Kukulkan's Realm

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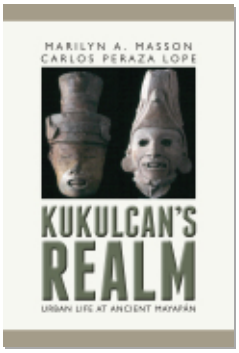

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Recognizing Complexity in Urban Life

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The complexity of urban institutions at the city of Mayapán is reflected in the details of the chapters of this book. This new look at the last major Pre-Columbian Maya political capital reveals multiple layers of political, urban, social, economic, and religious organization. The general history of Mayapán's most influential governors has been known since Diego de Landa's day, and here we have looked beneath the surface to explore evidence for middle-level political cohesion that would have tied the city's lords to its ordinary laborers. Within the cityscape, characteristics of architectural form, size, function, and artifact assemblages attest to subsystems that articulated the teeming daily desires and objectives of at least 15,000 residents. Although this book's chapters consider separate categories of data that reflect neighborhood administration, planning, household settlement, economic production and exchange, and religious images, it is clear that these aspects of life at Mayapán overlapped. Even the city's collapse was not simple or short, and this process testifies as much to Mayapán's resiliency as to its weaknesses. Complexity is reflected at different analytical scales. On a general level, the state successfully unified its citizenry, particularly those who resided at the capital, who adopted a relatively homogenous set of architectural and artifact styles. More specific variation is also tracked at the scale of individual buildings, where assemblages attest to pluralistic constituents who exercised some license in the annual cycle of religious observance, labor investment, marketplace purchases, and houselot characteristics.

Elite-sponsored social gatherings and the materialization of political and religious authority were closely

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founded on the economies of daily life. Activities at all social scales stimulated the production of basic goods in households, as is observed for the Aztec realm (Smith, Wharton, and Olson 2003). Commerce at Mayapán, along with its tribute rosters, would have bound together producers, consumers, traders, elites, commoners, farmers, locals, and visitors. Arguably, such integration has great time depth in the Maya area (Masson and Freidel 2012). The relevance of Mayapán as a comparative case study has yet to be fully recognized by those who study Classic Period Maya economies. While the importance of market exchange may have reached its zenith in Postclassic Mesoamerica (Sabloff and Rathje 1975; Smith and Berdan 2003a), the significance of this institution in earlier periods merits further systematic queries (Feinman and Garraty 2010; Masson and Freidel 2012). A ritual economy perspective focuses on the degree to which production was embedded in a system of beliefs (Wells 2006; McAnany 2010). The production of sacred and mundane goods for major ritual celebrations stimulated the local economy and connected producers to higher authorities in important ways for Mayapán and many other centers. This embeddedness of the city's commercial industries can be viewed as evidence for a highly integrated system. Embeddedness is no longer viewed as a label that points to an inferior level of sociocultural evolution (Feinman and Garraty 2010:173). Undoubtedly, the city's occupants were, for the most part, devout. But we leave open the probability that a secular realm of commercial relationships also existed in which religion was of little or no importance. To what degree were individuals motivated by practical concerns such as craft or agrarian provisioning and market events beyond occasions prompted by religious celebrations? We envision that such practical exchanges were a daily concern of city life.

Occupational diversity and dependency on others is a cornerstone of the definition of ancient urban life, whether one worked in crafts or agriculture or as a merchant, official, priest, or laborer (Childe 1950:11; Haviland 1970). Li Liu (2006:187) eloquently points out that surplus craft production is integral to the development of states and urbanism and that these processes cannot be separated into a linear causal sequence. Cross-culturally, the development of craft specialization at urban places is dependent on access to regional resources needed for the industries (Liu 2006:187). For this reason, the economies of urban places are closely articulated with those of regional towns and villages. At Mayapán, identifying craft production contributes directly toward recognizing that this political capital was a fully functional urban place. The importance of market institutions is revealed as a key mechanism for surplus exchange and household interdependency at this city. Ironically, V. Gordon Childe

(1950) did not consider markets in his treatise on urban life, as he thought that state authorities redistributed surpluses directly. Market institutions have received little attention in the Maya area relative to tribute demands, but this is now changing (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004; Dahlin et al. 2010; Masson and Freidel 2012; Shaw 2012). Even for the Aztec, for whom abundant historical records attest to complex market systems, economic analysis for many years emphasized a tributary mode of exchange (Kowalewski 1990:54). The existence and importance of Postclassic Maya markets has been accepted for many years, particularly due to the emphasis on commerce in the early works of Jeremy A. Sabloff, William L. Rathje, and David A. Freidel (Sabloff and Rathje 1975; Rathje 1975; Freidel and Sabloff 1984; Freidel 1981).

Studying the intersection of hierarchical and heterarchical networks is illustrative, as these configurations can be complementary, potentially conflictive, or both (Crumley 1987:158–59). We discover complexity at the junctures of these arrays of relationships (Crumley 1987:163). In ancient Mesopotamia, investigators have moved away from a top-down view of a hierarchical, temple-centered society in order to acknowledge the flexible, entrepreneurial character of social institutions (Stone 2007b:215). Mayapán, like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, exhibits variation in the elite control of production (Wright 1996:126). Elites or those under their close supervision tended to perform highly specialized crafting at Harappan sites as well as at Mayapán and Classic Maya centers (e.g., Ball 1993). Mayapán elites supervised or performed molding, modeling, stuccoing, and painting of deity effigy censers and copper bell production (Paris 2008; Cruz Alvarado et al. 2012). Aside from these cases, the majority of Mayapán's craft industries were organized according to commoner heterarchical networks. Some were concentrated in a downtown neighborhood (Milpa 1) while others were configured into smaller groups in dispersed parts of the city (Grid squares AA, Z, and S and Itzmal Ch'en). We infer that the exchange of these basic goods occurred in the marketplace, and it is also possible that craftspersons sold goods to their neighbors from their homes. Strict rules were enforced that confined trade activities to the marketplace, at least for professional merchants (Tozzer 1941:96n424). It is not known to what degree this was enforced on exchanges of small quantities of low-value goods within a settlement. Lawrence H. Feldman (1978) mentions the existence of petty vendors at the lower end of Contact Period Maya trader hierarchies.

The women and men of Mayapán fabricated the goods that were essential for the matrix of exchange relationships that bound together occupants of the city and other Yucatecan towns. Women wove and embellished fabrics for the textile industry, ever essential to the economies of ancient states (Pirenne

1925:153–55; Reents-Budet 2006). The stamp of female labor is also borne by white-tailed deer husbandry and fruit (garden or orchard) industries; these foodstuffs were traded out to coastal sites and also contributed dietary staples to the city's fare, as did maize tamales, also prepared by women. Although many stone, ceramic, and shell craft items may have been made by men, in the use lives of these objects, they passed through the hands of individuals of varied age and sex in the course of daily work. Aspects of crafting may have also been a family affair, with household members helping with preliminary stages or gathering necessary supplies (e.g., firewood for open pot firing or plaster making). Some households became affluent as a result of crafting or other part-time jobs.

Like the occupants of earlier Maya centers, farmers and craftspersons at Mayapán implemented a range of strategies for organizing their labor and reaping its rewards (e.g., Becker 1973; Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning 2003; Lohse and Valdez 2004; Masson and Freidel 2012; Dunning, Beach, and Luzzader-Beach n.d. 2003). Commoner households of premodern states were not the faceless proletariat masses of yesteryear's models, as comparative case studies defy views of passive or unchanging social relations of production, particularly between craft and agrarian producers and political elites (Gailey and Patterson 1987; Wailes 1996:4; Tringham 1996:236–37; M. Smith 2002; Robin 2004). Childe's (1950:11) model, which held that disempowered craft specialists made goods for food that was doled to them by a redistributive elite, is no longer tenable.

Heterarchical power networks provide opportunities for their participants and can thwart efforts by a ruling class to control the flow of exchanges. Such dialectical processes have long been recognized and inform the study of specific archaeological cases (Pirenne 1925:168–212; Crumley 1987). For societies with written or artistic records, top-down scorn for the contributions of farmers, craftspeople, traders, and laborers may be reflected in their omission from propagandistic works (Trigger 1980:108–9). Overt suppression of the mercantile sector has long been documented for Postclassic central Mexico (Berdan 1988), and parallel concerns may be reflected in Classic Maya art (McAnany 2010:256–57). Avaricious and decrepit depictions of the merchant deity (God L) are juxtaposed against the beauty, youth, and divinity of the avatar of Classic Maya kings, the maize god. As Patricia A. McAnany (2010) observes, this contrast was initiated by courtly nobles who controlled the artistic and written records and cast themselves as protagonists.

Considerable horizontal differentiation is observed in the work lives of occupants of specific dwellings at Mayapán and at earlier Maya sites (King 1994,

2000; McAnany 1994; Robin 2004; Yaeger and Robin 2004; Lohse and Valdez 2004; Hutson et al. 2012). Similarly, Elizabeth C. Stone (2007b:225–27) reports that neighborhoods in the ancient Near Eastern cities were populated by members of diverse occupations and that crafting was undertaken on a private basis rather than solely under the auspices of elite patronage. As for Mayapán, models of impoverishment of the general population of Mesopotamian city-states are no longer supported (Stone 2007b:218). Residents of both of these ancient societies had a degree of independence in terms of orchard holdings and grain fields, and some citizens combined farming, crafting, or trade with the duties of professional or religious offices (chapters 2, 7; Stone 2007b:219, 228). Chapter 8 reveals, however, that opportunities for affluence would have been truncated when episodes of drought or other pestilences rendered the region's economy particularly fragile.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

A full reconstruction of the complexity of the Mayapán polity and its hinterlands will require a regional approach informed by large-scale survey and testing. In urban history, as well as anthropology, studies have tended to focus on the city as an analytical unit rather than the regional systems in which the cities are embedded (Kowalewski 1990:40). This book is certainly guilty of the same. Data that are needed for understanding regional organization include the size and spacing of cities and the distribution of the population and economic resources (Russell 1972:18; Ashmore 1981; Kowalewski 1990; D. Rice 2006).

We still do not know the urban index—specifically, the proportion of the population in the Mayapán confederacy that lived in cities or large towns (Russell 1972; Kowalewski 1990). Presumably this ratio was high, given the importance assigned to town living at Spanish contact, when very few Maya farmers lived as relative isolates in agricultural zones (Freidel and Sabloff 1984; Restall 2001). Houses located outside of the city wall clustered within 500 meters or closer to this enclosure. Scattered farmsteads are observed in this zone, indicated by dispersed, isolated residential groups in distant tracts of cultivable land (Russell 2008a). Ancient states frequently had at least 50 percent or more of their population residing in cities or towns (Kowalewski 1990:46); Postclassic era Yucatán probably met or exceeded this proportion. The reasons for Mayapán's exact location remain unknown. Unlike cities with longer occupational histories, the Postclassic capital was quickly founded and built, and the commercial activities of the center would have involved some rerouting

of overland northern trade traffic that had former destinations in the Puuc, Mérida, and Chichén Itzá areas. Alternatively, preexisting routes to Classic Period Telchaquillo (1 kilometer from Mayapán) assumed greater importance. As for many premodern cities, the ability to attract trade was essential for Mayapán, and political capitals tended to enjoy particular advantages in this regard due to their ability to combine administrative, religious, and economic functions. Placement in a well-integrated and well-settled region also contributed to the stability and growth of ancient cities (Pirenne 1925:145; Russell 1972:234; Blanton 1996). Mayapán was built in a centrally located inland part of the northern peninsula in a well-populated region (Brown et al. 2006), as was its predecessor, Chichén Itzá.

Assessing functional differentiation among settlements is accomplished using qualitative and quantitative variables, with an emphasis on scale, degree, and change through time (Kowalewski 1990:49). Both large and small urban places can serve as seats of political, religious, and economic institutions for the hinterlands that they service (M. Smith 2008). Cities and towns in a regional landscape should be expected to differ significantly. Primate centers are identified by concentrations of goods and features that include civic-ceremonial architecture, state art, exotic objects, craft manufacture, and access to the widest ranges of utilitarian goods; such places linked their regions to the outside world (Kowalewski 1990:49; Smith and Berdan 2003b). Mayapán would have been distinct in the Postclassic Maya realm due to its population, settlement density, status as the political capital and center for religious knowledge, and investment in regional commerce backed by military muscle. This city would have also been home to the greatest concentration of skilled artisans and influential merchants and nobles, representing a cosmopolitan world city (Pollock 1962; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2003a; Smith and Berdan 2003a). Smaller towns would have performed some of these functions on a lesser scale. For example, craftsmanship declines in quality in the hinterlands compared to Mayapán, as reflected in the attributes of effigy censers (Masson 2000:262; Milbrath et al. 2008).

Investigating horizontal complexity among settlements of equivalent size is a task that is essential for regional scale studies (Kowalewski 1990:50). Although Mayapán lacked equals in the Maya lowlands, the prospect of studying horizontal complexity between secondary centers of the region should be foregrounded in future studies. Horizontal differentiation is expected to correlate with geo-political location and the possibility of specific functions. Sites may be positioned in a core-periphery continuum or they may represent boundary, gateway, or defensive locations (Blanton 1996). Resource access

may also result in differentiation, particularly for sites located near particularly rich or marginal cultivable land (Kowalewski 1990:50; Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning 2003), chert (Shafer and Hester 1983), or salt (Kepecs 2003). In ancient Mesopotamia, a surprising level of rural complexity, wealth, and functional diversity has been documented by aerial surveys (Stone 2007b:229); work in the Maya countryside has revealed the same (Potter and King 1995; Connell 2003; Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning 2003). Bruce H. Dahlin and his colleagues report striking functional differentiation between Chunchucmil and other Classic-era Yucatecan cities (Dahlin 2009; Dahlin et al. 2010). Spanish chroniclers also describe much productive diversity and specialization at different Maya towns (Roys 1957; Piña Chan 1978; chapter 7, figure 7.1).

Population growth is essential for the establishment of an urban center, but at some point in a city's history, growth can add strain. For example, the division of inherited wealth among siblings reduces prospects for affluence (Stone 2007b:228). Clusters of small *albarrada* groups in downtown Mayapán imply that larger *solares* were divided several times among family members. Unmarried sons at Mayapán may have served in the military or other service sectors, depending on their social status. Declining birth rates and increased mortality are also known problems for ancient cities, which can struggle to maintain their populations without the process of migration (Kowalewski 1990; Paine and Storey 2006). Upon founding the city, Mayapán's nobility resettled subjects in the urban zone so that they could provide necessary services (Landa 1941). The city may have re-implemented this policy with regularity. Mercenaries and slaves were brought to Mayapán at certain points in time along with individuals conscripted for temporary service. Other types of voluntary migrants may have been numerous.

How did cities attract populations other than by coercive means? Incentives such as offering arable land or other opportunities for making a living are sometimes effective (Stone 2007b:228). Cities promise occupations with potentially greater rewards than rural pursuits, although such hopes were not always realized (Pirenne 1925:154). Some workers in premodern urban settings achieved higher standards of living, even if it meant that they toiled harder, and their employment was precarious in the event of injury or illness (Dyer 1989:189–233). The purported individual freedoms associated with medieval European cities have been contrasted to those of the Maya, whose liberties were said to have been constrained by moral authority propagated by leaders at smaller cities like Piedras Negras (Houston et al. 2003). Yet the freedom of medieval laborers at the lower end of the wealth continuum, vulnerably tethered to meager incomes and the whims of their employers, must not be

exaggerated; and medieval society was anything but free from the constraints of Christendom. Although Mayapán had no equal peers in the extensive lowlands, the challenge of luring and retaining residents from their hometowns may have been daunting, given the pull of *cahob*, the primary source of social identity (Restall 2001). Beyond material incentives, the magnetism of a cosmopolitan place may have attracted more adventurous newcomers. Migration to late medieval towns primarily occurred from the countryside to the nearest city within one day of travel from the hometown (Russell 1972:231). Intercity migration was rare and limited to very skilled persons during this period in Europe, as more distant cities had fewer kin members who could house migrants, who were perceived as outsiders. Migrants may have traveled further to Mayapán, as urban functions were concentrated at a single settlement rather than across a network of cities.

To what degree did Mayapán promote the concept of political unity across Yucatán, as far as the eastern Caribbean coast, down the Gulf of Mexico, and into the southern interior lowlands? State-making can involve ethnogenesis, or the "creation of an authentic culture" for a group as a whole, that can override ethnic differences (Gailey and Patterson 1987:9; Oudijk 2002). Identities that transcended political boundaries in medieval towns used shared dialects, customs, building patterns, and diet (Russell 1972:18; Pirenne 1925:188, 210; Dyer 1989:189–90), and the same pattern holds for peninsular Postclassic Maya culture (Masson 2000, 2001b; Masson and Rosenswig 2005). Ordinary Mayapán-style pottery was widely emulated across Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and northeast Belize. Ritual effigy censer use is found beyond these zones into the further reaches of the Petén and Guatemalan highlands, with local modifications (Schele and Mathews 1998; Milbrath et al. 2008; Rice and Rice 2009). In terms of overlap in pottery forms and general decorative attributes, the Postclassic Period was one of the most geographically unitary in Maya history (Masson 2001b). Mayapán-style domestic or public architecture was sometimes reproduced at specific structures located at distant sites, including those of Cozumel, Caye Coco, and Zacpetén (Freidel and Sabloff 1984; Rosenswig and Masson 2002; Pugh 2002). Mayapán would have been a place of epic status to hinterland elites. Participation in elite culture was a dynamic force that bound together late Mesoamerican cultures, including those of the Yucatán Peninsula (Ringle, Négron, and Bey 1998; Pohl 2003a, 2003b; Reents-Budet 2006). Elites exchanged marriage partners, with all of the gifting and celebration that these occasions entailed. They also embraced the same or similar belief systems, used parallel religious paraphernalia and artistic symbol sets, and bedecked themselves in luxury goods that were widely

circulated across regions (Ringle, Négron, and Bey 1998; Smith and Berdan 2003a). This interaction contributed toward maintaining alliance networks essential for commerce. For distant Caribbean towns such as Caye Coco, a lagoon settlement less than 1/26th the size of Mayapán's walled area, political ties to the Yucatecan center would have been prestigious (Rosenswig and Masson 2002). Commoners at peripheral sites were also linked materially to Mayapán, even though they were unlikely to have visited the city. Ceramic vessels, stone tools, spindle whorls, and many other classes of artifacts are often indistinguishable in most aspects of form, style, or function between the center and east coast sites.

Hinterland interaction with Mayapán intensified during the last half of the Late Postclassic Period, from around AD 1250–1450 (Masson 2000). This pattern is reflected in the adoption of Chen Mul effigy censers, small line-of-stone shrines and altars, the use of other specific ritual paraphernalia (such as calendrical turtle sculptures), the diversification of everyday pottery forms to include more attributes like those at Mayapán, and house or public building styles. This resurgence, as J. Eric S. Thompson (1970:83) called it, is associated with increased public construction and an infusion of nonlocal goods that suggests accelerated development and prosperity in the periphery. Given Mayapán's troubles that occurred during an interval extending from AD 1270/1302 until 1362/1382 (chapter 8), the Caribbean surge seems inversely correlated with Mayapán's woes. Perhaps this is due to the gross chronological measures at our disposal. Mayapán may have bounced back from its slump around AD 1382–1421, and this forty-year interval may align with the acceleration of activity at distant sites (chapter 8). The eastern developmental surge may alternatively coincide with fleeting accounts of a diaspora out of Mayapán in K'atun 1 Ahau (1382–1401), as some of these individuals could have settled at Caribbean or Petén towns (P. Rice 2009a, 2009b). Both scenarios may have coincided: a diaspora could have partially overlapped with a recovery at the political capital. The dark K'atuns of the fourteenth century may have prompted an effective revitalization movement that centered on the use of Ch'en Mul effigy censers and more ancient Maya gods (Masson 2000; Milbrath et al. 2008; Milbrath and Peraza Lope 2009).

The revitalizing efforts of the Mayapán state may have been more effective in the long run for coastal polities than for the northwest peninsula. Once the villages and towns of the Caribbean were kick-started, they became active players in circum-peninsular trade and political interaction. These towns outlived Mayapán and were booming as a consequence of profitable commercial exchanges in the Mesoamerican world system on the eve of Spanish arrival

(Freidel and Sabloff 1984; Chase and Chase 1988; Masson 2003b; Kepecs 2003; Berdan et al. 2003). Political elites at Tulum, San Gervasio, Chikinchel towns, Caye Coco, and Santa Rita seem to have been up to the task of negotiating with the outside world and maintaining the social order that was essential to prosperity.

CITY UNITY

Efforts of the Mayapán state to symbolically promote polity unity within the city are reflected in standardized architecture and material objects used by its populace. This local process was a more intensive version of the types of regional emulation that have been reported in the hinterlands. City life can sometimes foster greater homogeneity in material culture and at other times promote social fragmentation through the effects of occupational specialization or the pull of hometown identities (Attarian 2003). Within Mayapán, the adoption of a normative house style is a particularly strong indicator of polity identity embraced by commoner households, voluntarily or otherwise. Like many ancient states, citizens of Mayapán used similar inventories of pottery and stone tools, and relative unity is observed in ritual practice at altars, shrines, and common deity effigies (see also Chase and Chase 2003:112) The orientation of domestic patio groups toward focal features within the city, especially the site center, suggests that these nodes held great meaning for commoners. A degree of experimentation was tolerated, as atypical house forms are found at the site, sometimes in clusters. Elites who constructed and operated outlying ceremonial groups took a mainstream approach in general attributes of building form, function, decoration, and the types of ritual paraphernalia that they used. The homogenization of outlying buildings makes it difficult to know whether they were built independently by ambitious elite factions or were part of a unified program initiated by governing authorities. We favor the latter interpretation, given the strategic placement of these groups by Major Gates D, H, and T and by large cenotes with long use histories.

The idea that minor ceremonial groups served as an intermediate layer of organization that linked outlying residential zones to governing authorities is not new. Minor centers and other outlying features at Caracol and La Milpa are thought to have performed administrative functions (Chase and Chase 2003:100; Tourtellot et al. 2003a:43, 2003b:106). Although the K'owoj were said to have guarded the east gate, there is little evidence that the eastern ceremonial group of Itzmal Ch'en was used to glorify the identity of any specific ethnic group. Gate H, near to this group, is not the only eastern gate that has

nearby monumental buildings. Itzmal Ch'en replicates many characteristics of monumental center public buildings (Proskouriakoff 1962a), but it also has some unique characteristics of unknown inspiration, such as an unusually wide substructure (Delgado Kú, Escamilla Ojeda, and Peraza Lope 2012a, 2012b). Other outlying ceremonial groups have idiosyncratic attributes. Dual shrines grace the top of the temple of the X-Coton group by Gate T, and Temple E-11 has a small *sacbe* by Gate D; these features are unlike edifices of the site center. Identifying similarities and differences of the city's monumental groups is possible using different scales and criteria, and the recognition of replicated features does not mean that the stamp of human agency cannot be detected in the details. One dimension of ritual behavior at Mayapán—mortuary ritual—allowed for a full range of ethnic, family, or individual expression of social identity (A. Smith 1962; Hutchinson 2010). Burial features, positions, and grave offerings are bafflingly diverse, even within individual house groups, and little spatial clustering is observed that might reflect the norms of social subunits.

How effective were state efforts at promoting unity? Conformity was clearly expressed by the majority of citizens in adopting the typical house style, but historical accounts attest to the fact that Mayapán was a place alive with rife competition and critique. Commoner households likely found themselves to be the targets of persuasive rhetoric for and against regimes in power. Some of these households would have had little choice about which side to take in factional strife due to their hometown, kin, or political affiliations. The Mayapán state was not above using "ritual sacrifice to terrorize a restive citizenry" (Dickson 2006:123). The two large burial shaft temples in the monumental center would have hosted bloody spectacles of sacrifice. Mayapán engaged in state-sponsored theater of cruelty and terror, a strategy employed by many ancient states (Sugiyama 2004; Dickson 2006:140). Dissention among the populace is not overtly observed in the material remains of daily existence, but the city's episodic rebellions (chapter 8) would have depended on some degree of public support.

PLANNING

The urban landscape at Mayapán is punctuated and penetrated by nodes, edges, and paths such as those defined by Kevin Lynch (1960), leading us to infer that the city exhibits more evidence for top-down planning than has been previously recognized. Cities are the product of many builders who engage in constant modification for their own reasons (Lynch 1960:2). Late

medieval cities grew through time, gradually adding walls to contain newly settled areas (Pirenne 1925:141–42; Russell 1972:22). We do not know whether Mayapán's great wall was built early or late in the settlement history, as its dry-laid stone is nearly impossible to date, but it was the most defining feature of the urban settlement (Russell 2013). Given Landa's (1941:24) description of the construction of walls at the time the city was founded, we favor the idea that the wall was an integral part of the original Postclassic political capital. Parts of this wall were carefully planned to include key features and to exclude others such as Cenote Sac Uayum, rumored even today to host malevolent forces (Brown 1999:157). Currently it is only possible to speculate the degree to which the city wall was perceived as a symbolic boundary between those living on either side of it.

Non-orthogonal layouts do not necessarily imply weak political control or a lack of planning (M. Smith 2007:21). Planning is best evaluated in degrees rather than by the classification of "planned versus unplanned" (M. Smith 2007:7). The latter dichotomy has generally been used to refer to urban places with orthogonal versus non-orthogonal layouts. Although Michael E. Smith (2007:7) observes that epicenters tend to exhibit greater planning principles than residential zones, at Mayapán the strategic placement of nodes defines and differentiates such residential areas and connects them to the larger city settlement system. Many aspects of city planning and organization represent the contributions of elites (Childe 1950:13).

Landmarks at junctions of features are particularly significant at cities (Lynch 1960:81). Focal points, especially public architecture in the settlement zone, as outlined in chapter 4, are distinctive from other features by having greater practical or symbolic meaning to the observer (Lynch 1960:8). Mayapán's focal points tend to cluster in functionally differentiated sets of nodes; for example, three of the city's outlying temple groups are associated with gates, and two of these are next to some of the largest cenotes at the site. Gates can be edges as well as nodes (Lynch 1960:100). Another example of a focal point includes the cluster of the city's three largest palaces, the monumental center portal gate, and the northern terminus of the city's principal sacbe. Focal architecture is spaced at regular distances, and it seems clear that this placement was part of a strategic effort to integrate the settlement zone in the eastern three-fourths of the walled part of the city. For example, distances of 200 meters separate three pairs of temples (E-11/H-17, H-17/T-70, and T-70/R-19) and two others are separated by a distance of 130–150 meters (R-19/E-11 and R-19/Z-50; see figure 4.2). Alignment of these nodes across these distances tends to connect the city gates with the epicenter or other downtown features; a north/north-

east-to-south/southwest alignment links Temple E-11 (near Gate D), Hall K-79, Temple R-19, and Hall Z-50 (southern terminus of the principal sacbe) and passes by the city's Square K marketplace, goes through its adjacent elite neighborhood, and intersects with the three-palace cluster and major sacbe (figure 4.2). Pedestrians entering Gate H on the east side of the city could have walked a nearly straight line to the focal points of Temple H-17, Hall J-109, Temple R-19, and the site center. The shared architectural types of halls and temples at these nodes fits an expectation of "coordination among the buildings" for "more planned" urban places (M. Smith 2007:8).

It is difficult to assess the degree of standardization in the planned public features of different Postclassic Maya cities or towns, as so little work has been performed on Mayapán's largest contemporaries. However, Tulum and Santa Rita share mural art styles with the city (Barrera Rubio and Peraza Lope 2004; M. Delgado Kú 2009; Milbrath, Peraza Lope, and Delgado Kú 2010). Tulum, in particular, has a serpent column temple that resembles Mayapán temples. The epicenter of Tulum, like that of Mayapán, was walled, and Tulum's colonnaded halls and large effigy censer assemblages are also closely analogous (Sanders 1960). Ironically, Tulum was built more orthogonally than Mayapán; William T. Sanders (1960) identified linear streets and the city wall is rectangular and symmetrical. Tulum's principal temple overlooks an inner walled compound. The outlying settlement of this coastal town has not been surveyed. Lowland Postclassic Maya towns across the peninsula lack formally built, recognizable ball courts (but see Masson 2000). The reason for this consistent exclusion of a traditional form of public building is not understood, and it contrasts with contemporary Postclassic Maya highland sites where ball courts are ubiquitous (Fox 1987).

Constructed features help to simplify individuals' perceptions of urban places (Lynch 1960:87). In some cases top-down construction of features can be an imposition that divides other logical, preexisting groupings (M. Smith 2010c:151). Cities reach their form from top-down as well as bottom-up processes; creating and using paths are logical aspects attributable to the latter. In preindustrial cities like Mayapán, focal architectural groups may have been particularly significant as landmarks compared to modern cities of several million people, where they tend to be secondary to paths (Lynch 1960). At the ancient city, at least one focal node would have been visible within a short walk from any part of the settlement zone (Shook 1952). In reality, focal nodes, paths, and other features form intersecting clusters that provide access, vistas, and guide the perceptions of mobile pedestrians through urban space (chapter 3; Lynch 1960:8; M. Smith 2007:36–37). "Way-finding" is the original

function of an environmental image, including constructed features within cities (Lynch 1960:125). Mayapán's cenotes, like those of other Yucatecan towns, were named features of critical navigational importance (Brown 1999:525–31, 2005, 2006). Today, archaeologists wishing to be escorted to any particular structure group shown on the Carnegie Insitution of Washington's Mayapán map need only to ask residents of Telchaquillo to take them to the nearest named cenote.

To what degree were urban spaces within Mayapán differentiated from one another? Areas designated for formal use provide an additional indication of planning (M. Smith 2007), such as the city's Square K market plaza, civic-ceremonial groups, and public cenotes. Two residential zones are distinctive compared to the rest of the settlement: the cluster of craft specialists in Milpa 1 and the cluster of elite residences in Squares K/R, to the east of the market plaza. More such areas might be found in future work. The three-palace cluster next to the monumental zone's portal gate probably constitutes an additional elite neighborhood, as these palaces are adjacent to one another and far exceed any others at the city in size or elaboration (chapter 4). Unfortunately, knowledge concerning elite residences in Squares K/R and in the three-palace cluster is limited to a single investigation of the R-86 group by Tatiana Proskouriakoff and Charles R. Temple (1955). Currently there are no comparative neighborhood scale data that would permit the evaluation of ethnicity for these clusters of elite dwellings. Commoner residential zones near Gates D, H, and T and their outlying ceremonial groups may have also been defined by these prominent focal points (Hare and Masson 2012). Most of Mayapán's neighborhoods may have grown through time with little formal planning. Migrants who were drawn to the city probably elected to live as near to their relatives as possible (e.g., M. Smith 2010a:151).

COLLAPSE

It is rare for a single ancient political center to maintain a position indefinitely at the top of a regional hierarchy. Dynamic regional shifts in the places of power are inevitable through time (Kowalewski 1990:51). For the Maya area, factors that contribute to the decline of a particular kingdom are well known. Kings were not alike in their leadership skills or longevity (Martin and Grube 2008). Competition for resources and power was manifested in the twin strategies of alliance networking and warfare that provide only tenuous stability. Regional political geography through all periods of Maya statehood may also have been resolved at times through participation in ritual calendri-

cal passages and prescribed rotation of duties of office (Love 1994; P. Rice 2004). Resource shortages wrought by climatic fluctuations would have periodically aggravated and accelerated inter-polity hostilities (Gill 2000; Gill and Keating 2002). Cross-cultural comparisons of ancient states reveal that subjects gauged their leader's divinely sanctioned status with metrics such as battle outcomes, droughts, and pestilence (Houston et al. 2003; Dickson 2006:135). Despite this tendency, across preindustrial Europe subjects tended to have a high tolerance for the failures or weaknesses of divine rulers, perhaps because of the lack of available options (Dickson 2006:135). Leaders of Mayapán can be grouped in this category. The Cocom claimed divine ancestry from Kukulcan (Roys 1962:63).

Internal processes also affected the undulating fates of specific cities. Family growth and wealth division multiply the numbers of nobles in search of new riches or opportunities. Marriage or entrepreneurial activities can reconstitute estates but do not provide a complete solution (Stone 2007b:219). Burgeoning noble sectors can present a major threat to political lords, and efforts to appease this sector are apparent in the late dynastic records of Classic-era Maya sites such as Yaxchilan and Copán (Schele and Freidel 1990). The formation of a council government at Mayapán provided an institutional means for incorporating high-ranking nobles into governance and gave them an official platform for vetting their concerns. Nonetheless, this confederacy was, in practice, a hierarchical system headed by a paramount (Ringle and Bey 2001). Inter-elite competition can result in the abandonment of elite obligations to their subordinates or extended families, and this can spur an exodus out of urban places (Stone 2007b:229). This response occurred at least once at Mayapán before the final fall of the city (chapter 8).

Elite factional competition and agricultural strain led to episodes of turmoil in the history of Mesopotamian states that periodically disrupted prosperous periods (Stone 2007b:229). This characterization is parallel to that of Mayapán. Like its medieval contemporaries (Russell 1972:31), Mayapán reached its maximum urban extent during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Medieval town development was truncated by the bubonic plague, at least temporarily. Ironically, plagues may have been one of the calamities that contributed to the suppression of political cycles in Yucatán after Mayapán's fall, even before the arrival of Europeans and the deadly epidemics that accompanied them.

The growth of militarism through time tends to correlate with an interest in defending accumulated wealth in ancient states, although Bruce G. Trigger (1980:73) points out that Childe, a pacifist, thought that warfare was a futile expenditure of wealth and manpower and did little to resolve city-state conflicts.

It can be difficult to determine whether warfare promoted or impeded the long-term stability of a given polity (Pyburn 1997:147).

Significant achievements of civilizations can survive the collapse of particular states or empires during interim periods of decentralization. Although some loss of elite esoterica will occur, the subsequent reconstitution of core elements of sophisticated knowledge and beliefs may arise from recesses in the countryside such as manors, monasteries, or remote towns (Trigger 1980:113; Blake 1985; Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993; Stone 2007b:231). The early Colonial era of Yucatán is a case in point. Mayapán fell over six decades before Spanish arrival, yet the towns of the peninsula maintained their knowledge of history, religion, and writing as well as key aspects of political, economic, and social institutions. Informants imparted much of this information to Spanish chroniclers. Naturally the implementation of Colonial policies wrought significant and irreversible organizational changes.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In advocating the recognition of complexity in the Maya lowlands, K. Anne Pyburn (1997:156) observes that it is ethnocentric to draw conclusions about non-Western societal trajectories, ancient or modern, as the outcome of environmental constraints or other unintended accidents and to interpret our own histories as a progressive set of advances that march toward ever-increasing complexity. Charles Mann (2005) also advocates a more nuanced view of ancient New World history, including that of the Maya, in arguing that Native Americans were neither passive victims of environmental catastrophe nor noble poster children for living in harmony with an unaltered wilderness. Mayapán's lords, subjects, and their predecessors should be given credit for a complex array of strategies, agendas, positive accomplishments, and failures that were dynamic and changing, as is appropriate for any other historical polity. Mann (2005:314) makes this argument for Maya kingdoms that collapsed at the end of the Classic Period, but it is also a relevant framework with which to understand Mayapán's trajectory.

This book's goal of documenting complexity in Mayapán's political structure, urban planning, settlement patterns, economy, and religious organization may seem at the surface to be a well-tread response to the tired view of Postclassic Maya civilization as a devolved, decadent, and weak echo of the glory days of Chichén Itzá and its antecedents. While the chapters of this book do address this problematic characterization anew, that has not been our primary goal. We view the argument over Postclassic "decadence" as one

that was long ago put to rest (Chase and Rice 1985a, 1985b; Sabloff and Rathje 1975; Sabloff and Andrews 1986; Sabloff 2007; Demarest, Rice, and Rice 2004; Smith and Berdan 2003a). Nonetheless, in some corners the view still lingers that "the practices of the Maya elite were largely extinguished by the 880's [AD]" (R. Fletcher 2012:331). The principal contribution of these chapters has been to recognize that the organizational institutions at Mayapán were more intricate than previously acknowledged. It is time to move past characterizing Mayapán as part of a "progressive deterioration" in the centuries following the Classic-era Maya collapse (R. Fletcher 2012:311). Roland Fletcher's (2012) projection of his doomed-to-fail low-density urbanism model to the Maya area is flawed by monolithic assumptions regarding limited forms of water control and dependency on agrarian worker mobility, about which there is little hard evidence. His ideas about productive homogeneity ignore the prospect of market-based food trade for supplying urban zones. It is also problematic that his criteria for success primarily concern city area and longevity, and he does not consider the fact that catastrophic climatic events have triggered the decline of a great many ancient political capitals. Don S. Rice (2006) offers a far more sophisticated treatment of the diachronic complexity of Maya city sustainability (see also Turner and Sabloff 2012), although Rice also does not discuss the solutions that market exchange can sometimes offer to supplement city food supplies and mitigate shortfalls (Freidel and Shaw 2000).

The recognition of variation, diversity, and institutional complexity within this ancient urban setting, as well its entanglements with external towns, makes research at Mayapán relevant to studies of earlier Maya cities. The definition and characteristics of urban life have not been fully explored for the Classic or Preclassic Periods, nor have the formal mechanisms that linked subjects to governing authorities been investigated in worthy detail. For example, Classic-era scholars disagree over whether, how, or why governing elites may have hosted and administered markets (chapter 6; Masson and Freidel 2012). Settlement data from the massive city of Caracol reveal a strong, centralized government and a planned and administered urban landscape and market exchange system (A. Chase 1998; Chase and Chase 2003; A. Chase and D. Chase 2004; Chase et al. 2011). Variation likely existed in the organizational complexity of different Maya centers, but foundational institutions of economy or government probably differed more in scale than form (Masson and Freidel 2012). In the Aztec realm, differences also existed in city-state affluence and influence, and some towns hosted simple, marginal markets where limited products could be purchased while others presided over large and diverse markets of regional

significance (Blanton 1996). Mayapán's internal market exchange, in which traders and craftspersons worked to supply the city's residents, would have had been a significant enterprise in its own right, irrespective of trade with the external world (e.g., Dyer 1989:7–8).

Studies that focus on a single site have emphasized greater local autonomy than may be merited. Such views depend heavily on the constraints of local production and offer little consideration of the role of inter-town exchange dependencies that potentially mitigated local limitations (Pyburn 1997:156, 167). Recent work has made positive advances in this direction (e.g., Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning 2003; Scarborough and Valdez 2003), but an emphasis persists on the relative economic independence of smallholders (Scarborough and Valdez 2009). We agree with Pyburn (1997:156), who criticizes an exoticized view of ancient Maya states that has fostered little recognition of an "economically based political system"—although chapter 6 discusses important exceptions in Maya scholarship. She points out that signs of complexity have long existed in the form of distant trade dependencies, craft production, complex agricultural systems that generated considerable surplus, and warfare. Economic incentives for the latter have rarely been considered in any depth. Major Maya centers were long characterized as nonurban despite indications to the contrary in terms of the occupational density and functional diversity of large settlements (Pyburn 1997:156).

An important question in evaluating the relationships of governors to the governed is the degree to which political elites controlled aspects of the economy. We have considered this issue for Mayapán. Except for a limited set of goods, we argue that elites encouraged but did not directly supervise the majority of basic food and craft production activities. We infer that elites were heavily invested in all types of distribution, particularly in taking tribute and administering large, regular market events (Freidel 1981; Masson and Freidel 2012). These events would have required planning, authorization, promotion, and policing by appointed officials (Piña Chan 1978; A. Chase and D. Chase 2004:117). Products of household labor, as well as market goods, were probably subjected to taxation. Incentives for merchants to frequent the city's market events would have included state protection en route. Multiple modes of exchange coexisted within all ancient Maya economies (Masson 2002). Luxury exchange among elites is also present in all ancient states, and it need not characterize an entire economic system (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004:116; M. Smith 2004:89). A high degree of integration of commoner activities with those of elites, as reflected by replication of artifact assemblages, does not necessarily connote an authoritarian regime (M. Smith 2002).

Little explored in this book is the issue of urban caché. How does a city establish its reputation in a way that attracts desirable and necessary occupants? Hosting one of the largest and most diverse regional markets was an important draw, as these attracted the best artisans and merchants who created more opportunities for luxury exchange for wealthy residents. These factors were important for Aztec centers (e.g., Blanton 1996) and presumably also for Mayapán. In addition to offering major market events and boasting a resident artistic and mercantile community, political and religious spectacle would have also contributed to the cumulative "image of the city" in Lynch's (1960) sense. Mayapán's monumental plazas that defined the heart of the downtown area, as well as key points on thoroughfares leading inward from the city's gates, exceeded in quantity and quality any other constructions at a single site in the Postclassic Maya world. Mayapán's priests and educated nobles were also the gatekeepers of religious and mytho-historical knowledge; the concentration of these literati would have helped to set Mayapán apart from its contemporaries as a wellspring of culture and commerce. A more morbid draw may have been the spectacle of public ritual sacrifice. The "ritual" attraction of a place due to monumental works and events is a centripetal factor (Scarborough, Valdez, and Dunning 2003:xix), and conjunctions of fairs and market events were one of several options for mercantile exchange (Pirenne 1925:143; Pounds 1973:404–6; Freidel 1981). Compulsory migration was probably a key element of Mayapán's strategy to maintain its population, but retention and stability are more effective with the addition of positive tangible and symbolic incentives.

Mayapán's image was not untarnished, and conflict among privileged sectors of society was endemic, if sometimes effectively backgrounded. Merchants and priests are people with connections and wealth who can challenge political regimes (Eisenstadt 1980, 1981; Dyer 1989). A priest, in fact, led the final revolt against the Cocom Mayapán government (chapter 2). But Mayapán survived through some of its dark periods until the very end, and to do so it must have counted on and received the loyalty of a significant number of subjects.

In this reexamination of Mayapán as a civilization, we have loosely followed Childe's (1950) framework for recognizing an urban place. Six of Childe's ten components of urban places have been reviewed in the chapters of this book: (1) urban density, (2) occupational specialization, (3) monumental public buildings, (4) a ruling class consisting of political, religious, and military officials, (5) sophisticated art styles, and (6) significant levels of long-distance trade. Building on this framework, we have documented significant variation in the complex, populous urban landscape of Mayapán in terms of wealth, occupation,