabah. This suggests that the stone was quarried at Mayapán rather than taken from the distant Puuc site (although this can only be confirmed with future geological studies of the rock). Imagery of vegetation motifs around the earspools of the masks at Mayapán seemed to have been "flipped" in comparison with the Kodz Pop examples. Furthermore, while the masks at Mayapán have striated eyes (at least this is seen in the remaining example), those at Kabah do not.
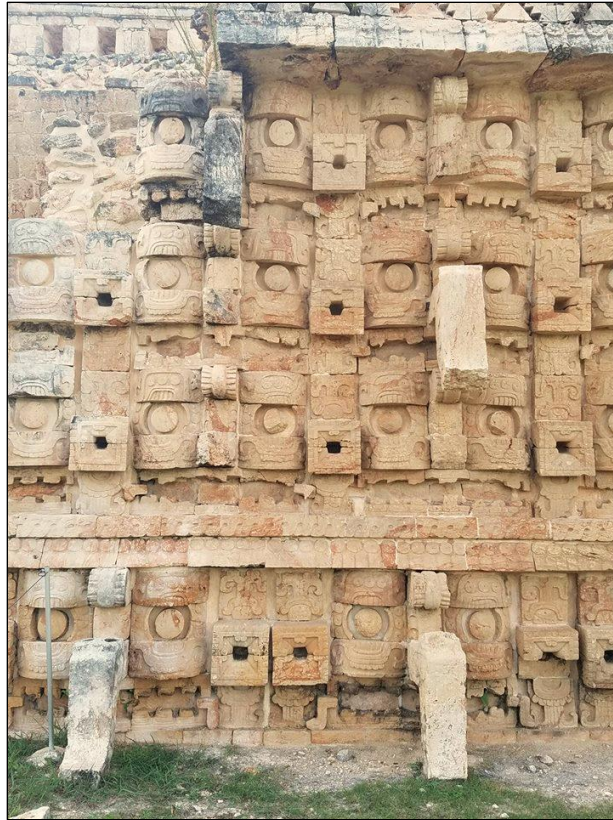
Figure 5.18   Kabah, Mexico. The Kodz Pop at Kabah featuring masks similar to those found in Structure 151 at Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2016.

In deviating in these ways from the Kabah masks, those at Mayapán resemble examples from other places. Most notable are the crescent shapes used in the headbands of the Mayapán examples. Some masks on the Kodz Pop at Kabah wear headbands, but these seem more in the fashion of rosette designs than crescents (Figure 5.19). Furthermore, the majority of masks on the Kodz Pop do not wear headbands at all. It could be that the crescent designs worn by Mayapán's masks were copied from those on the Kodz Pop. However, they are also quite similar to those worn by masks in the Las Monjas structure at Chichén Itzá (Figure 5.20).

Figure 5.19   Kodz Pop, Kabah. Masks with rosette headbands. Photograph courtesy of Susan Milbrath.

Figure 5.20   Las Monjas, Chichén Itzá. Masks with crescent designs. Photograph courtesy of Wesley J. Petty.

Additionally, these designs are similar to those depicted on a large circular shield shown in the frieze from the façade of the Castillo-sub at Chichén Itzá (Ringle and Bey 2009: figs. 11d, 11e) and also recall crescent designs seen on shields from the exterior frieze of the Temple of the Jaguars in Figure 5.21. Lastly, these crescent shapes are also a common architectural element at Uxmal where they occur in lines across the upper portions of façades such as that seen in the House of Birds structure there (Figure 5.22).

Considering that the masks at Mayapán do not exactly replicate those on the Kodz Pop at Kabah, and maintain similarities with other places, I argue that they are not spolia from the Kodz Pop.[93] Rather, it seems more likely that they are close *reinterpretations* of those masks that also make reference to other times and places. This would align with Mayapán's overall artistic program which relied heavily on integrating elements from multiple sites. Such reuse and reinterpretation of motifs and forms from various ancestral cities would have been typical of Mayapán's practice of artistic integration. These tactics would have allowed the buildings' patrons to maintain ideological connections with places that were once politically powerful while also maintaining the important religious and ideological associations that Chaak personified.

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[93] Mayapán's are made of a coarser material, are grey in color and share attributes with masks at other sites.

Figure 5.21   Chichén Itzá, Mexico. Carved shield motifs on the Upper Temple of the Jaguars, Chichén Itzá. Author's photograph, May 2018.

Figure 5.22   Uxmal, Mexico. Crescent imagery on the façade of the crown moldings of buildings at Uxmal. Author's photograph, December 2016.

Set to overlook the flooded plaza in front of Structure Q 151 and the largest cenote in Quadrant Q, the Chaak masks, together with their stylistic and iconographic referents to powerful places (and more than one place), became iconic elements of Mayapán's landscape. In this way, they were not simply a revival of Puuc culture at Mayapán, but an example of integrative practice wherein multiple referents were contained and communicated.

There are other examples of objects that could reference Puuc culture; however, I do not believe these function as strict revivals either. Proskouriakoff (1962: 87-164) recorded dozens of examples of stones with Puuc designs used in rubble fill and covered by plaster at Mayapán. Proskouriakoff believed that stones with Puuc designs were carved at Mayapán rather than being spolia. She made that suggestion based on the "cruder" type of stone used and also because they were "carved rudely" in her opinion. Proskouriakoff's hypothesis needs to be revisited, however. In this dissertation, I suggest instead that stones with Puuc design used in rubble fill or re-patterned and used as façade stones were spolia taken from Puuc sites rather than being Mayapán copies of Puuc design. I suggest this for the following reasons.

First, in the case of the rubble fill stones, it would not make sense for Mayapán's architects to decorate hundreds of small stones only to destroy them in fill, where they would also be unseen. These stones must have been taken from an earlier Puuc-style building nearby or from the Puuc hills. Similarly, the re-patterning of Puuc designs on façades at Mayapán, as is the case with the bird and scroll motifs discussed earlier, suggests that the builders found these stones already made and then used them as they saw fit. Puuc patterns from Terminal Classic sites follow specific rules and there is little variation or room for divergence from these regulated patterns. Repositioning motifs and symbols in ways that deviate from more conservative patterning is simply not seen at Puuc sites. It therefore seems odd that an architect or artist would

go through the trouble of closely copying Puuc motifs only to re-pattern those motifs in ways that diverged from original Puuc syntax.

These practices of spoliation at Mayapán are therefore not a revival or a preservation of Puuc iconography, style or culture. This point is reinforced by the fact that in considering buildings as a whole, there simply are no structures in the ritual center of Mayapán that closely copy or "preserve" the memory of any specific Puuc building. There are buildings with elements that evidence Puuc style and iconography (the Chaak masks), and buildings with Puuc spolia in them at Mayapán, but the buildings themselves are not clear copies of city-specific Puuc models (as are the Temple of Kukulcan or Caracol).

5.5   Reading Reuse as Integrative Practice

Although this chapter has focused more directly on relationships between Mayapán, the Puuc, and Chichén Itzá, the complexities of these relationships show that Mayapán was not a simple cross of these places. A return to Dean and Leibsohn's (2003) discussion regarding hybridity is helpful here. Thinking of culture, art and urban places as hybrid products denies choice to patrons, artists, and architects. Thinking in terms of hybridity assumes that the new is somehow only the result of more dominant and homogeneous structures that existed before. Certainly, this cannot be true of Mayapán for a variety of reasons. First, neither Chichén Itzá nor Puuc cities were homogeneous units. Chichén Itzá, for example, was itself affected by cultural interactions between the Maya region, Gulf Coast and central Mexico. Additionally, Puuc cities were never entirely unified, but rather existed as cities, ranging in size, with varying degree of sociopolitical and religious hierarchies. This created situations where Puuc society might differ in a variety of ways between one city and the next. These differences included variances in

structure types (for example the presence or lack of ballcourts), and the quality and quantity of architectural sculpture. There were also explicit size differences between Puuc sites. Uxmal, for example, was far larger than other Puuc sites and has iconography reflecting the feathered serpent cult and imagery that was similar to that at Tula in Hidalgo, Mexico.[94]

Second, as proven in this chapter, Mayapán's patrons and creative agents were specific in their choices to copy or spoliate from Chichén Itzá and Puuc contexts. These choices were often dictated or at least influenced by the sacred environment on which Mayapán was built. These choices were also influenced by sociopolitical contexts specific to the Postclassic. Because of these reasons, the reproduction of building types and iconographic imagery from Chichén Itzá and Puuc cities at Mayapán was different. In the case of many Puuc examples, these may not be revivals of Puuc culture, but rather a negation. There are some key reasons as to why memory of these places was used differently at Mayapán. These are related to important economic, religious and sociopolitical differences between Chichén Itzá and the Puuc cities. First, for at least some period Chichén Itzá was the uncontested centralized political, economic and military power during the Terminal Classic period, when its leaders maintained ties with cities along the Gulf Coast and in central Mexico. Although it apparently overlapped in time with Uxmal and other Puuc sites during the Terminal Classic period, by sometime around the mid-tenth century no other city in the Maya region rivaled Chichén Itzá's power in the Yucatán peninsula during its later tenure. Stylistically and formally its buildings also differed drastically from those elsewhere in the peninsula, although they were closely associated with examples much further northwest,

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[94] Jeff Kowalski, personal communication, December 2017.

particularly those of Tula. Chichén Itzá's urban identity (and its political, religious and economic identities), was therefore more international than that of Puuc cities.[95]

Evidence for Chichén Itzá's internationalism is apparent in the exotic trade goods found as offerings in the Sacred Cenote or otherwise excavated there and is clearly articulated in its architecture and art (Schmidt 2007; Kowalski 2011; Bey and Ringle 2011; Kristan-Graham 2011). After the fall of Chichén Itzá, the Yucatecan Maya world did not cease to be interested in ties with the Gulf Coast and Central Mexico. Rather, the contrary was true. Trade with these places is apparent in the archaeological record at Mayapán (Masson and Freidel 2013: 201-228; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Moreover, Kukulcan iconography became a pronounced feature of Mayapán's urban center and the cult continued to be important even after Mayapán's fall. It is seen, for example, at later sites including Tulum and El Meco in the modern state of Quintana Roo.

Compared to Chichén Itzá, Puuc cities demonstrated fewer ties to increasingly powerful cities in central Mexico. In the Puuc region there was a host of larger cities, making any visual reference to Puuc architectural forms more a borrowing of widely shared style, symbolism, and cosmology rather than a revival of building types associated with one important place. Therefore, for example, there is no singular reference at Mayapán to a complete site-specific Puuc model. Certainly, the Kodz Pop is not closely replicated at Mayapán. As discussed in the previous section, the masks of Kabah's Kodz Pop are not identical to those at Mayapán. Iconography, while similar, is not exactly the same and the Kodz Pop masks are positioned on the west-facing façade of that building, while Mayapán's are oriented to the south. At Kabah, the façade is

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[95] Some non-classic and/or "foreign" traits occur in Puuc architectural and sculptural iconography, including feathered serpent imagery at Uxmal, for example. However, Chichén Itzá's urban center more overtly expresses its ties with central Mexico given the greater ubiquity of radial pyramid structures, feathered serpent iconography, and colonnaded halls.

covered with numerous masks placed in positions where they articulate with one another. Such articulation is so pervasive in the building that masks share ear adornments on both left and right sides (i.e. the left ear adornments of one mask form the right adornments of the next mask). The masks are also stacked vertically in addition to being placed on horizontal planes at Kabah.

Even if one could argue that the correspondences of style and specific rendering of key motifs on the Mayapán masks were motivated by an actual awareness of the Kabah Kodz Pop masks as models, the commonalities between important buildings at Mayapán and Chichén Itzá were far more formal and exact. Puuc reference, even when seen in something that could be considered a "copy" as in the Q 151 masks, is simply more variable (meaning the entire building of the Kodz Pop was not copied at Mayapán, even if the masks are similar). Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the vast majority of reused Puuc stones at Mayapán were either used in fill, plastered over, or were repositioned. Likely, such reuse does not reflect the work of Xiu patrons. This is because these types of spolia point to a control of and ownership over original meaning or, an ignorance of and lack of interest in such meaning altogether. Such reuse does not seem to be a revival or survival of Puuc artistic or cultural tradition. Alternatively, it seems that the major building styles, forms and iconography associated with Chichén Itzá were maintained at Mayapán at least until the city's demise.

There is an important nuance to consider at this point, however. As Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2009b) have found, much of the architecture and art related to Chichén Itzá and central Mexico was deliberately ruined close to the city's fall. Such iconoclasm included the toppling of shrines and serpent sculptures as well as the covering over and destruction of art that did not reflect typically Maya aesthetics or symbolism (Shook 1954: 257; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2009b: 602). However, it is notable that while the defacement of objects *already at* Mayapán

seemed appropriate, there is less evidence to suggest outright spoliation from Chichén Itzá was practiced, therefore leaving the identity of that city, and its affiliation with the cult of Kukulcan, intact. Viewed in this manner, iconoclasm seems to have been a way for a given group to visually "conquer" another group at Mayapán rather than functioning as a technique for deliberately severing Mayapán's identity with Chichén Itzá, the feathered serpent cult, or sociopolitical and economic ties with central Mexico.

What is clear, based on the iconographic and formal discussions presented in this chapter, is that reuse at Mayapán was complex. The different ways objects were copied or spoliated is evidence of the choices made by Mayapán's leaders. Mayapán's people did not simply inherit forms, style and iconography (and associated ideologies) from Chichén Itzá or the Puuc region, but rather picked from elements available to them from these cities, as well as from more ancient contexts. The iconography and architectural forms that are tied together in Mayapán's landscape, therefore do not reflect a hybrid city. Rather, they point to the agency rendered by the city's leaders and show the dynamism of Postclassic life.

In tracing this dynamism, the following chapter turns from an emphasis on large-scale art and architecture and focuses instead on works produced for more intimate contexts. The chapter also looks closely at materiality as a major communicator of meaning. In doing so, Chapter 6 focuses on sculpture produced for the Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex (SSTC). This complex was one of the most important religious traditions of the Postclassic Period in the Yucatán peninsula and was arguably centered at Mayapán. As such, it became a major focal point for religious life among elite members of Postclassic society and was intimately tied to the landscape and sociopolitical atmosphere of Mayapán.

6   THE SACRIFICIAL STONE TURTLE COMPLEX OF POSTCLASSIC MAYAPÁN

6.1   Sacred Time, Sacred Rituals, and Stone Turtles at Mayapán

Stone was an important artistic and architectural medium for all ancient Maya cities and held important religious and political meaning as a material. These sentiments were especially true for Mayapán. As discussed in Chapter Four, the karst stone upon which Mayapán was built provided the city with water sources and supported long-held cosmological and sociopolitical belief systems. It is no surprise then that one of the most important religious cults at Mayapán, the Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex, was centered around sculpture made of stone. Combined with the important cosmological beliefs attached to turtle symbolism, the stone sculpture used for this cult was imbued with life-sustaining powers.

It has been argued that in Classic as well as Postclassic Maya belief systems, the turtle was a creature strongly associated with primordial time and place. As Taube (1988: 186) discusses, turtles were associated with Pawatun or sky bearer deities (Pawatuns known also as "God N" can be seen wearing a turtle carapace in the Postclassic Maya codices). The Pawatuns, in their role as sky bearers, were strongly associated with quadripartite space. By extension, Taube argues that the earth itself was likely understood as a rounded turtle carapace. He suggests that this concept may be what is pictured on Classic Period pottery in association with the Maya Maize God (Taube 1988: fig. 8). In Figure 6.1, a being (likely the tonsured Maize God) rises from a split in the cracked carapace of a turtle. Taube believes that such imagery reflects the epic story described in the 18th century Popol Vuh. It is very probable that protagonists from this story were depicted on the Late Classic "Resurrection Plate". In the scene, two figures flank what appears to be a maize god.

Figure 6.1   Rebirth of the Maize God. Drawing of the "Resurrection Plate." After D. Freidel, L. Schele, and J. Parker. 1993. fig. 825b.

According to the Popol Vuh, the maize god was a great sustainer of life and world order. He was resurrected by the Hero Twins, likely the figures depicted on either side of the central figure on the Resurrection Plate. Based on these accounts, the turtle is associated with the world's surface. Mark Zender (2008) has also noted the turtle's role as a symbol for the earth in his discussion of the etymology of words *Ahk* and *Mahk* (both terms associated with turtles in Classic Maya script). Zender also notes that turtle shells are diagnostic features of God N, a major earth deity. In Karen Bassie-Sweet's (2002) Mesoweb article reviewing Maya Creator Gods, turtles in the Maya Dresden Codex are also associated with God N as an aged earth deity. Bassie-Sweet argues that these conflations between God N and turtles are also apparent in Classic glyphs. She explains that God N is recognized by his netted headdress and elongated,

aged nose and is oftentimes accompanied by syllabic glyphs for turtle. For example, on Copán

Stela C "God N Yellow Turtle" is partially composed of an aged God N face followed by the

syllable for turtle or "ak."[96]

Other accounts, however, do not directly (or perhaps exclusively) associate the earth's

surface with a turtle's carapace, but rather with celestial phenomena. As David Freidel, Linda

Schele, and Joy Parker (1993: 80-82) discuss, and as Susan Milbrath (1999) has recently shown,

there is much evidence to suggest that the ancient Maya associated turtles with constellations and

other heavenly bodies. The modern Yucatec Maya of Chan Kom recognize Gemini as a turtle as

do the Lacandón (Milbrath 1999: 40; Redfield and Rojas 1962: 206; Baer and Baer n.d.). Landa

(1941: 132-133) recorded that a major constellation in the Maya calendar was *ac ek* (turtle star)

and either was Gemini or Orion. The latter description is according to a Maya informant per

Thompson (1960: 111-116). Alternatively, the Tzotzil of Zinacantán identify a turtle

constellation *Vuku-pat* that is made up of stars from Ursa Major, Boots, and Leo (Milbrath 1999:

38; Vogt 1997: 112).

Associations between turtles, and celestial and terrestrial places extended to Classic and

Postclassic Maya as well. A Late Classic pendant of a turtle excavated from the Mundo Perdido

group at the site of Tikal is clearly engraved with a *Lamat* symbol (Carlson 1983). This was the

symbol for the Great Star or Venus. In its relationship to the Great Star, turtles seemed to have

been associated with sacrifice particularly as the Great Star, in Mesoamerican thought, was often

understood as a male warrior. John B. Carlson (1983) argues that the Lamat symbol, particularly

when married with turtle iconography, reflected the turtle war shield and cults of sacrifice and

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[96] Bassie-Sweet, Karen. 2002. "Maya Creator Gods." *Mesoweb Articles* 1-60.
    http://www.mesoweb.com/features/bassie/CreatorGods/CreatorGods.pdf

warfare associated with Venus. The Postclassic Mural I from Tulum, depicts God N emerging

from a turtle carapace while situated below a zoomorphic elliptical band suggesting that deity's

relationship with celestial bodies (Milbrath 1999: fig. 3.3b). Additionally, celestial cords suspend

a turtle depicted on page 71a of the Postclassic Maya Madrid Codex (Figure 6.2). These cords

are attached to sun signs that are in turn connected to an ecliptic sky band. The turtle in the

image carries markers for the three hearthstones of creation, set in place at the time of creation in

ancient Maya belief (Freidel et al. 1993: fig. 2.16).
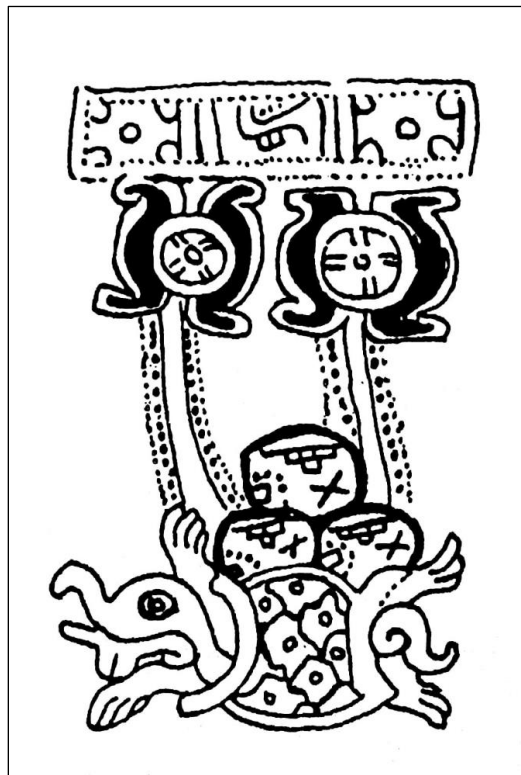
Figure 6.2   Page 71a from the
Postclassic Maya Madrid Codex. This
depicts a turtle carrying three
hearthstones on his back. After D.
Freidel, L. Schele, and J. Parker 1993.

In both the *turtle as earth* and *turtle as celestial marker* interpretations, turtles are associated with creation and fertility. In these roles, turtles were particularly important at Mayapán and represent the most frequently depicted animal in the city. The limestone turtle depicted in Figure 4.28 represents one example of the dozens recovered in excavations there (others include those pictured in figures 6.3 and 6.6 and very likely those shown in 6.4 and 6.5).

Figure 6.3   Mayapán, Mexico. Stone Turtle. 2003 INAH excavations at Mayapán. Photograph courtesy of Susan Milbrath, 2013.

Figure 6.4   Anthropomorphic stone turtle. Located at the museum at Dzibilchaltún. Provenance not provided by the museum. It is in the style of many turtles from Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2014.

Figure 6.5   Anthropomorphic stone turtle. Located at the Mundo Maya Museum in Merida. Provenance not provided by the museum. It is in the style of many turtles from Mayapán. Author's photograph, July 2014.
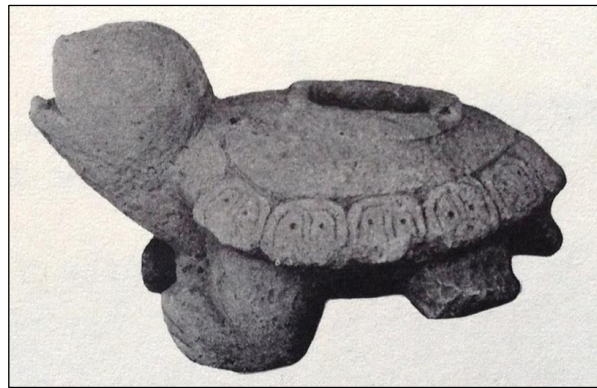
Figure 6.6   Mayapán, Mexico. A zoomorphic stone turtle from Mayapán. This turtle has Ahau day glyphs that ring its carapace. After H.E.D. Pollock, R. Roys, T. Proskouriakoff, and A.L. Smith. 1962.

The turtle in Figure 4.28 measures 41 cm in length, 35 cm in width and is 11 cm tall. The left view depicts the top of its roughly naturalistic turtle carapace; however, on the underside or plastron (seen right) an incised drawing of concentric rectangles with a ring extending from one side is depicted. Even without considering the curious design on the plastron (a motif noted in earlier sections), the turtle is clearly not entirely zoomorphic. Protruding from the open maw of the animal is an anthropomorphic head identified by Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1962: 331) as God D or Itzamná, an aged creator deity and alternatively by Karl Taube (1988: 186) as God N or Pawatun, a four-fold being responsible for holding up the celestial sphere.[97] While this turtle appears solid, it is not. A concavity exists within the carapace and was capped by the circular stone at its center. Inside were two obsidian blades and fragments of sting-ray spines (Shook and Irving 2009: 263).

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[97] I argue that the heads depict Pawatuns rather than Itzamná. These arguments are presented fully in Section 6.3.

According to excavation reports, mortar covered the back of the turtle including the stone that capped the cavity. The turtle was set over a cache in Q 151's medial shrine. The back side of the turtle was deliberately plastered over so that it became part of the bench in which the cache was stored. While the cache it was placed on was disturbed at some time in the ancient past, a second cache just in front of it contained two obsidian blades, a spine, clear obsidian or rock crystal, and a rectangular jade green stone (Shook and Irving 2009: 263). Considering the items in the cache, the turtle was clearly associated with sacrificial rituals. This is corroborated by a similar turtle recovered by INAH excavations in 2003 from Q 54, part of the colonnaded hall group that forms the western edge of the central plaza at Mayapán. Found near an altar within that building, this turtle also had a circular stone cap that was placed over its concavity.[98]

These turtles are two of at least thirty limestone turtles that have been found in shrines from complexes at Mayapán. Of the measurable examples, the stone turtles range in length from 12.5-42cm with the majority occurring between ranges of 22-42cm in length (Taube 198: 184). At least four of these larger turtles have cavities in their backs. Several were placed over caches and at least five were associated with bloodletting implements such as obsidian blades. The stone turtles share many of the same stylistic, iconographic and epigraphic programs, but there is some variation. Some of the sculptures have anthropomorphic deity heads while others have these heads coming out of the turtles' maws. Still others have completely zoomorphic heads. Many turtles with deity aspects also have human-like hands holding round objects. At least two examples of the turtles have the day name glyph Ahau carved onto their carapaces.

The turtles are the most frequently depicted animal in the sculptural program at Mayapán and they are present in both residential and non-residential contexts. In each of these cases,

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[98] Susan Milbrath, personal communication, 2013.

however, they were positioned in private areas such as interior shrines and altars. The turtle found in Q 151 or the "Hall of the Chaak Masks", for example, comes from a colonnaded hall that was not residential. Within that context, it was set into the ground near the base of a rear altar. Such a position would have been quite private, even in a non-residential structure. Other examples were found in elaborate houses. This is true of two stone turtles from structure R 87 one of which was placed over a cache at the base of R 87's private altar.

This turtle also has a concavity on its back. Within the cache itself were several pottery sherds, one including the name glyph for Itzamná, a flint point, a shark tooth and seven fragments of very thin gold, some of which had perforations. Although the turtle is broken, it is possible to make out two sets of numbers and an Ahau glyph. The two bars set together equal ten (each bar equals five) and the bar with the dots equals eight (each dot equals one). The number eight is set near the Ahau glyph suggesting "8 Ahau." It is not possible to know what the number 10 referred to, but Taube (1988: 188-189) has suggested it records 10 Ahau or 10 Tun.

One turtle in particular has received particular attention for its glyphic inscriptions. This turtle measures 21.7cm long x 13.6cm wide and is 13.6cm tall. It has thirteen Ahau glyphs incised lightly around its carapace (Figure 6.6). These glyphs depict the day name Ahau to mark the last day of each of thirteen K'atun cycles (Solari, 2010). The thirteen Ahau glyphs pictured on the Mayapán turtle therefore represent a complete cycle of 13 k'atuns or 260 days (as each K'atun equals roughly twenty years and 13 x 20 = 260). Similar representations of K'atun rounds were recorded by Landa during the Colonial period (Figure 6.7). Except for the K'atun round and the concavity on its back, this turtle appears zoomorphic. Like other examples, the turtle was found in an elaborate elite residence documented as Q 244b. It was positioned in a central room near the back wall.

Figure 6.7   Diagram of a K'atun round recorded by Landa in the 16th century. Although it is a Colonial count of the K'atuns, it provides some evidence of how the Precolumbian count was ordered and visualized. Drawing by Diego de Landa in A.M. Tozzer 1941: 167.

The Chilam Balams tell us that K'atuns were particularly important counts of time in the Yucatán peninsula during the Postclassic. The Chilam Balam of Tizimin, for example, carefully documents each of the 13 K'atun cycles from the 7th century to the 19th century, focusing particularly on the time period between 1441 and 1848 CE. As discussed by Munro S. Edmonson (1982: xii),

> It was believed that each *k'atun* would repeat the fate of the preceding such period with the same numeral coefficient, there being thirteen sacred numerals to the count. The Tizimin itself makes it clear that the priests were expected both to predict and to record the events of each *k'atun*. The predictions were taken seriously as guides to policy, and the recordings of recent events were taken seriously as guides to further predictions…the history of any one *k'atun* may be taken as equivalent to that of any other with the same number. There is no linear order to prophetic history.

While cyclical time was also important to the Maya in the Classic Period (the ritual Tzolk'in and agricultural Haab calendars were used during this time, for example), cyclical time

seems to have reached ascendency in the later centuries of the Postclassic, as the Chilam Balam of Tizimin attests. K'atun "Rounds" or completed cycles of 13 K'atuns were recorded in the Chilam Balam of Kaua (Bowditch 1910: fig. 64), for example, and a K'atun Round was taken down much earlier by Landa. Figure 6.5 depicts Landa's record of the K'atun Count (Landa 1941: 167). Here thirteen K'atuns are presented, each with a numerical coefficient and a day name. As Taube (1988) states, the thirteen Ahau glyphs ringing the carapace of the stone turtle from Mayapán likely reflect a K'atun round in sculptural form.

Representations of circular time have antecedents in Classic times as well. The visual connections between Classic Period "Ahau altars" including those from Toniná, Tikal and Caracol, and the Mayapán turtle with the ring of Ahau glyphs, are certainly noteworthy (Figure 6.8). Text rings the circular surface of these stone altars much like the Ahau glyphs ring the turtle carapace. These altars aligned the ballcourt of Toniná. Because of this and the fact that Ahau markings ring their periphery, M. Miller (1998: 211-212) believes they were related to K'atun endings and the conquest and subsequent sacrifice associated with those calendrical endings.
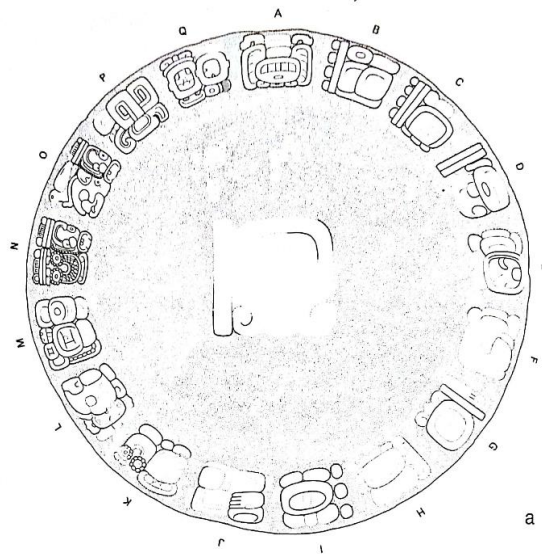
Figure 6.8   Toniná, Mexico. Giant Ahau Altar at Toniná. Drawing by Peter Mathews (after Becquelin and Baudez 1982: fig. 135) in M. Miller 1998: fig. 12a.

These connections demonstrate the longevity of the relationships between time, ritual sacrifice and stone sculpture in Maya thought. The Mayapán turtles certainly continue these traditions. Like many Late Classic altars, for example, the turtles portray religious symbolism and as reviewed in the paragraphs above, some of the turtles are marked with Ahau glyphs. However, Mayapán's stone turtles were also objects intimately tied to the specific urban landscape of Mayapán and the powers associated the surrounding ocean. Upon reviewing the turtles, for example, it is apparent that several sculptures visually mimic biological turtles found throughout the city of Mayapán. The remains of species including the Terrapin, the Box Turtle, the Mud Turtle and the Dermatemys Mawil have been excavated from a variety of locations within the city walls (Pollock et al. 1962). These species are roughly the same size as the stone

sculptures found at Mayapán. Several of the sculptural turtles even arch their heads in manners reminiscent of real land turtles.

These terrestrial turtles served as one inspiration for the SSTC at Mayapán; however, sea turtles also provided a model. During the rainy agricultural months, sea turtles congregate on the Yucatán peninsula's beaches to give birth to their young (Cuevas et al. 2010: 262). Notably, some of the stone turtles at Mayapán have carapace designs that mirror the scutes or patterning found on the carapaces of sea turtles. Associating the SSTC with both land turtles found at Mayapán as well as sea turtles functioned to bind powers of cosmological and agricultural fertility to the landscape of Mayapán (via the sculptures' reference to both land and sea). In their similarities to living species found at Mayapán, for example, the turtles of the SSTC were anchored to Mayapán. In their simultaneous reference to sea turtles as symbols of the east (a place associated with beginnings), the SSTC was invested with cosmological powers.[99] Such powers were harnessed by elite families throughout Mayapán. The sculptures' presence in both ritual and elite residential structures suggests that they were both religious objects as well as items of sociopolitical prestige. In both cases, the rituals they were involved in were intimate and controlled affairs. In sections to follow, I suggest that the turtles were used in rituals of autosacrifice for the purpose of assuring agricultural fertility. Such rituals were also linked to primordial beginnings and cyclical time. However, before focusing on these rituals, it is worthwhile to address why stone, as a material, was important not only to the Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex at Mayapán, but also to related religious contexts that preceded it.

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[99] Examples of similar turtles are found at other sites (such as Topoxté, Guatemala), but the vast majority of these sculptures are found at Mayapán. This suggests Mayapán was a center for the cult.

6.2   Stone as Sacred Material

The importance of stone in the ancient Maya world cannot be underestimated. It was used to create temples, residences and shrines and, long before Mayapán, was the material *par excellence* from which portraits of rulers during the Late Classic Period were fashioned and their histories recorded in monumental stelae. While these stelae cults died out centuries before the rise of Mayapán, several important aspects of the interrelationships between stone and sociopolitical power remained. For this reason, a review of stone's use during the Classic Period is necessary for understanding how it later functioned in the context of Postclassic Mayapán.

As expressed above, one of the most iconic uses of stone in the ancient Maya world was within the context of Classic Period stelae cults. In these cases, stone was used as a medium in which representations of divine monarchs were rendered. One example of such stone portraiture is Stela C at Copán, Honduras. Represented on both the east and west sides of the stela is the 13th ruler of Copán, Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil, or 18-Rabbit (Newsome 2001: 104-115). The stone itself is intricately and deeply carved with narrative text composing the sides (Baudez 1994: 28; Martin and Grube 2008: 203-204).

The west-facing side of Stela C depicts the king with arms folding in and clutching a ceremonial bar culminating in serpent heads (Figure 6.9). The monarch's large headdress surrounds him and takes up half the composition. The headdress itself is a stylized witz mask with vegetation and k'uhul (sacred essence) symbols emanating from its maw (Newsome 2001: 107-112). In front of the king's stela, sits a monumental bicephalic turtle, positioned as if the king himself were rising from it.[100]

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[100] The positioning with the turtle monument recalls the moment the maize god was resurrected (as retold in the Popol Vuh). This scene is also depicted on a Late Classic plate (figure 6.1). Also see Newsome (2001: fig. 3.9).

Figure 6.9   Copán, Honduras. The
bicephalic turtle altar at Copán with Stela C.
Author's photograph, January 2013.

Waxaklajuun's stela is only one of many examples from this Late Classic tradition of

monument-making. Other notable cases include Jasaw Chan K'awiil's Stela 16 from Tikal. Here

the king is also extravagantly attired and holds a ceremonial bar. Stela 18 from Yaxchilan depicts

ruler Itzamná Bahlam III standing over his captive Aj Popol Chay and Stela 25 from Piedras

Negras depicts K'inich Yo'nal Ahk I on an elevated throne.[101]

Such stelae were placed in the carefully scripted centers of cities. There they were often

associated with ritual and funerary architecture. Stela 16 from Tikal, for example, was placed in

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[101] See Martin and Grube (2008). Jasaw Chan K'awiil's Stela 16 from Tikal is discussed on page 44, Stela 18
depicting ruler Itzamná Bahlam III of Yaxchilan in pages 123-126, and Stela 25 from Piedras Negras with K'inich
Yo'nal Ahk I is discussed in pages 142-143.

the northern enclosure of Jasaw Chan K'awiil's second twin-pyramid complex. There it was located near the towering remodeled Temple I, which would serve as Jasaw Chan K'awiil's mortuary temple (Martin and Grube 2008: 44-47). Stela M from Copán, depicting the ruler K'ahk' Yipyaj Chan K'awiil, was located at the base of the impressive hieroglyphic staircase of Temple 26. The staircase is one of the longest dynastic texts in the Mesoamerican world and chronicles the lives of kings (Martin and Grube 2008: 208).

In these stelae, kings wear elaborate costumes with large headdresses and plumed back racks. These feature an array of decorative and symbolic images related to deities and other sacred essences. They often hold ceremonial bars across their chest as a symbol of their rank and holiness. Generally, Classic Period monarchs were depicted to take up nearly the entire face of the monument. In these cases, they often appear alone. This is the case for Stela 16 at Tikal. In other cases, kings are shown with captives who are placed near them or underfoot. The latter theme is depicted on Stela 2 at Aguateca. In several cases the king is also seen performing acts of sacrifice or giving other offerings. Stela 22 from Tikal depicts a scattering ritual involving the king's own blood. [102]

Particularly typical of Late Classic stelae and other monuments was the inclusion of fully developed glyphic script. These texts and dates recorded important temporal cycles, the dedication of the monument itself and also served as narrative devices recording the history and deeds of the monarch. Such history was recorded with the use of the Long Count calendar. The text on the back of stela D at Copán, for example, provides Initial and Supplementary Series dates from the Long Count calendar in order to situate the event it will describe in time. Following the date glyphs are verbs to describe the setting up of the stela. Afterward, deities

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[102] See Newsome (2001: figs. 11a, 11b and 12c).

associated with the stela's name are noted and then the dedication of the stela is discussed. Eventually, glyphs name the ruler 18-Rabbit or Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil and his accession.[103]

Stelae from the Late Classic come in a variety of sizes and styles. Some like Stela 1 depicting ruler Chaan Muan II at Bonampak are colossal, but thin and carved lightly in low relief. Others, like those at Copán, take on more sculptural and three-dimensional forms. In these cases, artists carved deep and organic lines and shapes into the basalt rock they worked with. Even despite these stylistic differences, the basic format and rules of subject matter remained largely homogeneous across nearly all examples. Furthermore, the deep associations stone had with creation, rulership, sacred time and sacrificial offerings were upheld across time and space in the Late Classic Maya world. These associations were made explicit in iconography that depicted rulers cast in stone and engaging with sacred time and primordial space.[104]

Stone was not simply a canvas, however. For the ancient Maya, stone embodied agentive and powerful essences related to cosmological belief, sacred time and political identities. As Stephen Houston (2004) has discussed at length in *The Life Within, Classic Maya and the Matter of Permanence*, the ancient Maya perceived stone and other materials to have the potential for animation. As Houston (2004: 78-87) describes, "energies agitate the Maya universe." For example, rocky cauac monsters (such as those discussed in earlier chapters) were depicted with eyes, noses and mouths. In other cases, caves could be depicted as living, breathing creatures. Such is the case for the cave figure seen in the Preclassic San Bartolo murals. In that mural the cave, complete with a stalactite for a tooth, seems to exhale.

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[103] See Newsome (2001: fig. 4.15, pages 185-187).

[104] In some cases, stelae depict rulers standing atop cauac or earth monsters. These visual relationships functioned to associate rulers with the stony earth at the same time that it anchored them to primordial beginnings and underworld realms. Such is the case for Bonampak Stela 1.

Based on glyphic and iconographic evidence, we know that the Classic Maya believed in a godly life-force known as "k'uhul" that could manifest in humans and be bestowed on other humans and things (Houston 2004: 81). This could be the same energy that flowed through landscape as well. From glyphic evidence and pictorial information, it seems that this life force originated and, in part, resided in human blood. The spilling of k'uhul by divine lords onto cloth, objects, the land or people was a favorite motif on Late Classic stelae. As will be discussed in later sections of this chapter, there is significant evidence that the blood of monarchs, other elites and/or captives was spilled on stone monuments in order to consecrate them and to sanctify sacred time. In these ways, blood as the most important fluid of life, was clearly linked to stone as a medium and may have had a part to play in its animation.

Stone's relationships with life forces is also manifested in its association with the rain deity Chaak. Thought to reside in caves (Kowalski 1987; Houston 2004), Chaak was also a figure linked with lightning and storms. As such, he was capable of enlivening the earth with life-giving rain and also energetic lighting and thunder. As Houston (2004: 87) notes, after a heavy rain, clouds and mist can be seen near hilly escarpments and close to the mouths of caves. These scenes may have provided the inspiration for the ancient Maya understanding that stony caves and hills were alive and breathing.

When stone was associated with the body of the king himself, such as in the stone stelae cults of the Late Classic, it certainly asserted its importance over other materials. Some of this presence was due to the monumental scale of such works. Several of Copán's stelae, for example, easily reach over thirty feet. Such monumentality combined with carefully scripted iconography and text functioned to fix the "larger-than-life" and timeless presence of the king into the public and sacred city center. These functions are somewhat similar to the goals of three-

dimensional Old Kingdom Egyptian sculptures depicting pharaohs and deities. In her review of ancient Egyptian materiality, for example, Lynn Meskell (2005: 54) states that statues of divinity were not simply formal depictions of figures, but rather the mechanism through which sacred figures *took* form. Monumental stone sculptures were therefore not representations of divine rulers, but rather their essences quite literally materialized in stone.

Such extensions of the sacred body into other objects and other bodies (as objects) is also expressed by Michael Rowlands's analysis of Cameroon chiefs called the *Fon*. In West Cameroonian culture, ancestors are considered vitally important to the act of procreation. The Fon, as the most sacred person, is the major recipient of sacred ancestral substances. These substances include saliva, raphia wine, breath, semen, food, and palm oil (Rowlands 2005: 78). Conception, in the minds of locals, occurs in part by obtaining access to these ancestral fluids. The fluids come from the Fon's body in the saliva he spits onto other bodies or via his breath. In this manner, the body of the Fon is itself an object. It acts as a container of precious fluids that are in turn given to other bodies.

The example above proposes that materiality is not only found in the materials of objects themselves, but also in the relationships objects have with people, the relationships other objects have with other objects, and the relationships people have with other people *about* objects. Similar points are discussed in Arjun Appadurai's (1986) edited volume *The Social Life of Things.* Appadurai's introduction refers to the movement of objects into different categories of exchange and the sacrificing of some objects in exchange for others. Appadurai also looks at the roles of those who guide and decide exchange networks for objects, suggesting that such

networks create a social life of objects wherein objects influence human action and relationships.[105]

Appadurai's discussion of materiality is related to case studies undertaken by Scott R. Hutson and Gavin Davies (2015) in the Mesoamerican world. These authors have recently explored how materials acted on Precolumbian Maya populations in Yucatán, specifically. Through their discussion of stone platforms and more perishable objects including baskets, Hutson and Davies argue that the processes of making and the habitual making with certain materials (i.e. stone and fibers) creates meaning in certain ways. This suggests that meaning is not simply derived from iconographic programs or even in material composition, but in the ways people both use material and interact with one another while in the process of making. Particularly important to the present study is Hutson and Davies's (2015) focus on stone. The authors believe that the physical aspects of stone including weight, texture, pliancy, and source affect relationships between people involved in the repeated use of such a material. Hutson and Davies (2015: 10) argue that the physical properties of materials shape embodied expectations people have of the world while engaging with these materials. This results in something of a "sociality of material."

For example, Hutson and Davies show that the practice of building in the megalithic style in the northern Maya region, a style discussed in Chapter 2, would have necessitated connections to certain quarries. Often, these connections were guided by social relationships. Furthermore, removing the stones would have required group and guided effort as would their transportation and subsequent incorporation in structures. The physical qualities of such stone therefore, in many ways, created certain types of human relationships. Similar things may be said for the

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[105] See Appadurai (1986: 3-63)

quarrying and working of stones used in the Late Classic stelae cults as well as in the SSTC at Mayapán.

Certainly, much of our understanding of the materiality of stone has come from researching these Late Classic stone stelae cults. Maya authors themselves tell us of the significance of stone. The author of the Chilam Balam of Chumayel (a 17th century book of Maya history and prognostication) writes,

> When the world was submerged, when there was neither heaven nor earth, the three-cornered precious stone of grace was born, after the divinity of the ruler was created, when there was no heaven. Then there were born seven tuns, seven k'atuns, hanging in the heart of the wind, the seven chosen ones.[106]

The stones that came from this primordial and watery darkness rose as pillars that provided both terrestrial and calendrical order.[107] The heavenly sphere hung from them and they set into motion cyclical time. In their association with primordial creation, stelae were often thought of as world trees or axis mundi rising from underworld or dark places. The Tablet from the Temple of the Cross at Palenque depicts a world tree rising from an earth monster. The ruler Kan Balam (right) is depicted along with another figure shown to the left (possibly his father Pakal). A similar scene is set in the Central Tablet from the Temple of the Foliated Cross at the same site (Newsome 2001: figs. 8, 9). In both scenes, Kan Balam is seen with the insignia of rulership and is associated with symbolism depicting primordial times and places. The clear associations in each of these examples is that the ruler was both sanctioned by and responsible for sacred time.

As these examples portray, Late Classic stelae were erected and dedicated as commemorations of both rulers and sacred time – especially as that time related to primordial

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[106] As discussed in Newsome (2001: 1).
[107] The "tuns" and "k'atuns" are calendrical units of time. They are discussed at length later in this section.

beginnings, but also as it marked calendrical time. In relationship to the latter, there is substantial evidence to suggest that in the Late Classic Maya world, stelae were erected and dedicated in honor of twenty-year (7,200 days) K'atun cycles. In the Late Classic Long Count calendrical system, K'atuns constituted the fourth of five units on a continual cyclical count from a mythical start date of 3114 BCE (Taube 1988: 183). The largest groupings of these units were B'aktuns consisting of twenty K'atuns (twenty-year periods) or 144,000 days. Then came K'atuns as periods of 7,200 days or roughly twenty years. Following K'atuns were Tuns equaling roughly 360 days or eighteen Winals. Winals, in turn, consisted of twenty-day cycles or twenty K'ins. K'ins, lastly, constituted units of one day.

These units were then listed together in order of largest unit to smallest within the Long Count System. Each unit of time was also combined with a number to provide for how many of a given unit had passed since the mythical founding event of 3114 BCE. During the Late Classic, Long Count dates were often given at the beginning of a narrative text on stone stelae and other media. These served as dedicatory dates for the stelae. They also provide record of the birth, ancestry, accession and marriages of monarchs in addition to the battles they took part in, the captives they took, the rituals they engaged in and the art and architecture they commissioned. The ending of twenty-year periods, noted by K'atuns, seemed to hold significance for Maya monarchs and much of the stone art and architecture seen in Late Classic cities was erected in commemoration of K'atun Period endings (Newsome 2001: 2). Both iconography and glyphic texts attest to these ceremonies and the relationship between stone, time and royal figures.

Based on inscriptions from various monuments at Copán, for example, the ruler K'ahk' Uti' Witz' K'awiil erected over seven different monuments in order to mark the K'atun ending 9.11.0.0.0. These included Stelae 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, and 19 (Martin and Grube 2008: 201). Ruler 4

of Piedras Negras celebrated K'atun ending festivities in 749CE. This scene is shown on Panel 3, excavated from a temple's upper sanctuary. In the scene, the king is shown sitting on a large throne and surrounded by various nobles. The text around the scene provides the date and describes the festivities (Martin and Grube 2008: 149).

The discussion thus far shows that stelae, other stone monuments and panels were far more than simple portraits of rulers. While they were visual and textual political statements, they were also sacred objects with deep cosmological associations. Much of this significance was couched in the material of stone itself. We know, for example that the word "stone" or "tun" was used in pre-Conquest Maya calendrical systems. A tun in the agricultural calendar represented 360 days and as noted previously a k'atun referred to a cycle of roughly twenty years or 7,200 days. In this manner, stone embodied time. This is reinforced by the fact that important stones were "set" and "taken" to and from important cities to mark the ending of one K'atun and the beginning of another (Stuart 1996: 151). [108]

Stone's importance in ancient Maya society is also apparent through phrases that state ownership over it. The phrase *U-tun-i*, meaning "her stone" was carved into a jade stone, followed by a woman's name (Stuart 1996: 151). A greenstone earspool also has the phrase *U-tu-pa*, meaning "his or her earspool." In other cases, stone could function as a skeuomorph. Skeuomorphs in the Maya world were objects formed of one material that usually were made of a different type of material. For example, Stuart (1996: fig.3) cites a set of stone vessels at Copán with the phrase *saklatun* inscribed on them. Saklatun means "artificial dish stone." Dishware in the ancient Maya world was almost always made of clay, not stone. Considering this, it is

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[108] Stuart cites the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, for example. In this book of history and prophesy the following records how stones were set and moved to and from various cities after certain K'atuns: "12 Ahau. The stone was taken at Otzmal; 10 Ahau. The stone was taken at Zizal; 8 Ahau. The stone was taken at Kancaba," etc. (Roys 1933:142-143).

interesting that the scribe in this example calls attention to the fact the dish is certainly stone. Simultaneously, this stone object has the capacity to "pretend" as another medium with the suggestion it is acting artificially.

Stone's sacred essence is also apparent by the many references made to practices of binding stone that were in turn related to K'atun endings. This ritual may be depicted on the carved peccary skull excavated from Tomb 1 at Copán. Here two figures are situated on either side of a large stone (marked with cauac symbols). Stuart states that the stone is tied or bound with cloths.[109] Stuart (1996: 156) has interpreted the accompanying text as: "1 Ahaw 8 Ch'en (is) the stone-binding (of) [royal name]." The initial date corresponds to the Period Ending on 8.17.0.0.0 (21 October A.D. 376) which is a K'atun ending. Stuart (1996: 156) states, "the peccary skull image depicts the k'altun [stone-binding] ritual overseen by two nobles, demonstrating that the rite refers to the fastening of cloth around the stone monument." Stuart's decipherment of stone-binding as "K'altun" is particularly relevant to the present discussion provided that "K'altun" is similar to the term "K'atun." Following the discussion above, Stuart argues that stone-binding rituals were undertaken as part of K'atun-ending festivities. Based on epigraphic evidence, Stuart (1996: 155, fig.8) states that Late Classic glyphs associated with stone binding events depict a stone over a hand as part of the glyph's construction (Figure 6.10). The hand occurs in the glyph as if it is undertaking the action of binding the stone pictured above it. Stuart interprets the "stone" depicted in the glyph as a celt (greenstone objects that monarchs often wore on their belts). The Leiden Plaque is an example of this type of stone. This stone is, in a sense, a miniaturized stela. On this Early Classic jadeite belt plaque, an image of the monarch

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[109] See Stuart (1996: fig.10)

occurs on one side while a date and script can be seen on its reverse side. It is one of the oldest examples of Maya art to feature a Long Count date.

The relationship between stone celts and Late Classic stelae is corroborated further by glyphic inscriptions that name stelae. This is true of Stela C at Copán, on which Stuart (1996: 155) translates the dedicatory statement as "the stone celt is the name of this big stone." Stuart believes that versions of this same glyph exist in varying formations from both Early Classic and Early Postclassic examples.

a
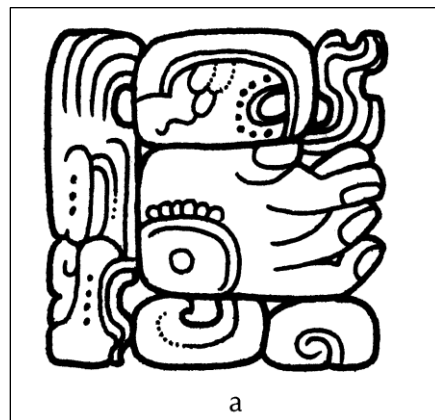
Figure 6.10   The stone binding glyph with the stone over hand present. After Stuart 1996: fig. 8a.

In later inscriptions, for example, the stone over hand glyphs are replaced in the glyphic sequence with syllabic glyphs instead (Figure 6.11). These sound-out *k'a-la-ha*. In this case the syllables that form the verb for binding have taken the place of the hand under the stone. According to Stuart, similar substitution is also present in an Early Classic example wherein the hand is still apparent, but the stone is only referenced via the completed verb for binding. This
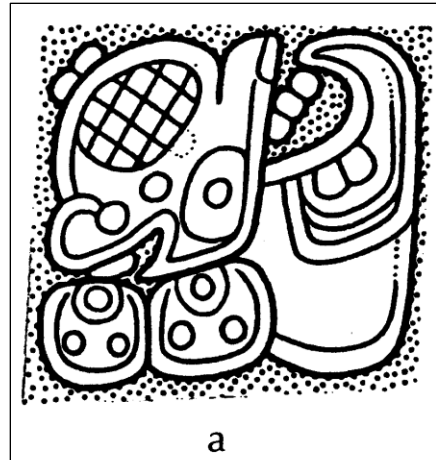
Figure 6.11   Zcalumkin, Mexico.
K'a-la-ha Syllabic Substitution for
the Stone over Hand. Column 1.
After Stuart 1996: fig. 9a.

epigraphic evidence shows that ritual practices of stone binding could be known as K'altuns. In

turn, these bindings may be related to celebrations marking K'atun endings.

Per the Diccionario Cordemex, the entry for K'atun does not simply refer to cyclical temporal

endings, but translates as "piedra que Cierra" or "the stone that closes" (Barrera Vasquez et al.

1980: 386; Stuart 1996: 156). This supposes that stones, and perhaps bound stones, were used to

close a K'atun period. During the Late Classic these stones could certainly be stone stelae or

similar pillar-like monuments. Perhaps as is shown on the peccary skull such monuments were

bound with rope as part of the closing event. This may also be what is depicted in Altar 4 from

Copán (Figure 6.12).

These accounts, though much abbreviated, should give some sense of the cosmological

and political significance of stone, as a material, during the Late Classic Period. Unfortunately,

the importance of stone during the later Postclassic Period is not as well-known. While stelae at

Mayapán certainly occur, they do not depict nor were they associated with divine monarchs.

Rather, they seem to depict deities or deity impersonators. Landa (1941) recorded that at

Mayapán there were "seven or eight stones, each about ten feet long and rounded on one side".

He also noted that such stones were erected every twenty years (Tozzer 1941, Milbrath and

Peraza Lope 2003). Several of these stelae can be seen in Brasseur de Bourbourg's drawing from

the nineteenth century where four standing stelae are depicted alongside fallen examples in front

of Structure Q 152 (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003). Much later, in the Carnegie reports,

thirteen carved stelae and twenty-five plain stelae were reported by Proskouriakoff (1962).

Recently, INAH archaeologist Carlos Peraza Lope (Milbrath and Peraza 2009) found another

stela in Quadrant Q and another was also found outside the center near Itzmal Ch'en (Delgado

Ku 2012; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014).

Figure 6.12   Copán, Honduras. Altar 4.
Author's photograph, January 2014.

Several of the stelae recovered from Mayapán, including Stelae 1, 5, and 6, have date glyphs and have therefore been useful in dating the site.[110] Stela I, first recorded by Proskouriakoff (1962), is particularly notable for its carved imagery (figure 6.13) The stela has a 10 Ahau date that Pollock et al. (1962) and Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003) have suggested could refer to a time in 1185 CE. The stela also has two figures carved into it. The smaller figure approaches the slightly larger seated figure from the viewer's left and offers something to this figure. The larger figure, seemingly dressed as Chaak, gestures and speaks as indicated by a speech scroll seen near the figure's mouth (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Masson and Peraza Lope (2014) liken the headdresses worn by both figures to those identified by Taube (1992) as belonging to the priesthood. A similar scene, although more eroded, can also be seen on Stela 9, found at structure Q 126.

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[110] Stela 6 has a 1283 CE date (Pollock 1962: 3) and Masson and Peraza (2014: 59) note that Stela 1 and 5 date to earlier K'atuns in 1185 CE and 1244CE respectively.
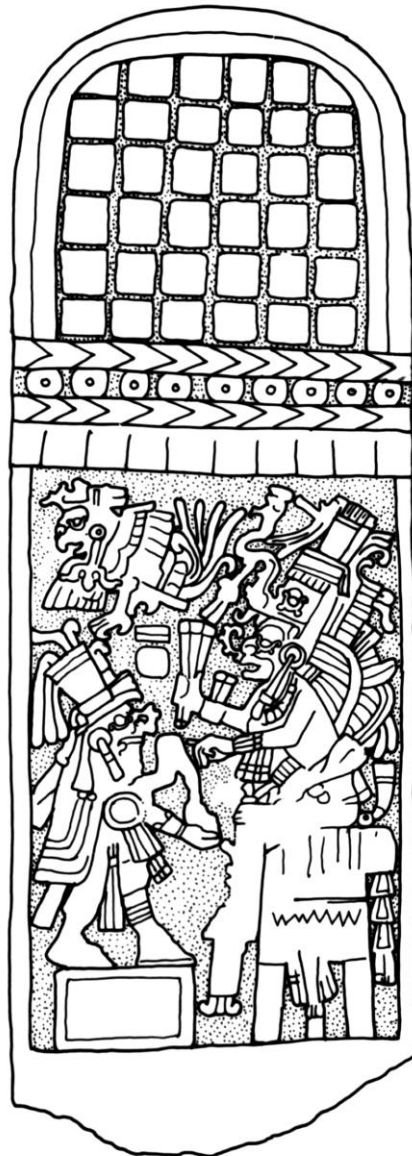
Figure 6.13   Drawing of Stela 1 at
Mayapán. Drawing by Linda Schele
in Schele and Freidel 1990: fig. 10:12.

The costuming of the figures, the fact that scenes never depict only one, grandiose

individual (as Classic Period examples do), and the concentration on K'atun dates over kingly

histories, shows that Mayapán's stela were not erected by divine kings. Rather, they seemed to

function as markers of sacred time and the history and role of the city in the larger web of cosmological time. Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003) have shown that the scene on Stela I, for example, is similar to that from the Paris Codex in which K'atun birds and K'atun ceremonies are also depicted with attendants who carry emblems of God K. They note that Stela I at Mayapán may have been carved to mark the K'atun 10 ending and then erected in Quadrant Q (particularly near or on platform Q84) to commemorate the new K'atun 8 Ahau. These stones were set in place early in the city's history and used as temporal markers for at least the first century.

The major function of Mayapán's stelae therefore seems to have been as markers and possibly embodiments of sacred cycles of the K'atun. Their glyphs and imagery reflect this role. With greater focus on sacred time, rather than sacred individuals, Postclassic stelae at Mayapán simply did not inherit the same role as those in Late Classic cities. However, I suggest that the cosmological and political significance of stone was still intensely present during the Postclassic. Rather than embodied in stelae; however, it was materialized most prevalently in the Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex. This class of sculpture carried many of the same associations between powerful individuals and stone monuments that earlier Late Classic stelae cults did. At the same time, this complex was geared toward the specifics of a Postclassic environment, and therefore represents a particularly brilliant exercise in integrative practice.

6.3   The Sacrificial Stone Turtle Complex as Integrative Practice

The stone turtles at Mayapán represent a synthesis of many of the cosmological and political ideologies inherited from Classic and much earlier times. Therefore, their presence at Mayapán is testament to the fact that the city and its artistic and architectural production were

not only derived from models at Chichén Itzá and Puuc cities.[111] The sculptures express, rather,

the inheritance of more ancient Classic Maya belief systems that engaged the relationships

between stone, blood, agricultural fertility, sacred time and ruling elite. Re-purposed for a

Postclassic present, the stone turtle complex was attractive for those at Mayapán because of the

links that could be made between stone's materiality, turtles, political authority and religious

belief.

It was important for those living at Mayapán to use stone as the material for one of their

most important religious complexes in order to express these relationships—especially as those

relationships related to cycles of time. Bloodletting implements associated with many of the

turtles suggest that the turtles, as receptacles for the instruments and/or blood itself, were closely

affiliated with ritual acts of sacrifice. Unfortunately, measurements were not made of most of

these receptacles, but one measured example suggests that they were rather shallow, less than

4cm in depth, and therefore they could not have contained much. They are, however, the perfect

depth for the catchment of liquid (Proskouriakoff and Temple 2009: 380-381). It is tempting to

think that given the concavities in turtle carapaces, and the association of bloodletting

implements with those turtles, that human blood was let onto the turtles' backs in order to pool in

the concavity.

Given the turtle's connection with the earth, Venus, water and stories of creation and

resurrection, it is fitting that such rituals would function in conjunction with seasonal,

agricultural rituals at Mayapán. The Ahau markings on several of the turtles suggest that

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[111] It must be noted that Chichén Itzá and Puuc cities do have turtle imagery as well. The Maize God can be seen emerging from a turtle carapace/Witz creature on the pillars of the Lower Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá and a large circular platform in the shape of a turtle is located in the Initial Series Group at that site. At Uxmal, there are also turtle sculptures that ring the cornice molding of the House of the Turtles structure. However, it is apparent that iconography and belief systems associated with turtle sculpture extend to much older periods (i.e. the Classic). Furthermore, the social context of the stone turtles at Mayapán (and their use) seems to be more directly related to the ways and reasons Late Classic stelae and their stone monuments were used.

agricultural rituals were also tied to K'atun cycles in some cases. The use of the turtles in these ways is similar to how altars from the Late Classic were likely used. The stone altar at the base of Copán Stela C, for example, provides an excellent starting point for considering the longevity of this sacrificial cult (Figure 6.9). The Late Classic altar is clearly a bicephalic turtle and the Ahau marking near its ear suggests that it was used in rituals related to K'atun cycles. Its placement at the base of a portrait stela with clear agricultural references likely depicts the king "resurrected" as the maize god from its carapace. This is reminiscent of the story from the Popol Vuh, where such resurrection was only possible through the self-sacrifice of the Hero Twins.

Clear evidence for the use of monuments as sacrificial objects is provided from Altar 4, as well (Figure 6.12). This monument is in the shape of a massive rounded stone encircled with a sculpted cord (Baudez 1994: 126-127). A depression at its center allows for liquid to catch and two curvilinear grooves allow the liquid to flow, in opposite directions, toward the cord running along its center. Andrea Stone (2011: 27) has interpreted the stone as an effigy rubber ball encircled by rope, noting that the depression and grooves mimic markings on other representations of rubber. As such, the ball references the ballgame and the primordial and real sacrifices that would have taken place there.

In turn, the ball and twisted cord of Altar 4 is similar to the cord that defines the circumference of a circular stone from Tikal – Altar 8 (Figure 6.14). This altar depicts a captive whose body is visually manipulated to conform to the circular space, a scene clearly referring to capture and sacrifice.

Figure 6. 14   Tikal, Guatemala. Altar 8. The circular altar depicts a captive inscribed within a rope. Drawing by William Coe (after Jones and Satterhwaite 1982: fig. 30) in M. Miller. 1998: fig. 15.

As reviewed earlier in this chapter, Mary Miller (1994: 187-222) has noted that circular altars often commemorated and were related to acts of sacrifice and conquest. At Toniná specifically, Miller also notes that such monuments are seen in close connection to the tenoned stone ballcourt markers that depict sacrificial victims. The relationships between the ballgame, circular stone mediums and sacrifice are certainly present in the iconography depicted in Tikal Altar 8.

The major difference between the Mayapán sculptures and these Late Classic examples was the intimacy of the rituals at Mayapán. Tucked away on or near shrine altars, the stone turtles could only have served individual families or small groups of people. Theirs was not the same stone materiality of megalithic structures or Late Classic stelae. The smaller scale and context of the stone turtles of Mayapán created different relationships between people. They did not extend the presence of the divine monarch as Late Classic stelae did into material form, nor did they necessitate relationships that were part of long-distant transportation or specialized

quarrying (Houston et al. 2006). Instead, they bound those who created them to the very landscape of Mayapán as they were made of limestone from that place. They also brought only select people into contact with them, and with one another, given their relatively small size and placement in sequestered settings. If large and public stone stelae represented the place and presence of the divine monarch, the Postclassic stone turtle complex provided for the absence of such a being. In doing so, the complex allowed for priests or other noble individuals to take the place of divine creator. This is much like the scene depicted on page 19 of the Codex Madrid (Figure 6.15). Here, a deity or priest dressed as a deity presides over a turtle. He is bound to four other deities via a rope thread through their penises with the suggestion that sacrificial blood is being let onto the turtle. As such, he could have been understood as the divine maize deity resurrected from a turtle carapace.

Figure 6. 15   Page 19 of the Codex Madrid. Showing five gods (possibly Bacabs) engaged in bloodletting around a turtle altar. They are tied or are threading a vine through their penises. Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies.

Certainly, based on their presence in elite households across Mayapán, it is clear that the stone turtles were precious objects for those privileged to own them. Such preciousness was marked in several ways. Interred with many of the stone turtles from Mayapán were greenstone beads, many of which were jade, a medium that, especially because of its blue-green color, was conflated with new maize (Houston et al. 2009). It may also be possible that the Mayapán turtles were painted in hues of blue-green. Stucco, a surface that was often added to stone in order to paint it, adheres to one Mayapán turtle and a similar stone turtle from the Postclassic site of

Topoxté, Guatemala is painted blue-green. Notably, stingray spines and obsidian were also found in the Topoxté turtle (Finamore and Houston 2010: 258).

The turtle sculptures at Mayapán also show strong connections with cardinal directionality. The turtle depicted in Figure 4.28, for example, was found in Structure Q 151, the building also known as "the Hall of the Chaak Masks." As discussed in Chapter 4, Q 151 has symbolic associations with the east. It also faces and abuts the rectangular plaza before it, which was likely flooded. The stone turtle found within Q 151 would therefore have shared and reinforced these associations with the east, watery places, and their powers. These connections are further supported by the rectangular design on the turtle's plastron. It is tempting to suggest that the design was created to represent the rectangular plaza just in front of Q 151.

The belief that the world was four-sided has deep roots in Mesoamerican thought. As Taube (2004a, 2004b) has argued, jade stones from Olmec contexts depict the four-sided world with a vertical bar and four dots positioned around it at its corners. In some cases, according to Taube (2004a, 2004b), the Olmec maize god himself takes the place of the central bar and can be seen as the axis mundi or center point between four symbols (Figure 6.16). In Classic Period iconography, turtles and world order are directly associated with Pawatuns, the aged male deities who supported the sky (Figures 6.17 and 6.18).
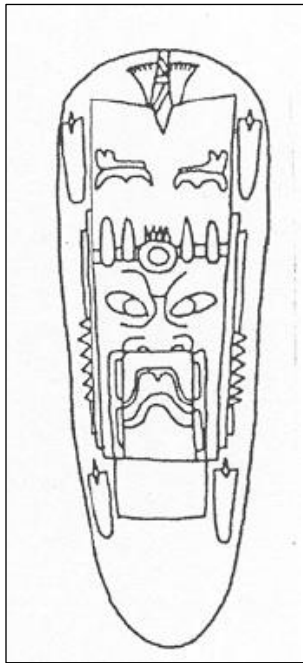
Figure 6. 16   An Olmec Celt depicting the Maize God in a central position surrounded by four directional symbols. After Taube 2003: fig. 26.1b
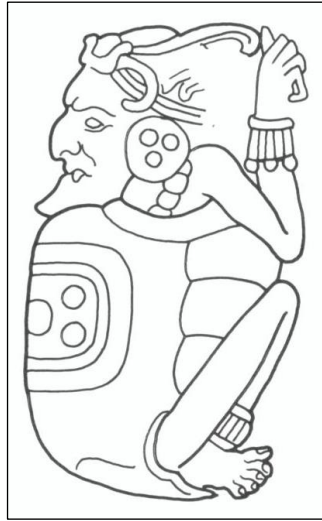
Figure 6.17   Drawing of a Pawatun in a turtle shell from Quiriguá, Guatemala. After Taube 2003: fig. 47e.
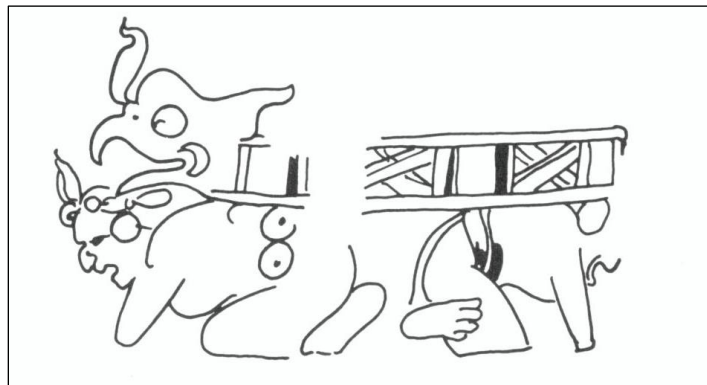
Figure 6. 18   Drawing of Pawatun figures supporting a skyband. After Taube 2003: fig. 47a.

In 20th century Maya society, "the world, the village, and the milpa are thought of as squares with four corners lying in the four cardinal points of the compass and with defined central points" (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 114). For example, the Ch'orti' of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador discuss the organization of the world as similar to a four-cornered altar and maize plot (Wisdom 1940: 429-430; Taube 2003: 462). Additionally, the Tzotzil Maya use the term *osil balamil* as the term for "world" and discuss the world as a square similar to houses and fields. They note, for instance, that "the sky rests on four pillars, just like those of a house" (Guiteras-Holmes 1961: 254; Taube 2003: 462).

The Pawatuns and their associations with cardinal directionality are also directly related to stone. First, the word for stone, "tun," forms part of their name "Pawa*tun.*" Second, Pawatuns, along with stone, were important to New Year ceremonies in the Yucatán peninsula. In Landa's (1941: 137-139) account of Bacabs (aspects or epithets of Pawatuns), he states that "they [Bacabs] were four brothers whom God placed, when he created the world, at the four points of it, holding up the sky so that it should not fall." Landa also mentions that during New Year festivities, many services for the Bacabs were held. In Landa's account, the placation of the Bacabs during the "unlucky days" (the last five days of a year) kept bad spirits away and assured that the coming New Year would be fruitful. Interestingly, New Year festivities also involved placing stones at the four sides of a given town. Landa (1941: 139) states, "it was the custom in all the towns in the Yucatán peninsula that there should be two heaps of stone, facing each other at the entrance of the town, on all four sides of the town, that is to say, at the east, west, north, and south."

Considering the associations between stones, turtles, Pawatuns, and cardinal directionality, the heads emerging from some of the Mayapán turtles' carapaces are almost

certainly Pawatuns. In these cases, they take the place of a more naturalistic turtle head. In other cases, these figures emerge from the open maws of a naturalistic turtle head.

Pawatuns seem to have been an important deity in Mayapán's pantheon. In their lengthy review of Chen Mul Modeled effigy ceramics from Mayapán, Susan Milbrath and Carlos Peraza Lope (2013: 216-218) have identified examples of the deity in ceramic form. As Milbrath and Peraza Lope explain, two examples of the censers are in the guise of God N or Pawatun and were likely K'atun idols. They note that God N is seen on page 6 of the Paris Codex where he is associated with K'atun images. One effigy vessel was found in Q 152a with an identical figure found nearby. A mat (woven or braided) pectoral was modeled in clay on the figures' chests with an oval shell at the center. Milbrath and Peraza Lope also noted that the figures have clawed toes similar to those of opossums, the animal associated with the god N/Pawatun as Taube has also discussed (Taube 1989, 1992: 92-99). An opossum wears a braided pectoral with an oval shell pectoral on page 26 of the Dresden, according to Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2013).

Notably, braided elements can be seen on clay examples of turtles from Mayapán now held at the Maya Cancún Museum (Figure 6.19). These sculptures typically depict a turtle with a deity head emerging from the turtle's back (arguably God N). Another deity can be seen "riding" atop the turtle holding a woven mat design.

Figure 6. 19   A clay turtle from Mayapán.
Author's photograph, July 2015.

Braided designs are also present along the sides of the turtles and appear to be wrapped around their carapaces. Since the woven or braided mat design can be linked with God N/Pawatun, it seems very likely that the mat and braided designs on the clay turtles, like the Chen Mul Modeled effigy censers, reference Pawatun. Therefore, it also seems extremely likely, especially given their architectural context and Landa's accounts, that the heads of the stone turtles from the SSTC at Mayapán depict God N/Pawatun rather than Itzamná.

Associating the stone turtles with these four-fold beings would have created concrete connections to primordial beginnings and world order. It is therefore likely that the turtles were used in sacrificial bloodletting rituals like that seen on page 19 of the Codex Madrid. In revisiting that image, four deities are situated around a four-cornered altar. A fifth deity is positioned over the turtle at the top of the altar. The four surrounding figures are strung together by their penises in acts of bloodletting. The scene symbolizes the four-sided earth with a central

figure acting as an axis around which the four figures (as directions) are anchored. Importantly, the principal figure is positioned just behind the altar and the turtle. In this position behind the altar, he also appears to be engaging in the sacrificial ritual above the turtle. Ultimately, it is the act of sacrifice that keeps the order of the altar scene intact.

The actual altars that are frequently excavated at Mayapán are not high and do not rise to waist level.[112] If bloodletting from the penis was the goal, the altars near which the turtles were found would have been a perfect height. As Taube (1988: 193, fig. 7b) has shown, bloodletting over a turtle is explicitly pictured on page 81c of the Madrid Codex. It is therefore highly likely that the turtles in the Mayapán shrines were placed on top of altars when used during ritual bloodletting events. Placed on altars, they would have been at a perfect height for bloodletting from the penis. After the events, the turtles were placed over caches of bloodletting implements among other precious objects.

The use of the stone turtles in these ways and the interpretation of their symbolic importance as related to cardinal directionality, sacrifice and agricultural fertility suggests they were in many ways similar to the stone stelae cult of the Late Classic. The central figure depicted in the Madrid image, for example, is situated in a similar position to the monarch of Stela C at Copán. In Stela C, the ruler himself is seen rising from the carapace of the monumental turtle altar just in front of him. It would have been through the act of sacrifice that he rose from the turtle as the maize god himself. The ruler's plumed headdress and the foliage symbolism in his dress reflect his role as that deity.

The deity on the Madrid page assumes the same position and it may be that through his act of bloodletting, in particular, agricultural fertility was assured. In these ways, the stone turtles

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[112] Bradley Russell, personal communication. July 31st, 2017

of Mayapán are examples of cosmological beliefs and political ideologies inherited from a Late

Classic past and reinterpreted for a Postclassic situation. The concavities on their backs and the

bloodletting instruments with which they were found make their connections to sacrifice

obvious. That several have Ahau markings on them relates them to K'atun counts and sacred

time. They, with manifestations of Pawatun figures and four-sided altars, bound together

sacrifice, K'atun counts, cardinal directionality and agricultural fertility.

The rectangular design on the underside of the turtle in Figure 4.28 may be acting in

ways similar to a plan of a ballcourt depicted on a Late Classic Veracruz jade pectoral (Figure

6.20). Relationships between ballcourts, sacrifice and agricultural fertility have been discussed in

previous chapters (especially in relationship to the Popol Vuh and the frieze in the Great

Ballcourt at Chichén Itzá). In the Mayapán turtle example, as I have previously suggested, the

design on its carapace suggests either the four-sided milpa or the plaza in front of Structure Q

151. It is also not impossible that it references both. Milpas, ballcourts and the sunken

rectangular plaza were all places that suggested agricultural fertility and could each have been

associated with ritual sacrifice geared to this theme.

Figure 6. 20   Veracruz, Mexico. Late Classic Pectoral with Incised Ballcourt. Michael E. Whittington 2000: catalog entry 32.

Based on this discussion, it is clear that the stone turtles at Mayapán conveyed and conserved ideologies inherited from a Classic Maya past. The complex was similar in many ways, for example, to the stone stelae cults of the earlier Late Classic. That said, it is important to note that Postclassic leaders deliberately chose *not to* use royal portrait stelae in their cities (although other types of stelae, discussed earlier, were used). Royal portrait stelae were no longer necessary in a political world that did not support divine monarchies. The stone turtles are also not on the scale of Late Classic stone altars (such as those at Copán) for similar reasons. The stone turtles at Mayapán needed to be small so that the powerful cosmological powers they were associated with could be owned by a new class of elite. For this reason, they are found not only in ritual structures, but in elite household contexts where rituals could be carefully controlled. Furthermore, many of the stone turtles take on the size and countenance of smaller land turtles seen in milpas at Mayapán in order to connect the sculptures' powers (and those who owned them) with the city's very landscape. As such, the stone turtles were important religious works,

but also items of prestige that visually and ritually connected their owners to the city and landscape of Mayapán—legitimizing those families (and family heads) in that process. Such legitimacy would have been particularly important in a political environment that was not always stable or certain.

7   CONCLUSION: SUMMARIZING INTEGRATION AT MAYAPÁN

7.1   <u>Mayapán: The Center</u>

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, Mayapán's urban identity was not marked by the traditional artistic and epigraphic signatures of Classic Maya cities. It was also unlike the later cities of the Terminal and Early Postclassic in the Yucatán peninsula. It has, historically, been disparaged for not being more similar in architectural and artistic quality to these cities. Mayapán does not, for example, have the beautifully carved portrait stelae of Copán nor the stories of divine kings and queens forever inscribed in stone. It does not boast the delicate stonework of Puuc cities and its buildings are not as grandiose as those at Chichén Itzá. That said, the city was, and its ruins are, a marvelous testament to the creativity, agency and overall tenacity of its people—Mayapán was not a simple product. Simply put, for those living there during the 13th through 15th centuries, Mayapán was the center of the world.

This center was made via Mayapán's methods of integration – a system of carefully planned and orchestrated architectural and artistic practices. Such practices brought sacred cosmological principles and political ideologies into the central precinct of Mayapán. In years past, these practices too have led some to disparage Mayapán's creativity or uniqueness. Buildings such as the Temple of Kukulcan and Caracol that mimic Chichén Itzá's models are certainly smaller and lack the attention to detailed stonework. However, as has been demonstrated in this dissertation, Mayapán's leaders, architects and artists held a tremendous amount of agency regarding the forms, iconography, styles and materials they employed in their urban center. Their choices were not accidental nor do they reflect a lack of creativity and ingenuity. Rather, these choices were dependent on how best to make the city's ritual core a

visual testament to Mayapán's legitimacy – in relationship to both a Maya past and more international present.

Rather than being too "unlike" Classic Maya or Puuc cities or a "poor copy" of Chichén Itzá, Mayapán's Quadrant Q manifests a very selective and purposeful "bringing in," binding, and re-centering of sacred and political visuality. These constructs were made possible by its powerful noble families and its economic and political importance and connections in the wider Mesoamerican world.[113] The result was that Mayapán became perhaps the most relevant and important Postclassic Maya polity during its time. The following sections lead the reader through a final experience of this place.

7.2   **The Civilized Center**

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre (1974) argues that space is not a void, but rather is formed by human interaction and is therefore a complex social construction that is in many ways politically motivated. As this dissertation has shown, the urban space of Mayapán's central precinct was never an empty space into which forms, iconography and external ideas were deposited. Instead, as Dean and Leibsohn (2003) might argue, it was a space formed by conscious and dynamic choice and sociopolitical and religious interaction. Mayapán was a space of active and evolving cultural practices. In many ways, these choices and practices were inspired and directed, not by foreign models, but by the landscape upon which the city was built. Mayapán was therefore not the product of two binaries, but a centrifugal force and a civilized and international center.

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[113] See Masson and Peraza's *Kukulcan's Realm* for individual chapters devoted to Mayapán's sociopolitical and economic significance.

Mayapán's leaders used a variety of techniques in order to proclaim their home as such a civilized and international place. Certainly, many of these techniques focused on incorporating cosmological and political values and ideas from other places into the space of Quadrant Q. However, city planning of Mayapán's central precinct was never meant to simply refer to other places and times. Rather, Mayapán's planners chose certain elements they saw as powerful and then bound those into the very center of Mayapán – thus giving Mayapán ownership over them. One of the most successful ways planners did this was by integrating architecture and art with features of its landscape. By anchoring important buildings to rock outcroppings and cenotes, archetypal forms and important iconography were no longer only references to far-off places and times. These things instead became part of Mayapán's own urban fabric and a symbol of the city's authority.

A major goal of this dissertation was to elucidate and explain these practices so that we have a better sense of how and why design of the urban center occurred as it did. Focusing on the choices involved in the *processes* of urban development help us to avoid thinking about Mayapán as a hybrid that simply materialized from binary, and primary, origins. Another goal was to describe Mayapán's urban center in an experiential, rather than a solely iconographic and formal way. Following Ömür Harmanşah's (2014) discussion of place in *Of Rocks and Water, Towards an Archaeology of Place*, I believe places become particularly important because of the experiences created in and associated with them. As Harmanşah (2014) states, powerful places are created by the physical interactions in and with them. These practices are "locally specific" and reflect both experiences created from daily use as well as larger and more extravagant use presented by political elite. These interactions between people and place, and between people

within a place, tie populations to locations. This creates a sense of cultural belonging and identity. [114]

Considering the significant meaning of place that is created through experience (and in the urban sense place would include a city's art, architecture, and landscape), it is important to consider interpretive approaches that focus on interactions between lived bodies and the places they visit, live, and move within. Phenomenological approaches to the ancient past should therefore be included more often in art historical analysis – along with more traditional methods including iconographic, epigraphic or formal approaches.

Ultimately, phenomenological approaches can help us to understand a *sense* of the interrelationships between cultural practice, social memory and place. Our understanding of place can therefore be more site-specific. Such an understanding may even make the past more relatable to the lived human condition as we use all of our bodily senses to interact with and be in place. In the case of Mayapán, I believe phenomenological approaches help us to situate our focus on the very thing that guided much of the site's urban design and even influenced the city's religious and political organization – Mayapán's own landscape.

Revisiting the comparison in Chapter 4 with Inca architectural and state-making practices is helpful here. The Inca were superb stone-workers and architects and they used this expertise to build their empire. Inca architects and engineers built an extensive road system running the north/south length of the Andes. They also crafted buildings such as Machu Picchu's Torreon and the large fortress *Saqsaywaman* (overlooking Cuzco) as visual syntheses between carved stone and rock outcroppings (Dean 2010). While Mayapán's architects did not build on the massive scale of the Inca empire, it is apparent that a visual relationship with the landscape was

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[114] See Harmanşah's Introduction chapter for further discussion.

intended and valued. And, like the Inca, the Maya at Mayapán seemed to have both a reciprocal and a dominating relationship with the natural landscape.

Colonial period documents including Guaman Poma de Ayala's *El Primer Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno* and contemporary Quechua histories suggest that the Inca spoke to and honored rocks and believed that Inca ancestors were themselves rocks. The earth itself, Pachamama, was perceived as feminine and brought under cultivation and "civilized" or "tamed" by the Inca state (Dean 2010: 65-102, fig. 8; Guaman Poma de Ayala 1988). The rocks that merge with Inca buildings and infrastructure, especially those most symbolic of the empire (temples, fortresses and roads) are quite literally a marriage between the civilized and untamed world with the result that the untamed world is tamed through these processes.

Certainly, the Inca took great care to create a beautiful fusion between built structures and rock; however, that relationship was still a possession (with political undertones) of the landscape. It was a bringing in of the wild environment into a civilized state. The latter extended to the sacred stones of and near the people the Inca conquered. As Carolyn Dean (2010: 105-108) observes, these sacred stones or *waka*, when moveable, were often taken to Cuzco. If they were too large, they were left in place but carved with iconic Inca steps, niches, and planar surfaces to denote Inca presence and ownership over the rock and its people.

While other Mesoamerican societies created architectural structures that responded to or actively incorporated rocks and hills, I argue that the use of rock outcroppings in the northern sector of Mayapán's ritual precinct is actually most comparable to the Inca example (even though the Inca example is more distant in both time and space than Mesoamerican examples). At Malinalco, it will be recalled; the Aztec positioned their temple on a hill and utilized the living rock in its construction. However, such construction relied on subtractive techniques

through which the hill was cut into and cut away in order to fashion the temple and its associated sculpture. This was not what happened with any of the structures at Mayapán. Those examples seem to allow for the living rock to *become* part of the architecture's presence.

Mayapán's integration of living rock outcroppings might be more comparable to the way architects at Dos Pilas used the hill as a temple base for the major pyramid El Duende. However, such integration simply occurs more frequently at Mayapán. Furthermore (although closer study of structures at Dos Pilas would be necessary for a definitive statement regarding these relationships), it seems that rock outcroppings not only guided the placement of many buildings at Mayapán, but also influenced their shape and orientation. The rock outcropping associated with the Temple of the Niches, for example, does not appear to have been leveled so as to create a flat raised surface upon which the building was placed. Instead, the rock rises *into* the building's façade and curves along the seam created by the building's stone walls. Formally, this is far more similar to the Inca technique for synthesizing living rock with built structures.

That said, *like* the Dos Pilas, Malinalco and Inca examples, the integration of rock outcroppings at Mayapán was much more than an appealing visual technique. It was instead related to important political and religious contexts. As Timothy Pugh (2001) has suggested, the painted temples depicted in the mural from the Temple of the Niches likely correspond to the five actual serpent temples at Mayapán (serpent temples defined as having serpent iconography). The Temple of Kukulcan is the primary serpent temple at the site, but the four others include Q 159 to the southeast, Q 218 to the south, Q 143 to the east, and Q 58 to the north.

Pugh (2001) argues that the serpent temples represented in the Temple of the Niches's mural represent these five serpent temples and as such were associated with different social groups at Mayapán. He compares the painted serpents that form the base of niches in the mural

to the cave monster seen on page 9 of the Mixtec Codex Selden. There, the figure of the cave monster is combined with a temple. Such combinations were standardized images that reflected particular places in Mixtec and other Mesoamerican writing (Boone 2000). The image in the Selden is a toponym now translated as "Temazcal-Cave of the Flowered War" (Pugh 2001: 224-245). Considering the connections between Q 80's mural at Mayapán and imagery from the Selden, Pugh suggests that the temples in Mayapán's mural could reflect different ethnic groups, since toponyms signify different geographic places and the people associated with them.

Several examples from this dissertation have demonstrated the importance that caves, cenotes, hills and mountains had in the placement and orientation of buildings. As reviewed above and in Chapter 4, it was also common for mountains or caves to act as toponym signs and as such these referred very often to powerful places and urban centers. The sign for important Postclassic central Mexican places including Chapultepec, Culhuacan and Coatepec are all marked with hill signs. A similar hill sign is also seen in the Great Goddess mural at Classic Period Teotihuacán (see Chapter 4).

Stones and rocky places were also frequently represented as toponyms in Mesoamerican manuscripts and imagery. The cities of Tepechpan (meaning "On the Large Stone") and Tlatelolco (meaning "Earth Mound") were designated with stone motifs and Tenochtitlán's toponym was constructed of a prickly-pear fruit cactus emerging from a stone glyph (Boone 2000: figs. 25h, 25i, 25g). The stone and cactus combination of Tenochtitlán's toponym is still seen on the Mexican flag today.

These traditions of associating important cities and capitals with watery, hilly and/or rocky environments suggest that these places and symbols had deep political significance. Malinalco's rock-cut temple reinforces this point. It will be recalled from the discussion in

Chapter Four that Malinalco was the site of an Aztec temple cut into and carved from the living rock there. Like the temples painted in Mayapán's Temple of the Niches, the Malinalco temple originally had the open jaws of a serpent carved around it. Sculpture attached to the floor and carved from the living rock inside features an eagle and a jaguar or mountain lion caved on a bench. One large eagle was also carved on the floor. Townsend (2000: 108-112) states that these corresponded to Aztec authorities including the supreme position of *tlatoani* in addition to *tlaccatecatl*, *tlacochcalcatl*, and *etzhuanhuanco* (*tillancalqui*). These were military governors from Tenochtitlán and/or members of local nobility appointed by the head *tlatoani*. The niche that was also carved into the floor of the temple was a place for sacrificial offerings to the earth.

During the height of Late Classic Maya cities, it was the responsibility of divine kings and queens to make offerings to the earth. As discussed in Chapter 5, iconography and text on stone stelae often illustrate and narrate these events. Sometimes, the stony earth itself was depicted. In these cases, sacred monarchs can also be shown standing on top of earth creatures marked with stoney cauac symbols. This occurs, for example, on the Tablet of the Temple of the Foliated Cross from the Classic Period site of Palenque, and on Bonampak Stela 1.

These representations, like relationships between political structure, architecture and earth at both Malinalco and within the Inca Empire, suggest that the concept of Maya leadership was itself also tied to earthly features. Stone was principal among those features. For example, Maya leaders frequently incorporated rocky places into important buildings in order to legitimize the city and themselves. Such binding fused sacred powers to structures. Leaders actively appropriated and drew in the power of places with potent geologies. It was a way to civilize, in a sense, wild places and bring those powers into the built world. By extension, this binding gave power and legitimacy to those commissioning and using such buildings.

Following the Inca and Mesoamerican examples above, I agree with Pugh (2001) that the five serpent temples depicted in the Temple of the Niche's mural reflect social structure at Mayapán. Furthermore, I suggest that the binding of this temple with the rock outcropping was an important element in the connection between political/social structure and architecture. Pugh believes that the temple and mural may have been used by lords called *Ajaw B'atab'ob* who gathered in Q 80 to take part in quadripartite consecration rituals. He suggests that these priests were each associated with one of the smaller serpent temples at Mayapán that surrounded the larger Temple of Kukulcan. These form a quincunx plan as each of the smaller temples is located to the north, south, east and west of the Temple of Kukulcan. Pugh suggests that the leader of Mayapán, the *AjK'in* and *Jalach Winik* (considered two aspects of the same person), presided over the Ajaw B'atab'ob as a premier figure at Mayapán and was himself associated with the Temple of Kukulcan.[115]

At this point, we cannot be certain who ruled over the serpent temples at Mayapán. However, I do find Pugh's argument attractive to the degree that the Temple of the Niches and its mural were associated with some sort of political office or organization. The fact that the temple was deliberately set atop and bound to one of the largest rock outcroppings at the site supports Pugh's thesis. The temple, its mural and its rock outcropping reflect shared Mesoamerican ideas about relationships between powerful, civilized places (cities and their leaders) and powerful topography (rocks and water).

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[115] As discussed by Pugh (2001: 250), six lords were associated with the cardinal directions and center of Mayapán. At one time, AjK'in Kob'a, the high priest and Kawich, the highest ruler, presided in the center. Sulim Chan ruled in the west. Nawat and Kowoj served as guardians of the spirit of the south and east gates/forts, respectively (Edmonson 1982; Roys 1962:79). Finally, Aj Ek' is mentioned as "the other one" (Edmonson 1982), presumably the lord of the north. Various indigenous and Spanish documents mention Cobá, Kawich, Chan, Nawat, Kowoj, and Ek' as both surnames and toponyms during the Colonial period (Roys 1972).

In the example of the Temple of the Niches, like that at Malinalco, we see the clear integration of these concepts into the very terrestrial and political landscape of Mayapán. Binding the Temple of the Niches, its iconography, and those people and events associated with it to a rock outcropping was analogous to the function of toponyms in naming urban centers. This combination functioned to proclaim Mayapán as one of these civilized Mesoamerican environments and its leaders as legitimate and worthy people. This point is further reinforced by the widespread use of stone turtles in cults of sacrifice among Mayapán's elite. Discussed in Chapter Six, these life-sized stone turtles were often found in association with household altars. Several of the examples excavated had sacrificial implements with them and the majority had round concavities on their carapaces. One of the turtles has a ring of ahau glyphs around its carapace. Such evidence suggests that the turtles were part of rituals involving the 260-ritual calendar (Taube 1988).

These turtles were likely used to mark the beginning and/or ending of k'atun or twenty-year cycles. The beginning and ending of k'atuns were especially important during the Postclassic period and were marked with offerings and blood sacrifice. As depictions from the remaining Maya codices suggest, sacrificial rituals involving the stone turtles were also linked to bringing agricultural fertility. In each of these ways, the turtles are related to the stone stelae cults of the Late Classic Period. It will be recalled from discussions in Chapter 6 that Late Classic stelae were sacred embodiments of and records for divine monarchs. Large monuments associated with stelae were likely used for bloodletting and sacrificial rituals (Newsome 1998).

Late Classic monarchs were largely responsible for assuring world order through military conquests and agricultural fertility (Schele and Miller 1986; Schele and Freidel 1990). The iconography and statements on the stelae, as well as the placement of large sacrificial

monuments near them, attest to these roles. While Mayapán does have several stelae, these smaller sculptures seemed to function more as markers of sacred time rather than as portraits or political statements tracing a single ruler's achievements. As I argue in Chapter Six, it was the smaller stone turtles that became a focal point of political and agricultural power as they were commissioned and used by elite families in private settings.

In the Late Classic and Postclassic cases, it was not only imagery that was significant, but the materiality of stone itself. This material was intimately related to rulership and the agricultural and ordering responsibilities that role necessitated. If stelae were a major way to center Late Classic monarchs in a sacred urban landscape, the stone turtle cult similarly gave noble leaders significant power and centrality in Mesoamerican politics and religion. It made these families major players in a civilized polity that had inherited much of its cosmological power from ancient places and sacred cities.

Efforts to proclaim Mayapán as a civilized center are also attested to in the similarities between Mayapán and Chichén Itzá. It will be recalled from Chapter 5 that the major buildings of Quadrant Q, the Temple of Kukulcan and the Caracol closely mirror forms found at earlier Chichén Itzá. This was, of course, no accident and the presence of similar buildings at the later Mayapán likely reflects patronage of the Chichén Itzá-affiliated Cocom family (Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2009b).

Simultaneously, the radial form of the Temple of Kukulcan is an important Mesoamerican archetype that was related to sacred directionality and time (Coggins 1980). Mayapán's decision to closely copy the Temple of Kukulcan and Caracol from examples at Chichén Itzá was an important political maneuver. These buildings, for the Cocom who commissioned them at Mayapán, referenced Chichén Itzá as a powerful political and economic

giant. Per Landa's accounts this lineage also had connections further afield in central Mexico. They were said to have invited foreign people to Mayapán from that place during their reign (Landa 1941). Not mutually exclusively, radial temples and serpent iconography referenced the important deity Kukulcan who was then known widely throughout the Mesoamerican world as an important founding deity or person associated with renewal and civilization (also discussed fully in Chapter 4). This deity was said to be responsible for the founding of Tula, Chichén Itzá and Mayapán (Landa 1941; Nicholson 2001).

In associating the city with Chichén Itzá and central Mexican cities (for example, Tula), Mayapán was also proclaiming itself as another major urban center and a place of high civilization. This is not necessarily a 21st century reading of a 15th century city. The most important urban centers in the Mesoamerican world were often associated with aspects of civilized life apparent in the concept of "Tollan." The term was originally associated with the Toltec capital of Tula (Nicholson 2001). Both Tollan and Tula, and additionally the Maya word "Tulán" are related to the Nahuatl word *tullin* or *tollin* and the modern term *tule* meaning "place of reeds" (Kristan-Graham and Kowalski, 2011; Molina 1977). The term has metaphorically been used to refer to places where there is a large "congregation of people" (Kristan-Graham and Kowalski 2011: 9; Molina 1977: 148). As such, it was also a place of civilized life. Several places in the Mesoamerican world were understood as such places. These include Teotihuacan, Tula, Cholula and Tenochtitlán. Maya variants of Tollans include Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and, as I argue, Mayapán.

It will be recalled that Kukulcan, a feathered serpent deity known by his Nahuatl name Queztalcoatl, was associated with such places. Indeed, a major marker of a city's status as a Tollan was its feathered serpent imagery. As Sahagún records in the 16th century, Queztalcoatl

was a lord who ruled over the Toltecs at a sacred city referred to as 'Tollan" after migrating there from the sacred Chicomoztoc (a lobed cave from which the Aztec also claimed descent) (Sahagún 1948: Book III, Chapters III-XIV). Sahagún states that the Aztecs considered the earlier Toltecs to be a superior society. They were artists, gifted in cooking, were excellent athletes and also very wealthy.

The concept of Tollan encapsulated far more than a large city with serpent symbolism, however. Frauke Sachse and Allen Christenson (2005) show that there was a mythical and archetypal connotation to the idea of a Tollan. Tracing Highland Maya references to this place as "a place beyond the sea," Sachse and Christenson (2005) interpret Tollan as a place of creation associated with powerful ancestors, a location of rebirth and of human origins. Tollans were places that were also (and not mutually exclusively) associated with both the life cycle of maize and understandings of human birth.

As Kowalski and Kristan-Graham (2011) discuss in their introductory chapter to *Twin Tollans*, both the earlier Tula and Chichén Itzá likely functioned as Tollans. Uxmal and Mayapán, with their large size and serpent iconography, were also very likely understood as Tollans. It is therefore no accident that Mayapán, Tula and Chichén Itzá all share similar architectural styles (see Chapter 5 for a review). That Mayapán also functioned as a Tollan is supported, not only by its architectural similarities with these older cities, but by the pairing of its major pyramid with a cenote and cave system. The cave runs just under the rectangular plaza and connects with Structure Q 151 or the Hall of the Chaak Masks. Like the binding of the Temple of the Niches with its rock outcropping, this combination is the physical manifestation of the mountain or hill+cave or water toponyms.

The practice of combining architecture with terrestrial features and copying archetypal forms bound Mayapán into a wider web of histories. These were simultaneously woven over the course of a few hundred to a few thousand years. They were specific to powerful and tangible places, but also timeless. That said, the site-specific terrestrial environment at Mayapán assured that the experience of these important buildings and their associated symbolism was an *experience of Mayapán*. New ways of interacting with and seeing these forms created new social memories at Mayapán, thus functioning to forge part of Mayapán's own urban identity.

To this end, it is important to remember that it was not as if another "Chichén Itzá" or a central Mexican city was entirely reborn at Mayapán, but rather that there was an interest in transference and ultimately ownership of certain political and religious ideologies. Therefore, even though copying acted as a form of preserving building forms that were once part of other, powerful cityscapes, these forms would have been phenomenologically understood in a new way at Mayapán. This was particularly due to the practice of binding important architectural structures and iconography to features of Mayapán's own natural environment.

Spatial relationships between Mayapán's buildings compared to those at Chichén Itzá, for example, are very different. The Temple of Kukulcan and Caracol (as well as many other structures) are clearly visible in the same field of vision at Mayapán as they are physically much closer to one another compared to their counterparts at Chichén Itzá. Concentration of architecture was the rule, not the exception, for Mayapán's ritual center, and the ubiquity of walls throughout the site seems to reinforce this sense of containment.[116] This is antithetical to the layout of Chichén Itzá's principal buildings. The Temple of Kukulcan and Caracol, for example, are not closely associated physically and therefore a viewer would not see them

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[116] This idea was developed in part through a discussion with Claudia Brittenham, July 2016.

together. Moreover, at Chichén Itzá, architects and patrons paid equal attention to the incorporation of large spaces between their buildings. Extensive spacing between buildings in the center functioned to make monumental architecture appear even larger and more self-contained within its own space. Little visual articulation occurs between buildings in Chichén Itzá's main plaza where major buildings are set far apart from one another in the viewer's field of vision. The effect is such that each building appears colossal and intimidating.

Alternatively, Mayapán's architects and patrons, while seeking to transfer and preserve form, style and iconography from Chichén Itzá, were not keen to organize and separate buildings in the same way. This suggests that Mayapán's leaders were instead far more interested in taking architectural forms and iconography that echoed ancient archetypes and powerful polities and then marrying those to terrestrial features in their own environment. This is similar to the way Inca rulers bound their architecture to natural features of environments they conquered. Ultimately, owning and advertising these forms by binding them to Mayapán's own physical environment gave Mayapán ownership over the cosmological and political powers they assumed. Mayapán presented itself as a civilized center by incorporating sacred and politically-charged forms and iconography into their city. However, it also claimed itself as a great civilized place by taking ownership over those things.

Such importance was in part articulated via Mayapán's visual relationships with Puuc identity and memory. Re-use of spolia from these sites in addition to copying Puuc iconography was used to create a decidedly Mayapán urban experience. This is made apparent in the examples of the long-nosed figures from Structure Q 151. Following interpretations of similar masks discussed in Chapter 5, I am persuaded that these figures depict the rain deity Chaak. The long, upturned snout on the masks at Mayapán is the clearest indicator of the figure's role as a

rain deity. In both the Dresden and Madrid codices, Chaak is depicted with an elongated snout. On pages 36c, 39b, 67a and 74 of the Codex Dresden God B (Chaak) takes part in rain-making rituals. Chaak is seen pouring water out of a vessel. Similar scenes are depicted on pages 9b, 13a, and 14b of the Madrid Codex. Chaak was closely associated with hills/caves/cenotes and rain-making. Offerings in caves and cenotes suggest rituals dedicated to this deity were often undertaken in these underworld places (Graham 1997).[117] Importantly, the Chaak masks at Mayapán also occur near its major cenote. Their associations with water are further reinforced by their position in the eastern sector of Quadrant Q, just in front of the rectangular plaza that likely flooded.

It is important to note that the masks on Structure Q 151 are also like masks found at other sites in Yucatán. The crescent shapes that form a band along the figures' foreheads are like those seen on long-nosed figures from Las Monjas at Chichén Itzá. These symbols also occur on the upper facades of buildings at Uxmal (see Chapter 5 for a full discussion). It is as if these creatures are wearing the crescent bands like headdresses much like the buildings at Uxmal "wear" the crescent shapes that occur on their upper facades. The Structure Q 151 masks are probably most like those on the West façade of the Kodz Pop at Kabah – although those masks wear bands with rosette designs rather crescent designs. The masks at Mayapán are therefore animated references to multiple things at once, reflecting an ingenious use of integrative practice. They present Chaak, an important deity in Maya religion while at the same time signifying powerful polities such as Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and Kabah. They were, however, concretely anchored in Mayapán's own environment. This is especially reinforced by their position within the eastern sector and facing the plaza near Cenote Ch'en Mul. As I review in Chapter 4, it is

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[117] The relationships between mountains/hills/caves/cenotes/water are discussed in this chapter as well as in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

likely that the plaza flooded and that water was contained within it by plugging the rectangular hole that fed into Cenote Ch'en Mul.

These multifaceted references and functions proclaimed Mayapán as a civilized center with legitimacy that was supported via strong and ancient ties with the Maya past in addition to references to Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and Kabah. In my opinion, the masks at Mayapán are interpretations of masks from these various places. They are not spolia taken from only one particular Puuc place, but rather were created at Mayapán from these various models and ideas. Set into the fabric of Structure Q 151, which was in turn tied to specific features of Mayapán's landscape, they became features owned within Mayapán's own political and religious contexts.

The Puuc stones that were spoliated and repositioned or reused as rubble core functioned in a similar way. Repositioned façade stones, such as the scroll motifs and birds seen in Q 151 or the interrupted Puuc stone patterns seen in the Hall of Kings, do not reflect an interest in copying, but rather owning and reinterpreting to fit new desires and needs at Mayapán. The stones with Puuc designs set in rubble core are certainly an extreme example of disregard for original Puuc meaning. Like the Egyptian monuments set within the Hippodrome at Constantinople or the collected objects Aztec emperors interred within the Templo Mayor, spoliated Puuc stones at Mayapán reflect the prestige of that city by showcasing its ability to own the past and do with it what it wished.

7.3   Quadrant Q and Quincunx Cosmovision

As was demonstrated in the previous section, Mayapán's leaders centered the city by making visual proclamations of its civilized nature. This included bringing in forms, iconography, styles and their associated meanings into the core of Mayapán. These were then reinterpreted and physically bound to Mayapán's sacred landscape in ways that suited that new context. In many ways, such integration of visual culture expressed Mayapán's ownership over these elements and the ideas they represented. This was one way Mayapán declared itself as an important center.

Centering the city was also accomplished by organizing Quadrant Q based on quincunx cosmology. In this most important area of the site, the east, west, north, and south sectors were developed with important cosmological principles in mind. However, the place where those directions met, the center, was the most important location of all and was designed as the axis mundi or center of the world. This urban design reflected the deeply held significance of quincunx or five-part design. The quincunx is defined by Thompson (1970: 194-196) as having four parts, a center and also a nadir. In Maya cosmovision, this organization of space was based on mythic creations. In one story, the world was flooded and a devious crocodile, in part responsible for the flood, was sacrificed to bring back the order of the universe. From this ordered universe came five world trees from which the celestial sphere hung and the directions were associated. The crocodile's body then became the surface of the earth from which the trees grew (Taube 1988: 168-169, fig. 58b).

As discussed earlier in the dissertation, five-part design was employed in several Mesoamerican cities. The Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán is a particularly explicit example of this model. In the Aztec case, the Templo Mayor, oriented to the cardinal directions, served as both

the anchor of horizontal and vertical directionality. Its central staircase was positioned on an

east/west axis to allow for the rising sun of the equinox to pass between the two temples on top

of it. (Aveni 1980: 245-249). From that center radiated the larger grid of the city (Pasztory 1983;

Mundy 1998).

Pugh (2001) has suggested that the layout of serpent temples in Quadrant Q reflects a

quincunx design at Mayapán. I think that the layout of these temples is important considering

that the four smaller temples occur north, south, east, and west of the Temple of Kukulcan. I

would go further, however, by suggesting that the temples were positioned as such not because

they were the first to mark the shape of the quincunx, but because that quincunx cosmovision

was *already* in place at the time they were built. This is supported by the fact that serpent

elements were not original aspects of the first construction phases of the smaller temples.

Furthermore, the Temple of Kukulcan was built over a non-radial, non-serpent temple that

existed before it – Structure Q 162a (Proskouriakoff 1962: 100, 252-253).[118]

Several other structures and features that predate the later serpent temples at Mayapán

were also deliberately placed in northern, southern, eastern and western sectors in line with the

powers those places had (Structure Q 151 and Structure Q 163 located in the east and west

respectively are two examples). Lastly, the temple located beneath the Temple of Kukulcan (Q

162a) had already played a key role in the development of urban planning and the quincunx

design long before the later temple, with its serpent iconography, was built.

While Mayapán's layout does not present the quincunx in the gridded fashion of

Tenochtitlán, the major principles of that cosmovision are deeply present. These guided even the

earliest orientations and building design in Quadrant Q. The four parts associated with the four

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[118] Partial stone serpent heads and tails were found at the base of stair balustrades and near upper columns of the
temples. See Winters (1944b: 400-408; Pugh 2001: 251-252) for a discussion.

cardinal directions hinged on the Temple of Kukulcan and the earlier Q 162a acting as axis

mundi. The most important directions, however, seemed to be east and west. Both the Temple of

Kukulcan and Structure Q 162a were built to function in relationship to these major directions as

these directions were linked to the perceived movement of the sun during important days of the

agricultural year.

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the Temple of Kukulcan (Q 162) and Q 162a are in the

southern sector of Quadrant Q. While Q 162a is not a radial pyramid like Q 162, both have nine

levels in reference to the Maya underworld. The extensive sculptural frieze covering the

southeastern portion of Q 162a was created during the first construction phase and is also clearly

an underworld/death scene. It will be recalled from Chapter 4 that the frieze is composed of three

major figures, two of which have niches for heads. The largest figure is located on the eastern

section of the frieze (the others are located on the southern section). The main figure's upper

torso is skeletal and he has a niche for a head. The figure is positioned between two vultures and

stands on a band of undulating water. A jaguar head is seen near his left foot and a sacrificial

knife is seen under the figure's right arm. As is discussed in Chapter 4, parts of human crania

were originally found in the niche. The connection between sacrificial knives, human skulls and

death is obvious. The Maya practiced heart extraction and decapitation regularly with sacrificial

victims (Tiesler and Cucina 2007: 1-13; Vail and Hernandez 2008: 120-164; V. Miller 2008:

165-189; Serafin and Peraza Lope 2008: 232-250).

These sacrifices were likely part of rituals related to the sun's movement from east to

west. I believe, for example, that the mysterious "floating" jaguar head refers to the

transformation of the sun into the jaguar of the underworld upon its descent into that dark place

(M. Miller and Taube 1993: 103-104). The fact that the water band it floats on undulates, like

waves, suggests that the water depicted is a sea. Since the sun was thought to rise from the sea to the east, the water depicted on the Q 162a mural seems related to the place where the sun rose. Furthermore, the very placement of this scene on the east façade references the place of the sun's birth as it faces east. Ingeniously, while the figure looks out east toward the sea, rising sun, and anyone viewing it, the viewer themself must face west, toward the scene of death and the dying or sinking sun itself. The primacy of east/west directionality was therefore clearly important even in the early stages of the site's history.

This importance is reinforced with other iconography and structures that were built in the eastern half of the central precinct. These were addressed in Chapter 4. Q 151 with its animated long-nosed masks and associated plaza (with evidence of flooding) relate simultaneously to the east and south, for example. Together with the Caracol (a building associated with Queztalcoatl-Ehecatl the wind deity and Venus), and temples in the East Coast Style, the east was related to watery places as locations of renewal. The Fisherman Mural makes the latter quite explicit. The figure of Kukulcan or Quetzalcoatl, who in one mythic rendition was said to have disappeared in the east, swims in a watery environment. He is accompanied by a bound crocodile and a fish.

The scene of the mural in the Temple of the Fisherman, both iconographically and stylistically, is like that seen in central Mexican codices such as the Nuttall (Milbrath et al. 2010). While clearly developed in the International Style, the scene was bound to Mayapán's landscape by way of its cardinal associations with the east. Located in the eastern sector, it relates clearly to the watery, eastern realm of the sun's emergence or "birth". Furthermore, I would suggest that in its association with themes of journeying, it was meant to be used by ritual practitioners during performances related to the sun's own journey from its birth in the east to its death in the west. It will be recalled that in related scenes of the Nuttall, the protagonists journey

to the realm of the Sun God where they are instructed to peer down a shaft. Notably, a shaft with sacrificial victims is also located within the Temple of the Fisherman, suggesting that the themes of each story are comparable (particularly the theme of journeying to the place of the sun, and the probability that sacrifice occurred during that journey or performance).

That the mural at Mayapán was meant to be used with the performing body is apparent in its large size, the fact it is on a large bench and because several of the figures are "upside down" and travel in different directions. The three-dimensionality of the temple of which the mural is a part further reinforces the inability of the viewer to disengage from the scene physically. The "gaze" in this sense cannot be separated from that which is "gazed at," as the body is incorporated into the scene once it is positioned under the temple's roof.

As discussed in Chapter 4, there have been several interpretations of the scene in the mural at Mayapán. Masson and Peraza Lope (2014: 95-96), for example, have suggested that the composition is related to the Aztec myth of the Fifth Sun wherein the fifth world or "sun" is destroyed. In recounting this myth, Masson and Peraza Lope (2014) note that Quetzalcoatl transforms himself together with the Aztec deity Tezcatlipoca into a sea serpent. Together the deities slay a crocodile. Per the myth, the earth was covered by water at that time and Quetzalcoatl's subsequent mission was to retrieve the bones of humans born in a past creation.

A somewhat different interpretation is given by Milbrath et. al (2010: 8) who note that the mural refers to a flood scene that occurred in K'atun 14 Ahau. Milbrath and her colleagues see most of the imagery as Maya, not Aztec. However, in agreement with Masson and Peraza Lope (2014), they recognize the Mexican Venus god Queztalcoatl as the central figure. As discussed by Gabrielle Vail (2009) and David Stuart (2005) it was Queztalcoatl who journeyed

to kill the crocodile responsible for the flood. Notably, a bound crocodile is seen in the Mayapán mural.

Following these interpretations, I suggest that Mayapán's patrons took advantage of the scene's ability to communicate *multiple* times and places via the theme of journeying. Iconography in the mural expresses both Maya and non-Maya protagonists and symbolism. However, even in differing interpretations a central theme of "journeying to or from a supernatural place" remains. I would suggest then that it was this central theme, and the ability of the mural to reference multiple places and times (not a strict binary) that was the hallmark of the Mayapán mural.

Anchored firmly within the urban cityscape of Mayapán, this stage provided a context wherein sacred journeys and sacrifices maintained the sun's cycle, assured the presence of rain, and ultimately guaranteed world order. The mural was therefore not a simple reference to distant artistic styles and subject matter, but through its eclectic use of integration, was distinctively and powerfully a work iconic of Mayapán's cityscape. It made Mayapán the synthesizer and reinterpreter of information gathered from these various sources. These stories were re-centered at Mayapán and used in a context that clearly marked out the east as an important direction associated with renewals and the sun. This direction was also inextricably linked with the west as a place of endings.

Understood as the place where the sun passed into the underworld, the west was associated with death. The Hall of Kings (Q 163) in that sector depicts several underworld deities and the plaza just to the front (north) of that structure is a mass burial ground with sacrificial victims (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). As reviewed in Chapter 4, the columns of the Hall of Kings were originally contexts for sculptural figures of either deities or venerated ancestors

(Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Following Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2003: 26), I believe that the sculptures represented Aztec deities. These deities were interpreted by Milbrath and Peraza Lope as Tlaltecuhtli, Xochipilli, Xipe Totec and Tlazolteotl (the last figure was depicted as female and pregnant). Each of these deities is strongly related to endings, and in particular, agricultural or world endings. Each of these endings, however, was also clearly bound to new beginnings—particularly as those beginnings related to the sun and/or agricultural renewal. This makes the hall's link with its complementary direction, the east, quite apparent.

Tlaltecuhtli, for example, was a central Mexican earth monster deity who was said to have been torn apart by Queztalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca to create the division between heaven and earth (Caso 1958). As the myth goes, the earth monster was seen striding upon the sea. In this version, the earth deity was female with a great desire for flesh. She is often depicted with a toothy open maw and gnashing mouths at her joints. Queztalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca each grabbed an appendage on either side of the monster's torso and tore her apart. Her upper torso became the sky and the rest became the earth. To console the maimed earth monster, the other deities decided that all plants would arise from her body. As Taube (1993: 27) writes, "from her hair are fashioned trees, flowers and herbs … her eyes are the source of wells, springs and small caves; her mouth, great rivers and caverns; and her nose, mountain ridges and valleys."

The other major deity depicted on the columns of the Hall of Kings is Xipe Totec. This central Mexican deity was related to springtime rejuvenation. As the personification of this deity, his priests were said to have worn the skin of sacrificial victims as if this was "new growth" covering the earth (Taube 1993: 33). In several examples of Aztec art, this practice can be clearly seen. Aztec sculptures often show the illusion of skin coming off of a fully fleshed body to suggest that the person depicted was wearing another skin. Sometimes, rituals dedicated to Xipe

Totec were combined with military initiation rites. Townsend (2000: 213-214) states that sacrificial rites dedicated to Xipe Toltec often took place in the earth-temple known as Yopico. Here, victims were sacrificed as part of springtime rituals related to agricultural fertility but also as initiation rites for young Aztec warriors.

Tlazolteotl, or "the goddess of filth," was also identified in the Hall of Kings. She is often represented in a crouching birthing pose. Like Xipe Totec, she can also be seen wearing the skin of sacrificial victims. Caso (1958: 54) states that Tlazolteotl is easily identified as she wears raw cotton around her headdress. This is a clear reference to agricultural harvests and is reinforced by the fact that her son, Centeotl, was a corn god. This corn god was in turn related to the god Xochipilli, "the prince of flowers." Per Caso (1958: 54), Xochipilli was the patron of dances, games and love, and the symbol of summer. He is recognizable by the human heart that adorns his staff and by the four points or *tonalli* which signified the sun's heat.

Each of the deities represented in the Hall of Kings was therefore related to cycles of life and death and had associations with endings and sacrifice. That said, certainly, both the east and west sectors of Quadrant Q are replete with references to sacrifice and death. This does not weaken the proposal that the east was associated with beginnings and the west with endings in Quadrant Q, however. As much of the art and architecture explored in this dissertation has attested to, the ancient Maya and other Mesoamerican groups did not believe life and death, nor the rise and set of the sun, to be separate categories. Rather, they were inextricably interlinked parts of the same cycle. At Mayapán, the pivots and anchors of this cycle were the Temple of Kukulcan and earlier Q 162a.

It is important to keep in mind that the Temple of Kukulcan was also built with the intention of creating strong connections with the northern direction. This orientation associated

Mayapán's temple with the Temple of Kukulcan at Chichén Itzá, as that temple also faces north. The northern direction was also a direction generally associated with rulership and so it was important, for political reasons, to highlight that direction (as discussed in Chapter 4). It seems, however, that the primacy of east/west orientations at Mayapán always remained a primary concern. Those who built the Temple of Kukulcan during the latter century of the city's existence kept these sacred directions in mind, even as they sought to orient the major staircase of the Temple of Kukulcan north, to match that at Chichén Itzá.

To safeguard the sacred cosmological powers of east/west directionality, architects of the Temple of Kukulcan made that temple a radial pyramid. Radial pyramids, as discussed fully in Chapter Four and Five, have strong connections with cardinal directionality and especially east/west directions (Coggins 1980). With these associations now safely preserved in its radial form, the main staircase of the Temple of Kukulcan could be positioned north. This was the direction associated with rulership and also the direction the main staircase at Chichén Itzá faced. Architects and artisans then added serpent iconography on the northern balustrades and upper temple columns to more completely copy the design of Chichén Itzá's temple.

The orientation of the new temple took full advantage of Mayapán's unique environment. While serpent iconography on the north side of the temple was certainly meant to recall Chichén Itzá, these serpents simultaneously face the direction associated with Mayapán's upperworld. As reviewed in the previous section, and in Chapter 4, the northern section of the precinct gives the effect of a naturally-undulating and rocky environment. It is a place where, physically speaking, a person must respond to changes in topography. The outcroppings are noticeable in this sector and even left unadulterated in some cases (meaning their natural state was valued in addition to their unification with architecture). This is a place that lets the body feel and work within natural

inclines and "rockiness." It will be recalled that the Temple of the Niches, with its serpent mural, is in the northern sector. Bound to this landscape via rock outcroppings that act as anchors and merge with the structure, the Temple of the Niches and its mural declare the northern sector as an important direction associated with rulership. The mural's serpent temples could very well reflect the five serpent temples that were built at Mayapán along with the social groups (noble priests and leaders) who attended to them.

As Pugh (2001) discussed, one of these priests, the *AjK'in*, was likely associated with the Temple of Kukulcan and undertook rituals there. Such rituals almost certainly involved sacrifice. Furthermore, as an anchor for cardinal and vertical directionality, the Temple of Kukulcan was a perfect stage for such events. We shall see that while the temple did create a new and important association with the northern direction, east/west rituals related to the sun's journey remained important.

The frieze on Structure Q 162a had already marked the location of Q 161 as a site of sacrificial rites related to the sun's movement (see the discussion in the previous section and in Chapter 4). In line with such iconography, it seems likely that sacrificial rites associated with east/west directionality and the "life-cycle" of the sun were carried out on staircases of the later Temple of Kukulcan. The associations the Temple of Kukulcan had with the sun are clear. Discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, radial temples, when seen from above take the form of K'in or day/sun signs (Coggins 1980). As such they are also embodiments of sacred time related to the sun's cycle. As Aveni, Milbrath and Peraza Lope (2004: 130-131) point out, the platform upon which the new temple sits is slightly off of cardinal directions, making it correspond closely to equinoctial sunrise-sunset directions.

The pyramid was also designed so that the sun casts its shadow along the northwest balustrade to create the appearance that a serpent is undulating down this corner during the winter solstice. Importantly, the Temple of Kukulcan is also connected to Structure Q 161. This was a later addition to the Temple of Kukulcan. As Susan Milbrath, Carlos Peraza Lope and Miguel Delgado Ku (2010: 1-3) have pointed out, the mural in that structure depicts eight sun disks flanked by sets of deities. Explored in the literature review of this dissertation, the descending figures pictured in the middle of each sun disk represent avatars of the sun during different years in the Venus almanac.

Each of these associations suggest that the Temple of Kukulcan was intimately tied to ritual processes related to the sun's movement. This was explicitly the case when the sun cast a long undulating shadow down the northwest balustrade during the winter solstice. It seems likely that sacrifice related to sun rituals would have happened on that staircase. This was also the staircase that was adorned with feathered serpent iconography and, incidentally, it was the staircase that faced north – a direction associated with rulership (see the full discussion in Chapter 4). If the Temple of Kukulcan was indeed tied to the mural in the Temple of the Niches to the north, as Pugh (2001) suggests, politically-sanctioned sacrifices on the north-facing staircase of the Temple of Kukulcan seem even more convincing.

As M. Miller and Houston (1987) have shown, there is substantial iconographic evidence to prove that human sacrifice occurred with great frequency on stairs. This is particularly true of sacrifices associated with ballgame rituals wherein players might function as re-presentations of creation stories that were precursors of later myths such as that retold in the K'iche' Maya *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1996). Art associated with ballcourts frequently depicts the ball in play on stairs, as is true of Step VII from the Hieroglyphic Stairs 2 from Yaxchilán, Mexico (M. Miller and

Houston 1987: 55, fig. 8). In this example, the ball is clearly depicted on a set of stairs with a player kneeling at its base. The body of a sacrificial victim is inscribed within the ball.

Mary Miller and Stephen Houston suggest that these compositions exemplify "resonant images" in which the imagery is *not* an illustration of the setting of one event, but rather refers to stages of events (and therefore different temporal sequences) that were all associated with the act of taking sacrifices, playing and the ballgame, and performing the act of sacrifice. In turn, these images and the events they referenced could also relate to more primordial times and landscapes such as those associated with the underworld. As told in the Popol Vuh, for example, the deity who would be resurrected as the Maize and Sun god, One Hunahpu, is tricked into playing a ballgame with underworld death lords who then proceed to decapitate him and hang his head in a gourd tree. One day a young woman named "Little Blood," a daughter of a death lord named Blood Gatherer, encounters the head of One Hunahpu. She is impregnated by him after he spits in her hand. Eventually she gives birth to twins—Xbalanque and Hunahpu (the "Hero Twins"). These sons later venture into the underworld to avenge their father, eventually defeating and sacrificing the gods of death and resurrecting their father (Tedlock 1996: 91-142). One Hunahpu then effectively replaces the false sun, Seven Macaw, as the resurrected and rightful sun (Tedlock 1996: 140). While the Popol Vuh is a Colonial era story, it very likely has antecedents in Precolumbian times. Figures from the story, including the Hero Twins and Maize deity, seem to occur in several Late Classic examples such as the plate depicted in Figure 6.1.

The symbolic aspects of this story are also apparent in iconography associated with actual ballcourts throughout the Maya world. Yaxchilán stair VII is one definitive example. However, the relationships are perhaps even more apparent via scenes from relief panels adorning Chichén Itzá's ballcourt reliefs. As discussed in Chapter 3, Chichén Itzá's Great Ballcourt is the largest

ballcourt in all of Mesoamerica. Similar iconography or at the very least, a Chichén Itzá-inspired ballcourt might appear at Mayapán as well. Yet, Mayapán has no known ballcourt. This makes it even more likely that major sacrificial rituals related to the sun's resurrection took place on the staircases of the Temple of Kukulcan – a site which already had deep ties to sacrificial rites and the sun via the Q 162a structure encased within it.

To summarize this section, I believe creative particularities in the design of the new Temple of Kukulcan were undertaken to keep the primacy of east/west directionality intact. Such primacy had already been established with the earlier Q 162a and its frieze. However, the Temple of Kukulcan also needed to be built as a reference to the feathered serpent cult and Chichén Itzá (for political reasons addressed in Chapter 5). The builders, therefore, aligned the major staircase of the temple to face north, but positioned the Temple of Kukulcan's *eastern* staircase to align with the line of Chaak masks from Structure Q 151, a structure in the eastern sector. Not accidentally, the rectangular subterranean plaza that was likely flooded with water that flowed into Cenote Ch'en Mul is also located in the east. These aspects, together with other iconography from the eastern sector (for example, the Fisherman Mural) associate the east with a place of emergence, and particularly the sun's emergence. It is important to note that the Temple of Kukulcan was designed *after* Structure Q 151, further suggesting that its eastern staircase was adjusted to align with Q 151's colonnaded hall and the Chaak masks.

Alternatively, the Temple of Kukulcan's west staircase connects with the line of stucco deities (many of which are the death deities mentioned previously) from the colonnaded Hall of Kings. The west staircase of the Temple of Kukulcan connects nearly exactly with this line of columns and the death deities that were once found there. Structure Q 163 was also built before the Temple of Kukulcan which means the builders of the radial temple were deliberately

attempting to align the western staircase with this hall. The eastern and western staircases of the Temple of Kukulcan, in a sense, reached out and anchored those two buildings associated with east and west so that they connected to the newly designed center. This center also referenced the south and the underworld via its nine levels. Simultaneously, the Temple of Kukulcan's major staircase and its serpent iconography faced north, a direction associated with Chichén Itzá and rulership.

The integration of such sacred cosmovision and political ideology was not only held in place with building design, iconography and orientation, but with important rites of sacrifice. Sacrificial rites on the stairs of the Temple of Kukulcan could have recalled similar rituals that took place in relationship to the east-facing frieze of the earlier Structure Q 162a, therefore reinforcing the location of both temples as the pivot around which the sun was assured of its journey. In line with this argument, the central precinct of Mayapán is replete with evidence of human sacrifice. Dismembered skeletons near the Caracol may be related to gladiatorial sacrifice and the tearing apart of the earth monster deity as suggested by Stanley Serafin and Carlos Peraza Lope (2008: 232-250). This structure is notably close to the Temple of Kukulcan in its location just to the northeastern corner of the temple. Sacrificial blocks were also found near the Temple of Kukulcan and a tapered stone (perhaps used for heart extraction) was found near the circular platform Q-84 (Shook and Irving 1955: 133; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003: 15; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 100). Serafin (2010) states that non-funerary human remains were also found in the plaza just to the west of the Temple of Kukulcan (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 100).

Following the discussion in this section, Mayapán's central precinct was designed based on an integration of cosmological principles and political agendas. The former was especially

modeled on a quincunx design. Moreover, this was done in a way that incorporated rich ideology from both Maya and central Mexican sources, and anchored those to powerful cardinal and vertical elements of Mayapán's own landscape. Together with visual cues that named the polity as a significant and civilized place, the layout of Quadrant Q's major buildings, based on sacred quincunx cosmovision, reinforced Mayapán's identity as a powerful Postclassic center.

7.4   The Similar Case of Cacaxtla

In summary, as a Postclassic city invested in both Maya and central Mexican worlds, Mayapán's ritual art and architecture had to be increasingly multivalent while also focused on remedying important concerns specific to Mayapán. It is worth comparing Mayapán's practices to the interesting case of Cacaxtla, an Epiclassic (650-950 CE) site located in what is now the Mexican state of Tlaxcala. The site is especially famous for its well-preserved battle mural depicting various combatants dressed for war and stretching over twenty meters long and located in Structure A (Brittenham 2015). Additional murals from Structure A include a pair of figures, one showing a man vividly depicted with black skin paint, donning an eagle costume and standing on a feathered serpent while holding a double-headed serpent bar (figure 7.1).

A structure known as the Red Temple also has murals including that of an old merchant deity in a divine landscape. In the Temple of Venus, near the Red Temple, murals depict both male and female figures. These figures are painted with blue skin and they wear large star or Venus symbolism around their waists (Brittenham 2015: 1-3). These murals are only a few of several still preserved at Cacaxtla. Such preservation is rare in the Mesoamerican world. The Cacaxtla murals, however, are rarer still for their artists' eclectic, yet polity-specific treatment of form and iconography. While located in the central Mexican highlands, the murals' style and

much of their iconography relate to Late Classic Maya traditions much further south. The organic and curvilinear contour lines are atypical of central Mexican preferences for more geometric representations (such as those of Teotihuacán and Mixtec or Aztec traditions). In that sense, the Cacaxtla murals seem more like mural styles preserved at Bonampak in Chiapas, Mexico (figures 7.2 and 7.3.).

Figure 7.1   Murals at Cacaxtla, Mexico. Photograph courtesy of Stanley Guenter, June 2018.

Figure 7.2   Bonampak, Mexico. Sacrificial victims depicted on the north wall of Room 2. Author's photograph, July 2015.
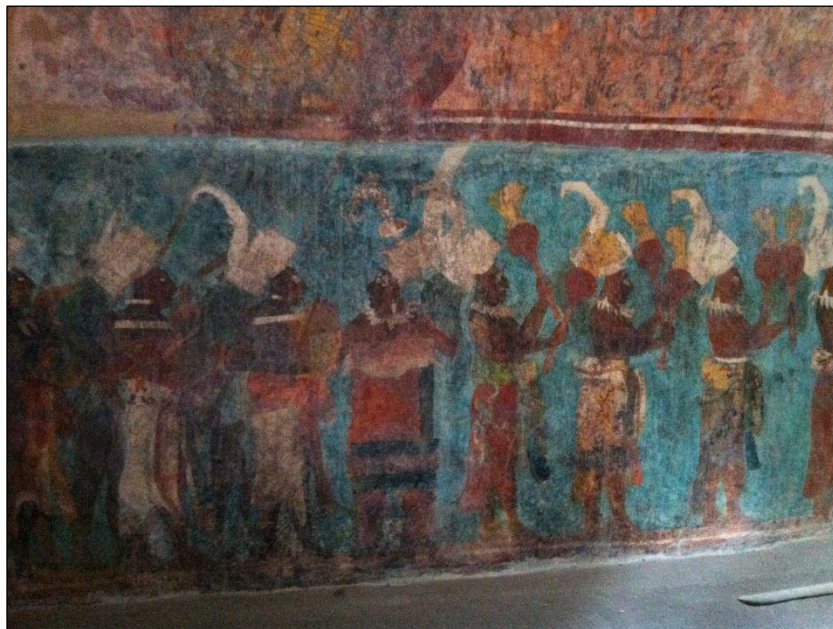
Figure 7.3   Bonampak, Mexico. Musicians and procession on the east wall of Room 1. Author's photograph, July 2015.

The Bonampak murals are iconically "Classic Maya" and feature the fluid lines that emphasize a reference to the real human body and its actions. Cacaxtla's murals incorporate much of this style. This is noteworthy especially because the dominant mural style that closely preceded Cacaxtla in central Mexico was undoubtedly that of Teotihuacán, not Bonampak (Brittenham 2015: 5). Unlike Classic Maya artists, Teotihuacán's artists employed bold, geometric lines and shapes within their murals. They then filled in these shapes with solid and bold blocks of color. At Teotihuacán, emphasis remained acutely focused on stylization as a communicative mechanism that referenced cosmic landscapes and deities. In some cases, the anthropomorphic form is only recognizable at Teotihuacán via glimpses of eyes staring out from broad rectangular shapes. This was quite antithetical to the Classic Maya preference for naturalistic representation even as the Classic Maya were contemporaneous with and had knowledge of the powerful central Mexican city of Teotihuacán.

While some authors (Graulich 1990: 110-111; Robertson 1985: 298-302; Walling 1982: 210-213) have suggested that Maya artists were responsible for the Cacaxtla murals (meaning these artists came to Cacaxtla to paint the murals), more recent interpretations suggest otherwise. Claudia Brittenham's extensive work on the Cacaxtla murals, for example, suggests that the form of the murals reflects an acute adherence to local central Mexican traditions of painting *along with* the incorporation of more southern Maya styles. Brittenham demonstrates that the Cacaxtla murals still reflect shallow pictorial space and blocks of bold color—both typical of the way color and space was depicted at Teotihuacán.

It seems that the artists, while apparently familiar with Classic Maya style, religion and subject matter, were still quite vested in the artistic traditions of the local area. As Brittenham (2015: 7) states, "Maya painting practice was integrated with local materials, technologies,

aesthetics, and iconographic concerns. The Cacaxtla painting tradition may have drawn on foreign inspiration, but it was transformed into a symbol of local identity."

Brittenham believes that the uniqueness of Cacaxtla's murals represents the ingenious ways Cacaxtlans selected from an array of domestic and foreign forms, styles and symbolism. They did so in order to reinterpret these elements into a polity-specific representation that best suited the social atmosphere of the Epiclassic Period. Like Mayapán's ascendency after the fall of Chichén Itzá, Cacaxtla was rising in the wake of a larger, more powerful polity—Teotihuacán. In each case the earlier, larger cities served (to a degree) as cultural models for both Mayapán and Cacaxtla. However, both Mayapán and Cacaxtla were economically invested in other areas of Mesoamerica. Leaders at both places were not simply copying their predecessors, but practicing very informed selectivity and engaging in creative reinterpretations to suit their own sociopolitical and religious needs.

7.5   **Remembering the Center**

Ironically, the very people responsible for fashioning Mayapán into a great Postclassic center were eventually responsible for its fall. Even despite their best efforts, Mayapán's leaders were not able to maintain the city beyond the mid-15th century. Based on evidence from Colonial sources including Diego de Landa, and from archaeological excavations at the site, it seems that Mayapán's last days were rocked by internal upheaval between the Cocom and Xiu families (Landa 1941; Pollock et al. 1962; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). That said, the city was well remembered for a century after its fall. Like Chichén Itzá before it, Mayapán itself became a point of reference for several of the Late Postclassic cities that survived into the 16th century. It also served an important role in the stories told by Maya living during that time.

The last section of this dissertation reviews the remembrance of this great center, manifested as it was in the recollection of those with ties to it. Undoubtedly, for those living at Mayapán, the city was home and people have always attached important and powerful symbolic meaning to their own homelands. As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977: 149) states, people have historically associated their homeland with a concept of "center." It is apparent that the city of Mayapán continued to hold its symbolic importance as center and homeland years, decades, and even a century after it fell.

For example, the word *Mayapán* was in use by Maya living in the Yucatán peninsula at the time Landa arrived there in the 16th century and was translated then as "the Standard [banner] of the Maya" (Landa 1941; Masson and Peraza Lope 2014: 14). The city's name also appears in the Motul Dictionary, a dictionary of spoken Yucatec Maya taken down in the 16th century by friar Antonio de Ciudad Real (Martinez Hernandez 1930). As epigrapher Marc Zender and Joel Skidmore (2006) note, "the *-pan* (or *-apan*) ending of the word Mayapán probably comes from the Nahuatl language…not from Mayan, and it is at least conceivable that the initial portion of the term is therefore Nahuatl too (Nahuatl being, of course, the language of the Aztecs and other groups from Highland Mexico)."[119]

It is apparent from Colonial records that being able to trace ancestry to Mayapán helped 16th century Maya secure their social and political positions once the Spanish arrived. Certainly, it is because of Native informants to Spanish missionaries and indigenous recorded histories in the Chilam Balams that we have so much discussion of Mayapán. Gaspar Antonio Chi, for example, was a chief informant to Diego de Landa and joint author of several papers in the

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[119] See discussion on Mesoweb's Maya encyclopedia:
http://www.mesoweb.com/encyc/index.asp?passcall=rightframeexact&rightframeexact=http%3A//www.mesoweb.com/encyc/view.asp%3Fact%3Dviewexact%26view%3Dbold%26word%3DMaya%26wordAND%3D

Relación de las cosas de Yucatán reports.[120] He was a descendant of the Xiu lineage who once

lived at Mayapán. His father was Napuc Chi, a priest who was murdered by the rival Cocom

family in 1536. Chi noted that his family was once one of the most important families at

Mayapán and wrote that they ruled the city jointly (Roys 1962: 28). Chi's recount of Mayapán

includes the customs of those living there. These were the accounts he gave Landa and provided

in *Relación of the Yucatán Peninsula* (Landa 1941: 230-231; Tozzer 1941: 230-232). Chi said

that the Yucatán peninsula was once ruled by one ruler whose last descendant was from the Tutul

Xiu family. Chi writes that the capital of the area was the city of Mayapán. He states that tribute

was received by the Xiu family at Mayapán while suggesting that those dwelling outside of the

city walls were subject to providing that tributary to lords of Mayapán (Roys 1962: 64-65).

Chi's recount of Mayapán clearly focuses on the important role played by his family, the

Xiu lineage, and is likely not entirely correct. The Cocom family had a powerful stake in the

development and governing of Mayapán as well. Further, there is no evidence to suggest a Xiu

king ever had sole power over Mayapán or the Yucatán peninsula during that time. However, the

history Chi provides us does suggest that Mayapán remained central in the hearts and minds of

Native Colonial historians and informants and particularly those from noble houses who had

some stake in the current Colonial regime.

Certainly, Landa's history of the Yucatán peninsula discussed in the literature review of

the dissertation has provided us with extensive information about Mayapán. Chi, in addition to

others living during the 16th century, told Diego de Landa of the foundation and ultimate fall of

Mayapán. They discussed the creation of the city by the deity Kukulcan and recounted the major

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[120] The *Relaciones de Yucatán* are 25 reports that were collected by "encomenderos" or those Spaniards granted the labor of indigenous groups in various towns. These reports consisted largely of responses to questionnaires given to the Maya living during the time. Subject matter included the political, physical and economic contexts of the towns the encomenderos governed (Roys 1962: 28)

lords of the city. According to these informants, the city was called "Mayapán" by Kukulcan

himself, but was known by Landa's contemporaries as "Ich-pa" or "Within the Fortifications"

(Landa 1941). The accounts Landa (1941) was given also provide information about the in-

fighting between the Xiu and the Cocom and the eventual destruction of the city because of these

issues. Similar histories are also given in the Maya Chronicles or Books of Chilam Balam. These

17th and 18th century books mention Mayapán several times (Roys 1962: 74).[121]

Besides the Cocom and Xiu who had clear ancestral ties to Mayapán, several other 16th

and 17th century families also claimed ancestry from the city. For example, Landa (1941)

mentions there was a particularly powerful "priest" whose daughter was married to a man of the

family "Ah-Chel". The son-in-law of the priest eventually went on to found the prosperous

coastal town of Tikoch and his descendants were known as the Chel family in the 16th century

(Gates 1978: 17-18). Members of the 16th century Pech family also traced their lineage to one

Nohcabal Pech from Mayapán, as noted in the *Relación de Yucatán* from the capital town of

Motul. As Ringle (2009: 41-42) states, the Pech family was able to secure prominent positions in

major towns including Motul, Maxtunil, Taxkukul, Conkal, and Chaak Xulub Ch'en because of

their connections to Mayapán. In the Chilam Balam of Chumayel, several lords noted that they

could even recount where their former houses were in the Postclassic city (Roys 1972: 33).

Beyond the names of lords and lineages associated with Mayapán, several other citations

of Mayapán are given throughout the *Relaciónes*. These make mention of Mayapán in relation to

the language of the peninsula, religions that were practiced, and the social hierarchies that had

developed. Below are a few examples:

- From the Relación de la Ciudad de Merida (RY 1: 50): *They speak a single language in all these provinces, called Maya and meaning maternal language. It has its origin in an*

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[121] Discussed in the Chilam Balam of Mani (Roys 1933)

ancient town named Mayapán, which had general dominion over all these provinces, which have 120 leagues of longitude.

- From the Relación de the Yucatán (RY 1: 118): *All this province has only one language, which all the natives speak. It is called the language of the Maya, from a city named Mayapán, which was the last city (poblazon) that the natives had, which, according to their count, would have been depopulated 150 years ago.*

- From the Relación de Yucatán of Motul (RY 1:77-78): *This town took the name Mutul from a very ancient lord who settled it, whom they called Cacmutul, which means white man. The language which the inhabitants speak is that which the natives of these provinces commonly and generally speak, which they call Maya, which is derived from Mayapán, which was a site where there assisted some lords who in former times held dominion over all this land.*

- From the Report of Tekal, north of Izamal (RY 1: 176-77): *At one time all this land was under one lord, in the time when the lords of Chichén Itzá reigned, and their lordship endured more than 200 years. After much time, the city of Mayapán was settled, where the absolute lord was one whom they called Tutul Xiu, from whom descend the natural lords of the town of Mani of the Royal Crown…This one took all the land more by strategy than by war; and he gave laws, determined the ceremonies and rites that he had, and he taught letters and ordained his lordships and knighthoods….and so at the conquest of these provinces there were already many lords and caciques. In every province there were lords, because after the destruction of Mayapán, an ancient city where the Tutul Xiu was lord, there was no enduring peace in these provinces; but each province had its cacique and lord. And so, the conquerors [the Spaniards] found it.*

This is only a small selection of the several citations of Mayapán in the Colonial documents. Even this short selection, however, shows that well into the 16th century, Mayapán functioned as a point of clear reference around which history continued to be built. Much like the Temple of Kukulcan that centered the buildings of Quadrant Q, Mayapán itself functioned as a way to center Native memory and history after the arrival of the Spanish and the subsequent traumatic conquest of Native culture. One important aspect that has not been fully discussed regarding this role is the large surrounding wall that enclosed the site. It is notable that Mayapán's wall is mentioned in Landa's accounts, in the *Relaciones* and in the later Chilam Balams. The structure seemed to have functioned as a major iconic feature of the city. As noted

earlier, Landa (1941: 26) and several of his informants, for example, referred to the city as Ich-

pa, or "Within the Fortifications." Gaspar Chi (196: 64-65) also states that those residing outside

the bounds of the wall owed tribute to those lords within it.

Today the wall at Mayapán is no more than one meter high in most places. However, at

one point it would have been much higher and there is evidence that several gates and porticos

existed along its periphery (Masson and Peraza Lope 2014). Most settlement associated with

Mayapán occurs within the embrace of the surrounding wall and those residences that were

outside of it were still closely clustered nearby (Russell 2013: 275). Bradley Russell's (2013)

recent study of the wall suggests it was defensive, but also served to control and guide traffic

flow and religious events.

The wall was constructed to have a 1.5-2m tall outer ring with a slightly lower "bench"

built within its interior. The bench would have made it possible to walk along it. As Russell

(2013: 278) states, it is roughly nine kilometers in length and had twelve gates (Figure 7.4).

These gates vary in size and design, suggesting to Russell that they served defensive purposes

(more variability in the portals offered less ease of access). However, the gates and the wall also

served religious and political purposes. According to the *Chilam Balam of Mani* (Roys 1962:

79), certain lineage groups were said to have controlled four main directional gates. The east

gate, for example, was controlled by the Kowoj lineage and a temple group in that section may

also have been associated with this family.
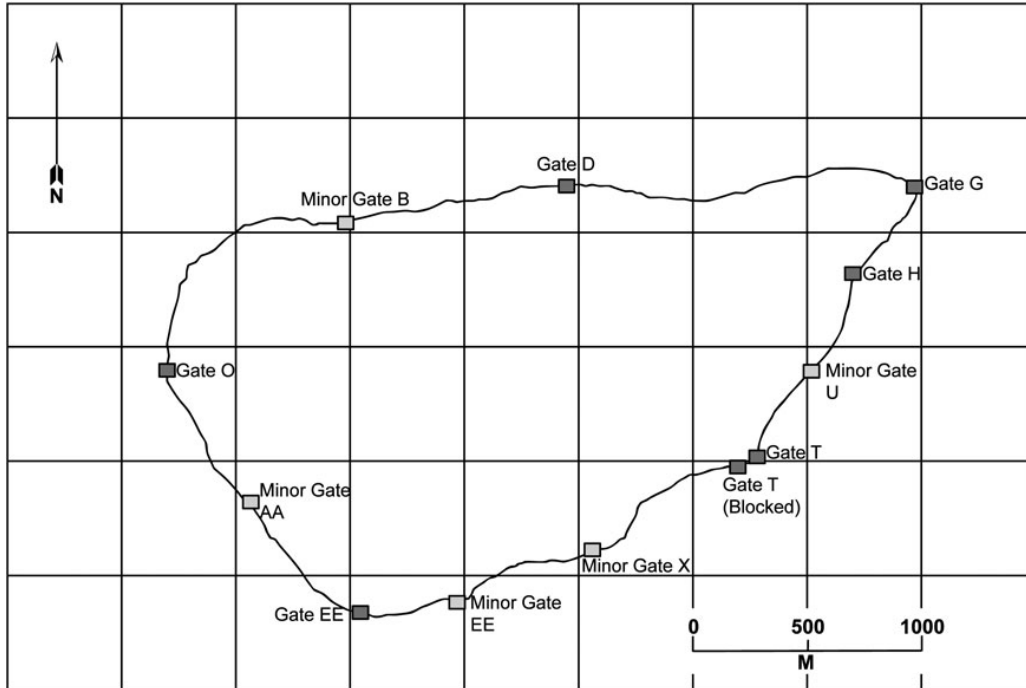
Figure 7.4   Mayapán, Mexico. The Wall at Mayapán with Gates. Russell
2013: fig. 2

Based on the discussion thus far, it is clear that the wall had various political uses.

Perhaps its major function, however, was to surround and contain the sacred landscape of

Mayapán and those important structures anchored to it. Ironically, this is made especially

apparent in what it *did not* contain. In his analysis of several cenotes at Mayapán, Russell (2013)

has also noted that certain cenotes, such as Cenote Sac Uayum in Grid Square X, were

deliberately left outside of the wall. After visiting the cenote and discussing it with local

villagers, Russell has suggested that the cenote was not included within the wall of Mayapán in

order to protect people from its dangerous forces. According to Russell (2013: 286), local people

today avoid it as they say a feathered serpent lives in it and in the tree above it. It is said to be a

powerful and malevolent portal.

This abbreviated review of the wall at Mayapán makes it clear that it was an important feature of the city. Its twelve equally-spaced gates would have allowed for the control of traffic into the sacred space of Mayapán just as the variability in gate design (and the wall itself) would have provided protection. It seems likely that certain gates were associated with powerful families of Mayapán. The wall itself enclosed and kept positive powers within at the same time as it kept harmful powers out. In each of these ways it was meant to define and safe-guard the political, religious and social center of life at Mayapán. That the wall was remembered and recalled centuries after the city fell is testament to its role in creating a sense of place at Mayapán that was distinct and unique from other places.

In concluding this study, I must refer to my own first memories of Mayapán. It looked very little like several of the more "traditional" Classic Maya cities I had recently visited. To be honest, my first experience there was due to a last-minute stop on my way back from a whirlwind tour of sites in Chiapas, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. At that time Mayapán seemed to me a strange site. Perhaps this was because it wasn't filled with people, its temples were easily accessible, and its sculptures and murals seemed to have been finished only yesterday. I remember thinking how free this center was of bustling tourists and vendors, but how full it was of silent memories. Perhaps that is what made my initial experience of the site so pristine—as I was quite alone in its ancient center.

Certainly, in popular culture and in the history of Mesoamerican art, Mayapán has been in the shadow of giants like Chichén Itzá, Late Classic Maya kingdoms such as Tikal and Palenque, and Aztec Tenochtitlán. However, the city deserves a more prominent position in our study of Maya art history and society. The scholars reviewed in this dissertation have made great strides, but there is yet much to do.

The architectural relationships Mayapán had with the Maya cities that rose shortly after it fell would be an excellent course of future study. Its structures share some similarities with Kowoj sites including Topoxté in the Petén of Guatemala, for example, and stone turtles have also been found at these sites (Rice 2009b: 3-20). Timothy Pugh and his colleagues reported that two turtles were found near altars within colonnaded halls at the site of Nixtun Ch'ich' in addition to structures at Topoxté (Pugh et al. 2016: 9, fig. 9). Like the Mayapán turtles, one of the turtles has a circular hole which likely would have been capped with a stone top (Figure 7.5). Pugh and colleagues noted that the contents of the offering or objects placed within the turtle had been deliberately removed.

On a broader level, it is important to continue critical analysis about the nature of the adopting, synthesizing and reinterpreting of artistic and architectural styles, symbols and forms in order to avoid thinking in terms of binary models. The important work that has been brought together surrounding this discussion is commendable in *Twin Tollans* – a volume that reviews relationships between the Terminal Classic Maya and central Mexican cities. Multifaceted Maya and non-Maya artistic interaction during the Epi, Terminal and Postclassic Periods has also been analyzed by Virginia E. Miller, Claudia Brittenham, and Susan Milbrath, among others who have contributed to this dissertation.
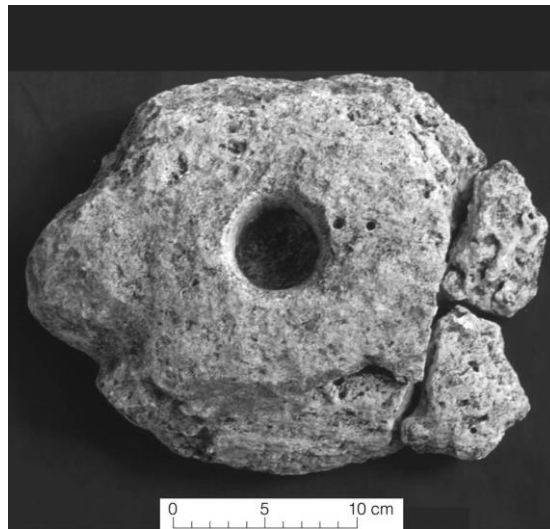
Figure 7.5   Nixtun Ch'ich', Guatemala. A Stone turtle similar to those at Mayapán. Photograph by Donald Rice in Pugh et al. 2016: fig. 9.

More recently, Keith Jordan (2016) has undertaken the task of tracing the longevity of non-Maya artistic elements in Maya art by revisiting the Mayapán murals in Structure Q161 and analyzing Late Classic sculpture. Jordan argues that the iconography and style of the murals reflects a long Maya tradition of appropriating the central Mexican "other" in the "form of local political and religious power"(2016: 413). In essence, Jordan suggests that the International style and symbols reflected in the Mayapán murals are like "prestige goods" controlled and owned by Maya elite at Mayapán. Jordan believes that the figures in the sun disks represent deified and revered Maya ancestors while simultaneously showing connections (stylistically) with central Mexico as a move that reinforced local sociopolitical prestige.

It is my hope that my own dissertation provides information useful to this developing conversation. Clearly, Mayapán's leaders, artists and architects were creative and resourceful people who used their abilities to integrate sacred cosmological principles into their own center.

Simultaneously, these people created powerful visual relationships with important cities existing before and during the time of Mayapán. Through techniques including copying, spoliating, binding, orienting, and reinterpreting, Mayapán's leaders created one of the most artistically dynamic urban centers in Mesoamerica. Their city was not a simple copy nor a static binary product. It was instead a city formed by a variety of deliberate, creative and critical choices that were largely guided by the sacred landscape on and through which the city was built.

APPENDIX I: Interaction and Economic Zones in Mesoamerica

According to Smith and Berdan (2003: 25-31):

Core Zones refers to areas of high populations and concentrated political power. These features lead to urbanization (typically including major investments in monumental architecture) and to a high demand for luxury goods by core-zone elites.

Affluent Production Zones are also areas of high populations and intensive economic activity (both production and exchange) that lacked the powerful polities and large urban centers found in core zones.

Resource Extraction Zones occupy a peripheral area where important nonagricultural raw materials were mined or obtained.

Exchange Circuits refers to the exchanges of goods and information throughout Mesoamerica during the Postclassic period. We [Smith and Berden] have identified four such circuits of the Late Postclassic period: west Mexico, the Aztec empire, the Maya zone, and the southern Pacific coastal zone.

International Trade Centers: International trade centers have several or all of the following characteristics: they engage in trade with distant areas, they trade with many different areas, they have a high volume of trade, and they exhibit a great diversity of trade goods.

Style Zone: Large areas characterized by distinctive Late Postclassic art styles. We [Smith and Berdan] have identified a single Postclassic international style that divides into four sub styles: The Aztec style, the Mixteca-Puebla style, the coastal Maya mural style, and the south-west Maya style. The existences of these zones, which cut across polity boundaries and economic regions, implies high levels of interaction among artists or patrons within each zone.

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