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## The People of the Patio: Ethnohistorical Evidence of Yucatec Maya Royal Courts

MATTHEW RESTALL\*

The Spaniards and Nahuas who marched into Calkini one morning in spring 1541 must have been nervous. On and off for over a decade the region centered on the town had witnessed Spanish-Maya violence. The Spaniards now fired their guns three times, once outside the town, once at its periphery, and again near the center, as they slowly made their way toward the plaza, their central Mexican auxiliaries fanned around them as protection against a possible ambush. But apprehension must have turned to relief as they saw not the battle-ready warriors of the Canul and Canche lords but the ruling court of Calkini presented to them in a dazzling array of material and human abundance and appeasement. What no one could have foreseen was that this encounter would signal the end of the Calkini court as it had been for a century—what we might take as the symbolic final moment of the ruling court of the ancient Yucatec Maya. The Spaniards and Nahuas departed that same day in 1541, leaving the Maya court to react, adapt, and persist, as it always had. Yet it would never be the same again.

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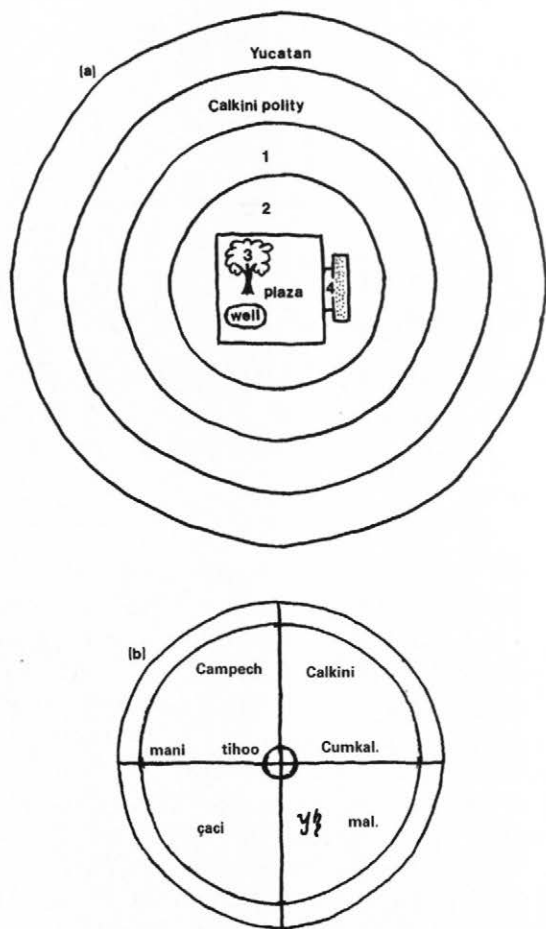


FIGURE 11.1 (a) Plaza and patio as courtly centers: the example of Calkini in 1541; (b) A Maya map of Yucatan, centered on Tihoo (Merida) (drawing by the author from the original in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*). Key to (a): (1) territorial Calkini *cah*; (2) residential Calkini *cah*; (3) the ceiba tree; (4) Napot Canche's patio. Sources: (a) based on text in TC: 11–17 (Restall 1998a:86–90); (b) facsimile in CBC (Edmonson 1986:195).

This encounter in Calkini was no great turning point in the decades-long Spanish invasion campaign; neither was the community of great importance in the peninsula—as we shall see, Calkini was but one of a dozen or so small Yucatec polities. But the incident is worth highlighting because, first, it is a rare case of a Conquest-era event that is well documented in the Maya language (the *Title of Calkini*, or TC);<sup>1</sup> and second, the details of the encounter contain all the key elements of the “royal” Maya court that is our topic of discussion—including a prefiguring of the court as it developed under Colonial rule.<sup>2</sup>



I shall discuss these elements below in two categories. The first is that of space and place, consisting of a conception of the court as a series of concentric spaces emanating from a center (Figure 11.1 is my visualization of the Calkini example and a complementary Maya rendering of the colony).<sup>3</sup> The force invading Calkini in 1541 traveled through those zones as they marched from the outer reaches of the peninsula ("Yucatan" in Figure 11.1) through the greater Calkini region or polity (discussed below), into the territory of the *cah* (municipal community) of Calkini, then into the *cah* proper, and finally into its center. The central space was the plaza, marked by its symbolic and sacred *yaxche* (ceiba tree, literally "principal tree"), the central community well, and the patio that fronted the house of the *cah* governor, Napot Canche. Having entered the plaza, the invaders proceeded to gather up the goods displayed for them beneath the ceiba tree—sacks of turkeys, corn, honey, and cotton.

In symbolically claiming their "right" to the produce of the land, these outsiders were forcing a shift in Maya conceptions of center and subject. Calkini, with its central elements of plaza, patio, tree, and well, would remain at the courtly core of a local world, as would be the case in all the *cahob* (Maya communities) of the peninsula. But Maya rulers of Colonial *cahob* would also be forced to recognize another structure of courts and centers leading all the way to Spain—a structure that was both parallel to the Maya world and rendered it subject and peripheral.

Although this discussion of place and space emphasizes cultural conception and social usage, the other category of courtly elements is a more directly human one—the court as rulers and retinue (i.e., members of the court). The people of Calkini's court of 1541, in presenting tribute, watching its seizure, and later recording it for posterity, were ritually communicating both their status as the rulers and principal men of the court as well as their acceptance of Spanish domination (at least for the time being). However, there was a further dimension to the ritual that the Mayas had not anticipated. Before leaving town, the Spaniards entered Napot Canche's patio, the space that lay between his house and the plaza; there they seized, bound, and carried off members of the court of the local Canul and Canche rulers. The written account of the event names eleven of these captives, including speakers (*ah canob*, i.e., councilors), priests, and a couple of courtly slaves (TC:12–17; Restall 1998a:86–90).

Yet both sides of the Maya perception of the ritual's meaning would remain intact. The subordination of the local elite to Colonial rule would become permanent (no doubt far more so than anyone, perhaps even the Spaniards, would have imagined in 1541). But the status of the local elite—their position as members of a ruling court—would from the onset be confirmed by the colonists, who relied upon the Maya elite to govern at the local level—to keep the tribute coming for three centuries. Symbolic of the continuity of the court despite the disruption of conquest is the fact that one of those seized on Napot Canche's patio was a grandson

of his, Nachan Couoh, who would later become baptized and serve as *batab* (governor) of Calkini (TC:17–18; Restall 1998a:90–91). In the second half of this chapter I discuss the four methods used by the Maya ruling class to perpetuate this continuity of status.

First, a word on this chapter's sources and temporal focus. The sources are archival documents written alphabetically in the Colonial period in Yucatec Maya. I have primarily used the four extant Yucatec examples of the quasinotarial genre known as the "primordial title," namely the *Title of Acalan-Tixchel* (TAT), the *Title of Calkini* (TC), and the *Pech titles* (TCH; TY).<sup>4</sup> In addition I have drawn upon another quasinotarial genre, that of the *Books of Chilam Balam*,<sup>5</sup> as well as the extensive corpus of notarial documents in Maya, most notably petitions by Maya rulers to Spanish officials.<sup>6</sup>

My temporal focus is primarily the sixteenth century, as that is the period of most relevance to these ethnohistorical sources. However, the sources also illuminate two broader time periods that meet in the sixteenth century. The first of these I have dubbed the "Segmented Century," because in the hundred years between the collapse of the Mayapan arrangement in the 1440s and the founding of a Spanish colony centered on Merida in the 1540s, no dynasty or region dominated any significant portion of the peninsula and none came close to forcing any kind of regional hegemony comparable to those of Mayapan and Merida.

The second period under study ran from the pivotal decades of the Spanish invasion, the 1530s–1560s, through the seventeenth century. For Spaniards 1542—the date Merida was founded—was a watershed that marked the province's transition into the civilized world (Chamberlain 1948; Restall 1998a:4–23); for Mayas the transition to Colonial rule was more gradual, in some ways as long as the Colonial period itself. Indeed, although the Spanish (and modern scholars') perception of the Conquest as marking a sharp division between two time periods was borne out by the profound Spanish impact upon Maya life, the emphasis by Maya rulers upon continuity in the sixteenth century was also borne out by colonialism's consolidation of Maya geopolitical segmentation. In short, these centuries are not as cleanly separated by the Spanish Conquest as one might expect; continuity and change played equally important roles.<sup>7</sup>

### The Court as Place and Space

In this section we will follow the 1541 Spanish-Nahua departure from Calkini—beginning beneath the ceiba tree in the plaza, moving to the well, crossing to the patio, then moving back across the plaza, out through the town, and into the surrounding region—with each element drawn from the Calkini story representing the broader Yucatec picture (see Figure 11.1).

### Trees

According to Fray Diego de Landa, sixteenth-century chronicler, proselytizer, and bishop in Yucatan, contact-era Mayas believed that the heavenly afterlife was lived beneath the branches of a very cool and shady ceiba tree (*muy fresco y de gran sombra*; Landa 33).<sup>8</sup> Certainly trees played an important role in Maya economic, social, and cultural life. They provided construction materials and food, were frequently left to family members in wills, marked boundaries in place of walls or fences, and were used in various ritual, ceremonial, and ornamental ways (Marcus 1982; Patterson 1992; Restall 1997a:203–205). Trees also provided refuge of all kinds, ranging from the shade of the afterlife, to shade in the middle of the plaza, and the shelter offered to those living in or traveling through the forest.<sup>9</sup>

Among the many uses and meanings of trees, two are of particular relevance here. One is the tree-ruler association in Maya culture, a topic discussed in this chapter's second half. The other relevant image is that of the tree as the axis of the cosmos—the World Tree whose best-known example is an ornamented, stone-carved tree from Palenque (Schele and Freidel 1990:66–77). Another example is on a stela from Izapa (see Figure 11.2), an image that seems particularly apposite here because its depiction of a cayman-tree resembles a ceiba; it appears to be functioning as a World Tree stretching from sky to underground, and some sort of commercial activity is depicted beneath the tree (loosely evoking the tribute ceremony of many centuries later beneath Calkini's ceiba).<sup>10</sup>

In the decades after the Conquest a myth regarding such carved stone trees, which looked somewhat like foliated crosses, circulated in the Mani region and possibly throughout Yucatan, to the effect that these "green trees of the world" were placed in temples by Maya prophets in preparation for the coming of Christianity and its crosses (Gaspar Antonio Chi, in RHGY, I:69). Perhaps the notion of a tree as a universal pivot was important enough to the Maya worldview that it needed to be accommodated to the incoming iconography of Christianity. As the link between the underworld, the earth, and the heavens, the Maya World Tree needed to be reinterpreted as an anticipator of the new notion of what heaven was. Likewise, Calkini's ceiba could continue to be the axis that symbolically held together that community's world; through the image of the tree, Calkini was still a microcosm of the universe.

### Wells

Calkini's ceiba was a symbol of life in Calkini because, like the community's inhabitants, it was sustained by the water beneath the plaza. The



FIGURE 11.2 The Ceiba at the Center of the World: Stela 5, Izapa, Chiapas (drawing by the author after Gareth Lowe in Lowe et al. 1982:30, 93, 298; and Pons 1997).

connection between wells and human settlement in Yucatan, a limestone peninsula virtually devoid of surface water, is too well known to be worth dwelling on here. It takes little more than a cursory glance at the various maps available from Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática (known as INEGI) to see that ancient, Colonial, and modern settlements have tended to cluster around *cenotes* (as Yucatan's natural wells are called) and places where the water table can be accessed from the surface with relative ease. Every archaeological site features wells; the inherited well (*chen*) is ubiquitous in the written testaments of Colonial-era Mayas (Restall 1995; 1997a: Chapters 8, 9). Suffice it to observe here, then, as we walk past the well in Calkini's plaza to Napot Canche's patio, that no Maya court could exist without access to a well or *cenote*; indeed, as a recent study of Classic-period water management suggests (Scarborough 1998), one of the court's underpinnings was control over water.

### *Patios*

The space that I have called a “patio” was somewhat more courtly than that English word suggests. The Maya term, *tancabal*, might literally be translated as “the space in the middle”; one possible gloss is thus “court(yard)” (Ringle and Bey, Chapter 9 in this volume). The *tancabal*, however, was not within a building or in the middle of a complex of structures but was at the entrance to the building that housed the ruler or the ruling council. There are four uses of the term *tancabal* in the Calkini manuscript (TC:12, 14, 16, 17; Restall 1998a:87, 88, 89, 90); in three, the patio in question is simply described as Napot Canche’s, but in the other a different patio is indicated, defined as “the patio at the entrance to the town hall” (literally “the patio at the entrance to the home of the council houses”; *u tancabal tu chli yotoch tu popolnaob*). The *tancabal* was thus “in the middle” of, or between, the inner space of a building and the outer space of a public area.

Because the interior space of buildings before and after the Conquest tended to be small, the spaces in front of important buildings were crucial courtly spaces and the sites of significant community gatherings and ceremonies. At their most grand, patios might have been large areas featuring roofs supported by columns and steps leading into the plaza; at their most modest (and the Colonial-era restriction of monumental architecture to religious buildings meant Maya rulers lived in or governed from modest dwellings), patios were simply plaza-facing open front yards. A good example of how these ancient and Colonial traditions came together is the *palacio* of the Cocom dynasty in Sotuta (see Figure 11.3). Initially constructed in the sixteenth century on the site of its pre-Colonial predecessor, from which much of its stone was probably drawn, the building as it stands today is a dilapidated mixture of centuries of construction and alteration, some of it post-Colonial. Still, one can appreciate the form and function of the arched patio that fronted the residence and seat of Cocom rule in the region, a patio that in Colonial times probably sported steps from the columns directly down into Sotuta’s plaza.<sup>11</sup>

The inner space of such buildings was also important to the court. If the building was the home of a ruling family or the community council, it was here that some courtly rituals took place—although, as shall be discussed in a moment, such events primarily took place outside, on the patio or in the plaza.<sup>12</sup> If the building was the town hall, it was here that one further material object crucial to the court was nurtured and maintained—the written text.

### *Texts*

With respect to ancient times, the writing, maintenance, and use of texts varied from texts on perpetual display, such as Copan’s Hieroglyphic

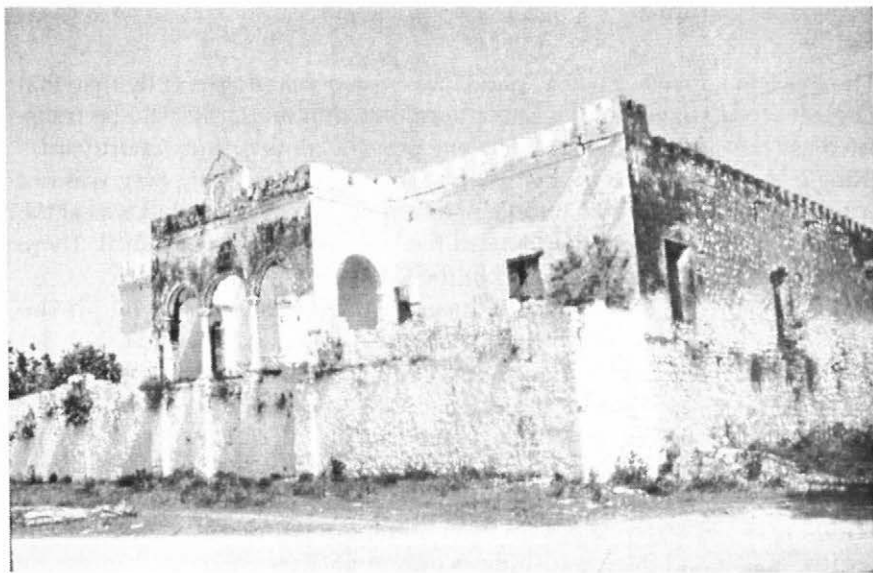


FIGURE 11.3 The patio of the Cocom Palace, Sotuta (photograph courtesy of Tsubasa Okoshi Harada).

Stairway and the Bonampak murals (Miller, Chapter 7 in this volume), to movable texts (on paper, wood, bone, ceramic, or small pieces of stone) usually generated in the neighborhood where prominent scribes lived (as in the Copan case; Fash 1991) and kept inside monumental structures near or at the community center.

With respect to ethnohistorical evidence, most mentions of texts not surprisingly appear to be partially self-referential—in other words, to alphabetic documents. Nevertheless, some references give us a sense of pre-Colonial patterns. For example, the *Book of Chilam Balam of Mani* talks of a “book of generations” (*acab libro*; CBM:70), a Colonial Maya phrase relevant in meaning to much pre-Colonial movable literature. The book consisted of “documents given to the priests to revere, to look at, to deduce the *katun* count” (*u hunil ab ti ah kinob lae u xocob u yilicob u hokol u ppicil u cuch katun*); “this great aid, the seven-generation book” (*noh anahte uuc acab libro*) was kept at Chuncaan in the center of Tiho, presumably in a building atop the Chuncaan mound structure (CBM:71). In another passage the Mani text states that “the seven-generation book shall be laid out on the great altar [or stone throne]” (*tiix bin chelan uuc acab libro ti noh temte*), so the priests (or rulers) could read it (CBM:68). The book was removed around the time that it recorded the displacement of the Maya deity Hunab Ku by “the holy virgin mother” (*suhuy kulbil na*; CBM:71), that is, when Merida was built over Tiho’s center and Chun-



caan ceased to be a locus of political and religious power and ritual (CBM:68–71; Restall 1998a:139). Tiho's *Book of Generations* was likely one of the sources of the *Book of Chilam Balam of Mani*, as the latter evolved through the Colonial period; in fact, all the books named after Chilam Balam might just as accurately be called "generation books."

Many pre-Colonial books were surely removed from their homes when those buildings were destroyed in the Conquest or ceased to be ritual centers due to Spanish campaigns of extirpation and persecution and to the gradual impact of conversion. Most infamously, Landa and his Franciscan colleagues "found a great number of books in their letters [hieroglyphs], and as they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil, we burned them all, which greatly amazed them [the Mayas] and caused them much pain" (Landa 41).<sup>13</sup> In the late sixteenth century both Chontal and Xiu rulers described how, in efforts to satisfy Spanish priests, their people went out and searched for "idols" to be gathered and burned;<sup>14</sup> it is possible that some books, after being copied out alphabetically, or instead of being hidden, were similarly destroyed.

The loss of such texts hardly ended Maya literary traditions. On the contrary, the importance of the written document survived and evolved with the Maya court. Hieroglyphic and semihieroglyphic books continued to be produced illicitly and were regularly destroyed by Spanish priests in extirpation campaigns (Chuchiak 2000:400–407). Meanwhile, Colonial circumstances ensured that notaries and their product would be more crucial to community culture and integrity than ever before. Although Colonial law determined the format and formula of many of these texts, Maya notaries still found ample room for individual community expression. Mayas viewed the notarial profession as a powerful and prestigious political office second only to the *batab* (community governor); notaries were usually among the few principal men in a community seen as eligible to be *batab* (see Figure 11.4 for examples of the signatures of Maya notaries, some of them *batabob*). Under Colonial rule, the written word became a vital weapon in the battle for the survival and promotion of community and dynasty in an era when warfare and regional political ambition were no longer viable options, and a higher authority could be petitioned and manipulated for local purposes.<sup>15</sup>

The records of such petitions, along with community land records, the testaments of the ancestors, the election records of the community council, and the histories of community and dynasty contained within the primordial titles and local versions of the Chilam Balam books—all this literature was maintained in a building or buildings located on the central plaza of the Colonial *cah*, behind the *tancabal* of the ruler or the council house (Restall 1997a:Chapters 5, 6, 18–21; 1997b). Documents were not simply kept where the court was located; these texts *were* the court, just as the basis of the court's legitimacy, its history, was kept *as* text. As one

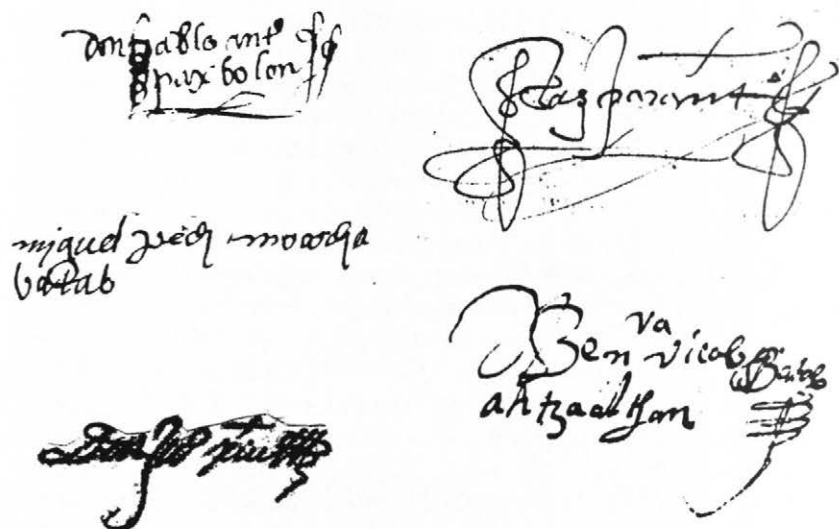


FIGURE 11.4 “Royal” hands: the signatures of don Pablo Paxbolon, *batab* of Tixel, 1567; don Miguel Pech, *batab* of Mococho, 1567; Gaspar Antonio Chi, interpreter general, Merida, 1578 (onetime *batab* of Mani); don Juan Xiu, nobleman and petitioner, Yaxakumche/Oxkutzcab, 1640 (onetime *batab* of Oxkutzcab and Maxcanú); don Bentura Uicab, *batab* and notary, Citilcum, 1669. Sources: AGI-México 367:68r; AGI-México 367:71v; AGN-Inquisición, 69, 5:158; XC: 13; AGI-Escribanía 317c, 2:312.

scholar has said of the Bonampak murals (Miller, Chapter 7 in this volume), ancient Maya rulers not only had the wherewithal to tell the story—they owned the story. No less so in Colonial times, the story was the property of the rulers and their courtly retinues; it was of their creation and manipulation, and it served their purposes.

### Plazas

One final Maya mention of an ancient book shall serve to draw our attention away from courtly buildings and across the patio to the plaza; the Mani text also calls the book of generations “the ceiba book” (*yaaxche libro*), the book made from ceiba paper (CBM:68). Indeed, it was probably in the plaza, perhaps beneath sacred trees such as the ceiba, that books were read by the literate elite in religious or political performance. Thus, the outer space on the public side of the patio was as important as the inner space of court structures. In the case of Napot Canche—or in that of another example, the patio of Nadzaycab Canul, ruler of Campeche when the Spaniards invaded (TCH:13/TY:7v; Restall 1998a:122)—this space faced the plaza, the two being a contiguous ritual site. In the fif-



teenth and sixteenth centuries these rituals may have involved reading the kind of material contained in the *Books of Chilam Balam*, such as prayers and incantations, calendrical information on farming cycles, and community myth-history.

With respect to the latter, the strong Maya tradition of the public presentation of dynastic "propaganda" (Marcus 1992), as well as architecture's potentially political function (Freidel and Suhler 1999; Houston 1998; Kowalksi and Dunning 1999), also continued well into the Colonial period. Don Pablo Paxbolon, governor of Tixchel and effective ruler of the Colonial Chontal Maya region of Acalan from 1566 to 1614, recorded how in 1612 he read aloud to the principal men of the community a history of Acalan and its ruling dynasty, so that "they hear of the origin, region, and people of the governor don Pablo Paxbolon" (*yubinob u thuntel u payolel u uincilel don pablo paxbolon gouernador*; TAT:70v; Restall 1998a:60). One imagines such a performance taking place on the Tixchel plaza. Ancient and Colonial plazas, like the patios that linked them to courtly buildings (see Figure 11.3), were central to political ceremony. Although the size and function of plazas at ancient sites appears to have varied greatly, the plaza's public role seems to be deeply rooted in Maya history (Folan et al. [Chapter 8 in this volume]; Reents-Budet [Chapter 7 in Volume 1]; Webster [Chapter 5 in Volume 1]; Houston 1998; Kowalski 1999). Spanish requirements after the Conquest forced Maya plazas to become somewhat more uniform, although they still varied in size and shape, seldom being mirrors of the model plaza that Merida represented, forming rectangular and L-shaped variations.

Regardless of architectural shifts, the plaza's ceremonial and symbolic importance to the local court was unaltered. The buildings that were of greatest political, social, and religious significance in the community—the temple/church, the council buildings, the residences of the ruler and other elite families—remained centrally located and almost always faced the plaza (cf. Ringle and Bey, Chapter 9 in this volume). Local and regional gatherings and ceremonies were also centered on the plaza and adjacent patios. In addition to the examples of the 1541 Calkini tribute ceremony and the 1612 Tixchel reading of dynastic history, there are records of other such meetings. A Pech/Cupul account describes how the lords of Izamal to the east and Mani to the south gathered at the Chuncan mound in Tiho in 1542 to agree on offering up tribute to the Spaniards (TCH:9/TY:4v; Restall 1998a:117). The Xiu lords that held a 1561 Mani summit were severely punished by Colonial officials for excessive drunkenness (AGI-*Justicia* 248, 2; Quezada 1993:134). On other occasions rulers and their courtiers met to plan wars against rival dynasties and regions (see Table 11.1 for an example).

Most such summits, however, seem to have revolved around land, with territorial control and the promotion of dynastic power being the

TABLE 11.1 Courtly Meetings in Conquest Times: Some Examples of Maya Summits, circa 1530–1600

Year	Venue	Rulers/cahob represented	Summit agenda
1530s	Calkini	Nachan Canul, batab of Calkini, and Napot Canche; Ah Tzab Euan, batab of Mopila, his son and 3 of his ah canob; followed by meetings with principal men of the Calkini-Mopila region	Land boundary treaty between the two cahob
1537	Mani	Ah Mochan Xiu and 12 principal men of Mani and subject cahob <sup>a</sup>	Plan Xiu revenge on the Cocom for the massacre at Otzmal
1545	Sotuta	47 governors & principal men of 9 cahob in Sotuta polity, including Sotuta governor Nachi (don Juan) Cocom <sup>a</sup>	Land boundaries of Sotuta polity; reaffirmation of Cocom power
1557	Mani	Don Francisco de Montejo Xiu and the rulers and courts of the cahob of the Maní and adjacent polities	Land boundaries of Mani polity; reaffirmation of Xiu power
1550s	Yaxkukul and Chicxulub	The Pech batabob and other Pech nobles of the cahob, principal men of some neighboring cahob, and some Spanish officials; parallel but separate summits	Land boundaries of Pech cahob; reaffirmation of Pech power
1600	Yaxcaba	Governors and principal men of 8 cahob in the Yaxcaba and northwest Sotuta regions (series of two summits)	Land boundaries of these regions; reaffirmation of power of Cocom, Cupul, and others

NOTE: <sup>a</sup> See Table 11.4 for the names of the court members at these summits.

SOURCES (in the above order): TC:20-23 [Restall 1998a:92-94]; CBC:53; DTS:424-427; XC (also see Roys 1943:173-94; Quezada and Okoshi 1999:2-13); TY:8 [Restall 1998a:125-127] and TCH:16-18 (also see Barrera Vásquez 1984; Restall 1998a:220n87); DTS:422, 426-431.

principal purposes of the meetings (again, see Table 11.1). These summits invite us to widen our perspective to include not only the role of the centers of these *cahob* but also the manner in which the meetings at their centers projected their importance onto their respective regions. Earlier I made passing mention of the maintenance of community land records at the Colonial court; the most important of these land documents—territorial border treaties or agreements forged and recorded on Maya patios and plazas—were the early-modern Maya equivalents of modern sum-

mits, complete with private discussions and public statements, private agendas of rivalry, and public agendas of peace.

Such meetings thus reaffirmed the political legitimacy of the rulers representing the region's communities—before each other, before their own subjects, and later before Colonial officials. They also served to ratify territorial boundaries so as to prevent possible future conflict or loss of land through Spanish intervention or acquisition. The demographic and political upheaval of the post-Mayapan and Conquest years—high mortality, internecine conflict, migration, invasion—made such agreements all the more necessary. The difference between the two time periods was that during the Segmented Century civil war was an omnipresent threat, whereas the late sixteenth century saw a series of Spanish attempts to impose new structures and methods of government; these efforts, combined with the persistent Spanish failure to understand (or disinterest in) Maya ways of doing things motivated Maya rulers to complete written agreements that presented Colonial officials with solutions—rather than riddles—to local political and territorial landscapes.

Such summits had deep roots in Maya history; one example is the summit portrayed in Piedras Negras's Panel 3 (Houston and Stuart, Chapter 3 in Volume 1). At the Piedras Negras event, prominent regional lords and relatives of the community ruler are gathered around, drinking what might have been chocolate and listening to the ruler speak. At a Calkini summit held shortly before the Spanish invasion, prominent members of the courts of Calkini and Mopila gathered at the home of Napot Canche (whose patio faced the plaza) and "drank much chocolate and wine while they were in discussion with the *batab* of the people of Calkini" (*ti yanix bakaal haaob y uciob tamuk u cana calob lay u Batab ah Calkiniob*) (see Table 11.1). Other summits involved tours or walks of territorial boundaries (such as Nachi Cocom's of 1545), processions that could take days before the protagonists would sit down in summit and draw up a written record of what they had seen and agreed upon.<sup>16</sup>

### *Town and Country*

Tree and well, patio and plaza, the buildings around them, and the events that took place there made the center of the community the effective and symbolic seat of Maya political power. The empowering mantle of centrality was further strengthened if a community also dominated a region of affiliated or subject communities. This broader perspective was crudely suggested by Figure 11.1; it can be seen more specifically in Figure 11.5, which is one of the so-called Mani Maps, a late-sixteenth-century depiction of the Mani region and the position of that *noh cah* ("great community" or Maya "city") as its political center.<sup>17</sup>

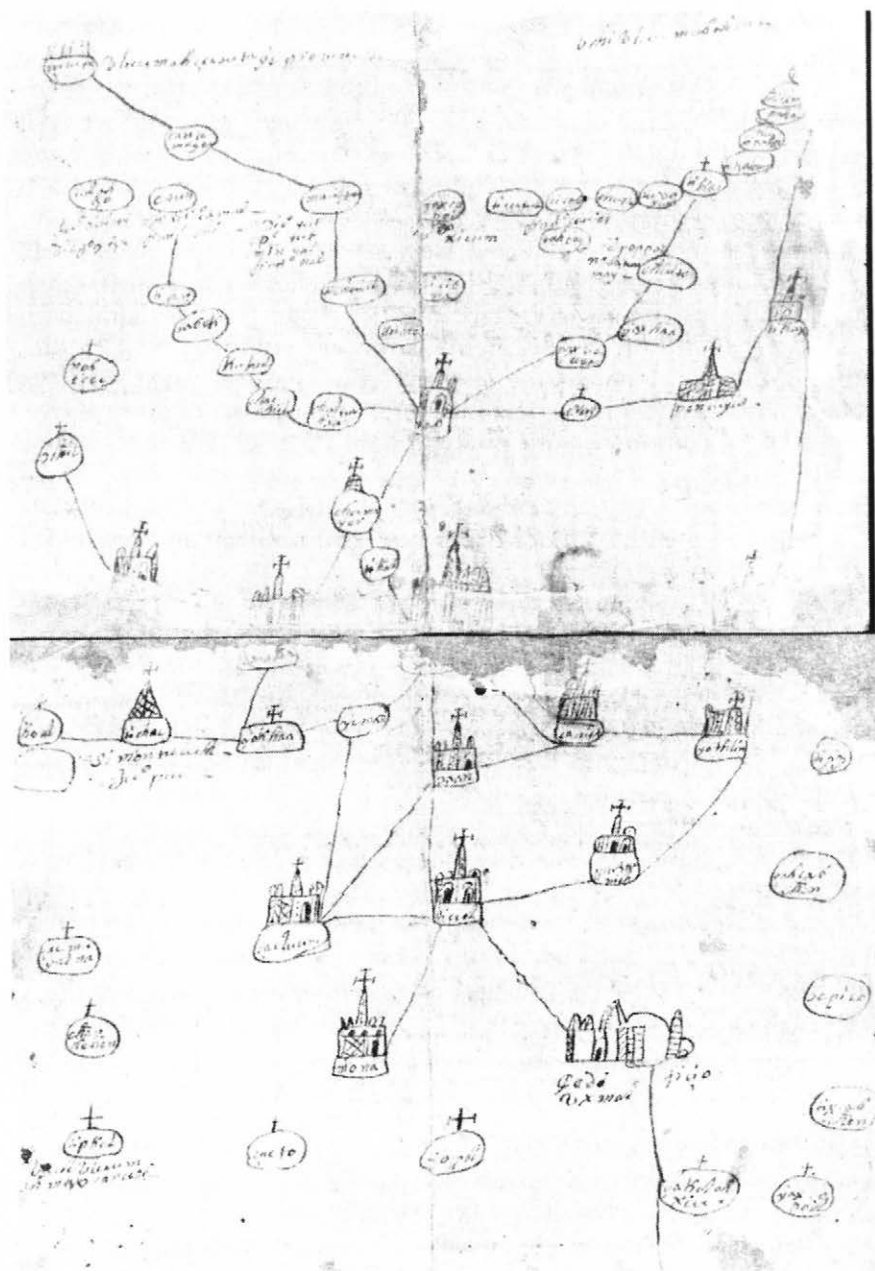


FIGURE 11.5 The Mani Map version in the Xiu papers, showing the Mani region in the late sixteenth century (from XC, courtesy of the Tozzer Library, Harvard University).

The degree to which central court power could be exercised on the periphery depended not only on what lay at the edge (such as the *caloh* depicted at the edge of the Mani map) but also in the way in which the periphery was tied to the center—if indeed it was. The ambiguity of Segmented Century geopolitical entities and the fluidity of regional hierarchies and intercommunity relationships, combined with Spanish disinterest in the pre-Conquest system and the invaders' emphasis on the imposition of an administrative structure that at least looked Spanish, have served to create a confused and confusing historiography on the topic.<sup>18</sup> In an attempt to avoid adding to this confusion, I would like to make three brief points on Maya geopolitics that suggest a simple paradigm of regional power and organization.

The first point is the nature and number of the Segmented Century polities. These were not "provinces," a term more appropriate to describe the Spanish colony of Yucatan (indeed, the Spaniards used it—*provincia*). Rather, pre-Conquest polities were loosely organized, with subject communities governed neither directly from the center nor by representatives sent from the center but surviving as self-governing entities whose subordination was expressed through tribute relations. There were multiple layers of subordination, and all were potentially open to negotiation (when Calkini offered tribute to the Spaniards in 1541, recognizing the new center in Campeche, Calkini's rulers were not surrendering their own dominance of Calkini's subjects—from whence the tribute came). The fluidity and ambiguity of such relationships makes it impossible to accurately calculate either the size of each polity (they varied greatly and boundaries were often ambiguous) or the total number of polities (there were probably about two dozen). In the north and west, the issue is academic by about 1570, when the administrative districts and parishes of the colony had become well established; beyond the colony, to the south and east, the loosely formed and constantly shifting polities of the Segmented Century persisted.<sup>19</sup>

The second point is the significance of the municipal community—the *cali*. Colonial-era sources reveal the *cali* to be the principal focus of Maya self-identity, loyalty, organization, and activity. The *cali* was a geographical entity, consisting of a residential core and outlying territorial lands (see Figure 11.1); a political entity, being the locus and focus of Maya gubernatorial autonomy; and the center of the social and cultural world of each Maya *calmal*, or "*cali* member" (Restall 1997a:13–40). Although archaeological evidence suggests that Maya society became urbanized many centuries before the Spanish invasion (Houston 1998; Sabloff and Henderson 1993), it is not clear how far back this degree of *cali*-centrism goes. It would appear that the Mayapan arrangement of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries was an attempt to recognize, represent, and contain the rivalry of dynasties whose status was rooted in their control of a

home *cah* and its cluster of subordinate *cahob* (Restall 1998a:23–26; Ringle and Bey, Chapter 9 in this volume). It was the centrifugal pull of the *cahob* that helped destroy Mayapan and led to the localized politics of the Segmented Century. The remains of Maya regionalism—efforts by dynasties to tie *cahob* together or consolidate the dominance of one *cah* over lesser neighbors—were destroyed in the sixteenth century by the Spanish assertion of a monopoly on regional authority and the Colonial confirmation of the integrity and autonomy of the *cah*.

The third point relates to the role played by patronym groups, or *chibalob*, particularly the dynasties and other ruling families. This point offers a segue into the second half of the chapter, which is in large part a treatment of dynasty and *chibal*. Suffice it to remark here, then, that the *chibal* complemented the *cah* as the other fundamental unit of Maya society. At the intersection of *cah* and *chibal* lay the extended family, within which every Maya individual enjoyed meaningful and productive social existence (Restall 1998b).

If the family existed where lineage and locale met, so did regional organization. In short, Maya “provinces” were loosely conceived polities because they were forged by dynastic *chibalob* whose social, political, and economic vitality were rooted in the *cah* (either a single dominant *cah*, such as Calkini, Mani, or Sotuta; or a nexus of *cahob* ruled by members of one dynasty, such as the Pech or Cupul). The centrifugal forces of *cah*-centrism, having helped to destroy Mayapan, and having prevented the rough polities of the Segmented Century from developing into cohesive provinces or states, found full expression after the Conquest in a golden age of localized politics.<sup>20</sup>

### The Court as Rulers and Retinue

The preceding discussion of the court as place and space began with the imagery of trees, and so it is with people—specifically rulers—as trees that this portion of the chapter will begin. The tree-ruler image has deep roots in Maya culture (see Lincoln 1991); Copan’s past rulers were commemorated on “tree stones,” and the rulers that preceded Pakal in Palenque were portrayed as trees in an ancestral orchard (Cortez 1995:117–139; Schele and Freidel 1990:71, 220). The purpose of promoting such imagery, it has been suggested, was to tap into potent themes of agrarian regeneration; furthermore, like the ceiba at Calkini’s center, valued tree species appear to have been planted and maintained near site centers, especially adjacent to elite residential complexes (McAnany 1995:43, 76, 164).

The ruler-tree tradition was expressed in Colonial times in the language of petitionary and reverential discourse, typically through the imagery of protection. The arm (*kab*) of a ruler was seen as offering shelter the way the branch (also *kab*) of a great tree offered shade; one term for “protect,” *boybes*, literally meant “to provide shade.” Thus, one eighteenth-century Maya petition to the Spanish provincial gover-



nor asked him "to protect us beneath the shade of your arm" (*ca a boybeson yalan u boy a kab*; ANEY, 1736–37:c.400). Similarly, one term for "principal man" that was used in Colonial times (and presumably earlier), *nucteil*, literally meant "important tree" or "great tree" (Restall 1997a:253).

The notion of ancestors as trees, or at least as branches of a tree, is hardly alien to the culture of the West (Figure 11.7 is an example of the way in which we conventionally convey kin relations in arboreal diagrams); indeed, in one extraordinary Colonial Yucatec document the tree-ancestor iconographic traditions of both the West and the Mayas converge. This is the Xiu Family Tree, created about 1560 most likely by Gaspar Antonio Chi, with additions made to one branch by don Juan Xiu in about 1685 (see Figure 11.6). More shall be said about the Xiu dynasty later; for now, our concern is the Tree's relevance to the imagery of lineage, rulership, and the court.

The Xiu Tree is based in part upon two Christian tree images—the biblical Tree of Jesse and the Franciscan Tree of Life—but it also draws upon Maya tree-ancestor associations. The prominent Xiu nobles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are the branches of the Tree, with their living progeny the flowers or fruit at the ends of the branches. At the base of the trunk is the eleventh-century dynastic founder, the original Tutul Xiu (the name became a title for subsequent Xiu patriarchs); his buttocks and thighs are the Tree's roots.

As a recent scholar of the Xiu Tree has observed (Cortez 1995:110–139), trees were frameworks for temporal references, linking ancestors to living lineage members, current rulers to ancient ones. Furthermore, present-day lineage heads were the living representations of the World Tree and, in death, would transubstantially become one with the Tree, as their ancestors were (hence the merging of Tutul Xiu's loins and the Xiu Tree's roots; the immobility of trees suggests that rulers were rooted to their roles and to the court; see Webster, Chapter 5 in Volume 1).

In addition, the World Tree was the recipient of sacrifice (also see Lincoln 1991); an offering of burning deer legs is made to the Xiu Tree. This association takes us back to the ceiba in Calkini; from this perspective, the produce laid out beneath that great tree in the town plaza was a sacrificial offering, ostensibly a tribute payment to the foreign invaders but also effectively a gift to the tree as representative and protector of the ancestors and living descendents of Calkini's lineages.

If the officers of a Maya court, ancient and Colonial, were an orchard of trees, the great Tree—be it the Xiu Family Tree, the Maya World Tree, or the ceiba in the *cah* plaza—represented simultaneously the founders, ancestors, and living rulers of the dynasty, the elite lineages, and, indeed, the community itself. The Maya court in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries was thus both a locus of objects—a place of plazas and patios, of sacred trees and precious documents—and a human forest.

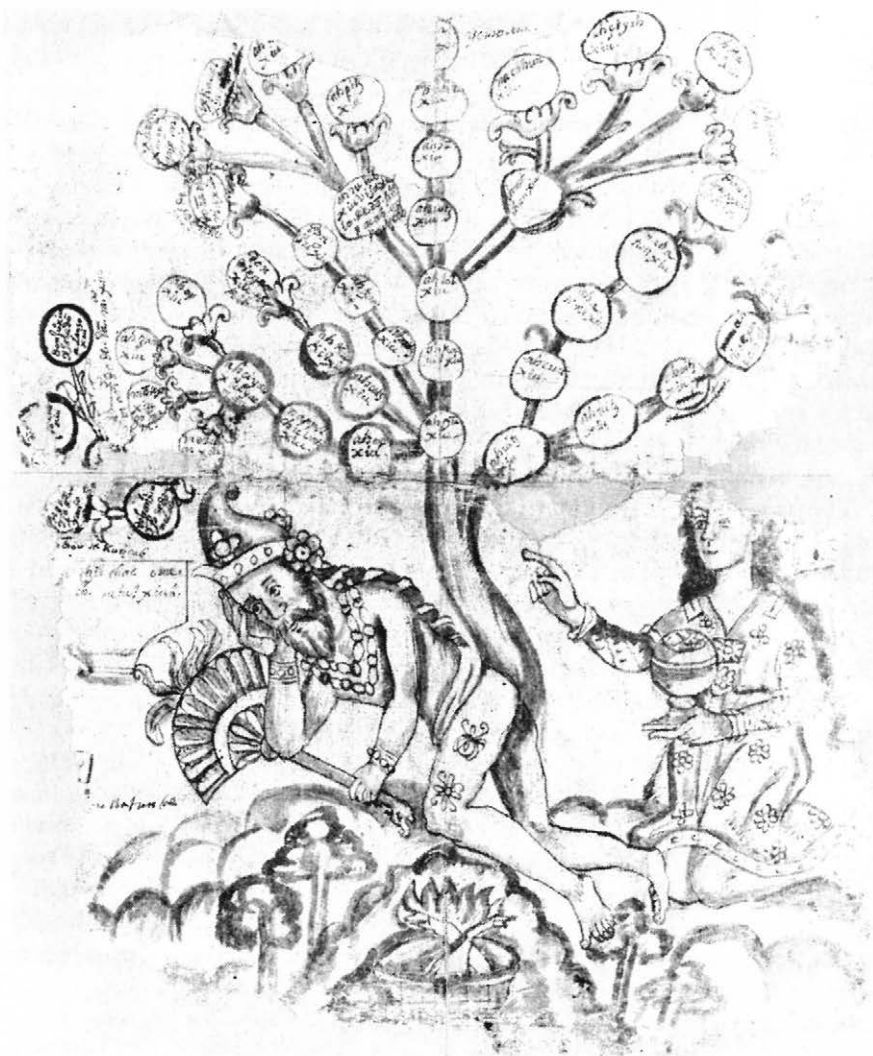


FIGURE 11.6 The Xiu Family Tree (ca. 1560 with ca. 1685 additions; from XC, courtesy of the Tozzer Library, Harvard University).

At the most elevated level, where courts came closest to being “royal,” ruling families claimed and traced their regional dominance back hundreds of years. Before and after the Spanish invasion, the Maya elite worked to maintain their position through a “royal” ideology of superior status. This ideology rested on four supports: social differentiation; an oligarchical monopoly over political activity; group hereditary status; and the perpetuation of dynastic origin mythology.



### Social Differentiation

On the surface, Maya society was divided with binary simplicity into nobles (*almehenob*) and commoners (*macehualob*). Beneath the surface, however, the determinants and levels of social differentiation were more complex. In a recent case study of the *cah* of Ixil in the 1760s, I identified eight loosely defined socioeconomic layers (Restall 1995, 1997a:92–97); this case offers a useful paradigm for discussing Maya social differentiation.

Ixil's bottom four layers were commoners, comprising three-quarters of the community's *chibalob* (patronym groups or extended families); the top four layers were the remaining quarter, comprising three layers of *almehenob* and a *crème-de-la-crème* layer of *almehenob* who were also *indios hidalgos*. As this was a small *cah* in the Pech region, only the Pech dynasty occupied that top layer. *Almehen* was a category of nobility recognized and given meaning within the Maya world; Spaniards were aware of the category but either confused it with *indio hidalgo* or were indifferent to it, as it afforded no special privileges from the colonists' perspective. However, *indio hidalgo*, literally "Indian nobleman," gave a Maya elite man (or woman—*india hidalga*) some of the privileges of nobles in Spain and Spaniards in the colonies, most notably exemption from tribute. From both Spanish and Maya viewpoints, then, *indio hidalgo* status meant something.

Of course, *indios hidalgos* existed only after the Spanish invasion; it was through collaboration with the invaders that Pech, Xiu, and other elite families acquired the status.<sup>21</sup> But we might reasonably assume that during the Segmented Century, too, Maya society was divided into multiple layers of commoners and nobles. Data from the sixteenth century enable us not only to identify an important criterion for differentiating between the upper crust and the lesser nobility—namely, the control of community *batabilob*, or governorships—but also to identify by name the ruling families that enjoyed regional and local authority (see Table 11.2). It is significant that the number of *chibalob* listed in this table as "ruling" represent about a quarter of the total number of *chibalob* in Colonial Yucatan, the same ratio as that of nobles to commoners in the case study from Ixil. In Late Colonial Ixil, one *chibalob*, the Pech, filled the dynastic layer (i.e., 3 percent of the total); census data from the end of the Colonial period suggest that in other communities a similar percentage of inhabitants made up the upper social echelon (6 percent of Hunucma's Maya residents in 1815 were *indios hidalgos*, for example; AME:104). In sixteenth-century Yucatan, 4 percent of the *chibalob* were at this level (the dynastic dozen of Table 11.2).

Thus, despite changes in detail, the framework of Maya social rank from the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, if not before and after, consisted of multiple socioeconomic layers topped by a dynastic elite

TABLE 11.2 Yucatan's Ruling Dynasties at the Time of the Spanish Conquest, circa 1520-70.

<i>Chibalob</i> <sup>a</sup>	Polities where <i>chibal</i> members held <i>batabilob</i> <sup>b</sup>	Number and percentage of <i>batabilob</i> held in that polity <sup>c</sup>	
First Tier: The Dynastic Dozen			
Caamal	n/a <sup>d</sup>	5	
Canul	Calkini	4*	44%
	Chancenote	1*	11%
	Sotuta	1	7%
	n/a	23	
Canche	Calkini	2*	22%
	Motul	2	7%
Chan	Chancenote	2*	22%
	Dzidzantun	3*	8%
	Mani	1	5%
	n/a	1	
Che	Mani	3*	15%
	Calkini	1	11%
	Hocaba	1	9%
	Motul	1	4%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Chel	Dzidzantun	5*	14%
Cochuah	Tihosuco	4	40%
Cocom	Sotuta	5*	36%
	n/a	3	
	Ekbalam	4*	80%
Cupul	Chichen Itza	2	50%
	Saci	4	57%
	Popola		(75%) <sup>e</sup>
	Tihosuco	1*	10%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	7	
	Iuit	Hocaba	6*
Pech	Motul	24	83%
	Dzidzantun	3*	8%
	Sotuta	2*	14%
	n/a	4	
Xiu	Mani	8	40%
	Calotmul	3	43%
	n/a	1	

(continues)

TABLE 11.2 (continued)

<i>Chibalob</i> <sup>a</sup>	Polities where <i>chibal</i> members held <i>batabilob</i> <sup>b</sup>	Number and percentage of <i>batabilob</i> held in that polity	
Second Tier: Other Ruling <i>Chibalob</i>			
Cauich	Tihosuco	1	10%
	Sotuta	1*	7%
	Dzidzantun	1*	3%
	n/a	1	
Ek	Mani	1*	5%
	Motul	1	4%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	1	
Euan	Calkini	1	11%
	Mani	1*	5%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	1	
Pot	Calotmul	1	14%
	Tihosuco	1	10%
	Hocaba	1	9%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	2	
Tun	Dzidzantun	2	5%
	Ekbalam	1	20%
	Hocaba	1	9%
	Sotuta	1	7%
	n/a	1	
Tzeh	Chancenote	4	44%
Uicab	Tihosuco	1	10%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	2*	
Third Tier: Other Ruling <i>Chibalob</i>			
Ake	Dzidzantun	1*	3%
Balam	Dzidzantun	1*	3%
Batun	Chichen Itza	1	25%
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Can	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Canche	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	Cantun	n/a	2*

(continues)

TABLE 11.2 (continued)

<i>Chibalob</i> <sup>a</sup>	Polities where <i>chibal</i> members held <i>batabilob</i> <sup>b</sup>	Number and percentage of <i>batabilob</i> held in that polity	
Ceh	Calotmul	1	14%
	Tihosuco	1	10%
Cen	n/a	1	
Chin	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Chuc	n/a	1	
Chuil	Saci	1	14%
Ci	n/a	1	
Col	Calotmul	1*	14%
Couoh	Dzidzantun	1	3%
	n/a	1	
Cuy	n/a	1	
Dzib	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Dzul	n/a	2	
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Huchim	n/a	1	
	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Ix	Sotuta	2	14%
Kauil	n/a	1	
Ku	Mani	1	5%
	Dzidzantun	1*	3%
Macun	n/a	1	
May	n/a	1	
Miz	Chichen Itza	1	25%
	n/a	2	
Mo	n/a	1	
Motul	Dzidzantun	2	5%
Na	n/a	2	
Namon	Hocaba	1*	9%
Naua	Sotuta	1	7%
Nauat	Mani	1	5%
Noh	n/a	1	
Oxte	Motul	1	4%
Pacab	Mani	1	5%
Pax	n/a	1	
Pol	Dzidzantun	1*	3%
	n/a	1	
Pola	n/a	1	
Puc	Chancenote	1	11%
	n/a	1	
Tayu	Calkini	1	11%

(continues)

TABLE 11.2 (continued)

<i>Chibalob</i> <sup>a</sup>	Polities where <i>chibal</i> members held <i>batabilob</i> <sup>b</sup>	Number and percentage of <i>batabilob</i> held in that polity	
Te	Calotmul	1	14%
Tuyu	Sotuta	1	7%
Tuyub	Chancenote	1	11%
Tzab	Hocaba	1	9%
Uc	Saci	1	14%
Ucan	Dzidzantun	2	5%
Uitz	Dzidzantun	1	3%
Uluac	Mani	2*	10%
Uz	Mani	1	5%
Xoc	n/a	2	
Xol	Saci	1	14%
Tihosuco		1	10%
Yam	n/a	1	

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>The patronym-group or extended family; see the text of the chapter (and Restall 1997a; 1998b) for discussion of *chibal* and *cah*.

<sup>b</sup>Governorships of *cahob* (Maya communities). There are a total of 213 *cahob* and their *batabilob* represented in this table, almost all the *cahob* in what was becoming the colonial province of Yucatan. Note that this excludes the Chontal Maya region, dominated by the Paxbolon dynasty (Scholes and Roys 1948; Restall 1998a:Chapter 3).

<sup>c</sup>These polities more or less correspond to the polities of the Segmented Century, although note that the sources are colonial and thus to some extent reflect post-Conquest Spanish administrative divisions. Only those communities whose *batabob* (governors) can be identified have been counted; the purpose of these percentages is thus to give an approximate sense of the degree to which certain *chibalob* functioned as dominant dynasties effectively ruling polities or clusters of communities.

<sup>d</sup>Not available or not applicable: some *cahob* were independent and the district affiliation of others is unclear.

<sup>e</sup>This figure is speculative; according to the *relación* of Popola, it was the center of a Cupul-controlled district of thirteen *cahob*, but it is only known for sure that a Cupul was *batabob* of Popola itself (RGHY, II:216; Quezada 1993:166, 182).

\*This indicates that one or two of the *batabilob* counted here are from the same *cah*, due to the change in control of the position during the decades in question; otherwise, each *cah*/*batabilob* has only been counted once. Where a *batabilob* changed hands within a *chibal*, it was likewise only counted once. Obviously there were other changes in *batabilob* control during this period for which we do not have records.

SOURCES: Quezada 1993:157–202, who cites seventy primary sources, the following of which I directly consulted: RHGY; Roys 1957; TC; TY.

comprising about 5 percent of the population and with the layers of lesser nobility making up roughly another 20 percent. I have refrained from terming these levels "classes" because that term carries baggage that is not necessarily relevant to the Maya, although "class" is certainly a more apt term than "caste," as Mayas were not strictly divided from each other by birth and occupation. In fact, the bases and mechanisms of social differentiation, combined with the political circumstances of the Segmented Century and the Spanish invasion, allowed for a certain degree of mobility. Furthermore, even though non-nobles were surely aware of their socioeconomic status—an awareness hinted at in *Chilam Balam* passages (CBC:20, 22; Restall 1998a:37, 134–138)—only the dynastic elite developed an ideology that approximated "class-consciousness."

These bases and mechanisms of differentiation, although closely intertwined, can be divided for analytical purposes into three categories (the sources for this analysis are Colonial-era; Restall 1997a:72–97, 110–120, 206–211). The first is social and can be subdivided into two: social rank as marked by the terminology of social differentiation (such as *almehen*); and *chibal* affiliations, both membership by birth and connection through alliances of marriage, economic enterprise, and political faction. The second is economic and can also be subdivided into two: ownership of land, both agrarian (*col* and *kax*) and urban (*solar*); and overall wealth. Thus far the categories pertained to women as well as men. The third category was relevant to men only, being that of politics: factional affiliation and career in political office.

As our primary concern here is with the "royal" court, let us look at this same structure again, but this time from a dynastic perspective. The characteristics of dynastic status were, in the social category, fourfold. These were: one, recognition in their *cah* (or in their region) as *almehen* and *don*;<sup>22</sup> two, connection by marriage and other forms of alliance to other local elite *chibalob* (the taboo on intra-*chibal* marriage was maintained throughout the Colonial period, with rare exceptions among the dynastic dozen); and three, connection to regional authority, meaning the region's dominant dynasty before the Conquest (if they were not members of that dynasty themselves), and the Colonial authorities after the Conquest—connected as *indios hidalgos*, as Maya conquistadors (see Restall 1998a), and as Spanish-sanctioned *cah* rulers, Colonial *batabob*. Finally, Maya dynasties maintained and promoted a mythology of origin, settlement, and legitimacy (discussed below).

In economic and political terms, the criteria of dynastic status were dominant landownership in the *cah*; distinguishing levels of overall wealth; and the domination of an oligarchical monopoly over regional and local political offices (after the Conquest, the *batabil* and senior *cabildo* positions in the *cah*). This monopoly was significant enough to be considered here as the second foundation of "royal" ideology.

### *Oligarchical Political Monopoly*

The oligarchies that monopolized political activity and office in the *cahob* of Yucatan consisted of more than just the core of dynastic nobles; certainly the upper crust by definition exercised the greatest control over community politics, but retainues (subordinate court members) were just as important to the form and function of oligarchies as were rulers. Indeed, as much as any other vestige of status or expression of power, Maya courts in the Segmented Century and Colonial period were defined in terms of their broader membership (for this membership in the Classic period, see Houston and Stuart, Chapter 3 in Volume 1; Inomata, Chapter 2 in Volume 1). Although the size and nature of courts varied greatly over time and place, they tended to be large, usually including (in descending order of importance): previous rulers; relatives of the ruler eligible to succeed him; prominent members of allied or competing noble families; the rest of the general pool of principal men, including those with specific offices; representatives of commoner families holding lesser offices; and non-office-holding servants and dependents, including, in pre-Colonial times, slaves. The largest courts of pre-Colonial and Conquest times would have been those of regional rulers (*halach uinicob*), with membership running the full gamut of the social scale from the *batabob* of subordinate *cahob* to *pentacob* (male slaves).

Slaves are worth a brief digression (not least because, as Inomata and Houston observe [see Chapter 1, Volume 1], not all court members were necessarily elites). The ethnohistorical evidence on Maya slaveholding in and before the sixteenth century is effectively limited to one source, the *Title of Calkini*.<sup>23</sup> In this text there is one reference to a female slave (*munach*) and nine to male slaves (*pentac* or *ppentac*). This is a slim base for analysis, but some patterns can be observed. First, the gender balance of these examples suggests that male slaves may have been more common than female ones. Second, the two labor references in these examples indicate why this may have been the case: One is to cultivable land worked by slaves (*pentac kax*); the other is to the fishermen slaves who worked the fleet of Ah Kin Canul. Third, slaves seem to have been held in small numbers; in six of these examples slave numbers are given, the average being 2.5. Fourth, in more than half the examples slaves are named. The great importance of patronyms in pre-Colonial and Colonial Yucatan, the importance of matronyms in pre-Colonial times—and the concomitant heavy peppering of Maya historical documents with the names of ancestors and their friends and enemies, their relatives and retainues—suggest that slaves were often far more than just a source of labor. Indeed, nowhere in these ten examples are slaves both named and described as workers of any kind. Thus, some, perhaps most, slaves may have been prestigious members of (enemy or rival) courts by virtue of their

TABLE 11.3 The Officers of the Court: Political Offices in Yucatan, circa 1400–1800

Segmented Century	Colonial Period
<b>Primary level (regional ruler)</b>	
<i>halach uinic</i> , "supreme ruler (lit. true man)"	[Spanish provincial governor]
<i>yax batab</i> , "principal governor", <i>noh batab</i> , "great governor"	[ <i>yax</i> and <i>noh batab</i> are used through the C16th but with decreasing relevance as Spanish officials assert their monopoly over regional-level offices]
<b>Secondary level (municipal community [<i>cah</i>] ruler)</b>	
<i>batab</i> , "governor"	<i>batab</i> , "governor" [survives into late-C19th but <i>gobernador</i> also used by Mayas]
<b>Tertiary level (<i>cah</i> ruling council and extra-council principal men)<sup>a</sup></b>	
<i>holpop</i> , "headman"	<i>teniente</i> , "lieutenant"
<i>ah dzib hun</i> , "notary, scribe"	<i>escribano</i> , <i>ah dzib hun</i> , "notary, scribe"
<i>ah can</i> , "speaker"	<i>alcalde</i> , "judge, councilman"
<i>ah cuch cab</i> , "district deputy"	<i>regidor</i> , "councilman"
<i>ah kul</i> , "deputy", "officer"	[ <i>capitán</i> , "captain", but exclusive to <i>batab</i> or former <i>batab</i> ]
<i>nacon</i> , "captain"	<i>kul uinic</i> , <i>nucil uinic</i> , <i>nucteil</i> , <i>principal</i> , "principal man"; offices of various rank, role, and origin, including <i>ah cuch cab</i> ("deputy"), <i>belnal</i> ("officer"), <i>chun than</i> ("speaker"), <i>procurador</i> ("counsel"), <i>mayordomo</i> ("steward"), <i>alguacil</i> ("executor"), <i>tupil</i> ("constable")
<i>kul uinic</i> , "officer", "principal man"	various religious officials, such as <i>sacristán</i> , <i>fiscal</i> , <i>cantor</i> , and <i>canan</i> , none of which were officially equated with priesthood
<i>ah kin</i> , "priest"	

NOTE: <sup>a</sup>Note that while the ranking of colonial-era tertiary level offices is based on substantial documentation (Restall 1997a:51–83, 267–275), the ranking of Segmented-Century offices is tentative. Likewise the equivalencies of pre- and post-Conquest offices are suggestive only, as it is unlikely that there was any conventional or consistent Maya perception of office equivalencies except at short-term community levels.

SOURCES: TC (Restall 1998a:86–103); TY (Restall 1998a:107–128); Landa XXVII–XXIX; Okoshi Harada 1993:Chapter 2; Quezada 1993:38–58; Restall 1997a:70, 72.



patronym or *chibal* affiliation; probably war captives, they were symbols of political authority. Because men monopolized politics in Maya society, this would also help to explain the suggested gender imbalance among slaves.<sup>24</sup>

Some of the details of this court portrait are illustrated in Tables 11.3 and 11.4. These tables are also intended to highlight the continuities and contrasts between pre-Colonial and Colonial patterns. Table 11.3 identifies most of the offices of Maya courts before and after the Conquest, suggesting their relative ranking and some ways in which Mayas maintained continuity of function and meaning through the transition to new formats and titles. Two aspects of this process should be emphasized.

One, the Maya *cabildo* (municipal council) was not the same as the Spanish *cabildo*, despite its name and the use of Spanish office titles. It looked the same, as it was intended to; but in reality it was not a courtly system imposed from the outside. Rather, it was a mere framework adopted from external sources and quickly reshaped into a mechanism for the continued exercise of self-rule by community oligarchical courts. Within the court the titles of *cabildo* posts and other offices encoded the relative status of the members of the oligarchy and the progress of their political careers. Among a number of Spanish-Maya *cabildo* contrasts was the role of the *escribano* (notary), a relatively minor post *outside* the Spanish *cabildo* that was, as mentioned earlier, a prestigious office *within* the Maya *cabildo* and a potential stepping-stone to the *batabil* (governorship). In short, the *cabildo* was at the core of the Colonial Maya court.

Two—and this is an important expression of both the pattern of continuity from pre-Conquest times and the contrast between Spanish and Maya *cabildos*—the Maya *cabildo* was by definition a local body that varied in size and nature from community to community. Often on legal documents submitted to Colonial courts there is an effort to conform to the Spanish model, with *alcaldes* and *regidores* (usually Mayanized as *alcaldesob* and *regidoresob*) signing records in twos or fours (numbers that could have reflected Maya models anyway), but by and large the numbers of *cabildo* offices and officers varies greatly over time and between *cabildos*. Furthermore, efforts to incorporate the full body of principal men into the *cabildo* were paralleled by the continued use of many pre-Colonial office titles. In other words, the Colonial Maya court included not only an extended localized *cabildo*, with a *batabil* above it, but also an extended retinue of extra-*cabildo* officers below it (Restall 1997a:Chapters 5, 6, 20).

Table 11.4 is a necessarily anecdotal attempt to personalize these patterns. The examples chosen are two fully pre-Conquest courts, with names and titles all pre-Hispanic; two on the cusp of the Conquest, in which names and titles are mixed in origin, including the names of the

TABLE 11.4 Some Examples of Maya Courtly Retinues, circa 1440–1700

*The court of Canul rulers that left Mayapan for Calkini, 1440s*

... the *batabob* were Ah Dzuum Canul, who came from this [the Canche] *chibal*; Ah Iztam Kauat; and those of the Canul, who were Itza settlers when they departed at that time from Mayapan—Ah Tzab Canul; Ah Kin Canul; Ah Paal Canul; Ah Sulim Canul; Ah Chacah Canul; Ix Co Pacab Canul, and Nabich Canul; these *batabob* that I have listed are the nine of them.<sup>a</sup>

*The first-tier retinue and one of the sub-retinues of Paxbolonacha, Chontal ruler of Acalan, 1527*

To assist Paxbolonacha in his realm [*y ahaulel*] were his principal men, who were the lords Mututzin; Kintzucti; Padzayato; and Tamalyaxun, as they were named ... one lord, named Lord Palocem went [to meet Cortés] with some principal men named Patzinchicua; Tamalbinyan; Paxuanapuk; and Paxhochacchan, companions of the ruler Palocem.<sup>b</sup>

*The court of Ah Mochan Xiu as it met in summit in Mani, 1537*

... when the noblemen gathered together in conference at Mani ... these were their names: Ah Mochan Xiu; Nahau Ez; Ah Dzun Chinab; Napoot Cupul; Napot Che; Nabatun Itza; Ah Kin [priest] Euan, who came from Cocel [Caucel]; Nachan Uc, who came from Dzibilkal; Ah Kin Ucan, who came from Ekob; Nachi Uc; Ah Kul [deputy] Koh; Nachan Motul; Nahau Coyi.

*The courtly retinue of Nachi Cocom, aka don Juan Cocom, during his tour of the Sotuta polity's territorial boundaries, 1545*

Naitza Cocom; Naium Pech; Francisco Dzay; Pedro Dzul, who brought as porters [*tameneb*] Francisco Canul, *alguacil*, and the carpenter Jorge Cauich; Francisco Uc, also called Ah Kin [priest] Uc; and Blas Puc; Juan Dzay and Francisco Oy, *ah cuch cab* of Sotuta; Napuc Us of Yaxcabá; Ah Kul [deputy] Tep of Titanus; Ah Kul Balam; Ah Kul Noh; Holpop [headman] Hau of Tikom; Ah Kul Tzotz; Ah Kul Euan; Holpop Cach of Pomonot; Ah Kul Ueuet; Ah Kul Chi of Homulna; Nacamal Us; Ah Kin Be; Ah Kul Cetz; Ah Kul Cauich; Nachan Tzek; Ah Kul Can; Ah Kul Coyi; Ah Kul Cab; Nachan Tzek of Tikuch; Ah Kul Coyi; Ah Kul Can; Ah Kul Cal [Cab?]; Napot Canche<sup>c</sup>; Holpop Tun; Ah Kul Hau of Cisteel [Cisteil?]; Ah Kul Euan; Ah Kul Cab; Napot Couoh; Ah Kul Hoil of Chanonot; Nacamal Chi; Ah Kul Chi; Ah Kul Chuc; Nahau Chable; Ah Nabatun Mo of Huntulchac; Ah Kul Puc; Napuc Tuyu of Tikom; Ah Kul Ucan: principal men.

*The retinue of Ah Macan Pech, aka don Pedro Pech, ruler of Yaxkukul, extended through collaborative conquest and resettlement, ca. 1542–1553*

... Kul Chuc was captured there in Cupul by Ah Ceh Pech ... he was then given to don Pedro Pech, to Ah Macan Pech, by don Francisco de Montejo, the *adelantado* ... and brought here to the *cah* with Ah Kin [priest] Pech, Macan Pech, the first conquistador, and the servants [*u palil*] and officers [*u nacomob*] of Macan

(continues)

TABLE 11.4 (continued)

Pech, here to Yaxkukul . . . [where there were don Pedro's] sons, don Alonso Pech, don Miguel Pech, don Lucas Pech, and don Francisco Pech. There was also Ursula Pech, who was called Cakuk Pech; she gave chocolate to the *adelantado* . . . she was elder sister of Ixkil Itzam Pech and the daughter of Tunal Pech, conqueror of Motul . . . the councillors and officers included Kom Pech and his son Nakuk Pech of the principal *chibal* [of the region] . . . among those who came down here to this land, this principal *cali*, from Cupul were the captains Chan, Cen, and Xuluc; the warriors Nacom [officer] Kuob, Nacom Xuluc, Nacom Poot, Nacom May, Nacom Ek, and Kul Chuc—the Kul Chuc who was the servant of Macan Pech and Nacom Poot; and the deputies; the rest of the principal men, sons, and sons-in-law . . . and the deputies who accompanied the captains were named Ah Kul [deputy] Matu, Ah Kul Chel, Kul Kiix, and Kul Che; and the priests were Ah Kin Cocom and Ah Kin Tacu.

*The court under don Juan Dzib, governor of Tekanto, as elected in December 1690 for 1691<sup>d</sup>*

These, then, are the members of the royal court [*audiencia Real*] in the center of the *cali*; their names are written here below: Antonio Caamal, Gaspar Oy, *alcaldesob*; Pasqual Balam, *alcalde meson*; Feliciano Dzib, Joseph Hau, Gregorio Dzib, Agustin Pech, *regidoresob*; Mateo Batun, *procurador*; Agustin Couoh, *aluasil [alguacil] mayor*; Pedro Kantun, *mayoldomo [mayordomo]*; Juan Ake, Andres Canul, Pedro Canul, Pedro Chan, Francisco Dzib, Francisco Hau, *aluasilesob [alguaciles]*; Josef Cab, Agustin Chable, *madamiento [mandamiento] meson*. Salaried: The salary of Mateo Couoh, notary, is 7 pesos, 12 loads of corn; the salary of Juan May, *maestro*, is 7 pesos, 12 loads of corn; Francisco Hau, *tupil doctrina madamias [doctrina mandamiento]*.

NOTES: <sup>a</sup> In one of its chronicle sections, the Book of Chilam Balam of Mani names "seven men of Mayapan"; CBM:135–136 (Restall 1998a:141).

<sup>b</sup> The pattern here of retinues of four is mythically rooted in the Chontal text in the retinue of four of Auxual, the founding patriarch of six generations before Paxbolonacha (TAT:69v [Restall 1998a:58]); the don Pablo Paxbolon mentioned elsewhere in the present chapter was Paxbolonacha's son.

<sup>c</sup> Although Calkini was not subject to Sotuta, it is possible that this was the Napot Canche who was governor of Calkini at this time and mentioned elsewhere in this chapter (e.g. see Figure 11.7).

<sup>d</sup> For the complete Maya text and English translation of this record, and for a discussion of it and other documents in the genre, see Restall 1997a:267–275, 324–326.

SOURCES (in the above order, with language of original text indicated): TC:13–14 [Restall 1998a:88] (Maya); TAT:71v–72r [Restall 1998a:62] (Chontal Maya); CBC:53 (Maya); DTS:424–425 (Spanish with some Maya terms and orthography); TY:5v–6r [Restall 1998a:119–120] (Maya); AGEY-A, 1, 1 [see note c above] (Maya).

rulers, both of which are given in the full texts; and one Colonial Maya court as recorded in a Spanish-approved election document.

It is worth making an additional comment about numbers, as this is often a topic of scholarly interest (Ringle and Bey, Chapter 9 in this volume). Although the source in Table 11.4 on the Colonial *cabildo*, an election document, is almost certainly a complete record of the Maya court at that time and place (Tekanto, 1691), the sources on earlier courts are different in genre and cannot be taken as complete listings. Nevertheless, the variety in numbers is probably a faithful representation of the pre-Colonial pattern—one that continued, as stated above, in the localization of *cabildos* and courts by Colonial *cahob*. Although four, seven, and nine appear with greatest frequency in quasinotarial sources, none of these magic numbers appears more significant than the rest (see Table 11.4); notarial sources show officers in pairs of fours more often than other numbers, but this could in part be Spanish influence. Tekanto consistently elected twenty-one officers in the late seventeenth century and Cacalchen, in the same region, elected twenty-eight (LC:47). However, evidence from both ends of the Colonial period suggests that courts at their broadest definition (including, for example, religious offices, be they pre-Christian or church choir posts) numbered more like fifty people; Nachi Cocom's 1545 summit retinue was close to fifty, and an 1821 Maya election document details more than fifty *cah* offices (Table 11.4; MT:65; Restall 1997a:268–269).

Transcending these details—and the tension between change and continuity from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries—is the consistent application of a simple principle: No one man, or even one family, ruled a Maya community or polity alone; the members of the court, to degrees depending on rank, participated in rulership. This principle, increasingly referred to by scholars as *multepal*, may go back as far as the Classic period and has recently been identified in pre-Conquest seventeenth-century Peten.<sup>25</sup> It certainly survived into the Colonial period and, indeed, helps explain the quick adoption, easy adaptation, and long-term success of the *cabildo* system by post-Conquest Mayas.

### *Hereditary Status*

Thus far the elite as a group has been defined in terms of social “class” and in terms of the political offices and bodies of the *cah*; in other words, the argument that the ideology and perpetuation of Maya elite status embodied a principal of corporate heredity has largely been made above. Ubiquitous in this analysis has been the *chibal*, or patronym group, and a number of *chibalob* have been frequently cited, particularly those I have called the “dynastic dozen.” The taboo on intra-*chibal* marriage encouraged elite *chibalob* to form marital alliances with one another (Restall 1997a:87–97, 110–140; 1998b), thereby consolidating and domesticating

the intra-elite ties that nurtured social differentiation, underpinned the "royal" court, and produced the oligarchical system of rule.

The dynastic dozen were the Caamal, Canul, Canche, Chan, Che, Chel, Cochuah, Cocom, Cupul, Iuit, Pech, Xiu (see Table 11.2), whose dominance of clusters of *cahob* gave them a regional authority that marked them as the upper crust. Of these dozen, the most important were probably the Canul, Chel, Cupul, Cocom, Pech, and Xiu, due to the size and location of the regions they dominated. This in turn determined the significance of the role they played in the Conquest, which in turn determined how well they survived that period. There is evidence that the status and regional power of the Cocom, Xiu, Chel, and possibly others in the dynastic dozen went back to before the Segmented Century, perhaps into Classic times, and most of these dynasties maintained considerable status through the Colonial period; however, the sixteenth century was the crucial test of the strength of the foundations of dynastic status and the adaptability of elite *chibalob*.

From the dynastic dozen's viewpoint, one of the most serious ramifications of the Conquest was the Spanish claim to a monopoly over regional authority, with Maya political power restricted to the level of the *cah*. This transition was not as drastic as it might appear; as discussed above, the integrity of Maya regional polities during the Segmented Century was based not on centralized government but on the control of *cah* governorships (*batabilob*) by members of the dominant dynasty or their allied kin. Certainly the position of *halach uinic*, the regional supreme ruler, as held by a Maya lord, would not survive the sixteenth century (for most of the Colonial period, the title is accorded by Mayas to the Spanish provincial governor in Merida). But Spanish confirmation of dynastic dozen nobles in governorships throughout the colony promoted dynastic continuity and helped these *chibalob* maintain their legitimacy with their own subjects at local as well as regional levels. Due in part to the deep-rooted centrality of *cah* identity in Maya culture, the Spanish were eventually able to restrict Maya political authority to the *cah* level (producing the above-mentioned golden age of localized politics; Quezada 1993; Restall 1997a). But the demise of Maya regional power was slow and gradual, and the regional cooperation of *batabob* in the 1761 uprising (AGI-México 3050; Patch 1998) and during the so-called Caste War (Dumond 1997; Rugeley 1996) suggests that it went dormant rather than died.

This is not to say that the Conquest period was characterized solely by continuities in dynastic status. The inevitable rise and fall of *chibal* fortunes were accelerated by the Spanish invasion, which brought issues of legitimacy to the fore, providing opportunities for some and endangering the political fortunes of others. The Canche, for example, were a dynastic dozen *chibal* by virtue of their *batabilob* (governorships) in both the Motul and Calkini regions, where they enjoyed alliances with the Pech

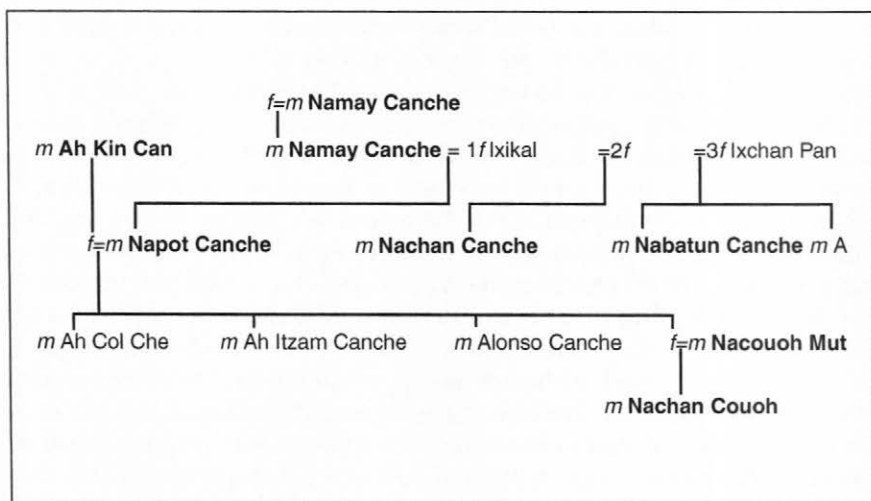


FIGURE 11.7 A Family of rulers: the Canche of sixteenth-century Calkini. Note: The names in bold served as *batab* (governor) of Calkini or another *cah* in the region; the elder Namay was part of the departure from Mayapan in the 1440s and a member of the Canul court; the younger Namay won through warfare the *batabil* (governorship) of Dzitbalche; he died before the Spanish invasion; his son Napot was confirmed as *batab* of Calkini in 1541, when Spanish officials also confirmed the eligibility (and possibly gubernatorial positions in the region) of two of his brothers and his son-in-law; a grandson of Napot, Nachan Couoh, was *batab* of Calkini in the late-sixteenth century; Alonso Canche served as *alcalde* (see Table 11.1) in Calkini in the 1570s and was still alive in 1595. Source: TC: 13–18 (Restall 1998: 88–91).

and the Canul respectively. Figure 11.7 illustrates their survival in Conquest times as a ruling *chibal* in and around Calkini. Although marital alliances with several other *chibalob* are shown in this genealogy, the Canul are conspicuously absent. This reflects efforts by the Canche to alter the balance of power between themselves and the Canul in this region, efforts that may have gone back into the Segmented Century but that certainly met with some success in the Colonial period—as reflected in the *Title of Calkini* (the source for Figure 11.7), a community history that shows signs of having been reworked in Colonial times to promote the Canche (Okoshi Harada 1993; Restall 1998a:Chapter 5).

The Xiu seem also to have maneuvered well during the Conquest decades, but they lost political ground in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A brief history of the dynasty, highlighting events in the 1530s and 1560s, illustrates both points emphasized in this section: the persistence of group hereditary status; and the simultaneous systemic changes that came in the wake of the Conquest.





umph of 1557, was don Francisco de Montejo Xiu's prosecution by Quijada for drunkenness during a 1561 Xiu summit in Mani.<sup>28</sup> The following summer brought even greater ritual humiliation, as Landa's torture-driven inquisition into "idolatrous" practices culminated in the whipping of hundreds of Maya "penitents" and the burning of religious statues and other objects at the Mani *auto da fe* (Clendinnen 1987:72–82; Scholes and Adams 1938).

In 1567, the year of his death, Montejo Xiu was the principal author and signor of a letter to the king of Spain from a group of Xiu and Pacab rulers denouncing Landa, his fellow Franciscan "torturers," Quijada, and other Spanish officials. "May our descendents to the fourth generation be recompensed the great persecution that came to us," wrote the Xiu lords, but one wonders how much faith they really had in the likelihood of compensation (Restall 1998a:165–168).

The 1560s marked a turning point in the evolution of the Maya court and, probably, in the Maya evaluation of the status of dynastic authority. After the 1560s dynastic persistence relied increasingly upon three strategies, albeit ones with deep pre-Conquest roots and that continued to be supported by the elite ideology of superior status: working the Spanish legal system through petitions (an old Maya tradition) and lawsuits; consolidating local power on a *cah-by-cah* basis; and redefining dynastic corporatism to permit new alliances with "lesser" *chibalob*. Symbolic of this shift in the Xiu world was the fact the *batabil* of Mani passed to Gaspar Antonio Chi in 1571 and to a Francisco Be in 1575.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the direct line of Xiu lordship shifted to the less prominent Xiu *cah* of Oxkutzcab and, by the late seventeenth century, to the tiny *cah* of Yaxakumche (XC; see Table 11.5). The Xiu dynasty survived, but its authority became increasingly localized.

Don Francisco de Montejo Xiu's name was rich in symbolism, representing the status of the Xiu dynasty as Maya conquistadors—as equals, within their own domain, to the Spanish dynasty that headed the new dominant court at Mani. But his Christian name also marked the Xiu ruler as subordinate to his Spanish godfather; as a representative not only of the Xiu dynasty and its ancestors but also of the Montejos and the colony they had founded; as not only the head of the court at Mani but also a subordinate member of the new Colonial court at Merida. The Xiu world, centered on Mani, persisted, but it was now part of a larger world of concentric spaces centered on Merida, Mexico City, and Madrid.

Montejo Xiu's christening was paralleled by that of the head of the Pech dynasty, Ah Naum. As don Francisco de Montejo Pech, Ah Naum was confirmed in office in the 1540s as *batab* of Motul, the most important *cah* in the Pech region. But like his namesake in Mani, the Pech lord thereby confirmed the Spanish establishment of a colony in Yucatan. This is efficiently illustrated by the depiction in the *Title of Motul* of Ah Naum



FIGURE 11.5 The Yaxakumche Branch of the Xiu Lineage

Time	Line of descent by primogeniture	Source
C11th	Hun Uitzil Chac Tutul Xiu	The ca.1560 portion of the Xiu Family Tree (by Gaspar Antonio Chi) (from XC)
C15th	Ah Tzun Xiu	
C15th	Ah Op Xiu	
d.1536	Nappol Chuuah Xiu	
d.1536	Ah Ziyah Xiu	
c.1522–1548	Don Melchor Xiu	The ca.1685 portion of the Xiu Family Tree (by don Juan Xiu)
c.1547–1624	Don Francisco Xiu	
C16th–17th	Don Pedro Xiu	
d.c.1630	Don Alonso Xiu	
c.1620–ca.1690	Don Juan Xiu	
b.1661	Don Juan Antonio Xiu	The papers of the Xiu Chronicle (C17th to early-19th) (XC)
1697–1759+	Don Salvador Xiu	
C18th	Don Lorenzo Xiu	
C18th	Don Pablo Xiu	
C18th–19th	Don Pedro Xiu	
C18th–19th	Don Antonio Xiu	Gates 1937:125
b.1788	Don Andrés Xiu	
b.1814	Don Bentura Xiu	
1839–1911	Don Bernabé Xiu	
1861–1911	Don Ildefonso Xiu	
b.1887	Don Nemensio Xiu	
b.1915	Don Dionisio Xiu	

Pech as a prophet-ruler, who entreats his people to welcome the Spaniards with food and drink “so that Christianity may enter the *cah*” (*yoklal ocol cah ti cristianoil*; TY:7r; TCH:12; Restall 1998a:121). The lordship of don Francisco de Montejo Pech, and his descendents, survived beyond the Conquest, but Pech history would later be written to project the impact of Spanish colonization back into the pre-Conquest mind of Ah Naum himself.

The Pech seem to have maneuvered better than the rest of the dynastic dozen through the upheaval of the Spanish invasion to consolidate much of their regional authority. The *batabil* of Motul was passed by don Francisco de Montejo Pech to his son don Melchor in the 1550s and on through his branch of the Pech dynasty into the next century. The persecution of the 1560s little affected the Pech region, as reflected in the fact that the Pech continued to promote themselves as the Spaniards’ chief allies; in 1567 two dozen Pech rulers of *cahob* in the Motul-Conkal region, headed by don Melchor Pech, wrote a letter to the king of Spain on the same topic as the Xiu letter of that year, only the Pech heaped praise on Landa and pleaded for more like him (AGI-México 367:62, 70; Restall 1998a:156–158).

Thus by allying themselves to Spanish Colonial authority, Pech and Xiu nobles survived the Spanish invasion and even consolidated their local power, the Pech being particularly successful at holding onto *batabilob* in their region.<sup>30</sup> Other nobles preserved their courts in similar ways. Don Pablo Paxbolon, the Chontal ruler of Acalan-Tixchel, extended his regional power by acting as a Colonial agent and Maya conquistador; his campaign against noncolonized Maya groups lasted into the seventeenth century (Restall 1998a:Chapter 3; Scholes and Roys 1948). Ah Kul Caamal of Sisal learned that resisting Spanish demands resulted in imprisonment and the loss of his rulership; his subsequent cooperation and baptism as don Juan de la Cruz Caamal led to his confirmation as governor of Saci-Sisal (upon which Valladolid was founded), where “he was *batab* a long time before he died” (*ont kinac u batabil cat cimi lay*; TY:5r; TCH:9–10; Restall 1998a:117–118). Don Fernando Uz rose to prominence as a senior Maya official who, like his elder contemporary Gaspar Antonio Chi, also served the colony as an interpreter and notary and lived partly in the Spanish world; although he held a number of *batabilob* during his career, he also kept a house in Merida (AGI-Escribanía 305a; Farriss 1984:98–99).

There was a price to be paid, however, for redefining legitimacy through association with the Spanish authorities. First of all, Spanish concern with political stability and the provision of tribute took precedence over loyalty to a particular dynasty or fidelity to a particular alliance—as the Xiu history above illustrates. Second, the subject Maya population remained an important audience that needed to be reassured and convinced of the legitimacy of the local rulers. Negotiation and persuasion played as much of a role in internal Maya relations as it did in relations between the Spanish and Maya courts. The *Books of Chilam Balam* contain several references to the poor quality of rulership during troubled times, including the Conquest period (CBT:63, 67–68; CBC:20; CBM:70–72; Restall 1998a:133–135, 138–140). In one notable incident of 1610, the Xiu *batab* of Tekax was almost murdered by his rioting subjects, who were incited by a gubernatorial rival, the above-mentioned don Fernando Uz (AGI-Escribanía 305a; Farriss 1984:98–99, 193–195, 246). The near escape of the Xiu lord and the subsequent imprisonment of Uz showed that the traditional basis of legitimacy—the quadripartite ideology that underpinned the Maya court—remained just as important in Colonial times as the newer tactic of association with the Spaniards.

### *Dynastic Origin Mythology*

The fourth and final support for the Maya elite’s ideology of superior status was a mythology that claimed external origins.<sup>31</sup> This mythology—taken by most Mayanists since Landa to be based on a historical migration from central Mexico—is, I suggest, without historical foundation, being a metahistorical construct serving particular cultural purposes.

TABLE 11.6 Maya Origin Myth References in the Ethnohistorical Sources

Source	Places of origin	Ancestors of origin
Title of Acalan-Tixchel (1567/1612)	"Cozumel"	"Auxauhal", four other Chontal Maya nobles (Chacabalam, Huncha, Paxmulu, & Paxoc)
Title of Calkini (1595/1821)	"the Itza region", "the east", "West Zuyua"	"those people of West Zuyua", "those of the Canul name"
Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel	"Cartabona", "Viroa Chacunescab"	"the chibal of the Tutul Xiu"
Book of Chilam Balam of Mani	"the land and home of Nonoual", "West Zuyua", "Tulapan"	"the Tutul Xiu"
<sup>a</sup> Probanza of don Juan Kauil (1618)	"the kingdom of Mexico"	"a Cocom", "a relative of Moctezuma named Tumispolchicbul", "Cuhuiakcamalcacal-puc", "Ixnahaucupul" and "Kukumcupul"
<sup>a</sup> Gaspar Antonio Chi (1579)		"the Tutul Xiu" as "foreigners"
<sup>a</sup> Landa's Relación(1566)	"the west"; "the south," "Chiapas"	"Kukulcan", "the Itzas"; "the Tutul Xiu"

NOTE: <sup>a</sup>Spanish-language document.

SOURCES: TAT, 69v (Restall 1998a:58); TC, 36 (Restall 1998a:101); CBC, 21 (Restall 1998a:135–136); CBM, 134 (Restall 1998a:140); Brinton 1882:114–118 and Quezada 1997:214–216; RHGY, I:319 (Restall 1998a:149); Landa VI; XIII; IX.

Ethnohistorical sources such as the *Books of Chilam Balam* and the primordial titles contain a number of examples of the myth (see Table 11.6). Paxbolon's dynasty originated with founding ancestor Auxauhal, who "in the beginning came from Cozumel to conquer the territories here" along with four of "his principal men" (*u na cahibal auxauhal tali cuçumil tali u chuci cabil cabob uij . . . yithoc u nucalob*; TAT:69v; Restall 1998a:58). The myth-histories of both the Canul and Xiu lineages claim origins in a place called "West Zuyua." The principal men of Calkini state that "we know how we came from the east, we Maya men, and that we come from those people of West Zuyua . . . Travelling along the road, they [sic] came to rest in the Itza region, which is where those of the Canul name came from" (*c oheliix hibiciix teil talon ti lakine coon ah maya uinice tiix u talob lae ah chikin suyuaob . . . lay u bel beob lubob tal ti peten yfza ulci ah canul ukabaob*

*lae*; TC:36; Restall 1998a:101). The Chilam Balam text from Mani asserts that “the Tutul Xiu were at West Zuyua for four eras; the land they came from was Tulapan . . . the land and home of Nonoual” (*can te anilo tutul xiu ti chikin zuiua u lumil u talelob tulapan . . . ti cab ti yotoch nonoual*; CBM:134; Restall 1998a:140). According to Gaspar Antonio Chi (a Xiu on his mother’s side), one dimension of the rivalry between the noble lineages of the Cocom and the Xiu was that the Cocom claimed that “they were native lords and the Tutul Xiu foreigners” (RHGY, I:319; Restall 1998a:149); accordingly, Chi’s Xiu Family Tree (Figure 11.6) features some central Mexican iconographic elements.

Even this brief summary reveals the contradictions and ambiguities in the sources; they are internal and intertextual and concern geography and nomenclature. For example, the Chontal myth names Auxaua as the founding ancestor of the ruling dynasty; Auxaua is possibly a name of Nahuatl origins, and there is a similarly named site to the west of the Chontal region; however, Auxaua is described as coming from Cozumel, which is far to the east. The Calkini text claims that the Canul lineage came from West Zuyua to the Itza region and then to Calkini, which has been taken to suggest a migration from central Mexico through the Chontal region and into Yucatan; however, the Calkini text also states that this place of origin was in the east—again, the opposite direction—and the Itza region referred to here is probably the area around Chichen Itza.<sup>32</sup>

Zuyua is also mentioned in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, usually in association with rulership. It has been interpreted variously by scholars (Burns 1991:35; Edmonson 1986:168; Marcus 1992:78–79; Roys 1933:88–98; Sigal 2000:233–240), but Zuyua itself is almost universally assumed to be a Nahuatl-derived toponym and located in central Mexico.<sup>33</sup> Yet, as one linguist has pointed out, there is “no convincing evidence that Zuyua has anything to do with Nahuatl place names, the Nahuatl language, or central Mexico” (Karttunen 1985:6). Indeed, the word’s possible components (*zuy* and *ha’*, for example) are very plausible Yucatec toponymic elements. Nevertheless, no place in Yucatan has been identified as a possible historical site for Zuyua. Equally unidentifiable are other place-names given as dynastic provenances in the origin-myth sources, such as Nonoual, Cartabona, and Viroa Chacunesab.<sup>34</sup>

A 1618 source records a claim that the Cocom and other local nobles were descended from lords “who came from Mexico,” one of whom was related to Moctezuma.<sup>35</sup> Although knowledge of one or both the Moctezumas may have circulated in pre-Conquest Yucatan, it seems more likely that tales of him arrived with the Spaniards and/or their Nahua auxiliaries. Besides, the Cocom name has been identified in Chichen Itza hieroglyphs dated long before the Moctezumas ruled in Mexico (Ringle 1990; Stuart 1993:346–347). Furthermore, another source

claims that it was the Xiu who were widely perceived as foreign, usually central Mexican, and the Cocom as locally rooted (see Chi in Table 11.6). In fact, the names cited in the Valladolid document as those of ancestral migrants are Maya, not Nahuatl. Likewise, the patronyms featured in other versions of the origin myth—such as Canul, Caamal, and Cupul—are as Yucatec Maya as is Cocom. The name “Xiu” is usually assumed to be Nahuatl-derived, but this, too, is a dubious assumption.<sup>36</sup> Even if *xiu* were to be viewed as a loan-word from Nahuatl, that would hardly prove that the lineage or *chibal* named Xiu came from central Mexico.<sup>37</sup>

Not only have scholars been quick to take literally and uncritically the vague and contradictory origin mythology of dynastic dozen *chibalob* such as Canul, Caamal, Cocom, Cupul, and Xiu; they have added Pech to the list. By misreading statements in the Pech primordial titles, one historian argued that the Pech nobles arrived in the region north of Merida not only after the fifteenth-century fall of Mayapan but “in conquest times” (Roys 1957:41). In fact, the assertion by Pech nobles that they were “the first noble conquistadors here in this land” (*yax hidalgo concixtador uay ti lum*; TY:2v; TCH:1; Restall 1998a:109) is a reference to the acquisition of prestigious Spanish titles, not the initial arrival of the Pech in the region; it relates to elite Maya reactions to foreign invasion, not to their own putative foreignness (Restall 1998a:44–45, 104–128). But the erroneous interpretation was used by another historian to characterize the Pech as “parvenu ‘adventurers’” (Farriss 1984:245), thus grafting onto Maya mythology a historiographical myth.<sup>38</sup>

If the myth of Maya elite origins was not rooted in historical fact—that is, none of the dynastic dozen were descended from central Mexicans—what purpose did the myth serve the Mayas who perpetuated it?

Put simply, such mythology made the elite who they were. Put metaphorically, it was the crucial agent that prevented the mortar used to construct the Maya court from eroding and crumbling. Tales of foreign origins were used by the Maya elite to ideologically underpin socioeconomic differences and help perpetuate the dominance of their *chibalob*. As discussed above, Maya social differentiation was marked and maintained in a variety of ways. But in times of political and economic crisis—as in the fifteenth century, when the Mayapan arrangement collapsed, or in the sixteenth century, when the Spaniards invaded—the elite needed a foundation to their status that transcended the material and the mundane. This need was fulfilled by the assertion of a sacred and celestial connection to distant places and ancestors. The exclusivity of this connection was of the utmost importance; its monopoly imbued it with meaning.

David Henige (1982:90–96) has argued that “there seem to be few important differences between the styles of origin theories” from thousands

of societies, both oral and literate, with external origins proving again and again to be “uncannily attractive . . . perhaps because it often seems desirable to distinguish the ruling classes from the rest of the population.” Similarly, in a series of studies (e.g., 1993, 1994, 1998), Mary Helms has proposed that “in human cosmologies geographical distance corresponds with supernatural distance” (1998:xi) and that status is gained through knowledge of—and claimed ancestral links to—distant places. Most societies “recognize two ideological centers—one at the heartland of the polity and the other . . . located geographically ‘out there’” and viewed as a place of cultural and ancestral origin (1994:361, 363).<sup>39</sup>

Zuyua and the other places cited in Maya texts precisely fit this mythological category of the temporally and geographically ambiguous homes of founding ancestors. Such toponyms are not easily identified because their meaning to the Maya was rooted in their remoteness and otherness—in the fact that they were not supposed to be readily identifiable, geographically, temporally, or linguistically.

The sacred element commonly found in origin mythology elsewhere is also present in the Maya case. Cozumel was probably significant to the Chontals because it had for many centuries been a pilgrimage site, usually associated with the Itzas. Indeed, “Itza” or the Itzas—possibly the name that Yucatec Mayas gave to Chontals during Chichen Itza’s heyday—are frequently cited in Maya texts in connection with elite origin mythology and usually with sacred associations.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the otherness of names and places allowed them to function as spatial metaphors for the sacred and the exotic, allowing rulers—in accordance with deep-rooted Maya tradition—to transcend their earthly roles and assert connections to the supernatural.<sup>41</sup> But at the same time it was important to maintain the deeply rooted local connections that served to legitimate the material basis of social and political status—to nourish Helms’s “ideological center . . . at the heartland of the polity.” The dynastic dozen thus laid claim to “the logically awkward but not unfamiliar claim to a double legitimacy” (Clendinnen 1987:150). Long into the Colonial period Maya elites asserted this paradoxical dual legitimacy deriving both from their mythical external origins and their long-term occupation and rule of the region they dominated.

Origin mythology enabled Maya dynasties to appropriate the vestiges of prestige and power resulting from encounters with the peoples and/or cultures of central and southern Mexico in pre-Conquest times—all with a view to reinforcing a nativist claim to local rule. This ideological principle was reinforced by the Spanish Conquest and the attempt by some elite *chibalob* to assert status as “noble Maya conquistadors”—Xiu, Pech, and other elites attempted to distance themselves from the Maya masses and to appropriate the Conquest as a way of inverting defeat and maintaining status.



Elite origin mythology and the Yucatec historical experience therefore fed off each other, with the perpetuation of the origin myth being one legacy of centuries of multiple contacts and exchanges between Yucatan and the outside world. Colonial-period Maya references to the foreign origin of certain elite lineages do not reflect a historical migration or invasion; rather, they reflect the complexity of the Maya social structure, the sophistication of the Maya reaction to the Spanish invasion, and the tenacity of the rulers of the Maya court.

### Colonial Epilogue

The story of the Maya court in the sixteenth century thus features at its heart a dialectic between change and continuity. There are many similarities between the court of 1450 and that of 1650, and yet the court was never static at any point during those centuries. Ruling dynasties, noble families, and courtly retinues had to adapt continually to changing political and social circumstances prompted in particular by the post-Mayan wars, by the Spanish invasion, and by the imposition and evolution of colonialism in the peninsula.

In fact, the Colonial period witnessed competing campaigns of adaptation between Maya courts and Spanish colonists, both of whom attempted to make Colonial Yucatan look and function as much as possible to their way of perceiving and doing things. The Maya elite had the advantages of being native, being in the majority, and being permitted to govern themselves at the local level; but the political and economic advantages of the colonists were greater in the long run. In using the Colonial courts (the Spanish legal and administrative system) to perpetuate themselves, Maya courts gradually undermined their own political and cultural independence.

In short, the Maya court survived the Conquest, but in order to do so it had to allow itself to become partially colonized. To return to the metaphor of concentric spaces introduced at the start of this chapter: Two Colonial developments altered the positioning of the Maya court within this spatial metaphor.

One was the gradual insertion of Spaniards and Spanish concepts of the built environment into the center. Initially the Maya elite achieved continuity around the plaza by amalgamating Spanish and Maya perceptions of the prestige of stone (rather than wattle-and-daub) houses and the prestige of living on the plaza; the Pech history of Chicxulub describes three buildings constructed around the plaza—the new church; the *cali* government building; and the stone house of the *batab*.<sup>42</sup> But the patio of Spanish-style houses was inside the building, not in front of it; it was an inner courtyard rather than a spatial link between building and plaza. The church that replaced the “pyramid” and temple, as much as it



was valued and nurtured as a symbol of *cah* status and integrity, was likewise an internal space.

Furthermore, the most significant rituals performed in the church were the monopoly of Spanish priests, just as, in time and in the most important *cahob*, the house-plots on the plaza became monopolized by Spaniards.<sup>43</sup> Some Maya rulers embraced Spanish concepts of space and status to the extent of creating and partially residing on Spanish-style *estancias* (agricultural estates)—a notable example is the Chontal ruler don Pablo Paxbolon, who lived on his *estancia* outside Tixchel (TAT:n.f.; Restall 1998a:73)—but this, too, had the effect of partially removing the court from its traditional center. Eventually, one way or another, Mayas were pushed into the outer concentric spaces as the Spanish presence in the plaza, so temporary that day in Calkini in 1541, became permanent.

The other Colonial development that altered the metaphorical positioning of the Maya court was the evolution of new centers of power. I have argued above that elite origin mythology was perpetuated to promote the sacred “otherness” of dynastic *chibalob*; viewed through the model of concentric spaces, this mythology allowed rulers to be both at the physical center of their domain and transcend it metaphysically, occupying alone a three-dimensional space outside the flat model.

However, in the Colonial period, Maya rulers lost their monopoly on the “otherness” of rulership. Increasingly that space came to be co-occupied also by the remote higher powers of Spanish Colonial rule—the governor in Merida, the viceroy in Mexico City, and the king in Spain. These Spanish rulers were at the centers of a vast interlocking set of concentric zones that served to peripheralize Maya courts. The *cahob* and their courts remained at the center of their own worlds, but Maya courtly members were increasingly aware of their subordinate status within a larger world centered far away (Hanks 1996:287; Restall 1998a:155).

By the Late Colonial period, the titles of *ajaw* (“lord”) and *halach uinic* (regional ruler), so important to the pre-Conquest Maya,<sup>44</sup> became applied only to the Spanish governor, viceroy, or king—two of whom, or even all three, were often conflated by Maya *cabildos* into a single, remote, kingly personage. In an effort to hold on to their position at the center, Mayas recast their own rulers as Spanish-style conquistadors (Restall 1998a) and Spanish-style kings (see Figures 11.6, 11.8, and 11.9). In doing so, Mayas conceded the colonization of their “royal” courts.

### Abbreviations

- AGEY Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán, Merida  
 AGI Archivo General de las Indias, Seville  
 AGN Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City  
 AME Archivo de la Mitra Emeritense [cited numbers are page numbers in Dumond and Dumond 1982]

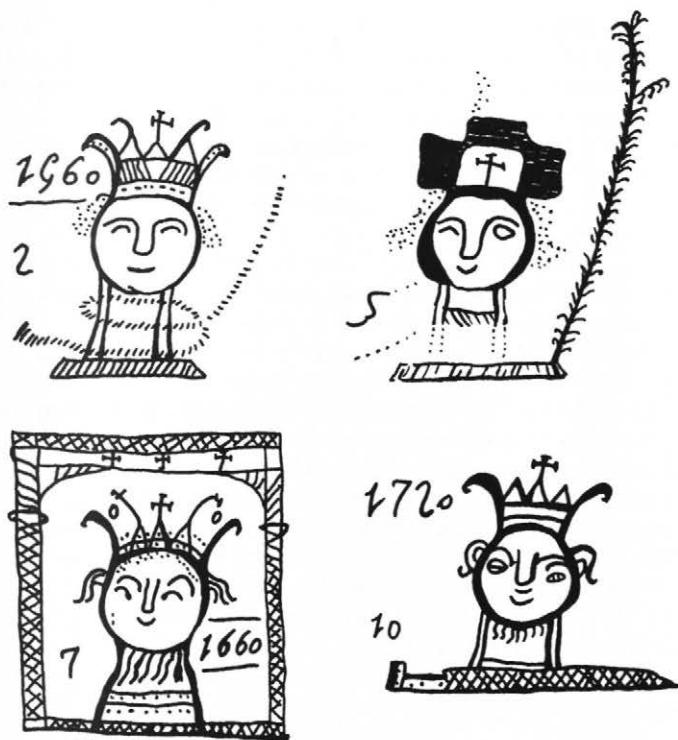


FIGURE 11.9 Imagining kings: Colonial Maya depictions of Maya rulers (drawings by the author after originals in *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*). Source: CBC (drawings in Roys 1933:150, 153, 158, 161; facsimiles in Edmonson 1986:128, 150, 218, 66).

- ANEY Archivo Notarial del Estado de Yucatán, Merida
- CBC *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* [cited numbers are page numbers in Roys' 1933 edition; also cited with each reference, where applicable, is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- CBM *Book of Chilam Balam of Mani* [cited numbers are page numbers in the Codex Pérez manuscript, photostat in Tozzer Library, Harvard University; also cited with each reference, where applicable, is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- CBT *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin* [cited numbers are page numbers in Edmonson's 1982 edition; also cited with each reference is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- CCA Colección Carrillo y Ancona, in the Centro de Apoyo a la Investigación Histórica de Yucatán, Merida
- DTS Documentos de Tierras de Sotuta [cited numbers are page numbers in Roys 1939]
- LC Libro de Cacalchen [cited numbers are folio numbers in the photostated manuscript in Latin American Library, Tulane University]

- MT Montes de Tsek [cited numbers are folio numbers in the photostated manuscript in Latin American Library, Tulane University]
- RHGY *Relaciones histórico-geográficas de la gobernación de Yucatán* [cited numbers are page numbers in Garza 1983]
- TAT *Title of Acalan-Tixchel* [cited numbers are folios of original manuscript in the Archivo General de las Indias, Seville; facsimiles are in Scholes and Roys 1948; also cited with each reference is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- TC *Title of Calkini, a/k/a Códice, Codex, or Chronicle of Calkini* [cited numbers are pages of original manuscript, photostat in Tozzer Library, Harvard University; also cited with each reference is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- TCH *Title of Chicxulub, a/k/a Chronicle of Chicxulub, a/k/a Crónica de Chacxulub-Chen, a/k/a Códice de Nakuk-Pech* [cited page numbers are photostat pages of nineteenth-century Regil manuscript in Tozzer Library, Harvard University and in Latin American Library, Tulane University; also cited with each reference is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- TY *Title of Yaxkukul, a/k/a Crónica de Yaxkukul* [cited numbers are folios of 1769 manuscript, Latin American Library, Tulane University; also cited with each reference is the translation in Restall 1998a]
- XC *The Xiu Chronicle, a/k/a the Xiu Papers* [original manuscript in Tozzer Library, Harvard University]

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### Notes

1. The relevant passage from the Calkini text, with my translation, is as follows (note that here and throughout this chapter I have used Colonial Maya orthography): *Cimenili ah tzab canul ti uli kul uinicob lae lay tun Naapot canche ti kamiob ti patan ca ti uliob tu tancabale ti tacan u Batabob tumen lay nachanchee canule lay napot canche tu an uba tutan kul uinicob tanlah ti yan u pentac lay ah cot mas u kaba y ix ix cahum kuk u uinic ti tun ti alabi Batabil tumenel dzul y u haan ti nacouoh mut y y in ti nachan canche ylix nabatun canche u canan uinic u mehen yalic he napot canche lae lay cuchmail cah uay Calkini lae tu tancabal ti uch u kubul patan ti monxo cap." ca ti uliob uay Calkinte y u holcanob tu pach he ca hulob tal sacnichteel chene paybe ulci u kekenob y u culuaob ti gonsalo u cap." culuaob lae hetun ca huliob u dzulilob tune hun chup kin tu chun caan cu satal ti likin ca uliob he ca tali u kuchulob tu hol cah uay Calkini lae ca oniob tu huntun he tun ca kuchuob tu uol chakane tiix oniob xani huntun hi catun kuchuob ti yotoch tun tix oniob tu yoxten xani bay tun u cibahob lae ti hummol ah Calkiniob u pakteob u ocol yulel u patan hunhuntsuc ti cabe catun u kubahob ti cap." lae chuyub pix kin ti hatzabe he patan u kubahob lae hokal yiximal ti molcab hex yulumale hokali xan lahuyoxkal u pulil cab hunkal xuxac pi u bal cuyub occi bay ix u sac kuchil xan lay u patannob tu kamah mondejo yalan yaxche ti ix halim lae catun ti hopi u thoxicob yxim tu batanbaob tumen u tupilob ti ah tacan tupil yalabale ma ohelan u kabae maix u tancuob yulmal xan baix toxci yulmal xan baix thoxci u pi il xan heix u kuchile hun banhal u cibah catun hopi u bakti thot chotun ca thani u capitanoob ca yalah aex chaex tulacalex ci yalabalob catun u pah ubaob yokolob ca u holmektahob tu huntucob yan yab u chah yan ma yab u chah tu than huntul tulacalob chuplal y xiblahob batun cu caluacticob lae lay u chun tu tancabal napot canche lae hex almehen cabob ah otochnal laobi lae lay u batabob nachan canul u cuchma yilah yuchul buucah lae te tacan tu nii yotoche ti yan tucan ti yotoch Naapot canche lae lay u tabtahob tumen ul lay u chayah u naal lae namay tayu y nachan y ah kul couoh y yah canob laobi lae tzlante tu chune lay yah kin lae ah kinob kin may y ah kul uh nabatu uc kalo namay tayu huntuli ah dza ti ya huntul xani ah chaul huntul xani ah dzuun che u pentac ah chaul lae ah chuen chay u catul u pentac. Translation: As Ah Tzab Canul had already died when the officers [i.e., Spaniards] arrived, Napot Canche received them with tribute—when they arrived on his patio where Nachanche Canul had gathered the *batabob* together. Napot Canche presented himself before the officers, so that the men might be served by slaves of his named Ah Cot Mas and Ix Cahum Kuk. He was then appointed to the *batabil* by the foreigners, along with his son-in-law Nacouoh Mut and his younger brothers Nachan Canche and Nabatun Canche, to whom he was guardian. This Napot Canche held the *cah* governorship here in Calkini; it was on his patio that the tribute was delivered to the captain Montejo, when he and his soldiers arrived here in Calkini, when they arrived near the well at Sacnichte. Their swine and their Culhuas arrived first; the captain of the Culhuas was Gonzalo. When the foreigners arrived, there was on the horizon a sliver of the sun as it dawned in the east. When they reached the entrance to this *cah* of Calkini, they fired their guns once; when they arrived where the savannas begin, they also fired their guns once; and*

when they arrived at the houses, they then fired their guns a third time. The people of Calkini then gathered together to discuss the completion of the bringing of tribute from each district, which they then delivered to the breast-plated Captain. That morning they delivered this tribute: one hundred loads of corn all in all; one hundred turkeys also; fifty jars of honey; twenty large baskets of ginned cotton; the sisal breast-armor was brought in; also the white cotton yarn. These were the tribute items received by Montejo under the ceiba of Halim. Then the constables began to distribute the corn among themselves—the names of the assembled constables are not known—distributing not just half of the turkeys, but all of them, as they did the cotton and the yarn. Then, having become gluttonous, they began to break the line and form a tightening circle. And the Captain said: “Give it up!” “Take all of it!” they replied. Then they began to be suspicious of each other, holding piles of things tightly in their arms; some were able to grab a great deal, others grabbed a little; one and all, women and men alike. And thus they did it in haste. Then the following began to occur on Napot Canche’s patio: the district nobles, the residents, and their *batab* Nachan Canul, who were not responsible for watching this splitting up of spoils that took place, were hidden at the back of their homes; but those in front of Napot Canche’s home were tied up by the foreigners. They took all who were there: Namay Tayu, and Nachan and Ah Kul Couoh; and the speakers, the priests, those who interpret the cause of things; the priests Kin May and Ah Kul Uh; Nabatun Uc. One who was there was Namay Tayu; Ah Dza Tiya was another one; Ah Chauil was one more—Ah Dzuun Che was Ah Chauil’s slave, and his second slave was Ah Chuen Chay (TC:16–17; Restall 1998a:89–90).

2. In the fifteenth century and after there were no Maya rulers who could usefully be called “kings”; neither could any Maya dynasties be taken as “royal” in the sense that such a term is customarily defined—that is, a single ruling family governed by principles of heredity and (modern royalty aside) represented by a king or queen enjoying permanent and absolute rule, perhaps by divine right. However, “royal” is pertinent to the Classic period (see especially Chapter 1 by Inomata and Houston in Volume 1 and Chapter 3 by Harrison in this volume) and retains a certain relevance in the Post-Classic and Colonial periods (see the second half of this chapter).

3. For similar Maya models and maps see the drawing in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chan Cah* (Calderon 1982:123), the circular version of the Mani Map (reproduced widely; e.g., Marcus 1993:127; Roys 1943; Sharer 1994:505; the noncircular version is presented below as Figure 11.5), and the citations and discussions in Restall (1997a:200–201) and Marcus (1993:125–128). For an analysis of the conception of geopolitical space by the independent Itza Maya of the seventeenth century, a conception that fits well the models in Figure 11.1 (from the plaza and concentric residential spaces of the Itza capital to the territorial center around it to the four outlying territories), see Jones (1998:60–107). On present-day Maya conceptions of space, see Brown (1993) and Hanks (1990).

4. “Quasinotarial” means that the documents were only partially (or in some secondary sense) generated by Spanish-approved notaries for a Spanish audience according to Colonial legal guidelines and formats; on Maya quasinotarial material, see Restall (1997a:Chapter 21). Primordial titles were written in various Colonial Mesoamerican languages; most extant examples are in Nahuatl (see Gruzin-

ski 1993:Chapter 3; Lockhart 1992:376–392; Restall 1997a:Chapter 21; 1997b [which contains extensive references to the relevant literature, in particular articles by Robert Haskett and Stephanie Wood], 1998a:Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6). The Acalan-Tixchel document is in Chontal Maya (a Yucatecan language, despite its frequent classification as Cholán). The Pech titles are a pair of near-identical texts, the Chicxulub (or Chacxulubchen) and the Yaxkukul, which contain within them shorter, subsumed titles that I have named after Motul and Saci-Sisal. All the Yucatec titles are published in English in Restall (1998a).

5. The literature on the *Books of Chilam Balam* is too large to cite here, but for examples see Edmonson (1982, 1986); for an introduction, short excerpts, and further references, see Restall (1998a:Chapter 7).

6. Restall (1997a) is a study of the notarial material in Maya; see also Roys (1939); Thompson (1978); Quezada (1997); Restall (1997b; 1998a).

7. There are three book-length studies of the conquest of Yucatan: Chamberlain (1948); Clendinnen (1987); Restall (1998a), which offer varying emphases on questions of change and continuity.

8. Citations of Landa are by chapter to facilitate the reader in finding passages in any edition. The standard Spanish-language edition is Landa (1959); my translations are drawn from Restall and Chuchiak n.d.

9. Living "beneath the branches, beneath the foliage" was a Maya metaphor for homelessness; traveling "beneath the trees, beneath the branches" was a metaphor for a long journey through a region without towns; Mayas who lived outside the colony were called by Colonial Mayas *ah tepp cheob*, "those covered by trees" (e.g., TCH:13/TY:7v; CBM:135; XC:35; Restall 1998a:122, 141, 177).

10. The cayman-tree is the caimito, *ek ya*, *Chrysophyllum cainito* (Stephen Houston and D.J.B. Restall, personal communications). For other ancient Maya images of trees see the illustrations to Cortez (1995); for an illustrated introduction to the role of the ceiba in Maya culture, see Pons (1997).

11. Also see the description of Maya palaces and patios by Cortés in his first letter to the Spanish king (1986:30–35).

12. It is possible that there were thrones of some kind in rulers' residences or in council buildings, although the small size of polities and the concomitant lack of monumental architectural construction in the Segmented Century make it unlikely that such thrones were very grand or in special throne rooms (as in Tikal, for example; see Harrison, Chapter 3 in this volume). I have translated a phrase in the Chontal primordial title as "seated on his throne" (*chumul tu tepeual*), being reported speech by Cortés and referring to the king in Castile (TAT:72r; Restall 1998a:63); as tempting as it is to comment on a possible Colonial Maya view of royal thrones as exclusive to Spaniards, I now believe that "established in his reign" is a more accurate gloss. There is no other reference to a throne in the Maya primordial titles or any in the Maya notarial record of which I am aware. There are two terms used in the *Books of Chilam Balam* that could be glossed as "throne," *am* and *kanche*, but neither are very common, and the latter, which the Tizimin text uses more often than the former, means "wooden chair or bench" when removed from a courtly context (Edmonson 1982, 1986; Restall 1997a:106, 365; Roys 1933 on the noncourtly *kanche*).

13. *Hallámosles gran número de libros de estas sus letras, y porque no tenían cosa en que no hubiese superstición y falsedades del demonio, se los quemamos todos, lo cual sin-*

*tieron a maravilla y les dio mucha pena*. On the spiritual conquest of Yucatan see Farriss (1984:Chapters 10, 11); Clendinnen (1987); Restall (1997a:Chapter 12; 1998a:Chapter 9); and Chuchiak (2000).

14. TAT:74v (Restall 1998a:67); AHN, caja III; Restall (1998a:167). For Spanish testimony that substantiates the Xiu claim with respect to various parts of the colony in 1562, see Scholes and Adams (1938, I:37, 68, 220, cited and summarized in Clendinnen 1987:83).

15. The larger point may be that legitimacy and authority were tied to a monopoly on knowledge, be it maintained through the keeping of texts or the memory of oral tradition (Stephen Houston, personal communication). The *Title of Calkini*, for example, illustrates the importance of both the written record and the memory of "those who are in the know" (TC:26–28; Restall 1998a:96–97). On the relevance of orality to Maya literacy pre- and post-Conquest, see Houston (1994, 1997) Restall (1997b).

16. The circumstances of Conquest that necessitated a proliferation of these courtly gatherings in the sixteenth century were repeated in a different form in the final century of Colonial rule, when population growth increased demand for land among both Spaniards and Maya communities. As a result, land summits reappeared in significant number. For example, a walk and summit agreement in the area just north of Merida in 1786 involved eight Spaniards and the *cabildo* officers of four *cahob* and took five days (CCA, Chichi papers, III); among the last such multicourt rituals to be recorded in the Colonial period were major border walks and summits in the Mani region and in the Uman region south of Merida, both in 1815 (ANEY 1826ii:34–36; AGN-Tierras, 1419, 2:55–56; Restall 1997a:193–200, 218–255; see Hill 1992 for highland Guatemala parallels).

17. Each copy of the 1557 Mani Land Treaty was accompanied by a variant copy of this map; this version was the one maintained by the Yaxakumche branch of the Xiu dynasty (see Table 11.5).

18. See Ringle and Bey's able navigation through these waters (Chapter 9 in this volume), as well as Roys (1957:3); Farriss (1984:147–148); Marcus (1993); Quezada (1993:32–58); and Restall (1997a:39–40, 169–177).

19. On the administrative evolution of the colony, see Farriss (1984:Chapters 3, 5); Patch (1993:Chapters 2–3); Quezada (1993:Chapters 2–4; 1997:Chapter 6); Bracamonte (1994:Chapter 1); and Restall (1997a:Chapters 3, 5, 13). On the survival of extra-Colonial independent Maya communities and their struggle to stay independent in the face of Spanish and Colonial-Maya hostility, see Scholes and Roys (1948:Chapter 11); and Jones (1989; 1998).

20. For a complementary model presented in far greater detail and representing a sophisticated attempt to reconcile Classic-period and Conquest-period evidence, see Marcus (1993).

21. Nahua elites who lead the native auxiliaries of invading Spaniards from central Mexico, primarily from the Montejo *encomienda* of Azcapotzalco, also received *indio hidalgo* status, but they were absorbed into Spanish/mestizo society, not the Maya world.

22. *Don* was an appropriated Spanish title applied by the Maya to *indios hidalgos*, to *batabob*, and to former *batabob*; there are various examples throughout this chapter and in Ringle and Bey (Chapter 9 in this volume); also see Restall (1997a:46, 91–94).

23. TC:13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 30, 31, 32, 38; Restall (1998a:87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 98, 102). There are references to slavery in the *Books of Chilam Balam*, but the term used, *munal*, is somewhat ambiguous, and the contexts are that of bondage in a general rather than a specific or detailed sense. The *Tizimin* uses *u munal* five times and the *Chumayel* uses *u munal*, *u munnal*, and *ah mun* once each; in all eight instances Edmonson glosses the term as "slavery" or "slaves" (1982:38, 62, 99, 104; 1986:247, 98, 240), but Roys glosses the *Chumayel* variants as "tender boy" or "young maize plant," "slaves," and "tender green shoot" respectively (1933:115, 76, 112). As *munal* does not appear as such in the Colonial dictionaries, Roys' uncertainty is understandable, although Edmonson's consistent use of "slave" is more helpful. A clumsy but more accurate translation would be "tender, young man or boy, subordinated or possibly enslaved." All of this may help to illuminate the *Chilam Balam* passages in question, but it does not tell us much about the role of slavery in Maya society. I can find no *Chilam Balam* use of the less ambiguous terms used in the Calkini text.

24. There is slave reference in another ethnohistorical source, the *Title of Acalan-Tixchel*, but it comes in a passage for which we have only the Spanish translation (Restall 1998a:70), and I suspect the term in the lost Maya page was one of the terms that appears elsewhere in this text, such as *chanbel uinicob*, "subject people." Nevertheless, the context of the reference is relevant, being the raiding of uncolonized Maya communities by the semicolonized Chontal Mayas under don Pablo Paxbolon in the late sixteenth century; the captives kept fleeing back to their original homes, "because they were [i.e., had been made] slaves of the ruler and the other principal men." Even if the Maya term that the Spanish notary glossed as "slaves" was in fact "subjects," this kind of low-grade warfare between communities was probably the way in which notable opponents were enslaved in other parts of Yucatan during the Segmented Century.

25. Schele and Freidel (1990:360–61, 370) asserted that the term was used in Chichen Itza, but this reading has since been re-evaluated (Stephen Houston, personal communication). On Peten, see Jones (1998:104–105). *Multepal* is usually translated as "joint rule" or "joint government" (e.g., Brinton 1882:103; Craine and Reindorp 1979:139; Marcus 1993; Roys 1962:72, 74, 76), but Edmonson has glossed it as "crowd rule" (1982:10; 1986:54), and I have suggested "factional rule" (1998a:141). The rare incidence of the term in ethnohistorical sources (as far as I can find, one each in the *Books of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, *Mani*, and *Tizimin*; source just cited) means it should be used with caution. The term may effectively describe a long-lasting principle in Maya court/government culture, but it does not necessarily convey the full picture of the governmental system. A relevant and illuminating parallel can be found in the Maya's own terminology of inheritance, encapsulated in the terms *ceil* and *multial*, "even distribution" and "joint ownership"; the application of both principles of inheritance represented Maya attempts to recognize both the rights of individual family members to inherit property and the importance of group inclusion and integrity (Restall 1997a:110–120). With respect to government, *multepal* reflected the latter, with the group being the courtly nexus of dynastic and elite family members; the sibling principle (and here the analogy is loosely drawn) was the right of individual elites, especially the dominant men of a dynasty, to inherit status and office.

26. Some forty Xiu and other court members were slaughtered in Cocom territory while en route to perform a rain-bringing ceremony at Chichen Itza. The massacre was rooted in a Xiu-Cocom feud going back to the fall of Mayapan and renewed by a 1533 Xiu alliance with invading Spaniards; it sparked several years of warfare in the Mani-Sotuta region. The drawing reproduced in Figure 11.8 is a seventeenth-century etching printed in Cogolludo (1867–1868, 3:VI) and probably based on a lost sixteenth-century commemorative drawing. Maya accounts of the Otmal massacre are in two *Chilam Balam* books (CBM:136; Craine and Rein-dorp 1979:187–188; Roys 1933:138), in the *Annals of Oxkutzcab* (XC:154), and in one of the *relaciones* contributions by Gaspar Antonio Chi (whose father was among the Otmal victims; RHGY, I:318). Spanish accounts include Cogolludo (3, VI) and Landa (XIV). See also Restall (1998a:40, 81, 144, 149).

27. On the Xiu succession up to 1548, see Morley and Roys (1941:120–148); Cortez (1995:237–242); also Figure 11.6 and Table 11.5 in this chapter.

28. Both *halach uinic* Montejo Xiu and another Xiu *batab* (don Juan of Hunacti) were removed from office for six months, fined twenty pesos, and given fifty lashes (AGI-Justicia 248, 2; Scholes and Adams 1938; Quezada 1993:134, 150).

29. Chi was a Xiu noble by maternal descent and a staunch defender of the dynasty, but he was raised and pursued a career largely in the orbit of Landa and the colonists (Restall 1998a:Chapter 8); Be's term of office (Quezada 1993:196) marked the first time since the fall of Mayapan that Mani had been ruled by a non-Xiu.

30. On evidence of Pech court continuities, some from the fall of Mayapan through the eighteenth century, see Quezada (1993:187–191); Restall (1997a:92–97, 281–292; 1998a:Chapter 6); and Ringle and Bey, Chapter 9 in this volume, Figure 9.1.

31. A fuller version of the argument presented in this section is in Restall (2001).

32. Okoshi Harada suggests this (1993:14–18). There is similar directional confusion in the Landa version (see Table 11.6).

33. Brinton (1882:110); Roys (1933:88; 1943:59, 151); Thompson (1970:23); Edmonson (1982:38); Coe (1993:171); Sharer (1994:406). Variations on the theme have Zuyua in the Tabasco region (Carmack 1981:46; Okoshi Harada 1993:5) and the Peten Itza region (Jones 1998:7). Zuyua's central Mexican location could be inferred from the claim in Cakchiquel Maya sources that lineage ancestors came from "Tulan, Zuyua"; however, such sources also claim that local elites were descended from Abraham and the ancient Israelites (see, e.g., the Xpantzay primordial titles from Tecpan); Recinos (1984:120–121, 168–169).

34. Nonoual might be derived from Nonohual, the name of a mountain adjacent to Tula, although Brinton (1882:109–124), Carmack (1981:46), and Okoshi Harada (1993:4) argue that Nonoual is the Chontal area. Cartabona appears to be an altered Spanish place-name, possibly based on Cartagena (Edmonson 1986:101 proposes Constantinople). Viroa Chacunescab is also obscure; Edmonson (1986:103) proposes that Viroa is a Maya reduction of Babylonia, whereas Roys (1933:80) opts for Chacunescab as the name of a member of the Tutul Xiu *chibal*.

35. Statement made in Maya in Valladolid, written down in Spanish; reproduced in Brinton (1882:114–118); Quezada (1997:214–216); quoted at length in



Roys (1962:66 and erroneously dated 1718). The Maya witness cites local Kauil and Caamal noblemen as sources.

36. The supposed source of the Maya patronym is the Nahuatl word *xihuitl*, which means both "grass" and "year." There is a Maya term, *xiiu*, meaning "plant," but arguably, as Karttunen suggests, "one would expect the Maya form of such a loan to be *xiuit*, and in fact *xiuit* appears as a common noun in the Chilam Balam of Tizimin apparently meaning 'year'" (1985:10). It is therefore just as likely that *xiiu* and *xihuitl* are derived from a common Mesoamerican origin. The only personal name in Maya origin mythology that could be Nahuatl is Auxaal, but the four principal men who are named as his cosettlers have distinctly Yucatec and Chontal Maya names (see Table 11.1).

37. The evidence relating to patronyms has both linguistic and ethnic implications; the lack of non-Maya patronyms in Yucatan, especially among the allegedly foreign elite *chibalob*, reflects the fact that Yucatec Maya contains a very modest quantity of words derived from Nahuatl—and some of those are either derived from common Mesoamerican origins or entered the language under post-Conquest Spanish mediation (Karttunen 1985; Restall 1997a:Chapter 22). Linguistic evidence, in fact, "strongly supports indirect and mediated contact" between Yucatan and central Mexico before the Spanish invasion, not "direct and sustained contact" (Karttunen 1985:14). Likewise there is no evidence, either from the Colonial or modern periods, of ethnic differences between the Maya *chibalob* of alleged foreign origins and the peninsula's other *chibalob*—although the issue has yet to be studied using biological methods.

38. An important additional component to the development and perpetuation of the myth, and the perception of its historicity, is the longtime hegemony of the Toltec invasion paradigm in which "two radically different pre-Columbian people" (Jones 1997:285) clashed, producing a new Mexican-Maya elite (Clendinnen 1987:149; Coe 1993:155; Gillespie 1989:201–207; Morley 1946:211–212; Thompson 1956:99–105; Tozzer 1957:128–129) whose origins even inspired them to capitulate early to the Spaniards (Farriss 1984:245; Roys 1933:192–199; 1957:41). Of relevance here is the suggestion by Jones (1997) that the binary global politics of World War II and the Cold War provided a cultural context that nurtured this vision of ancient Yucatan; also relevant may be a broader Western perception, rooted in Colonial times, of a cultural and material dichotomy between central Mexico and the Maya area. The Toltec invasion interpretation has, of course, been well undermined by recent archaeological scholarship (Gillespie 1989:207; Jones 1995, 1998:7–16; Ringle 1990; Sabloff and Andrews 1986; Sabloff and Henderson 1993; Sharer 1994:338–408).

39. For other examples, both from Mesoamerica and from other cultures, see Sahlins (1981); Lincoln (1991); Chatterjee (1998); and Christensen (1999).

40. The Pech texts refer to local pagan priests as "the Itza priests" (*ytza u yah ki-nob*; TY:6r; Restall 1998a:121), whereas the *Books of Chilam Balam* make various references to Itza priests and Itza migration mythology (e.g., CBC:20; Restall 1998a:134). Similarly the Canul ancestors of the Calkini myth were imbued with sacredness by passing through Itza territory. This passage is quoted above; in the original Calkini text a Maya/Christian cross (all four arms of equal length) is drawn in by the word *ytza* (TC:36). Although the Itzas are also called foreigners in the *Chilam Balam* literature, there are no specific references to their place of origin;



if anything, the Itzas are associated with places within Yucatan rather than outside it (CBC:20, 22; CBM:135–136; Restall 1998a:134, 136, 141). Itza “otherness” is thus primarily achieved through associations of sacredness (although in other *Chilam Balam* passages there is an equation made between the Itzas and the Spaniards as bringers of warfare and related disasters; Restall 1998a:41–43). For a discussion of the connection of the term “Itza” to sacredness and shamanism, see Jones (1998:428–429).

41. For a discussion of spatial metaphors in contexts of cultural interaction and “otherness,” see Ouellet (1998). Henige (1982:90) calls origin tales “the major metaphors.” On the pre-Conquest tradition of the transcendence of rulers, see Houston and Stuart (1996); Inomata and Houston (2001, Chapter 1 in Volume 1 of this series).

42. TCH:15; Restall (1998a:124). “I also built my home, a house of stone, to the north of the church. The Maya people [i.e., the commoners] may not say one day that it belongs to them; this is why I make it clear that I did not build it for them” (*Bay xan licix in betic in uotoch pakil na tu xaman iglesia ma u yalic maya uinicob ua utialtob tu kinil lay tumen ci chicil besic hebix in mentah ma ilobe*).

43. A forthcoming doctoral dissertation by Christopher Nichols of Tulane University details this change in Tekax in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

44. *Ajaw* goes back at least as far as the Classic period (Houston and Stuart, Chapter 3 in Volume 1), but *halach uinic* seems to be a Post-Classic development.