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Social and Political Organization in the Land of Cacao and Honey: Correlating the Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Postclassic Lowland Maya

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Present knowledge of Lowland Maya social organization prior to the Historic Period is derived primarily from syntheses of ethnohistoric descriptions of the Maya by Spaniards during and following their conquest of Middle America. Analysis of these documents reveals substantial information concerning Lowland Maya cultural practices. However, the descriptions are clearly not all-embracing, particularly when they concern material culture. The accounts are also known to vary in their reliability. Given the continued use of ethnohistory for interpreting the Classic Maya (M. Coe 1965; Haviland 1968; Kurjack 1974; Thompson 1970) as well as Postclassic Maya archaeological remains, it seems appropriate to assess the ethnohistoric descriptions through archaeological information from sites occupied immediately prior to the Conquest. While such an assessment was undertaken on a limited scale for Mayapan (Pollock et al. 1962), recent archaeological work on the Lowland Maya Postclassic Period (see other papers this volume and A. Chase and P. Rice 1985) has added significantly to the available data. Archaeological data may often be used to clarify ethnohistory and may occasionally serve to correct garbled accounts. This paper, therefore, seeks to combine and contrast what is now known from both archaeological and ethnohistorical studies concerning the

Protohistoric social and political organization of the Lowland Maya.

It is astonishing that after a century of study Mayanists can still not archaeologically define what is "Maya" at the point of the Spanish conquest as opposed to what is "Mexican" or "Putun," particularly given the ethnohistoric data that are available concerning the location of various ethnic groups at the time of the Conquest. In order to discuss interactions between various groups and regions, it is necessary first to define the realities of the situation at contact. Without such a definition, researchers can find themselves speculating unnecessarily about matters that can actually be resolved by reference to hard data.

The ethnohistoric information used in this paper will be drawn primarily from the most accessible works, such as the numerous synthetic writings of Roys (1933, 1943, 1957; Scholes and Roys 1948) and the descriptions of Diego de Landa as translated by Tozzer (1941). Archaeological discussion will be limited to the Late Postclassic Period (ca. A.D. 1300–1520) and will be presented predominantly from the site of Santa Rita Corozal, with additional information being added from the site of Mayapan.

Although Mayapan was largely unoccupied after A.D. 1450, this site was probably the most important administrative center in the Northern Lowlands for much of the Late Postclassic Period. Excavations there by the Carnegie Institution have provided an extensive body of archaeological data on the Postclassic Maya (Pollock et al. 1962). Mayapan also lies squarely within the Yucatec area best described in the ethnohistoric documents (Relaciones de Yucatan 1898–1900; Tozzer 1941), and tentative correlations between the archaeology and ethnohistory have been made (Roys 1962).

The site of Santa Rita Corozal, located on the extreme southeastern part of the Northern Lowlands, was first investigated by Thomas Gann (1900, 1911, 1914–16, 1918) and more recently by the Corozal Postclassic Project (A. Chase 1980; A. Chase and D. Chase 1981; D. Chase 1981, 1982a, 1985; D. Chase and A. Chase 1980). Both sets of investigations serve to underscore not only the Late Postclassic Period remains, but also the long history of occupation at the site. While continued investigation at Santa Rita Corozal is planned, the 1979 and 1980 seasons unearthed substantial information relevant to Protohistoric Lowland Maya cultural practices.

Santa Rita Corozal is located within the southern province of Chetumal, noted for being rich in cacao and honey at the time of contact

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(Oviedo y Valdez 1851–55, book 32, chapter 6). The site has been tentatively identified as the capital of the province of Chetumal during the early sixteenth century based both on its location and on its archaeological remains (for discussion see D. Chase 1981, 1982a: 571–73; Sidrys 1976: 325–31; Thompson 1972: 6). It has been further argued (D. Chase 1982a) that the archaeological links between Mayapan and Santa Rita Corozal are such that the Yucatec documentary references probably apply to the latter site as well as the former. While archaeological remains from Santa Rita Corozal are not identical to those from Mayapan, they clearly derive from the same tradition. Recovered archaeological patterns at Santa Rita Corozal also fit ethnohistoric descriptions for central Yucatan (D. Chase 1982a, 1985). The archaeological work at Santa Rita Corozal may therefore be viewed as providing insights into the organization of Protohistoric Yucatec Maya society from a point in time following Mayapan.

ETHNOHISTORIC DESCRIPTIONS
OF LOWLAND MAYA SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

According to Roys (1943: 33), Postclassic "Yucatecan Maya society was definitely divided into three classes: nobles, commoners, and slaves." The nobles were not only the ruling class, but were also the most important and/or wealthiest warriors, priests, farmers, and merchants. While commoners could be wealthy, too, they were reportedly separated from the true nobility by their lack of knowledge concerning ritual. Commoners were "artisans, fishermen, and small farmers and merchants generally" (Roys 1943: 34). More recent archaeological work (Adams 1970; Becker 1973) would indicate that artisans during the Classic Period may have been considered nobles. Slaves were generally commoners captured during war and were evidently used as laborers for various kinds of activities, including farming, fishing, trading, and domestic chores. There may have also been a class of individuals whose position was below that of commoners but above that of slaves, "the members of which might be considered serfs" (Roys 1943: 34).

Roys further describes (1943: 35) Yucatec society as having been divided into patrilineal groups (*ch'ibal*) that, at least in some instances, included both nobles and commoners and, as Roys suggested, undoubtedly aided in maintaining the solidarity of the group. These lineage groups were exogamous and each had a patron deity—in some

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cases a deified ancestor. While patrilineal descent was clearly impor-
tant, matrilineal descent was also evidently recorded, as the mother's
first name was transferred to her children as a first name (*naal*) fol-
lowing marriage, at which point the person's childhood first name was
technically dropped (Roys 1943: 36). Roys (1943: 33) suggests that
descent in both the male and female line was acknowledged in the
meaning of the Maya word for noble, *almehen*—"*al*, a woman's off-
spring, and *mehen*, a man's progeny."

Marriage between bearers of the same patronymic was generally
prohibited, as were marriages between close relatives on either side.
After marriage the couple lived for at least five years with the bride's
parents and then generally moved to the husband's father's home for
permanent residence; this was apparently in direct contrast with Chon-
tal practice, where matrilocal residence has been described as being
common (Roys 1965: 663). While monogamy was the general custom,
polygyny was evidently practiced among the upper class. The principal
wife would have been of the noble class, while subsequent wives could
be "slave concubines." While children of the principal wife retained
the status of their father, children of slaves most likely did not and
were apparently sometimes sold (Roys 1943: 26–27).

Property and major offices/titles were held primarily by men. Titles
were handed down from father to eldest son (where possible) and
property was generally divided among the sons (Roys 1943: 28, 164).
While women could inherit chieftainships in certain parts of Mexico,
this pattern is not described for the Yucatec Maya (Roys 1962: 63).

According to Landa, each town had four ceremonial entrances,
which were associated with the cardinal points. At each of these en-
trances were two opposing mounds of stone. The town itself was ori-
ented around a central area containing plazas and ceremonial structures.
Houses nearest the center were those of the nobles and priests; the
lowest class had their residences at the very outskirts of town (Landa
in Tozzer 1941: 62–64). Roys (1943: 20) points out that the larger
towns were composed of a series of subdivisions or barrios (1965: 662–
64) and that members of the same name group, while distributed
throughout the town, might be concentrated in specific barrios. This
barrio model may either be viewed as directly opposing the concentric
ring model provided by Landa or it may be viewed as complementing
it.

At the time of the Spanish entrance into Yucatan in the early six-

teenth century and following the fall of Mayapan (mid-fifteenth century), there were at least 18 independent Maya territories (see Figure 10.1), each called a *cuchcabal* (Roys 1943: 1; 1957). These had at least three types of government (Roys 1965: 669; 1957). In the first type of territory or state, a *halach uinic* governed the entire province (examples included Cehpech, Mani, Sotuta, Hocaba, Cochuah, Ah Kin Chel, and probably Chetumal, Chanpoton, and Tah Itza); below him were the *batabs* of the various towns. In the second type of territorial organization, the province did not have a *halach uinic*, but was ruled primarily by members of the same name group (examples included Ah Canul and Cupul). A third type of organization was characterized by only a loose alliance of independent towns (examples included Chakan and Chikin Chel and possibly Tases).

In the territories where a *halach uinic* was present, he was the military and judicial administrative head or *batab* of his own town and was also superior to the *batabs* of other towns in the province. Below each *batab* were a series of individuals with duties toward a specific portion or division of the town—each called an *ah cuch cab* or, in Spanish, a *principal*. In the hierarchy below the *ah cuch cab* were a number of individuals with the title *ah kulel*, and below this the *tupil*. Two other individuals, the *holpop*, possibly the local head of the most important name group (Roys: 1965: 669), and the *nacom*, or war chief, were sometimes present within a town hierarchy. While not suggested by Roys, it seems likely that the *holpop* was present primarily in those instances where the ruling lineage was not either the most populous or most prestigious one in a territory.

Towns within a territory might have joined together formally under a *halach uinic*, because of name groups, or due to ceremonial activity (Landa in Tozzer 1941: 164–66), and other less formal affiliations undoubtedly existed. Lands may have been held in common within the province; it is unclear whether lands and salt beds were sometimes held in common by several towns (Roys 1943: 37). Territories appear to have been only loosely allied at the time of the Spanish Conquest and often at war with each other.

The organization of Maya society at the time of the Spanish Conquest appears, in sum, to have been based upon a number of interwoven systems. Individuals of the same patronym were linked together by their lineage regardless of social status. Lineage heads and ancestral deities may have been important in effecting this union. At the same
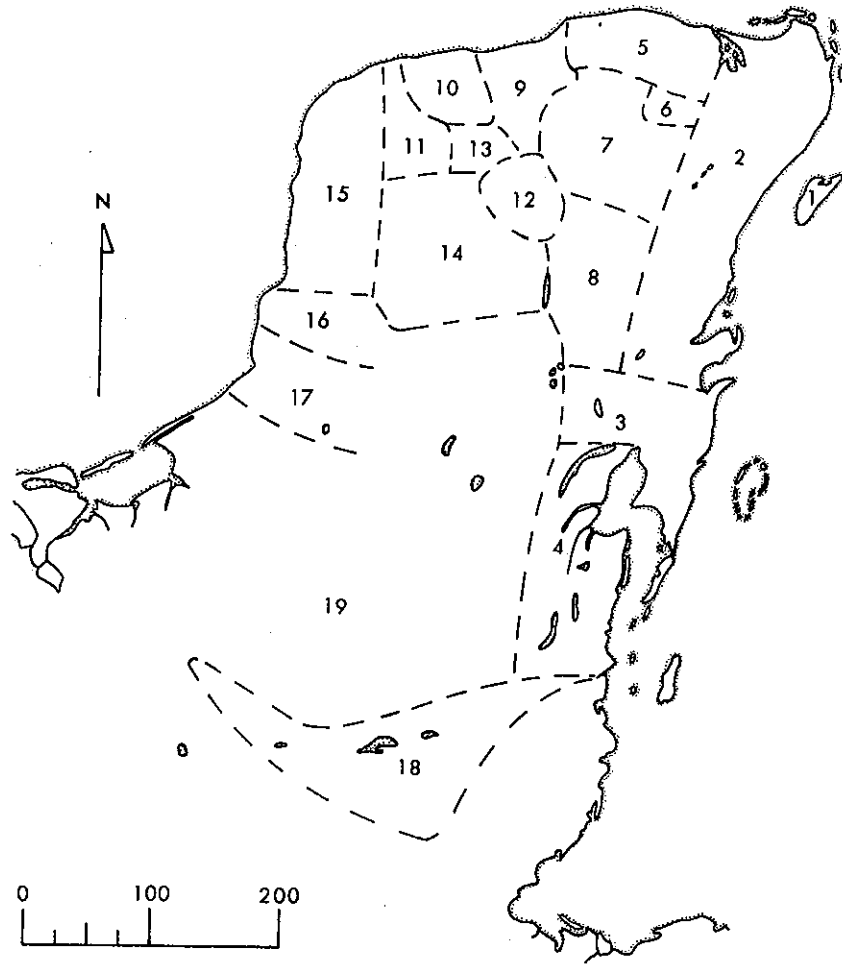
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Figure 10.1 Map of the Yucatan indicating boundaries of native Maya provinces in existence at the time of Conquest (after Roys 1957: Map 1). 1. Cozumel or Cuzamil; 2. Ecab or Ekab; 3. Uaymil; 4. Chetumal or Chactemal; 5. Chikincheel or Chauaca; 6. Tazes; 7. Cupul; 8. Cochuah; 9. Ah Kin Chel; 10. Ceh Pech; 11. Chakan; 12. Sotuta; 13. Hocaba or Homun; 14. Tutul Xiu or Mani; 15. Ah Canul; 16. Canpech; 17. Champoton; 18. Tayasal or Tan Itza; 19. Cehaches (?)

time, however, towns were most likely organized spatially into a series of barrios, which formed administratively distinct units. Whether these correlated with lineage groups is unclear; apparently in certain cases this was true. Members of the various social classes appear to have resided in each barrio. The barrios themselves were tied together not only by a larger administrative system, but also by a system of ritual. This system, maintained by the noble class (and, of course, specifically by "priests"), integrated the various subdivisions of a town through rituals that were concerned with the Maya calendar and the cardinal directions. These towns were further organized along similar lines into territories or provinces, each with a regional capital and many with a regional ruler, or *halach uinic.*

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA BASE

The reconstruction of the social organization of a group of people from material remains is a problematic task (Allen and Richardson 1971), but one that is continually attempted by archaeologists. While it is unlikely that archaeological evidence will be found incontrovertibly to confirm or refute all ethnohistorically derived interpretations of Protohistoric Lowland Maya social organization, certain aspects of social organization can be viewed relatively usefully from an archaeological perspective. This essay will differ somewhat from previous correlations of ethnohistoric and archaeological data concerning the Late Postclassic Lowland Maya (such as Haviland 1968) in focusing on only three topics for which there is pertinent evidence: status, site organization, and regional organization.

Archaeologial Evidence for Differential Status

There is little direct archaeological evidence for the presence of classes in Postclassic Maya society, but there are indirect indications that such may well have existed. Two sets of data that can be analyzed with regard to determining status differentiation are architectural constructions and burials (cf. Haviland 1968; Kurjack 1974). The juxtaposition of these two sets of data produces additional information.

If one examines constructions that have been identified as dwellings at the sites of Santa Rita Corozal and Mayapan, it soon becomes apparent that these buildings are not all equal in size, plan, or tech-

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nique of construction. Residences vary in sheer mass and in number of rooms. The quality of construction and the amount of imperishable building material utilized likewise vary; excavated Postclassic building remains range from simple lines of stones to multiple-course base walls and, occasionally, to completely stone-walled buildings.

Thomas Gann excavated approximately 47 structures at Santa Rita Corozal; of these, at least 13 yielded evidence for Late Postclassic use. Unfortunately, little extant information from these early investigations can be used to determine architectural or residential types. Recent work at the site has led to investigation of 20 structures of which at least 17 evinced Late Postclassic use. Six basic structure types have been identified from the site of Santa Rita Corozal; examples of each of these six types, used during the Late Postclassic Period, are illustrated in Figure 10.2. While an absolute assessment of structure function based on form may be impossible, investigations have suggested probable correlations between building form and archaeological materials that may be indicative of the functions for the various structure types excavated to date (D. Chase 1982a).

The simple structure (Figure 10.2: Type 1) is frequently visible on the surface only as lines of stone. Like most Postclassic constructions at the site, these were once surmounted by perishable superstructures. The occupational refuse associated with Type 1 buildings suggests that these constructions served as residences or possibly for other domestic-related activities. Simple structures with frontal platforms (Figure 10.2: Type 2) frequently have higher substructures than Type 1 and are sometimes associated with more finely dressed masonry. While these may also have served a multitude of possible functions, the lack of domestic and ritual objects, in combination with the occurrence of a core cache in one of the excavated examples, could indicate that such structures were employed in administrative-related activities. Single structures on larger platforms (Figure 10.2: Type 3) sometimes have partially standing walls. Their form is suggestive of shrines found in the Northern Lowlands. The single investigated example had no associated refuse to indicate either residential or purely ritual function, but did have a cache and numerous burials placed within it. Based upon this example (Str. 58), Type 3 buildings are thought to have served civic-ceremonial functions. Large platforms with multiple structures resting on them (Figure 10.2: Type 4) are believed to have served a variety of functions based on the variety of associated buildings. Most
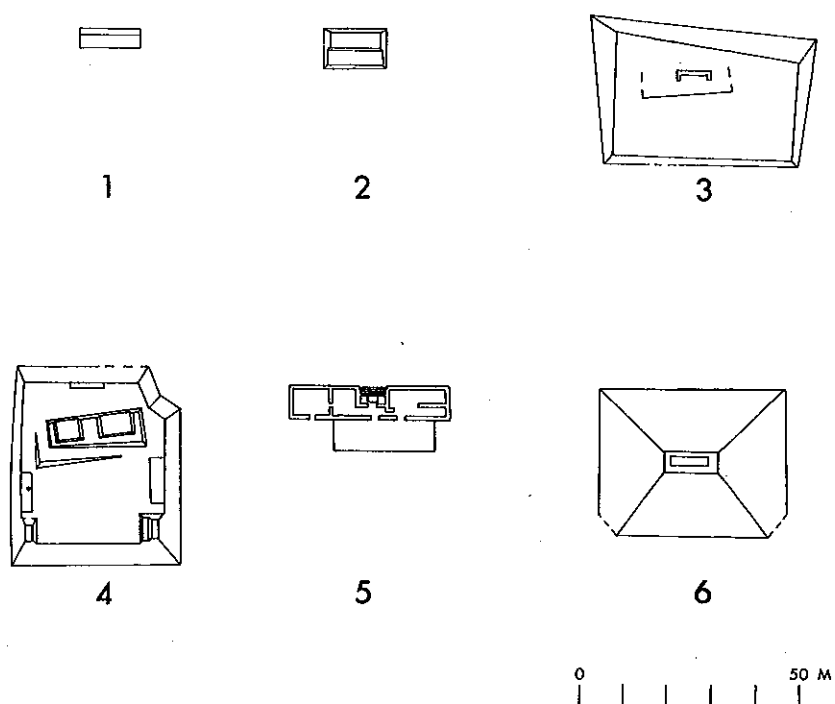
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Figure 10.2 Santa Rita construction types in use during the Late Postclassic. Type 1: Simple structure (Ex. Str. 74). Type 2: Simple structure with frontal platform (Ex. Str. 36). Type 3 Single structure on a larger platform (Ex. Plat. 1—Str. 58). Type 4: Multiple structures on a platform (Ex. Plat. 2—Strs. 73, & 76–80). Type 5—Multiple room construction (Ex. Str. 81). Type 6: High elevated construction with or without multiple rooms (Ex. Classic Period Str. 7 which was re-used during the Postclassic).

of the constructions atop large platforms are variations of Type 1 simple buildings, but others represent Type 2 or Type 3 constructions. Based upon associated debris, the platform as a whole has been suggested as the locus of both residential and ritual activity (D. Chase 1982a: Table 20). Multiroom constructions (Figure 10.2: Type 5) may have basal wall stubs and an enclosed shrine with altar. The remains associated with the excavated Str. 81 have been interpreted as indicating that the building was most likely the residence of a *principal* (D. Chase 1982a: 301–2), thus serving combined residential, ritual, and administrative functions. Raised temple constructions (Figure 10.2: Type 6) are thought

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to be primarily ritual in use and are frequently associated with censer deposition. These may be either reused Classic Period constructions or entirely Postclassic Period buildings.

While it would be difficult, if not impossible, to define three formally distinct types of house each of which could be associated with one social class (nobles, commoners, slaves), the two polar extremes recovered to date in investigations at Santa Rita Corozal are easy to identify (Type 1 and Type 5). These extremes do not necessarily represent class differences; certain simple structures are located in close proximity to multiple-roomed buildings, allowing the possibility that the former were either specialized activity areas or housing for newly married individuals (see Landa in Tozzer 1941: 41, 101). Alternatively, the Type 1 constructions within a grouping including Type 5 buildings may have been the houses of servants while Type 1 buildings elsewhere may represent residences of commoners, loci for food preparation or storage, or some combination thereof. Further investigation of domestic residences is necessary in order to define these relationships more accurately.

The distinction between elaborate and simple dwellings at Santa Rita Corozal and at Mayapan (A. L. Smith 1962; R. E. Smith 1971: 106–7) may not be as clear cut as is indicated by delineation of structure types. Material remains associated with Type 1 and Type 5 constructions, with the exception of ritual items (see below), do not necessarily suggest differing wealth in material goods. The archaeological situation may in fact be taken to indicate the existence of a continuum in classes below the elite. Such a continuum might indicate that commoners could accumulate wealth to the point that they were difficult to distinguish materially from the elite. This much has been suggested from a study of early documents by Roys (1943: 33). Interestingly, only the more elaborate of the dwellings and platforms (Types 4 and 5)—those presumably utilized by the nobles—are predominantly associated with ritual activity in the form of caching and censer deposition. This association agrees with statements by Roys (1943: 33) that the elite differed from the common people not solely by virtue of wealth, but, more importantly, in their knowledge of ritual.

There is no direct archaeological evidence for occupational differences between classes at Santa Rita Corozal with the exception of ritual activity (as determined by censer or other modeled pottery deposition and caching). Lithics and objects usually assumed to be net weights

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appear to be distributed nearly universally at the site, although their frequencies may possibly vary. It may, however, be significant that small notched points are more common in what are interpreted to be elite areas of the site.

Ideally, in order to archaeologically identify the several ethnohistorically defined classes, burial data should correspond with dwelling type to indicate at least three mutually exclusive groups, each including members of both sexes and individuals of all age groups. Instead, excavation thus far has revealed a variety of burial patterns; most of their cultural associations are unknown.

Excavations in the vicinity of Santa Rita Corozal by Thomas Gann (1900, 1911, 1914–16, 1918) yielded at least 92 burials containing 95 individuals. Of these burials, seven are clearly Postclassic in date. The 1979 and 1980 Corozal Postclassic Project investigations at the site encountered 62 burials containing 78 individuals. Twenty burials with 32 individuals were deposited during the Postclassic Period.

The Gann and Corozal Postclassic Project burial patterns are consistent. Unlike Mayapan, the site has not been reported to contain any crypt burials for the Postclassic Period. Deposition was either in a simple burial with no clear outline or in a cist (i.e., with clear outline), sometimes lined or covered with stones, but always filled with earth. However, certain of the cist burials, specifically those cut into bedrock, may actually have required effort nearly equivalent to that involved in creating a crypt. Burials at Santa Rita Corozal range from single, articulated primary interments to multiple secondary ones. Bodies are sometimes placed with no artifacts but are sometimes associated with one or more objects. Accompanying grave goods include pottery, flint tools, copper artifacts, and jade, shell, or ceramic beads. Articulated individuals are generally found flexed with skull toward the north of the pit; however, extended burials are also present as are interments in which the skull is located toward the east or south. The present sample includes male, female, and subadult human remains; there appear to be more females and children than adult males.

While burials at Santa Rita Corozal range from individuals with no associated items to individuals accompanied by a wealth of material goods, this range may not be indicative of class distinctions. Apart from the archaeological evidence reviewed below, ethnohistoric data may also illuminate the problems involved in archaeological determinations of status and wealth. Specifically, Landa (Tozzer 1941: 130–

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31) relates that Maya nobles were cremated in northern Yucatan; obviously this practice could obscure archaeological evidence of a continuum of status distinctions in burial "wealth."

The locations of burials relative to recognizable structure types, however, may prove instructive. Investigations at the site have thus far (with one possible exception) encountered no simple residences associated with burials, and this may indicate that the excavated sample is only indicative of the range in status and/or wealth of individuals within a single class. However, based on investigations to date at Santa Rita Corozal, burials appear to be associated primarily with non-domestic constructions (Platform 1, a Type 3 construction), platforms with multiple constructions (Platform 2, a Type 4 construction), or with an altar within a presumed elite residence (Structure 81, a Type 5 construction). Platforms 1 and 2 at Santa Rita Corozal contain a number of burials and thus resemble Western graveyards.

Santa Rita Corozal Structure 58 in its latest phase was a small structure, measuring 3 by 8 meters, situated atop a larger platform, measuring 34 by 37 meters (see Figure 10.2: Type 3). The form of this latest construction is suggestive of a shrine; although there is not enough significant associated refuse to confirm this, a cache was located on axis with the structure. The earlier Late Postclassic structures, which were buried within Platform 1, may have functioned as either shrines or residences. Burials were found throughout the trench dug into Platform 1; these were associated with either the latest or the penultimate construction of the structure and platform, but were cut through an earlier, probably Early Classic, plaster floor. The interred individuals included adults of both sexes as well as subadults; they were found in both the flexed and the extended position, generally with their heads to the north. While most interments were of only a single individual, there were occasionally two individuals (or parts of two individuals) within one grave. Of all the burials in the vicinity of Structure 58, the most elaborate one belonged to a woman. She had been placed in a flexed (fetal), upright position and had been buried with a jadeite and spondylus necklace as well as two copper rings.

Platform 2 is a large platform measuring 44 by 36.5 meters (see Figure 10.2: Type 4). There are a number of structures located on its summit, specifically Structures 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, and 80. These were apparently residential and/or administrative buildings as well as ritual constructions. While burials were encountered throughout the

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platform, they were most abundant adjacent to it. An excavation along the eastern portion of the southern platform face encountered seven interments (see Figure 10.3). Like those in association with Platform 1, these were placed in cists cut through a floor and then filled with earth; a few were cut into bedrock. Objects recovered with these interments ranged from nothing to one or more beads to beads and copper rings to multiple smashed vessels. The individuals placed in graves in this area appear to have been only children and women. While men may have been interred elsewhere in Platform 2, none were encountered in this southern burial area. An extensive refuse deposit was located above the majority of these graves. Pottery in this deposit included redwares (Figure 10.4a & b), unslipped ollas (Figure 10.4d & e), modeled vessels, modeled cups (Figure 10.4c), effigy censers, and ring-based censers.

The two graveyard-like areas from Platforms 1 and 2 at Santa Rita Corozal include interments that vary both in the amount of preparation necessary to create the grave and in the kinds and numbers of items included with the burials. Not everyone who died at Santa Rita Corozal was buried in these two areas. At most, this sample is indicative of the range in status of a limited group of individuals, most likely those from a single family or lineage; alternatively, it may possibly be representative of everyone living within a particular area, regardless of their family ties. The significance of age and sex in the placement of individuals in parts of northeastern Santa Rita Corozal suggests that the location of the burial itself is an important variable.

While Roys (1943: 28, 164, 1962: 63) and Landa (in Tozzer 1941: 99) indicate that women did not generally hold important positions or inherit wealth, the burials of women at Santa Rita Corozal suggest that their worldly existence was not always devoid of material pleasures. While there are differences in the burial patterns among men and women at Santa Rita Corozal during the Late Postclassic Period (no men were interred with copper rings; men and subadults seem more likely to be found in secondary burials), several female interments are "rich" in terms of number and kinds of objects, and at least one was located in a place of presumed importance (S.D. P3B-3, located in a Type 3 construction). While prominent status has been inferred for certain Classic Period Maya female interments (Adams 1963; A. Chase n.d.; Pohl & Feldman 1982), the Santa Rita Corozal data may indicate that women were much more important in Protohistoric Maya society
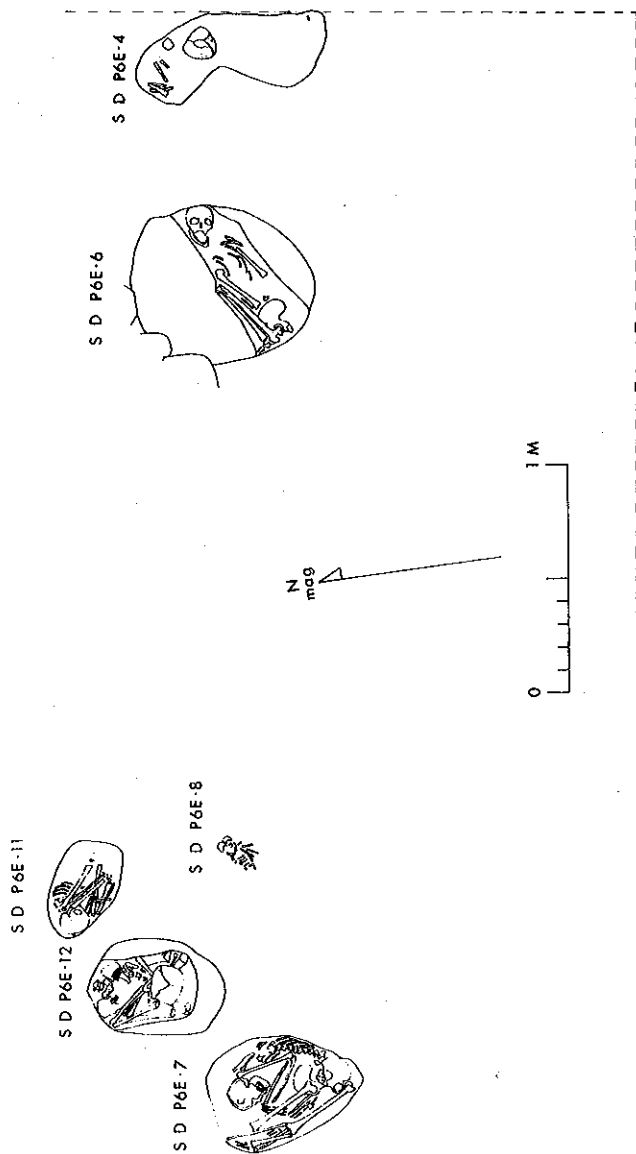
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Figure 10.3 Late Postclassic burials immediately south of Santa Rita Platform 2. S.D. P6E-4 is the interment of a subadult accompanied by 1 small green stone bead. S.D. P6E-6 is the interment of an adult female accompanied by 6 broken pottery vessels. S.D. P6E-7 is the interment of an adult female accompanied by two copper rings and two shell beads. S.D. P6E-8 is the interment of an infant. S.D. P6E-11 is the interment of a subadult accompanied by 1 shell and 1 ceramic bead. S.D. P6E-12 is the interment of an adult female accompanied by 2 partial ceramic vessels. S.D. P6E-5 is not illustrated here, but this flexed burial of an adult female was located directly above S.D. P6E-12.
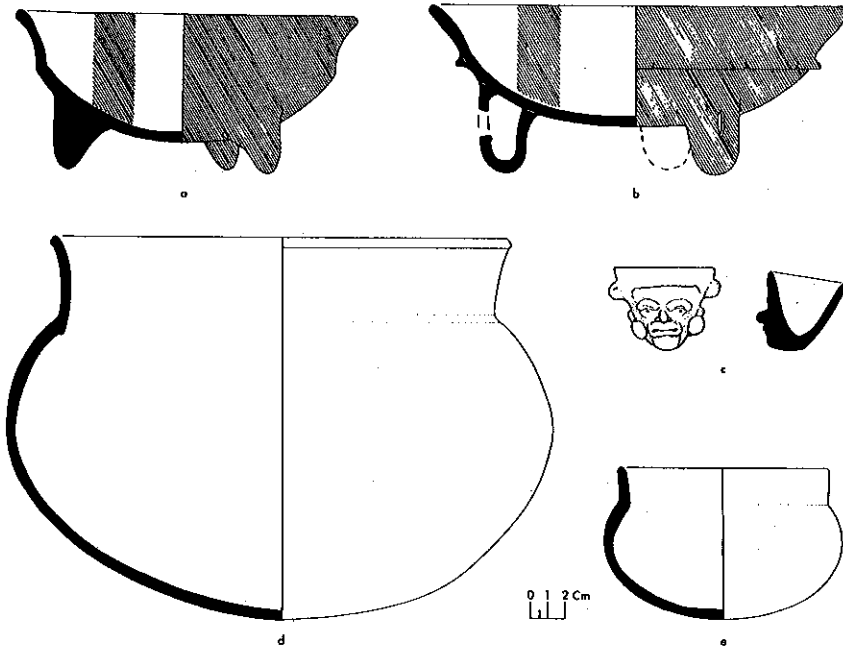
Figure 10.4 Selected examples of Santa Rita pottery. a. Rita Red tripod bowl. b: Rita Red tripod bowl. c: Kol Modeled cup. d: Santa Unslipped olla. e: Santa Unslipped olla.

than has been suggested so far in ethnohistoric work. Alternatively, this apparent significance may be an indirect result of the recorded practice of cremating noble men and rulers and placing them in urns (Landa in Tozzer 1941: 130–31), although there is no evidence for this at Santa Rita Corozal.

Burials at Mayapan (A. L. Smith 1962: 232–55; R. E. Smith 1971: 114–19) were of several different types: simple burials with no definite outlines, cists, and more elaborate stone-lined and vaulted crypts. Each of these burial types involved different amounts of labor. It is tempting to suggest that the elaborate Mayapan crypts were the final resting places for important nobles, yet many of these yielded no evidence of ever having contained a body. However, several crypts in places of presumed importance did contain one or more individuals and perhaps represented family tombs; only one elaborate crypt contained a single

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interment. It would further seem that the care taken in the preparation of a grave was not always proportional to the quantity or quality of accompanying objects, for simple burials at Mayapan are not all devoid of goods (see, for example, Mayapan Str. K52a).

Work at both Santa Rita Corozal and Mayapan supports the notion that type of burial, burial objects, and location all have implications for the status of the deceased individual. However, it is difficult, based upon the present archaeological sample alone, to state with confidence precisely what these status differentials might be. It is evident, however, that the burial types are dispersed throughout both sites and that interments in any one area or structure vary as to type of grave and contents. This suggests either nonstandardized burial practices or much variation in the status and wealth of individuals living within any locale. While age and sex do apparently affect the grave type, burial objects, and location of burial, there is enough variation within burials of adults of the same sex to suggest the presence of wealth and/or status differences.

In summary, investigations to date indicate that there are neither three distinct burial patterns nor three distinct residence plans that can be related to class differences; this in turn suggests a status gradation that blurs these categories. Maya social organization during the Late Postclassic was clearly more complicated and less rigid than the terms *noble*, *commoner*, and *slave*, found in the ethnohistory, imply.

Site Organization

The spatial organization of towns described ethnohistorically is less difficult to compare with the archaeological data than is the social organization. The "concentric ring" model (see Figure 10. 5a) for Postclassic or early Historic Maya towns, first described by Landa (Tozzer 1941: 62–64), holds that the most important temples and plazas were located in the center of a Maya town, with the houses of the nobles located directly outside this area and the houses of those of lesser status still farther from the center. It must be noted here that this model not only bears a strong resemblance to colonial Spanish villages but also was generally held by the majority of the early ethnohistorians for much of Latin America. These facts are important when one realizes that Landa, who defined the pattern for the Yucatec Maya, was described by Genet (1934) as "one of the greatest plagiarists of his period."
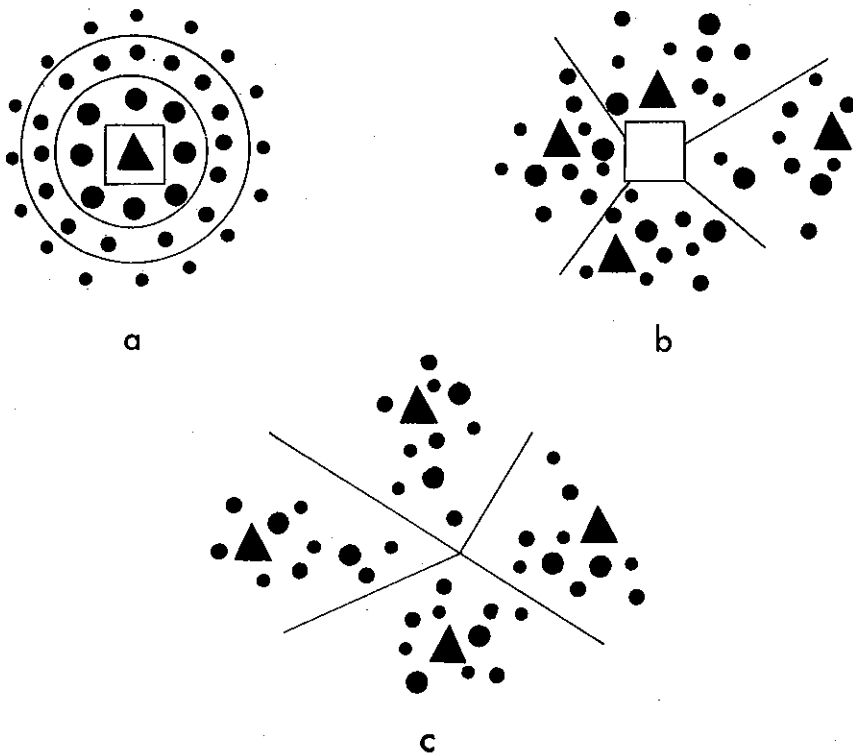
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Figure 10.5 Schematic drawings of possible Postclassic site organization. a: Concentric organization. b: Barrio organization with defined site center. c: Barrio organization with no defined site center.

Landa's description of the organization of a typical Maya town reads uncannily like earlier descriptions of Central American towns (see Anghiera 1516: VI, V, 4; López de Gómara 1552, *Serie de Cronistas* 1: 120; and Oviedo y Valdés 1851–55). Landa probably had access to the works of Gómara and Oviedo when he was composing his *Relación* (Tozzer 1941: vii). In short, Landa's account of the organization of a Maya town may be neither original nor descriptive of the Maya. In any case, if the model is applicable to the Maya, we can expect to find distinct archaeological traces of a compact center with complex architecture and to find buildings of decreasing size and complexity radiating from it.

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An alternative model for the organization of a Maya town may be postulated both on the ethnohistory (Roys 1943: 62–63; 1957: 7–8) and the archaeology (D. Chase 1982a: 578–83). Two alternate versions of this sector or barrio model may be postulated (see Figures 10.5b and c); in the first there is a single central civic and ceremonial area per site while in the second the important civic and ceremonial constructions are found in each barrio. In either form of this barrio model, there were different subdivisions (barrios) within a town, each governed by an *ah cuch cab*. If each barrio included members of the three Maya social classes noted in the ethnohistory, they should be expressed archaeologically in what might appear to be a random distribution of residential architecture and burial types. The various activities and constructions (certain structures, burials, and caches) that are generally considered elite would therefore not be concentrated solely in the center of the site. In order to delineate a barrio, however, it is necessary both to define the minimum number of constructions and/or traces of activities expected to be found within a barrio and to note the patterned replication of these remains at a site or to find actual walled subdivisions within the town.

Whether or not the Late Postclassic site of Santa Rita Corozal ever had a core area that was the primary locus for ritual and administrative buildings is difficult to ascertain because of the destruction of the site in the course of modernization. Gann's (1900, 1918) work, however, suggests that although there may have been a slightly greater concentration of higher Classic Period mounds in a core area, there was no specialized Postclassic Period site core like the one at Mayapan. Thus, both postulated barrio models (Figures 10.5b and c) may have been extant during the Postclassic Period. Construction types at Santa Rita Corozal appear to be distributed more or less equally throughout the site; the most complex constructions are not restricted solely to the core area. The same is true for caches and burials. This distribution indicates that a strict interpretation of the concentric ring model does not apply to Santa Rita Corozal. This site, in fact, appears to be organized into what may be interpreted as a noncentralized barrio or sector pattern (Figure 10.5c).

At Santa Rita Corozal, the recovered caches clearly do not correlate with any "central" area as they should according to Landa's model. Differences in coeval caching patterns may in fact be correlated with different parts of the site and are believed to be representative of some

combination of barrios and the various Uayeb or New Year's rites (D. Chase 1985).

Work at Santa Rita Corozal also suggests that at least one of each of the six structure types defined above (see Figure 10.2) is likely to be present in any barrio (D. Chase 1982a: 580–83). The distribution of the six structure types should allow definition of site sectors and, thus, understanding of overall site organization.

A single elaborate multiroomed residence (Structure Type 5)—presumably the home of the *ah cuch cab* (or *principal*), the head of a barrio—should be in use at any one time in a barrio according to the model. The archaeological identification and dating of Structure Type 5 buildings should, therefore, aid significantly in defining site organization. While smaller house constructions (Structure Type 1) should be abundant throughout the site, elevated platforms supporting several buildings (Structure Type 4) and isolated constructions on large platforms (Structure Type 3) may be barrio-specific and possibly useful indicators for determining site sectors. Structures with frontal platforms (Structure Type 2), believed to have served an administrative function, may also be barrio-specific. If there was any one unifying characteristic of a Late Postclassic town, however, it may have been a centrally placed large temple; this temple may, however, have been replaced to a certain extent in Protohistoric times by smaller temples in each ward (Structure Type 6).

While M. Coe (1965: 107) interpreted Landa's descriptions of the Uayeb rites and the four entrances to the town as indicating the existence of four barrios in every town, such was apparently not the case at Santa Rita Corozal. The replication of the above-defined construction suggests that there were minimally five barrios at the site during Late Postclassic times (D. Chase 1982a).

The identified barrios at Late Postclassic Santa Rita Corozal do not seem to have been organized in a rigid fashion. They tend to be composed of clusters of structure groups with less formalized constructions scattered about them. This is a pattern which has been indirectly defined for earlier Classic Maya sites (Kurjack 1974; Willey 1956; see also Haviland 1968). Neither Mayapan nor Santa Rita Corozal evince the gridded layout evident at certain Mexican sites (Haviland 1968: 97); if any sites may be considered to be organized in such a fashion it would be some of those along the Quintana Roo coast such as Tulum (Lothrop 1924) or Cancun (Vargas Pacheco 1978).

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Although Mayapan does have a core area composed of what are presumably administrative and religious constructions (see Figure 10.5b), the rest of the site was apparently organized in a fashion similar to that found at Santa Rita Corozal. Certain dwellings and elaborate burials or caches were near the site center (which was also the focus for archaeological work); however, equivalent ones were also dispersed throughout the site. Residences do not seem to diminish in size away from Mayapan's center in a radiating fashion; likewise, elaborate caches were found outside the site center, and crypt burials were found to the limits of the town wall. The structure types at Mayapan also appear to be similar to those noted for Santa Rita Corozal, but both platforms supporting multiple structures and multiroomed constructions appear to be more common, while isolated (nongroup) shrines and temples may not be as prevalent. Formal, clustered groups of structures are also found outside the site center.

Investigations at Santa Rita Corozal and Mayapan may be interpreted as verifying a barrio-type occupation model in the Late Postclassic. The concentric-ring class-linked residence pattern described by Landa does not appear to have existed. Many Late Postclassic sites, however, probably had a distinct central area, which may have been largely nonresidential; this is particularly visible at Mayapan. The barrio site organization, with its dispersion of individuals belonging to the noble class throughout the site, might actually have served as a more effective mechanism for integration within a town.

The differences between Santa Rita Corozal and Mayapan, specifically the greater decentralization evident at Santa Rita Corozal, may be due to regional or political factors or to the slightly later Protohistoric Period occupation at Santa Rita Corozal. I would suggest that regional capitals and perhaps major and populous Late Postclassic towns all had a site organization organized along one of the two barrio models. Those in the northern part of the Yucatan Peninsula may have comprised a center surrounded by barrios with clusters of constructions, while those to the south may have been more decentralized.

Alternatively, it is possible that Mayapan symbolically represented the heart of the Maya Late Postclassic world, emulating in its plan the allegorical world tree and fifth world dimension of the Maya (cf. M. Coe 1981: 161–62). Thus, Mayapan's ethnohistorically noted role as the preeminent center of the Late Postclassic Northern Lowlands may have been replicated symbolically in its physical layout; this focal

plan may not be present at any other Late Postclassic site. This symbolism would be in keeping with a wider Mesoamerican world view, for the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan was also considered to be the center of the world and its nulceus symbolically portrayed this concept.

Other material evidence of specialized activities may also be expected to be present in important Postclassic Maya sites. In addition to trade items, greater indications of ritual activity, specifically caching and censer deposition, should appear in leading towns. Landa noted at least one occasion when people from smaller villages gathered at a larger one for ceremonies (Tozzer 1941: 164–66). The abundance of caches at Santa Rita Corozal and Mayapan in the Late Postclassic Period versus their relative absence elsewhere suggests that people may have gotten together more frequently than was suggested by Landa— perhaps along the lines of the pilgrimage fair pattern proposed by Freidel (1981b). The ritual knowledge of the elite, who were more likely to live in these larger centers, may well have encouraged such activity.

Structure 81 at Santa Rita Corozal includes a component that may be a useful indicator of religious organization and interactions during Protohistoric times: an enclosed shrine room with a false back wall. The plan of this shrine room and false wall is very similar to that projected for the shrine of the talking idol at Cozumel (Freidel 1975), and it has been suggested (D. Chase 1982a, 1985) that Structure 81 was the home of such an oracle. The location of similar shrines elsewhere should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of Maya belief and interaction systems. Given the existence of similar phenomena at both Cozumel and Santa Rita Corozal, it would not be surprising if oracles proved to be important components of most major Late Postclassic towns.

Provincial Politics

The differences in political organization among the territories of the time of the Conquest—specifically, the presence of a territorial capital with a *halach uinic* versus the existence of loosely allied towns without a dominant leader—do not appear to correlate with larger alliances as indicated by the various documents. The provinces known to have *halach uinics* (Sotuta, Cehpech, Hocaba, Mani, Ah Kin Chel) included ones that were constantly warring with each other, such as

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Sotuta and Mani. Most of those provinces noted as having *halach uinicob* were reportedly established by lineages from Mayapan (Sotuta, Mani, Ah Kin Chel, Cochuah). There were, however, people from at least one former Mayapan lineage who became rulers of a province without holding the title of *halach uinic*. The Canul, who have been referred to as the guardians of Mayapan (Roys 1957: 11), left the city following its "destruction" to become the ruling lineage in the province of Ah Canul; they did not, however, establish themselves as *halach uinicob*. That the Canul were purported to be of Mexican origin should not have prohibited them from assuming this role, as the province of Hocaba was known to have a *halach uinic* of the Iuit lineage. *Iuit* is Nahuatl for "feather" (Roys 1957: 55) and presumably indicates a Mexican origin for this lineage.

Not all provinces were controlled by former ruling lineages at Mayapan. Ah Kin Chel, for example, was named for the leader of a military group at Mayapan. It has also been argued (Roys 1957: 110) that Tases, which had no *halach uinic*, was formerly part of the confederation of Mayapan. As most of the territories with *halach uinicob* were ruled by members of what are believed to have been important lineages from Mayapan, the ability to set up a territory with a *halach uinic* may have depended on the status and/or size of a particular lineage in the League of Mayapan prior to the league's disruption.

Whether the differences in internal organization within the territories, as outlined by Roys (1957), can be identified archaeologically is as yet unclear. It is possible that those territories with *halach uinicob* residing in a capital town will be found to have more easily identifiable capital sites. Work at the site of Mayapan (Pollock et al. 1962) and Santa Rita Corozal suggests that these sites would also have greater numbers of certain other features, such as modeled-figure cache vessels, than would contemporary neighboring sites.

It has been suggested that the territory of Chetumal had a *halach uinic* (Roys 1965). There is no evidence for the presence of one in Ecab (Roys 1957: 143) in northeast Yucatan, and it is unlikely that such a ruler was present in Uaymil to Ecab's south at the time of the Conquest, since Uaymil was organizationally combined with Chetumal by the Spanish. If the site organization and caching patterns identified at Santa Rita Corozal correlate with more than just its role as a regional capital, these patterns may also be indicative of the type of organization we can expect from towns with presiding *halach uin-*

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icob. The lack of other such sites in southern Quintana Roo, where the lower part of Ecab and all of Uaymil were located, may reflect differences in political organization.

Some Late Postclassic sites, such as Mayapan (Pollock et al. 1962), Tulum (Lothrop 1924), and possibly Muralla de León, far to the south (D. Rice and P. Rice 1981), were fortified (see also Webster 1979). Other sites may have been fortified with perishable materials (Landa in Tozzer 1941: 123). In any case, the presence of defensive features must be regarded as a significant indicator of political insecurity. There are also sites, such as Cozumel (Sabloff and Rathje 1975a, 1975b), Tancah (Miller 1982), and Mayapan (Bullard 1952, 1954) with internal boundary walls. These latter features, while primarily delineating house or garden areas, may also reflect barrio relations within the site.

The presence of three different kinds of political organization during the Protohistoric Period may be connected with geographical location and may be interpreted as correlating with the archaeological differences noted between the east and west coasts of Yucatan (see Andrews and Robles C. this volume). The *halach uinic* provincial organization has been found primarily in territories located in the middle of the Yucatan Peninsula rather than on the east or west coast. This form of Postclassic Maya government is also the most politically centralized. The geographical distribution of *halach uinic* government may indicate that the inland territories required a strong central government to maintain their political and economic status in the midst of east-west stresses and competition. The decentralized organization and possibly fluid alliance patterns of the coastal provinces may have been a direct result of increased exposure to outside stimuli (see Miller, this volume). If this is the case, the *halach uinic* form of provincial organization can perhaps be interpreted not only as the strong governing force needed in a tenuous political situation, but also as a vestige of the indigenous Maya political organization.

The Land of Cacao and Honey: Time and Space

Unlike political organization within provinces, the territories and larger alliances of the Maya should be relatively easy to define through archaeology. On the basis of the known excavated sample, architecture and ceramics appear to be prime indicators of regional variation. Regionalization was apparently present prior to the Late Postclassic in

Yucatan and can be seen in Early Postclassic Cehpech, Hocaba, and Sotuta ceramics (Ball 1979a) as well as in what is called Puuc as opposed to "Toltec" architecture. The obvious differences in the spatial distribution of these archaeological remains have led to major disagreements concerning the temporal placement and meanings of these archaeological traditions (Smith 1971; Ball 1979a, 1979b; D. Chase and A. Chase 1982; A. Chase this volume).

While there are overall similarities in Late Postclassic Lowland Maya architecture, specifically in the use of relatively crude masonry constructions (at least by Classic Period standards) and the increased importance of stucco in surface finishing and decorating, several differences in building components are also identifiable (see Figure 10.6). These
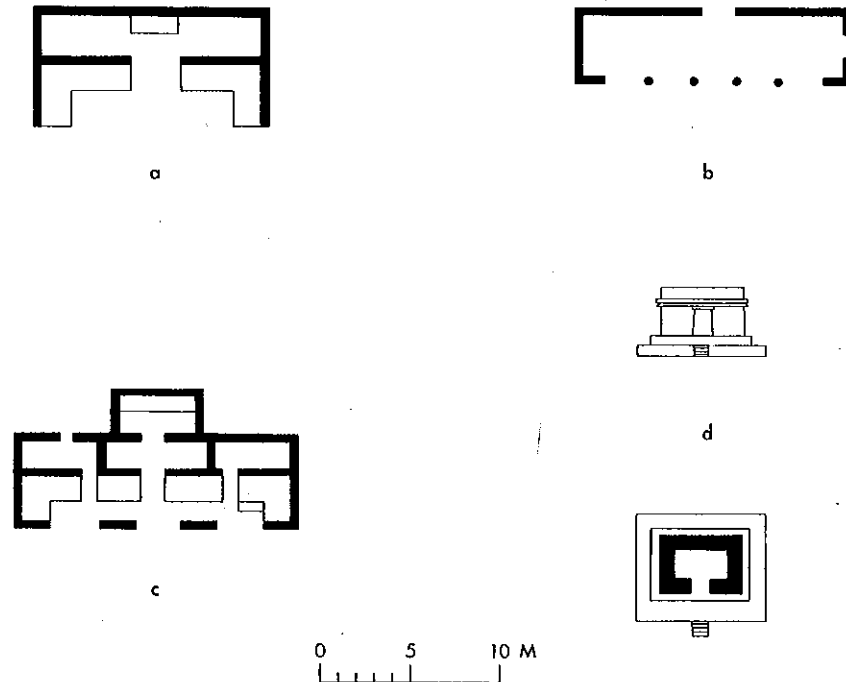
Figure 10.6 Postclassic architecture. a: Tandem-plan construction (Ex: Mayapan Str. S-30c after A. L. Smith 1962 Figure 5c). b: Columned construction (Ex. Mayapan Str. K-79a after A. L. Smith 1962 Figure 7b). c: Multiple roomed construction (Ex: Mayapan Str. K-52a after A. L. Smith 1962 Figure 5b). d: Flat masonry roofed construction (Ex: Tulum Str. 54 after Lothrop 1924 Figure 106).

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variations include the use of tandem plans (Freidel 1981; Figure 10.6a), multiroom (Figure 10.6c) and "dwarf" constructions (called shrines by Lothrop 1924), stone columns (Lothrop 1924; Figure 10.6b), and flat masonry roofs (Andrews IV 1943; Sanders 1960; Figure 10.6d). Sites along the Quintana Roo coast (Andrews and Andrews 1975) best exemplify a combination of these assorted architectural traits; Proskouriakoff (1962: 137), in fact, noted that the East Coast building plans were far more variable than those at Mayapan. Interestingly, this synthetic East Coast architectural tradition appears to have emanated primarily from the province of Ecab (El Meco to Chacmool?) and also occurred in northern Chetumal (Ichpaatun); it is not known to occur in what may be interpreted as the intervening province of Uaymil south of Espiritu Santo Bay (Harrison 1979; Lothrop 1924). While its absence may be due to a lack of archaeological work in this vicinity, it is also possible that the void noted here is due to the existence of a different Postclassic architectural tradition in this area, possibly that of a different, diminished population (Harrison 1979: 206).

Certain Postclassic building plans have been cited as useful in determining relationships between sites, including those located at some distance from each other. Freidel (1981a) proposed that the presence or absence of the tandem-plan constructions might be indicative of regional housing preferences and that their distribution within sites (Mayapan, Quintana Roo, Cozumel, and Cilvituk) might reflect the use of tandem-plan buildings as elite residences. He saw their presence at Cozumel as indicative of close ties between Cozumel and Mayapan. Freidel did note, however, that tandem-plan constructions (Figure 10.6a), which are abundant at Mayapan, are not as common at Cozumel. This is surprising because, according to the Books of Chilam Balam (Roys 1933: 168), Cozumel was the origin point for the population of Mayapan (via the Little Descent). It may thus be possible that tandem-plan constructions were largely a Mayapan innovation and that their presence at other sites followed contact with Mayapan.

At Santa Rita Corozal, as at Cozumel, the predominant construction type appears to have been the single-room building (see Figure 10.2: Type 1). As at Cozumel and Mayapan, multiroom constructions (Figure 10.2: Type 5; Figure 10.6c) appear to be indicative of elite occupation. Columns (see Figure 10.6b), although present to the north at Ichpaatun and apparently in Structure 2 at Santa Rita Corozal (Gann 1900: 678–82), are not characteristic of Santa Rita. Likewise masonry

roofed constructions (see Figure 10.6d) are not known from the site, although Structure 1 may have been an exception (Gann 1900: 662–77). That there were few masonry tandem-plan rooms at Santa Rita Corozal does not, however, exclude the possibility that they were made of perishable materials. Assuming that there was a front room constructed solely of perishable materials, some of the line-of-stone constructions at Santa Rita Corozal may correlate with the open halls noted by Bullard (1970) for Topoxte.

Recent work in the Petén indicates that both Topoxte (Bullard 1970; A. Chase 1976, 1982; Johnson 1985; P. Rice and D. Rice 1985) and Macanche (D. Rice and P. Rice 1981) have constructions in the Yucatec tradition. In contrast, work in the vicinity of Lake Peten indicates the existence of simple line-of-stone Postclassic constructions, but with an apparent lack of the formalized Yucatec architectural tradition (A. Chase 1979, 1982, 1985). Investigations at Barton Ramie, Belize (Gifford 1976; Willey et al. 1965), also revealed Postclassic occupation, but without any identifiable Yucatec component; this material probably predates that found to its west in Lake Yaxha (A. Chase 1982; Sharer and Chase 1976).

Late Postclassic redware ceramics and censerware vary considerably in vessel forms and types. These ceramic differences, in combination with architecture, may be suggestive of the kinds of material-culture distinctions to be expected between territories or allied groups of territories. At the site of Tulum, for example, generally believed to be at least partially coeval with the site of Mayapan, distinctive ceramic forms within the general redware tradition (Sanders 1960; see also Figure 10.7a & c) include sag-bottom bowls, double-vented feet, and banded curvilinear incised designs. There is, however, a problem in the absolute definition of the Late Postclassic red slipped groups. Tulum-related ceramics evidently occur outside Tulum both at nearby sites such as Cozumel (Connor 1975; Escalona Ramos 1946) and at more distant ones such as Ichpaatun in southernmost Quintana Roo (Sanders 1960) and Colha in northern Belize (Adams and Valdez 1980).

While Tulum (Paybono) red pottery has generally been seen as an indicator of the Late Postclassic Period, these ceramics at Colha are dated to the Early and Middle Postclassic periods (Adams and Valdez 1980). This dating is evidently confirmed by other associated artifactual classes (Hester 1980: 12; Hester, personal communication; Shafer, personal communication). The similarity in ceramics may well indi-
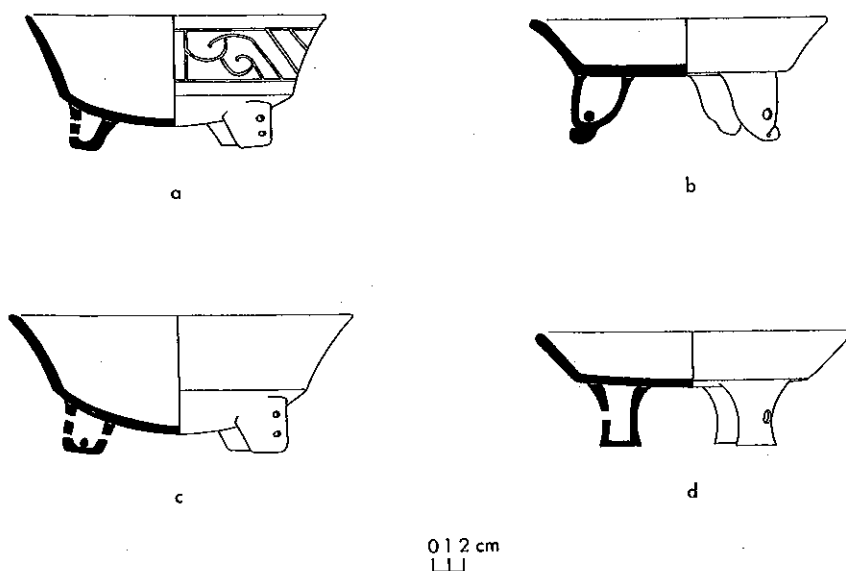
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Figure 10.7 Selected Postclassic red slipped tripod bowls. a: Tulum Red bowl with incision (Ex. from Tulum, after Sanders 1960: Figure 4a-3; incision such as that present on this bowl occurs in the early facet of the Late Postclassic at Santa Rita). b: Augustine Red bowl (Ex. from Tayasal, after A. Chase 1983: Figure 3-94). c: Tulum Red bowl (Ex. from Ichpaatun, after Sanders 1960: Figure 4 b-10). d: Paxcaman Red bowl (Ex. from Punta Nima, after A. Chase 1983: Figure 5-2, this vessel is actually an Ixpop Polychrome).

cate interaction between peoples. The violent nature of the end of the Late Classic Period at Colha (Hester 1980) suggests a warlike interaction.

The possibility that at least certain forms of Tulum Red are Middle Postclassic or earlier cannot be overlooked given the occurrence of Tulum Red forms only in fill for Late Postclassic constructions and of related modes in early-facet Late Postclassic lots at Santa Rita Corozal; it is possible that the slight variations within the type between Tulum and Ichpaatun also indicate temporal variations (Figure 10.7a & c; Sanders 1960). Pendergast (1981a, 1981b, 1981c) has suggested that there may be a Belizean origin for certain Late Postclassic red wares, specifically Mayapan Red. The coexistence but mutually exclusive distribution of northern Belize Mayapan or Tulum-like red wares with the Terminal Classic–Early Postclassic complexes consisting of San

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Jose V red wares, double-mouthed jars (Sidrys 1976), trickle and slate wares (such as in the Ikilik Ceramic Complex at Nohmul [D. Chase 1982b]) indicates the presence of at least two and probably three interaction spheres during this era (see A. Chase, this volume).

During the late facet of the Late Postclassic, ceramics at Santa Rita Corozal appear to be both coeval with and later than, as well as derivative from, the Mayapan tradition (see Figure 10.4). Thus far, the Santa Rita Corozal red slipped type known as Rita Red (Figure 10.4a & b) has been found only in limited distribution outside northern Belize. (It has also been found at Yakalche in northern Belize [Pendergast, personal communication] and at Aventura [Ball, personal communication].) What appear also to be Rita Red vessels, however, are evidently among the latest pottery noted by Brainerd for Yucatan (1958: Figure 95c). There is little overlap between vessel forms and types at Santa Rita Corozal and Ichpaatun. Santa Rita Corozal is closer in support and vessel forms to some of those pieces illustrated from Tulum (see Sanders 1960) than to Ichpaatun ceramics.

Farther south in Belize, the pottery traditions appear to be less closely related to the Yucatec tradition. The Augustine Red (Figure 10.7b) and Paxcaman Red (Figure 10.7d) ceramic groups appear to be distributed in a belt extending from Lake Salpeten, in the Peten of Guatemala, to Tayasal, on Lake Peten, to Barton Ramie, in Belize (A. Chase 1982, 1985; Sharer and Chase 1976). Pottery found in the vicinity of Topoxte and Macanche in the Peten (specifically the Topoxte Red ceramic group; Rice 1979) appears to be modally related, albeit distantly, to that from the Northern Lowlands or from Santa Rita Corozal. The historic site of Tipu (Jones 1982) appears to continue the usage of the traditional New Town sphere Postclassic ceramics with the introduction of some Spanish wares.

The above-mentioned archaeological data may be interpreted in a number of ways and may in fact enable us to delineate more precisely the boundaries of Protohistoric provinces, specifically those of Chetumal. The site of Santa Rita Corozal (the capital of Chetumal) is distinct architecturally and artifactually from Ichpaatun, the only other relatively well-known Postclassic site in northern Chetumal. This may be due to the imposition of a new ruling group at Santa Rita Corozal following the demise of Mayapan or to an incorrect accounting of the boundary of the province of Chetumal. It seems more likely, however, given the proximity of the sites and the descriptions of the province,

that the archaeologically known aspects of Ichpaatun predate those of Santa Rita Corozal and that further work in the northern portion of the province of Chetumal will reveal evidence of occupation like that known from Santa Rita Corozal.

The site of Lamanai, near the limits of the New River, represents either the southern boundary of the province of Chetumal during the Late Postclassic or possibly the leading town within a completely different (and unknown) province; it was probably a regional capital in its own right on an earlier temporal horizon and, in fact, may have continued in this role and been a contemporary of Late Postclassic Santa Rita Corozal. The province of Tayasal as defined archaeologically by the sites of Tayasal and Barton Ramie (and the Central Peten Postclassic tradition [Bullard 1973]) extended in a wide band from the central Peten of Guatemala east to include the Belize River drainage, but apparently included a distinct, probably Yucatec-inspired (A. Chase 1976, 1982) enclave, minimally comprising Topoxte and Macanche.

The similarity in archaeological remains between sites in the provinces of Ecab and what may be called northern Chetumal is also suggestive of a number of prehistoric possibilities, among them the inclusion of Ichpaatun in the poorly defined province of Uaymil and, if this situation can be confirmed, perhaps an alliance between Ecab and Uaymil. This reconstruction would fit the known archaeological distinction between the material remains from Santa Rita Corozal and those from Ichpaatun and Chacmool (to its north) and Chamberlain's (1948: 101–2) assertion that "the lords of Uaymil . . . accepted the overlordship of the cacique of Chetumal only with reluctance." Alternatively, Ichpaatun and/or Tulum may have been abandoned prior to the Conquest, and the apparent similarity in both ceramics and architecture could mirror political unity prior to the establishment of the Protohistoric provinces of Chetumal, Uaymil, and Ecab. Two additional points may support the latter interpretation. The first consists of ethnohistoric references to Tulum which describe a situation in 1579 where none of the residents in the area could remember who had constructed the site (Scholes and Roys 1948: 75), implying that the major occupation at Tulum may have ended prior to 1520. The native documents also describe a series of events, which may have a bearing on Ichpaatun, Tulum, or another site along the coast, culminating in the overthrow of Ah Ulmil Ahau in Katun 8 Ahau (A.D. 1441–61) (Roys 1962: 74; A. Chase, this volume). The similarity

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between Ulmil and Uaymil is apparent; this event takes place during the same katun as the depopulation of Mayapan. Yet a third possibility might be that the archaeologically recognized discontinuities between Santa Rita Corozal and Ichpaatun are an expression of the internal organization of the provinces themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of topics relating to Late Postclassic or Protohistoric Maya social and political organization can be cross-checked through both ethnohistoric and archaeological investigation. Excavations at the site of Santa Rita Corozal, in combination with those from the site of Mayapan, in fact offer a few new twists to traditional ethnohistoric perspectives.

Archaeological work indicates that if status distinctions are present during the Late Postclassic Period, they are not clear-cut along three class lines. While elite residences and burials may be relatively elaborate and commoners' residences and burials less distinguished, the situation is one of obvious overlaps and gradations. It is uncertain what, if any, archaeological data can be associated with slaves. The association of elites with ritual that is indicated in the ethnohistory can be documented archaeologically. Ritual activity at Santa Rita Corozal appears to have occurred principally around the more elaborate constructions, many of which presumably represent elite residences, and does not appear to have been associated with all family groups. As has been pointed out elsewhere (D. Chase 1982a, 1985), the archaeological investigations at Santa Rita Corozal have provided data that contradict earlier interpretations of Postclassic ritual (Proskouriakoff 1955; Thompson 1970).

While grave type and associated objects are significant, one of the other important factors in suggesting status in Postclassic burials appears to be location. Differences between male and female interments and adult and child burial patterns exist. Female burials at Santa Rita Corozal appear to be in favored locations, in graves requiring much effort, and often accompanied by elaborate objects. This evidence suggests that women in the Late Postclassic were more prominent than is indicated by the ethnohistory.

Important Late Postclassic sites appear to be organized in a sector or barrio arrangement rather than in the concentric configuration

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described by Landa (in Tozzer. 1941). Two basic types of barrio settlement pattern are archaeologically evinced in Late Postclassic site organization. In the first, exemplified by Mayapan, a site center was surrounded by barrios. The second, exemplified by Santa Rita Corozal, had no obvious center. In both cases, the barrios were composed of clusters of smaller constructions organized about more formal groups in a manner similar to that found at Classic Maya sites. In combination with the continuities in caching patterns, burial practices, and certain construction techniques from the Classic to the Postclassic Period, this pattern may be interpreted as an indication of the predominantly "Maya" nature of these sites.

While more work must be carried out, the regional nature of the archaeological remains of the Late Postclassic is apparent. The architecture and pottery found at sites in the presumed Protohistoric provinces of Ecab, Uaymil, Chetumal, and Tah Itza indicates that the boundaries of the provinces or allied areas, which were initially defined from documentary evidence, can be assessed and partially confirmed archaeologically.

I suggest that the organization of the site of Santa Rita Corozal is representative of the organization of Lowland Maya regional capitals at the time of the Conquest. This organization can be seen both as derivative of that known archaeologically for the Classic Period and as homologous to that which can be reconstructed from documents for the early Historic Maya. The archaeological patterns I have defined can also be utilized to attempt a discussion of larger Protohistoric interactions. The archaeological differences between Santa Rita Corozal and sites along the east coast of Yucatan reflect temporal, regional, and organizational distinctions between Quintana Roo and contact-period northern Belize. It is doubtful that enclaves of purely non-Maya peoples will be securely defined archaeologically anywhere in the Maya Lowlands for the Late Postclassic Period; if any site organization within this area hints at Mexican influence, however, it is that seen in coastal Quintana Roo.

In conclusion, ethnohistory and archaeology in the Maya area may be more complementary than has been previously proposed. Their relationship, however, is neither static nor unidirectional. Late Postclassic archaeological data and their interpretations can clearly be utilized to identify, elucidate, and correct problems in the sometimes nebulous documentary accounts.

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