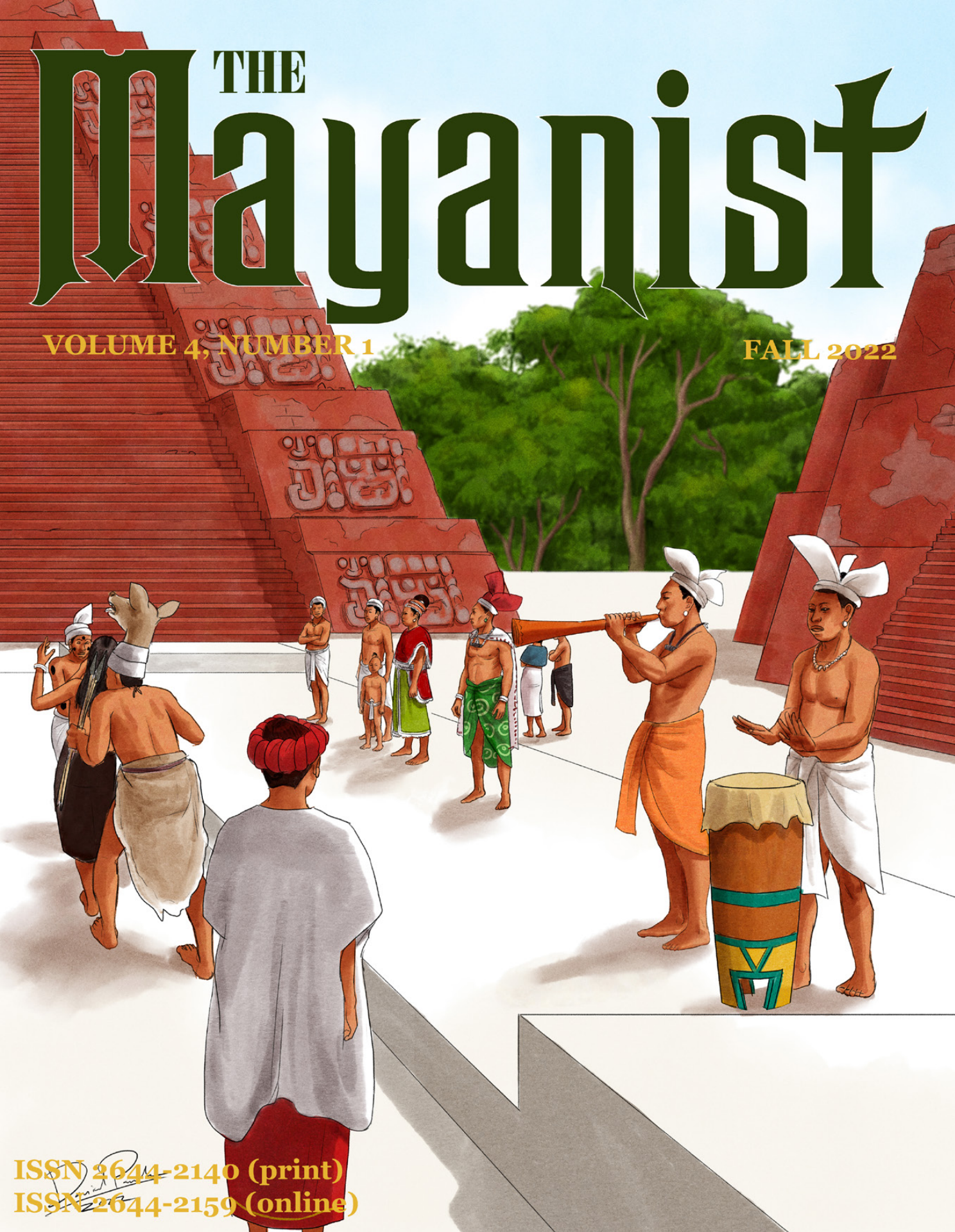


# THE Mayanist

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# THE Mayanist

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# The Editorial

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and

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We, *The Mayanist* team, are excited to introduce this new issue featuring three papers and one film review. The first two papers are research articles by Mary-Jane Acuña and John Chuchiak and Harri Kettunen. The third paper is a research report by David Mixter. Altogether, these papers cover a broad swath of time, ranging from the Middle Preclassic period to the Colonial era, and juxtapose various fields of Maya Studies: archaeology, epigraphy, ethnohistory, historical archival work, and codicology. The film review, by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, introduces a new ethnographic film directed by Sam Pack. As always, this issue would never have seen the light of day without the help of our layout maestro, Joel Skidmore, and our prompt and dedicated copy-editor, Jack Barry.

This seventh issue is liminal, lying at a crossroad of sorts. Our editor-in-chief has relocated to a new country, city, and institution—far away from Davidson, NC, the town which has anchored this journal for its first three years. This physical transition has implied a certain detachment from broader AFAR duties for Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire, especially conference organization. Indeed, after helping co-organize the *Maya at the Playa* and *Lago* conferences since 2014, he must now focus on other projects. But fret not! One of these projects is most definitely carrying on with this most amazing journal.

In the spirit of continuity, *The Mayanist* will remain everything it is at its core: a biannual, bilingual, free-to-publish-in, open-access, peer-reviewed journal that also happens to be beautifully illustrated. One significant shift, however, will be in its calls for papers. We are moving away from the “out-of-AFAR-conferences” model and towards a special issue model. Our eighth, “new model” issue, is already in the works. Yet, if you are interested in proposing a special issue and in acting as a future guest-editor for *The Mayanist*, please do email the editor-in-chief with a preliminary proposal. Papers for this ninth issue will be due in June 2023. When considering this, it is primordial to keep in mind that our journal is aimed at reaching a broader public than just the academic core; a commitment which includes our short paper length (between 3,000 and 4,000 words). We



will also continue aiming to publish between four and six papers per issue and we remain open to submissions in Spanish or English. To this effect, we are glad to report that, after a short summer hiatus, our translating team has resumed working on expanding access to our journal by translating all our English papers to Spanish.

Another transition occurred on the illustration front. After displaying the incredible art of Walter Paz Joj in our last two issues, we are featuring Daniel Parada's impressive artwork in this issue. Daniel is a prolific illustrator and author of the Zotz graphic novels, which are worth your time and attention. They can be found here: <https://zotzcomic.bigcartel.com>

The current issue stems from the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Maya at the Lago Conference, which honored the career and achievements of David A. Freidel—one of the most prolific Mayanists of the past two k'atuns. This unique hybrid conference was our first with an in-person component in years, and seeing friends and colleagues converge in Davidson was a real pleasure (Photos 1 and 2). We were also privileged to have multiple, dedicated presenters Zoom-in from Latin America and beyond. Hearing the many testimonials about how supportive David A. Freidel is as a mentor was particularly moving. I (Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire) have had the privilege to collaborate on a few projects with David A. Freidel. And these months working with him gave me a glimpse of how central mentorship and generosity are to his identity. Quite fittingly, then, we now leave you with our guest editor, Kathryn Reese-Taylor, who is lucky enough to count herself as one of David A. Freidel's longtime mentees.



Photo 1. David A. Freidel and fellow presenters, organizer, and attendees during the 11<sup>th</sup> *Annual Maya at the Lago Conference* opening reception at the Davidson College Hurt Hub, Davidson, NC. Photo by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire.





Photo 2. Left: David A. Freidel, David Mixer, and Marc Zender participating in person to the hybrid forum on Maya Rulership—along with remote presenters Jim Garber, Travis Stanton, Marcello Canuto, Kathryn Brown, Kathryn Reese-Taylor, Mary Jane Acuña, and Debra Walker. Right: a group of in-person attendees to the conference (not pictured are the 70+ remote attendees). Photo taken at the Davidson College Hurt Hub, Davidson, NC. Photo by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire.

### From our Guest Editor

I am privileged to be the guest editor for this issue of *The Mayanist* in honour of David A. Freidel. David has had a profound impact on our discipline for 40+ years. From his earliest work on Cozumel Island to his latest investigations at El Peru-Waka', his research has been on the cutting edge of Maya studies since the 1970s. Broadly, his research can be categorized into three important themes: political economy, religious ideology, and the art of governance.

Freidel's early research on Cozumel Island (Freidel and Sabloff 1984) was foundational for our current understanding of marketplace exchanges and long-distance trade in the Maya lowlands. His later work on political economy in the Maya region included investigations of market economies, currency, and long-distance trade of high valued resources, such as spondylus and jade, which he invariably linked back to governance in both the Classic and Preclassic periods. This was highlighted in his work at Cerros, which he successfully argued was an important trading port and a hub in the robust interaction sphere during the Late Preclassic (Freidel 1979, Freidel et al. 2002), as well as his recent work at El Peru-Waka' on the place of currency in the political capital of Late Classic kingdoms (Freidel et al. 2016).

His long-term interests in the intersection of religious ideology and governance is highlighted in his two books, *A Forest of Kings* (Schele and Freidel 1990) and *Maya Cosmos* (Freidel et al. 1993), both written with long-term collaborator Linda Schele. Both books – crucial reading for Mayanists – addressed the more straightforward aspects of divine kingship, including its material expressions and sociopolitical consequences, but also the sacred legitimization of governance through cosmological concepts and state-sanctioned ritual. Since the publication of these books, Freidel has honed his argument for the role of divine kingship among the Maya in publications detailing the religious sanctioning of governance at Late Preclassic Cerros, Early Classic Yaxuna, and Late Classic El Peru-Waka' (Freidel 1992, 2005, 2008, 2017, 2018; Freidel et al. 1998, 2010; Freidel and Guenter 2006; Freidel and MacLeod 2000; Freidel and Suhler 1995). His most recent work at El Peru-Waka' highlights the role of kings and queens as diviners for their kingdoms (Freidel 2022).

In addition to his research interests, David has pioneered reaching out to wider audiences through storytelling. He embraced multivocality and community engagement at a time when such methods were only beginning to gain momentum in the field of Mesoamerican archaeology. In *Forest of Kings*, he and Linda Schele also engaged the full potential of the narrative form, confident that the narrative structure of their interpretations would have much to offer both lay and professional audiences (Guernsey and Reese-Taylor n.d.).

However, even while this body of work has driven the field for over 40 years, David's devotion to the training, mentorship, and general cheerleading of younger scholars may prove to be his lasting legacy. He has generously shared his data and ideas, and his insightful guidance has been critical for so many of us. Indeed, David's impact has been widespread and deep, touching on scholars engaged in research at all levels of academia, professional tour guides, journalists, and artists, as well as avocational Mayanists throughout the world. The three articles in this issue exemplify an academic tradition built on Freidel's body of work, which integrates interpretation and storytelling with scientific inquiry.

"A Diachronic Assessment of Rulership at El Tintal" by Mary Jane Acuña explores the changing characteristics of rulership from the 350 BCE to 800 CE at El Tintal in the Central Karstic Uplands. Acuña uses archaeological correlates, such as monumental structures, large multi-courtyard residential compounds, key long-distance trade items, and use of select titles on codex-style ceramics to highlight the distinct political strategies that addressed sociopolitical circumstances in the Late Preclassic and the Late Classic periods. Acuña builds on Freidel's research regarding governance in the Maya lowlands to explain the increasingly administrative role and responsibilities of king, which is particularly evident when comparing the office in the Late Preclassic to that in the Late Classic.

The article by John Chuchiak and Harri Kettunen draws on a detailed analysis of the *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* (Account of the things of Yucatan) to explore the history of the manuscript. The article provides new insights into an important document detailing daily life in 16<sup>th</sup> century Yucatan. Chuchiak and Kettunen address questions of authorship and, perhaps more importantly, documentation of state secrets. Like Freidel's work on the epigraphic corpus of El Peru-Waka', which seeks to interpret Classic period inscriptions in the context of specific historic events, the contingencies of the period in which the transcriptions were made are paramount for understanding the original text and the subsequent commentary.

Finally, David Mixter explores how the Maya reshaped their political institutions during the Terminal Classic period at the site of Actuncan in central Belize. Following Freidel and Suhler's (1999) engagement with performance spaces at Yaxuna, Mixter lays out an argument that the new modifications are designed for post-royal ritual performances and reflect a rejection of divine kingship during a period of political fragmentation in the Maya Lowlands.

In the foreword to *A Forest of Kings*, Schele and Freidel (1990:19) state, "The story we construct here is one of drama, pathos, humor, and heroics." I think this statement sums up well David's lifelong passion, to tell the remarkable story of the Prehispanic Maya. Through his writings, he has aroused our curiosity and introduced the rich history of the Maya people to a global audience, well beyond the white towers of academia, and we thank him profoundly for sharing his constant wonder at these ancient voices with us all.

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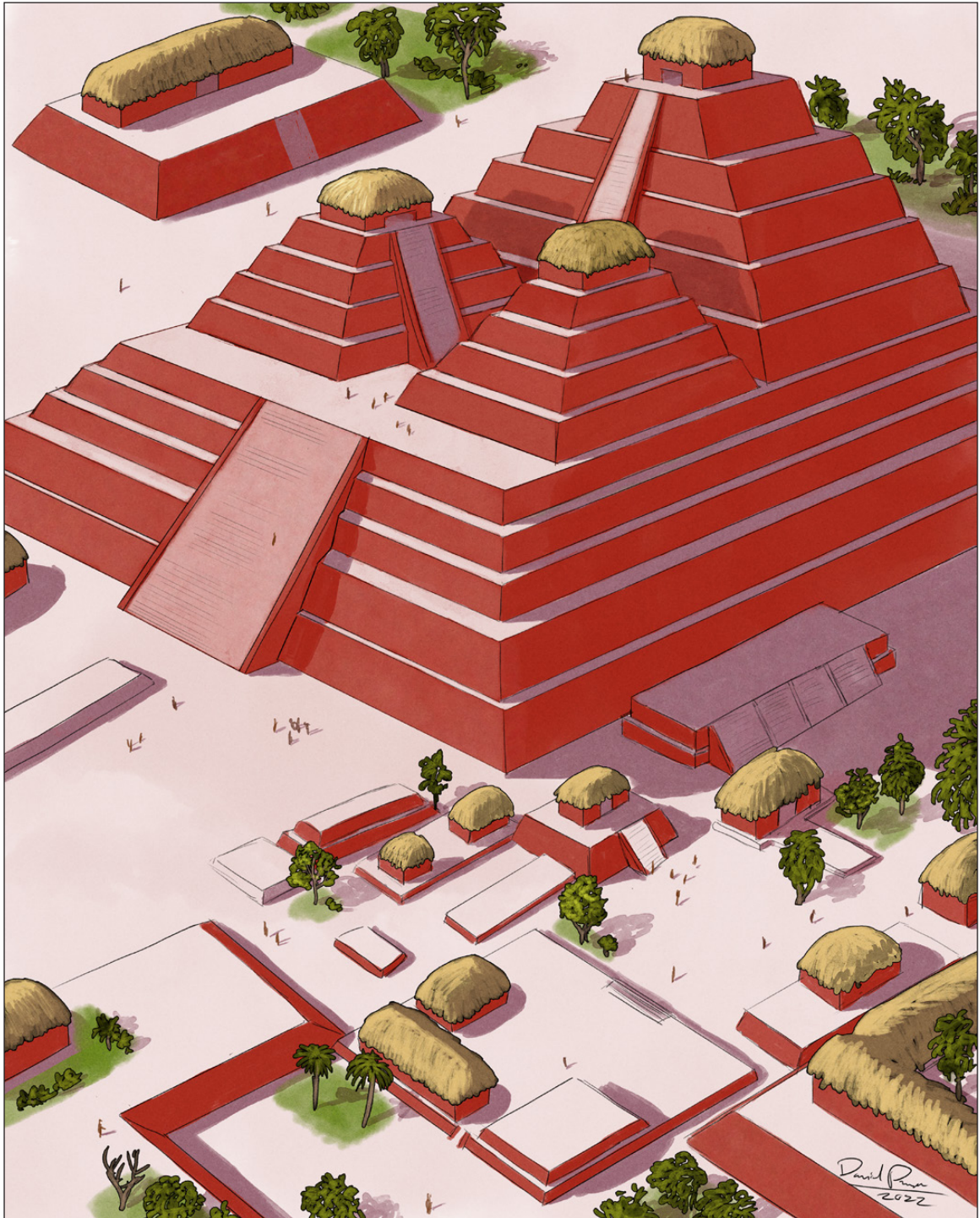
# A Diachronic Assessment of Rulership at El Tintal

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*The purpose of this paper is to review the characteristics of rulership at the site of El Tintal as they manifest diachronically in the documented archaeological record. El Tintal is situated on the Central Karstic Uplands of northern Petén, a region in which settlements are well-known for their Late Preclassic Period occupation (350 BCE-250 CE), poorly understood during the Classic Period (250-900 CE), and notorious for their absence of carved monuments and a limited iconographic and epigraphic corpus. I therefore rely on architecture in conjunction with material culture and settlement patterns to discern the nature of rulership in each period. The results indicate the presence of systems of government that adapted to circumstances in each period in response to both local and external factors.*

Keywords: *El Tintal, rulership, monumentality, royal tomb, elite residences*





A great deal is known about ancient Maya rulership from the vast corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions and iconographic programs found on portable objects, stone monuments, and buildings. The depth of that knowledge varies among different subregions of the Maya world, with the southern lowlands tilting the balance in its favor with Preclassic iconographic programs and epigraphic records (Estrada-Belli 2006; Freidel and Schele 1988; Taube et al. 2010) and long dynastic sequences from many cities in the Classic Period (Houston and Mathews 1985; Martin and Grube 2008). Traditionally, these expressions of rulership are associated with divine kingship (Fields 1989:9-10), and commonly thought of as lineage-based. Yet, within the southern lowlands there are areas for which we know comparatively little about rulership in that traditional sense, generally due to the absence of epigraphic and/or iconographic records, particularly on carved stone monuments. The

dearth of texts and images may hinder our ability to discern dynastic rulership but does not correlate with the absence of the office of rulership or of governance, as we can discern their qualities from alternate sources of evidence such as architecture, material culture, and funerary and settlement patterns. Here, I use the term rulership in a broader reference to the position and not specifically to dynastic kingship.

The ancient Maya embedded meaning in buildings, manifested through particular styles, configurations, layouts, and locations within a settlement (Ashmore 1991; Flannery 1998; Houston 1998). Architectural functions ranged from the highest ritual level to the basic utilitarian dwelling. When evaluated alongside associated material culture and settlement patterns, architecture can be informative about rulership. Burials were particularly riddled with meaning: through type of interment, layout, accoutrements, location, and, often, epigraphic and iconographic content. Classic Period Maya rulers, for instance, were notorious for their elaborate tombs containing insignias of power. The degree of specificity to which we can describe rulership varies according to the available evidence and can range from discerning presence or absence to having biographical information about rulers. Levels of detail fluctuate over space and time depending on regional cultural canons, and sociopolitical and economic circumstances.

This article reviews archaeological correlates for rulership at the site of El Tintal from the Late Preclassic (350 BCE-150 CE) through Late Classic (550-800 CE) Periods in order to illustrate its changing nature diachronically. El Tintal – located on the Central Karstic Uplands (CKU) of north-central Petén, Guatemala (Figure 1) – was part of a network of sites with strong Late Preclassic occupations characterized by architectural monumentality and strong Late Classic occupations largely devoid of carved stone monuments, but rich in other material culture and architecture.

## **Evidence for Rulership at El Tintal**

### *Late Preclassic Monumentality*

The population at El Tintal thrived between 350 BCE and 150 CE. Major construction projects took place during this period, defining a built landscape that continues to characterize the ancient settlement. Concurrent with site planning, emphasis on scale and volume in construction projects was a hallmark of the times and region, and is generally considered evidence – in conjunction







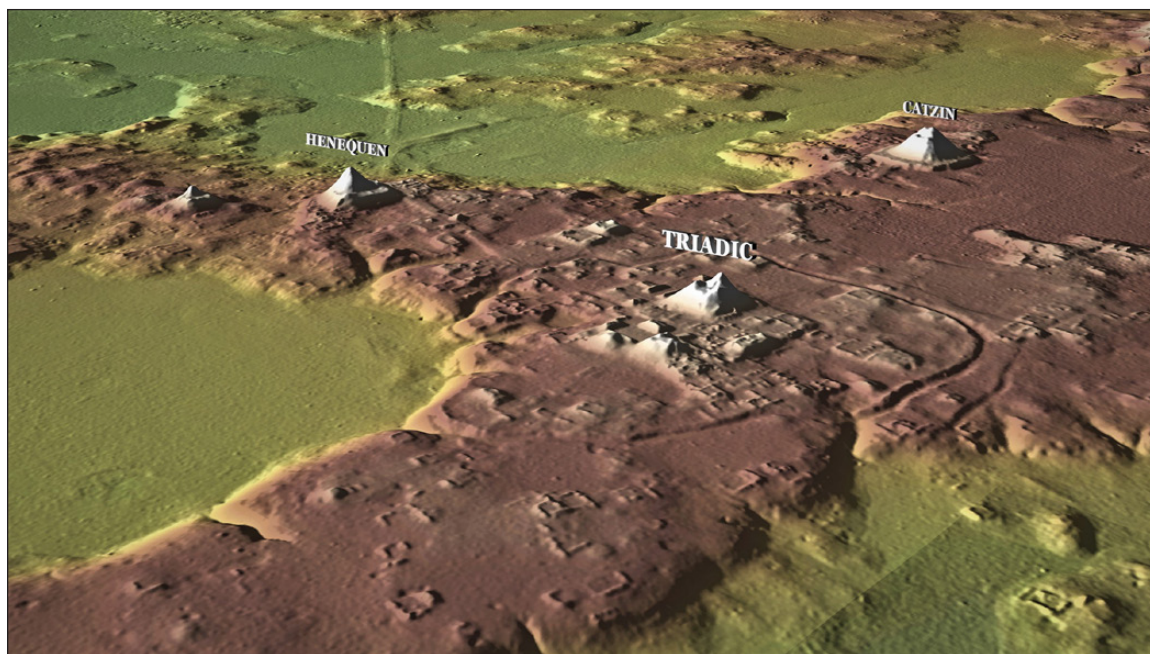
**Figure 1.** Location of El Tintal on the Central Karstic Uplands. Light gray line delineates the greater San Juan River drainage system (map by C. R. Chiriboga).

with iconographic programs and homogenous material culture – for the existence of centralized authority in these early societies (Doyle 2013:187; 2017; Estrada-Belli 2011; Hansen 1998; Sharer and Traxler 2016:13). Filled with meaning, built environments were expressions of political power, social relationships, and strategies (Ashmore 2015; Houk et al. 2020; Koontz et al. 2004; Rosenswig 2010), and Preclassic communities on the CKU clearly made statements to signify their complexity through monumental architecture and site layouts, among other features. The existence

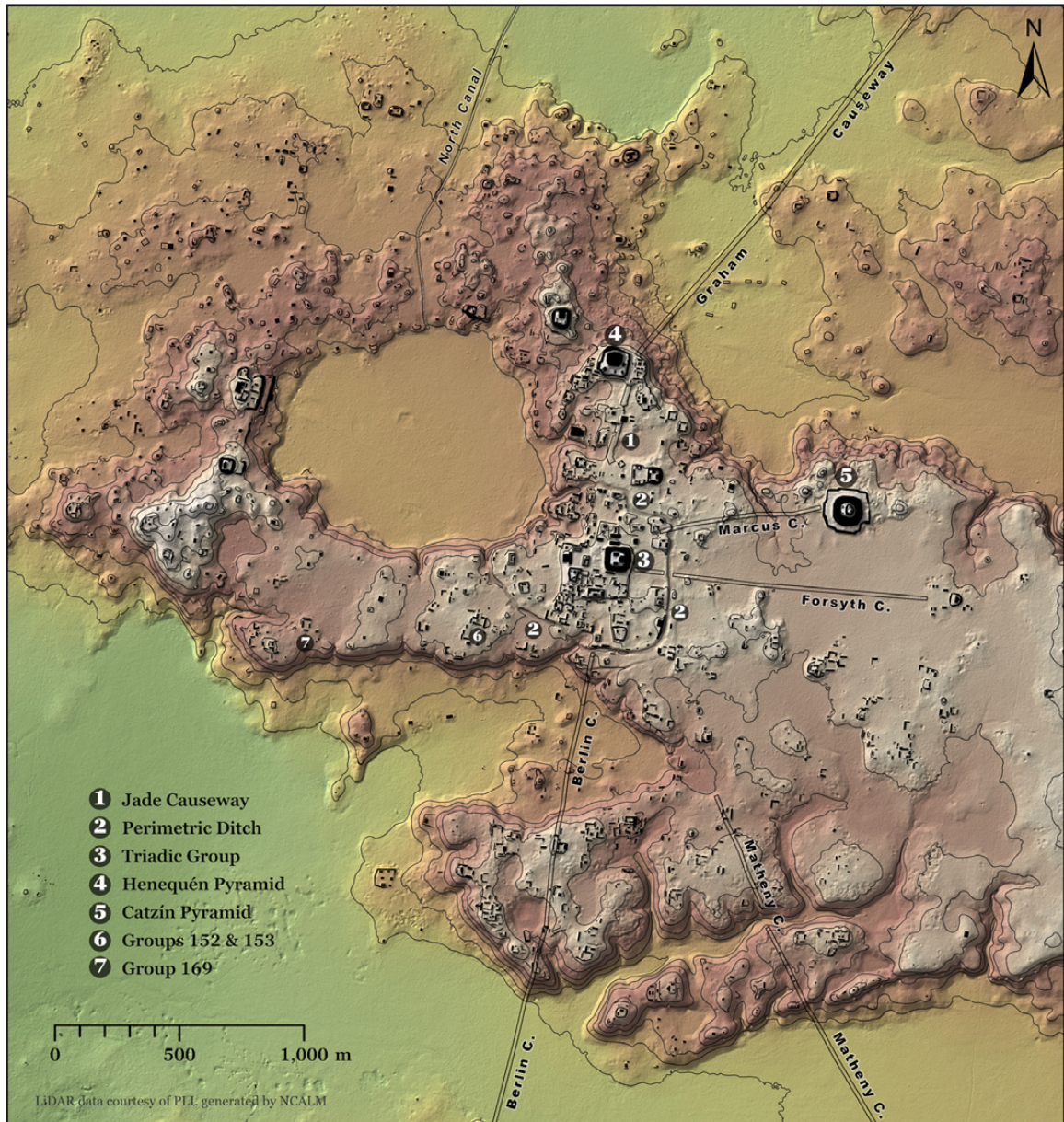


of monumentality alone is insufficient to determine the presence of political power (Rosenswig and Burger 2012:6), as it can result from ritual practices among diverse peoples not integrated into a formal urban setting (Inomata et al. 2021). However, when monumentality develops as part of an urban design, it requires planning and organization to ensure its successful integration into the settlement and achievement of its intended function. Thus, in order to use monumentality as an indicator for rulership, we must view it in conjunction with other evidence and within a broader context in order to gain insight into other factors—including the means by which monumentality occurred (e.g. labor force, organization, and cooperation strategies) and the motivations behind it (e.g. political, economic, social, practical, and ideological).

The most salient monumental features at El Tintal are its pyramids, namely the Triadic Group, Henequén, and Catzín (Figure 2). Architecturally, these buildings share similarities in construction and style (e.g., tenon blocks, inset corners, apron-moldings, sheer volume) with analogous structures at other CKU sites, reflecting a degree of sociopolitical cohesiveness. Of particular importance are Triadic Groups, considered emblematic of Late Preclassic rulership, as they became focal points for displaying and enacting ideological narratives through symbolic representations and performances (Doyle 2013:185; Freidel 1985; Freidel and Schele 1988; Velásquez 2014). In addition to the primary pyramids, however, other monumental features – structures, terraces, causeways, hydraulic and defensive systems – characterized the built landscape of Late Preclassic El Tintal (Figure 3). Six causeways have been securely identified that connect locations within the settlement, as well as with other sites in the region, such as El Mirador, La Ceibita, and possibly La Florida (Chiriboga 2017, 2020). Their existence alludes to the regional integration of El Tintal in sociopolitical and



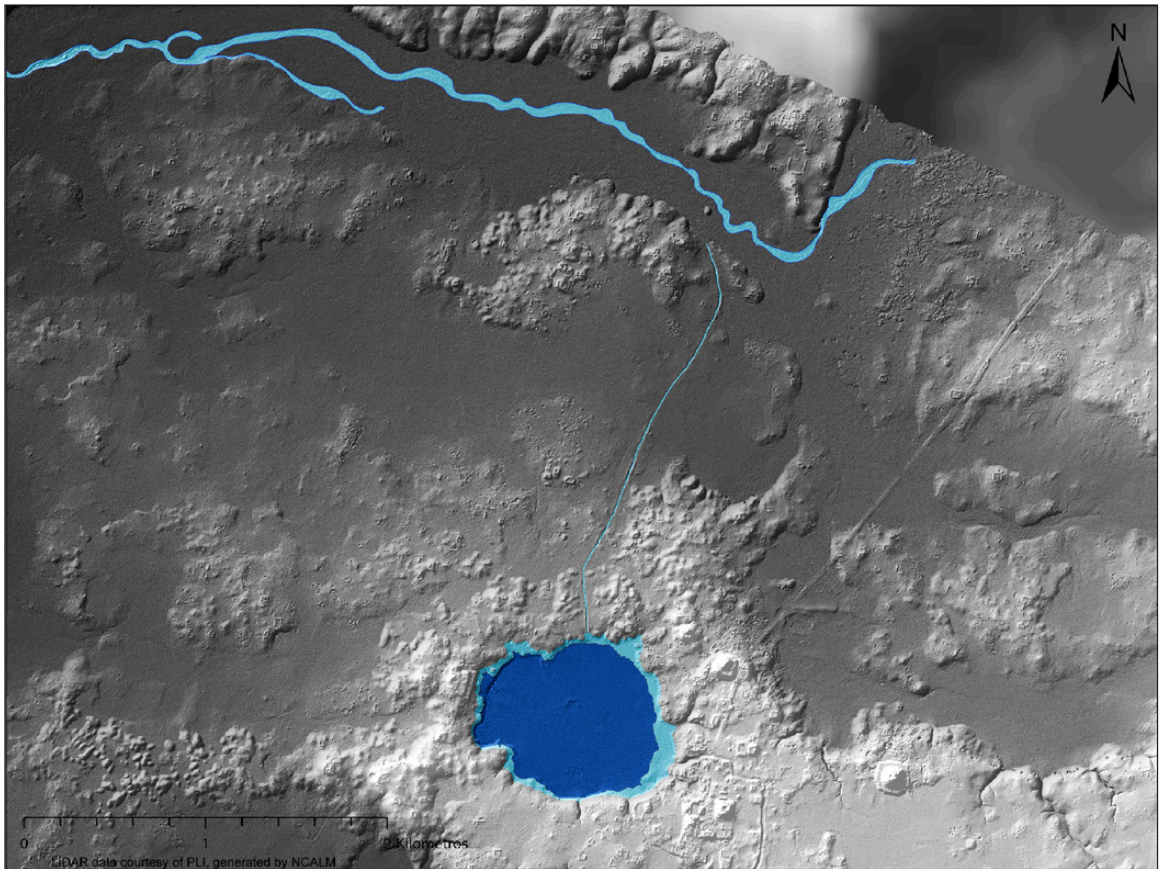
**Figure 2.** Northeastern perspective in 3D of El Tintal’s central area showcasing the three largest pyramids (map by C. R. Chiriboga).



**Figure 3.** Map of El Tintal showing the location of structures and features discussed in the text (map by C. R. Chiriboga).

economic networks, which were essential elements of political authority. Causeways linking two separate settlements not only signal affiliation and possibly common worldview, but also cooperative efforts among communities resulting from perceived shared benefits (Carballo 2013; Smith 2021). Moreover, the North Canal that connected Chacamatzal lagoon with a flow system feeding





**Figure 4.** Map showing the trajectory of the North Canal that drained the lagoon's overflow into a drainage system that is now seasonal (map by C. R. Chiriboga).

into the greater San Juan drainage (Figure 4; Chiriboga 2017:171) increases the possibility for the existence of seasonal fluvial networks for canoe transportation, thus broadening the regional scope of interactions. Excavations in this 2.4 km-long canal revealed it was a complex engineering feat comprising tunnel sections necessary to traverse the southern elevated terrain and an open-air channel for its trajectory through the northern *bajos* (Chiriboga and Castañeda 2019, 2020).

All of these projects required a substantial labor force. I infer that the Late Preclassic population of El Tintal was large enough to meet the required labor force based on high frequencies of pottery combined with the widespread construction of patios and plazas, indicative of the conglomeration of inhabitants within the urban settlement limits. Participation of a rural population is also probable, not only for construction work but for supplying subsistence and material resources and partaking in projects integral to a developing urban center. Participation in community-wide projects may have provided benefits that attracted dispersed populations towards the urban center, similar to what has been described for E-Groups and other monumental constructions since the Middle Preclassic Period (Doyle 2012; Estrada-Belli 2011; Freidel et al. 2017; Inomata et al. 2017;

Inomata et al. 2020).

Excavations into the large pyramidal platforms revealed that their monumental volume resulted from single-phase construction efforts in the Late Preclassic Period (Hansen and Rodas 2015; Hernández 2014; Pérez 2019), implying high levels of social organization, administration, and leadership to accomplish them. Precise planning to determine the location of each feature was important to the integrated layout of the settlement. Research has shown that site planning was prevalent in Preclassic settlements, with layouts serving functional purposes, but also signaling ideological and sociopolitical worldviews (Clark and Hansen 2001; Doyle 2012, 2017; Freidel et al. 2017; Inomata 2017; Inomata et al. 2021; Inomata et al. 2020; Šprajc 2021a, b; Šprajc et al. 2009). The study of the symbolic significance of El Tintal's layout is only beginning. Carlos R. Chiriboga's analysis of the settlement patterns using LiDAR data has revealed preliminary evidence suggesting that the layout of some Preclassic buildings and open spaces may have had calendrical significance with important sightlines for sunsets and sunrises (see also Aveni 2001; Šprajc 2021b). If confirmed, the results of this analysis have multiple layers of relevance for ancient Maya sociocultural dynamics, ranging from a practical function for time-keeping to the more complex ideological one of authority being linked directly to agricultural cycles through the myth of the Maize God (Fields 1989; Freidel et al. 1993; Taube 1996).

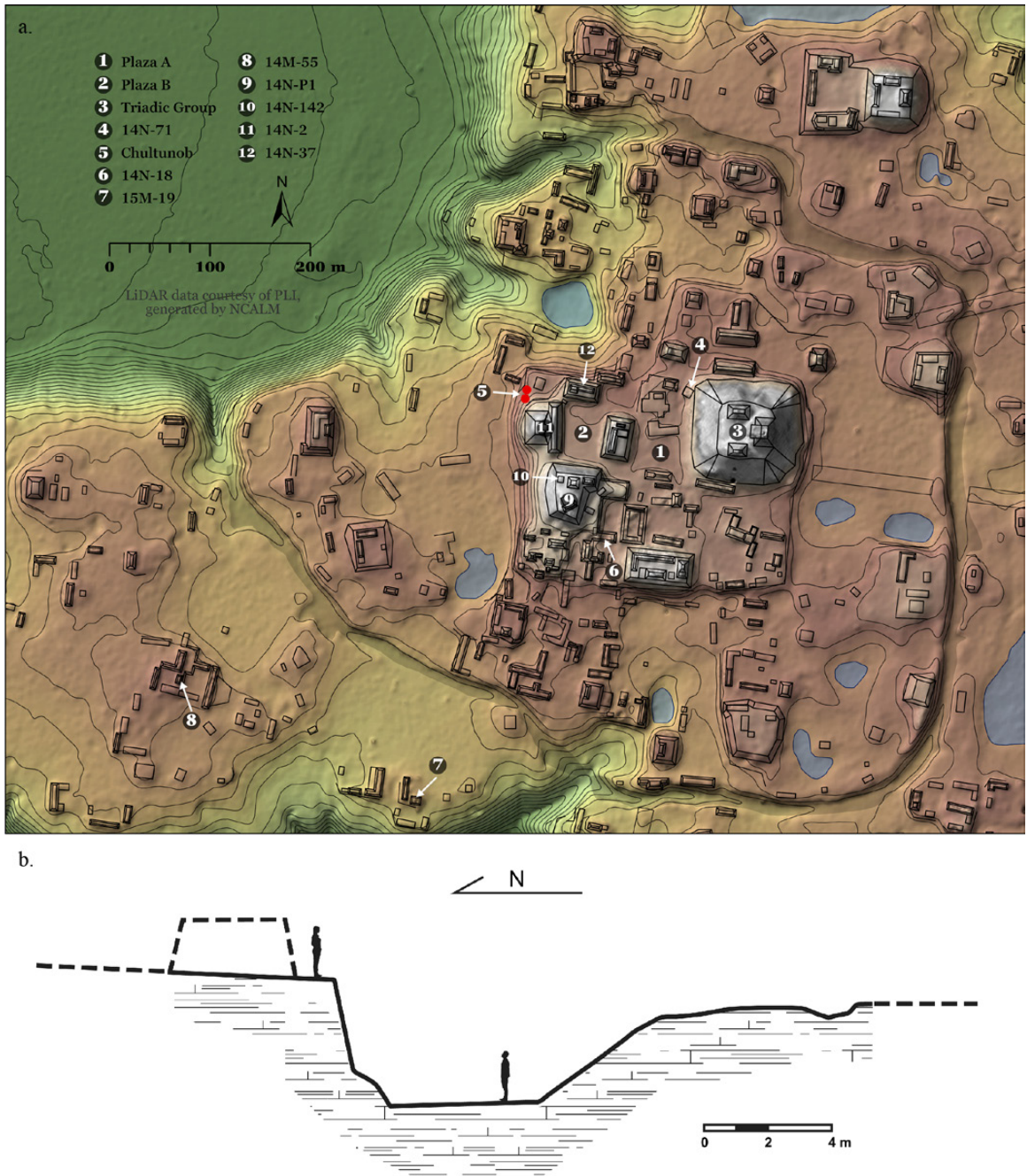
The Perimetric Ditch was a feature of monumental proportions that restricted access to and protected the settlement core, including buildings and spaces that were vital symbols of the sociopolitical ideology, namely the Triadic Group, the Ballcourt, and Plaza B (inferred as the locus of government-related activities; Figure 5). It is preliminarily dated to the late facet Late Preclassic or Terminal Preclassic Periods (ca. 0-250 CE) based on diagnostic pottery found in the bottom sediment layers and construction of the southern embankment over Late Preclassic floors (Chiriboga and Castañeda 2020; López 2015:564). As such, it played a similar role as the West Group Wall System at El Mirador (Matheny and Matheny 2011:99-108) and as ditches like the one at Becan, with which it also shares physical correspondences (Webster and Ball 2021).

### *An Early Classic Ajaw*

The transition into the Early Classic Period (250-550 CE) is underrepresented archaeologically at El Tintal. What is readily apparent is the significant reduction in construction activity and dramatic drop in artifactual frequencies that ensued from regional instabilities in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, inferred to represent a notable depopulation (Doyle 2017:109-118; Hansen 2012). Very little is known about the persistent population, except that they primarily continued to use earlier infrastructure and produced Tzakol sphere ceramics. Yet, the existence of a royal tomb containing insignias of power indicates that rulership existed during at least a portion of this time period.

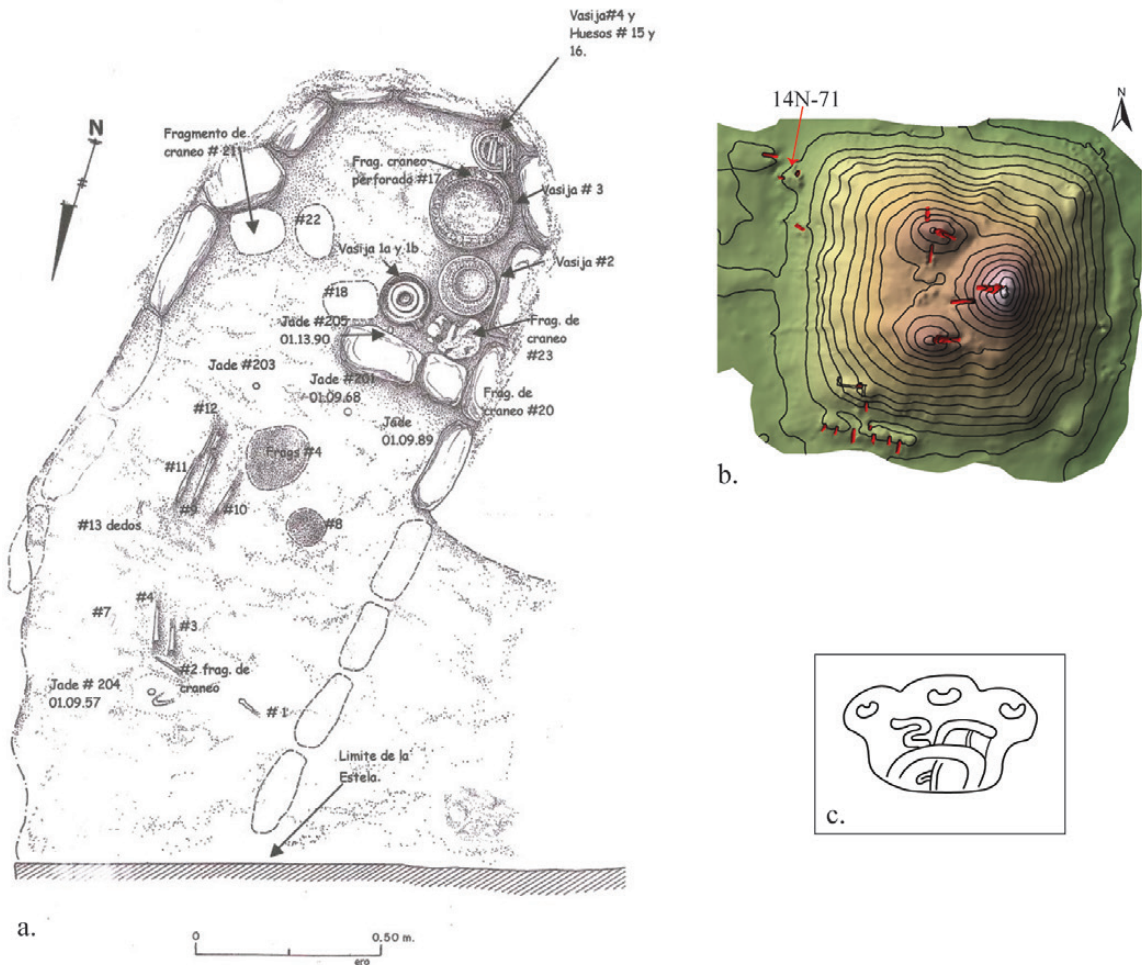
Tomb 1 was excavated by the Mirador Basin Project in 2004 and was dated to between 300-400 CE based on its ceramic offerings (Figure 6; Hansen et al. 2005; Hansen et al. 2006:747). Its chronological placement is further confirmed by similarities found with 4<sup>th</sup> century elite burials from El Zotz, Tikal, Dzibanche, Calakmul, and El Palmar (Meléndez 2019:174-176, 890-891). Tomb 1 was found in Structure 14N-71, located at the base of the northwestern corner of the Triadic Group, with characteristics befitting the interment of a ruler (Hansen et al. 2005): its prominent location next to an ancestral building symbolizing rulership; the architecture of the funerary chamber;





**Figure 5.** a) Close-up of the central precinct surrounded by the Perimetric Ditch; b) cross-section of Perimetric Ditch based on excavations in its southern area (map and drawing by C. R. Chiriboga).

human offerings; and the complete assemblage of artifacts, including greenstone, shell, obsidian, a stingray spine, and six ceramic vessels. Among the greenstone artifacts were pieces that pertained to a mosaic mask and plaques incised with glyphs. One of the plaques was carved in the shape of a trilobe or trefoil, a form known for its association with Maya royalty and authority, standing as the semantic equivalent for the ruler title *ajaw* (Fields 1989:19; 1991:167-168; Houston and Inomata 2001:59; Martin 2020:69). Moreover, this artifact was incised on one side with an emblem glyph employing an early form of *ajaw* and the presence of possibly two names on separate greenstone pieces within the tomb further confirm the status of this individual as a ruler (Guenter and Hansen 2019; Hansen et al. 2005; Hansen et al. 2006).



**Figure 6.** a) Plan map of Tomb 1 found inside Structure 14N-71 (after Hansen et al. 2005:Fig. 12b); b) topographic map of Triadic Group showing the location of Structure 14N-71 (map not at scale by C. Chiriboga); c) drawing of greenstone plaque incised with early glyph utilizing early format of *ajaw* (drawing by M. J. Acuña).

### *Late Classic Nobility*

An era of cultural revitalization and population growth occurred between 550 and 800 CE, evinced archaeologically by a spike in material culture and a surge in construction projects ranging in functions throughout the settlement, including a large number of residential groups. Absent from El Tintal's Late Classic dataset are carved stone monuments depicting rulers and detailing their historical accomplishments. This deviation from the tradition seen at major polity centers throughout the Classic Period elsewhere in the southern lowlands is not unique to El Tintal; it is rather a subregional phenomenon incorporating settlements in north-central Petén, many of which had been major Preclassic centers. Other evidence, including architecture, artifacts, and settlement patterns shed light on the nature of Late Classic rulership.

In contrast to Preclassic volumetric monumentality, Late Classic construction emphasized quantity and density. The primary ceremonial precinct remained centered around Plazas A and B, with investments in new administrative and residential buildings and renovations in older ones (Figures 3 and 5a). The Triadic Group continued to dominate the space in Plaza A with its Preclassic summit architecture exposed, unchanged, and seemingly still used. Whether used with the same purpose as in the Preclassic remains unresolved. However, excavations at the southwestern base of the platform revealed large concentrations of artifacts over the Late Classic surface, including broken pottery, chert tools, and several figurines (Pérez 2019), signaling the enduring symbolic significance of the Triadic Group. The Ballcourt was remodeled one final time, resulting in a 40 x 15 m court space, continuing to reify the ritual significance of the core through its multi-layered meanings tied to mythology, warfare, and politics (Whittington 2001).

As is frequently the case, royal residences, palaces, and courts are located adjacent to ceremonial buildings within the core of Maya urban settlements. Despite the current absence of overt evidence for Late Classic royalty, such as tombs or carved monuments, the location and architectural arrangement of Plaza B, including adjacent groups south and east of 14N-P1, suggest they served courtly and palatial functions (Christie 2003; Christie and Sarro 2006; Flannery 1998). The complex is characterized by a relatively restricted arrangement of structures with intricate architecture of varying sizes and designs centered around patios and courtyards (Figure 5a). Key features include structures with multiple rooms and/or reception hallways containing benches; a temple; decorated façades; private and elevated spaces; annexed residential compounds; burials; an adjacent *aguada* and two large *chultunob*; and an artifactual assemblage incorporating prestige items and polychrome pottery (Figures 5a and 7). Furthermore, Plaza B has a long history of occupation with the oldest floor dated to cal. 360-103 BCE, followed by five, possibly six, subsequent floor re-surfacing events through the Late Classic Period (Acuña 2019:84-89; Acuña et al. 2014:62-63). With associated buildings also containing earlier iterations, including one documented Early Classic phase in 14N-2, the continued occupation underlines the longstanding significance of Plaza B. The Late Classic revitalization of the space began between 550-610 CE, and the similarities in architectural styles and refuse from associated buildings in Plaza B indicate their constructions were functionally and temporally integrated.

Observations of architectural styles, layouts, and associated artifacts found in looters' trenches suggest that many other compounds were occupied and used by high-status groups in the core

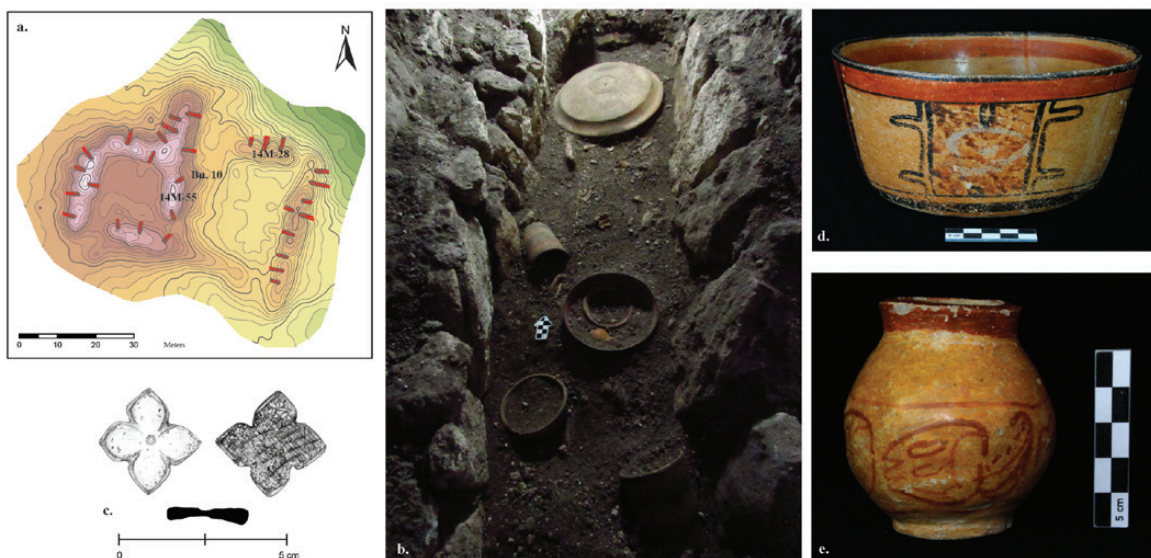




**Figure 7.** Example of material culture found in Plaza B contexts: a) fragments of modeled stucco that decorated the façade of Structure 14N-142 (photos by M. Colín); b) fragment of greenstone tubular pendant, Structure 14N-P1 (photo by R. Rodas); c) shell artifact (*Jenneria pustulata* sp. of Pacific origin) from Structure 14N-P1 (Cotóm 2020:305; photo by J. Cotóm); d) shell artifact (*Americoliva reticularis* sp. of Caribbean origin) from Structure 14N-2 (Cotóm 2020:304; photo by J. Cotóm); e) partial headdress of a fragmented figurine (photo by R. Rodas); f) miniature jar found in Burial 9, Structure 14N-37 (photo by M. Colín); g) chert bifaces, Structures 14N-142 and 14N-7 (photos by M. Colín).

area enclosed by the Perimetric Ditch and along the Jade causeway. The occupants were seemingly nobles privileged to live within the ceremonial precinct. These “fancy” types of residential groups, however, also encompass much of the Late Classic settlement outside the core.

Group 152/153 – a double patio residential compound – is a good example of such an elite family living outside the ceremonial precinct (see Figure 3). Excavations there revealed intricate



**Figure 8.** a) Topographic map of Group 152/153 showing location of referenced buildings and looters' trenches (map by C. R. Chiriboga); b) Burial 10 (photo by A. Cajas); c) flower ornament carved in Caribbean shell (*Lobatus costatus* sp.) found in Burial 10 (Cotóm 2020:306; drawing by A. Cajas); d-e) polychrome vessels from Burial 10 (photos by M. Colín).

masonry architecture of equal quality and style to that of buildings in the core (Cajas 2017a, b, 2019). The rectangular structures contained multiple rooms with private benches offset from the doorways, in association with a diverse assemblage of finely crafted artifacts, including polychrome pottery, obsidian and chert tools (some from Colha), regional freshwater shell, marine shell, and carved bone objects. Architectural and funerary evidence indicate Structure 14M-55 was reserved for the highest ranked members of the family inhabiting Group 152/153, evinced by the discovery of Burial 10—an elaborate crypt containing seven polychrome pots and a carved shell ornament that contrasted with simpler interments from neighboring buildings (Figure 8; Cajas 2019:183-186). Moreover, Edgar Suyuc (2005), from the Mirador Basin Project, recovered a polychrome cylinder vase decorated with a dedicatory text naming Yopaat Bahlam bearing the title *K'uhul Chatahn Winik*, a few meters south from Burial 10. This individual is named on several unprovenanced codex-style vessels, though his place of residence continues to elude scholars. While the vessel's discovery in association with a looted burial context in Structure 14M-55 provides clues about social dynamics and relationships of the Late Classic population, it is insufficient evidence to ascertain that this compound was his residence.

Group 169 is a residential group of slightly more modest architecture exhibiting comparable material culture. Varinia Matute (2016:121-124) recovered several fragments of finely painted polychrome pottery from one of the looted burials, including a partial codex-style plate, and several chert tools that Project lithicist, Jason Paling, identified as tool-making tools (Figure 9). We surmise from this that the interred individual might have been a craftsman of elevated social rank specializing in tool production.

Many more groups comprised of single or multi-patio compounds with intricate architecture,

vaulted roofs, benches, and multiple sub-floor burials are spread throughout the settlement. Some evince buildings with sculpted façades, such as Structure 15M-19 – located in a small compound southeast of the core – that had been decorated with stucco elements similar in quality and representation to those from Plaza B (Mauricio 2015). Overall, the frequency of architectural units with similarities in style, artifactual assemblages, and burial practices is increasing across much of the settlement and bespeaks a highly visible and non-royal Late Classic elite.

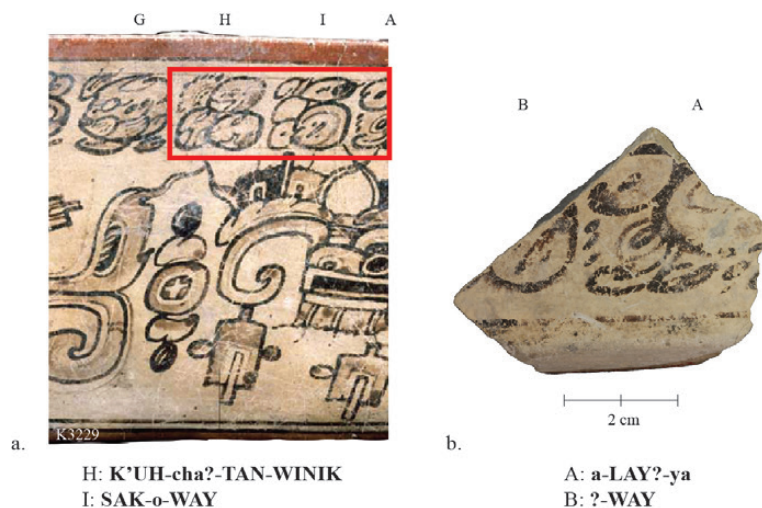
A sherd recovered from looters' backdirt outside Structure 14N-18 in the greater Plaza B area is painted with two glyphs representing the beginning (**a-LAY?-ya**) and end of a dedicatory sequence (Figure 10). In this case, only a portion of the ending glyph survives and can be transcribed as **WAY**, the logogram found in the title *Sak O' Wahyis* (Velásquez and García 2018:4). A comparison with two codex-style vessels (e.g. K3229 and K1810) reveals similarities in calligraphic style with the Tintal sherd, but they also illustrate examples of *Sak O' Wahyis* utilized in combination with *Chatahn Winik*. Both of these titles were used, individually or combined, by individuals or groups considered to be of high social rank affiliated with the Kanu'l regime (Velásquez and García 2018). The discovery of both titles in contexts at El Tintal provides clues about the social networks and affiliations of the Late Classic population, which I return to below.

## Discussion

This article aims to diachronically review archaeological evidence for rulership at El Tintal. In the Late Preclassic, we cannot speak of individuals or lineages, as there are no such records in



**Figure 9.** Artifacts recovered from a looted burial in Group 169: a) codex-style fragmented plate (photo by V. Mendoza); b) chert tool-making tools (photo by R. Rodas).



**Figure 10.** a) Section of vessel K3229 showing the combined use of titles *k'uh[ul] Chatahn winik* and *Sak O' Wahy[is]* (photo by Justin Kerr ©; transcription after Velásquez García and García Barrios 2018); b) example of probable *Sak O' Wahy[is]* title on a sherd from El Tintal associated with Structure 14N-18 in the greater Plaza B area (photo and transcription by V. Mendoza).

the dataset to date. The existence of the office of rulership is most evident in the built landscape, through single-phase constructions of massive architectural and engineering projects that served ideological and practical functions. Each feature is a receptacle of managed labor and resources, and their integration into an urban landscape signals sophisticated planning and leadership. This leadership developed material manifestations of power harnessed in monumentality and expressed through particular types of buildings such as Triadic Groups. Architectural similarities and causeway connections indicate strong interactions between contemporaneous regional centers, although the particularities of these relationships are still being defined. Furthermore, causeways facilitated the movement of people and goods over the landscape in a region of abundant *bajos*, which was vital for a successful political economy on which Preclassic Maya rulership depended (Freidel and Reilly 2010). By adding a canal that linked the settlement with a broader fluvial network, Preclassic rulers turned El Tintal into a nexus of sociopolitical and economic consequence. Ceramic types from the regions of Tikal, eastern Petén, and Belize, such as Ainil Orange and San Antonio Golden Brown, as well as paste compositions from areas near El Zotz and La Joyanca, indicate El Tintal's Preclassic interactions spread beyond the CKU (Acuña and Alvarado 2022; Bishop 2017).

Following an apparent regional political disintegration at the end of the Preclassic era that contributed to a substantial out-migration, rulership at El Tintal is manifested in the 4<sup>th</sup> century by way of the royal tomb of an *ajaw*. The available evidence is insufficient to understand how the office of rulership transitioned alongside major, regional sociopolitical shifts from the preceding period. A royal tomb sharing characteristics with analogous interments elsewhere in the lowlands bespeaks sociopolitical relationships developed by the ruling group at El Tintal, also evident in the

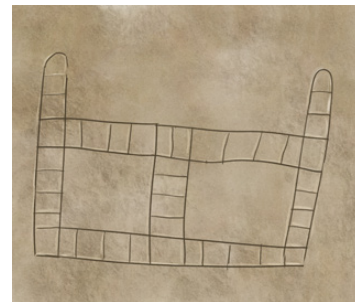


local production of common Tzakol sphere ceramics. Sociopolitical affiliations notwithstanding, it appears that local circumstances, including a probable shortage of labor, prevented whatever political power rulers had from being materialized architecturally. Furthermore, despite regional interactions and shared cultural traditions, local rulers did not adopt the custom of carving stone monuments, in contrast with Classic Period rulership at many other southern lowland centers. This raises questions about the degree of power they held, how they came into positions of power, and whether those practices were associated with Preclassic antecedents. With few exceptions, this was the case at several settlements with important Preclassic occupations on the CKU.

The absence of carved monuments continued into the Late Classic Period and to date, no royal tombs have been found from this era. In comparing the features and layout of the Plaza B complex with palaces elsewhere (Christie 2006; Flannery 1998), architectural evidence suggests that these buildings catered to both government-related activities and residential quarters for the highest ranked group at El Tintal in the Late Classic Period, and possibly earlier given the long history of Plaza B. This architectural complex stands out from other residential units because of its size, integration, and proximity to the ceremonial core. Yet, the material culture, burial patterns (sub-floor crypts), and even sculpture decorations are otherwise analogous to those found in residential units throughout El Tintal.

The pattern that begins to emerge for El Tintal's Late Classic occupation is one of multiple non-royal elite groups engaged in a complex and prosperous economy with a less-apparent, local centralized authority (see Chase 1992; Christie 2006; Demarest et al. 2020:245). Elaborate assemblages of diverse artifacts, including some accessible through long-distance trade, found in residential compounds across the settlement imply these groups enjoyed access to an open, though complex, economic system perhaps facilitated by their privileged social status. As our research advances, there is increasing evidence to suggest the elite population maintained relations with or identified as individuals that used the *Chatahn Winik* title, and tenuously *Sak O' Wahyis*. Studies have shown that these titles were used by elite groups who specialized as scribes and sculptors, particularly in association with codex-style pottery production, monument carving, and esoteric knowledge (García and Velásquez 2016). There is ample evidence linking individuals who used these titles to the Kanu'l regime (García 2011; Velásquez and García 2018), particularly in the region of north-central Petén and southeastern Campeche. Thus, it is doubtfully a coincidence that the revival of El Tintal occurred in the 6<sup>th</sup> century alongside that polity's growing political influence (Martin and Grube 2008:104). Moreover, El Tintal remains a contender for a production center of codex-style pottery (Bishop 2017; Reents-Budet, et al. 2010) and perhaps also the residence of specialized carvers. Despite our improved understanding of the Late Classic occupation, more research is needed to continue elucidating details about the sociopolitical organization and the degree of political centralization.

In conclusion, the evidence to date reveals distinct manifestations of rulership and governance in each period. In the Late Preclassic, the programmatic investment in large-scale construction projects to create an integrated and regionally interconnected settlement indicates the presence of





centralized authority with considerable power, albeit otherwise mostly invisible due to the absence of texts and images. In contrast, during the Early Classic there is supporting evidence for political authority focused on an individual (an *ajaw*), though with seemingly attenuated power ruling a smaller population overcoming hardships. In the Late Classic, the existence of courtly and palatial architecture in the ceremonial precinct suggests the presence of a ruling class, although the increase in non-royal elite residential households and possible secondary, peripheral administrative centers allude to a rather decentralized government. Unfortunately, some major gaps in the timeline prevent a discussion about *how* rulership changed and much remains unknown about its various compositions. Our current understanding of the record recognizes distinct strategies adapted to broader sociopolitical circumstances and that El Tintal held close connections with powerful neighboring settlements throughout most of its occupation, predominantly with El Mirador in the Preclassic and with the Kanu'l regime in the Classic Period.

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“*Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca*” – A New Understanding of the Structure, Composition, and Copyists of Diego de Landa’s *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*

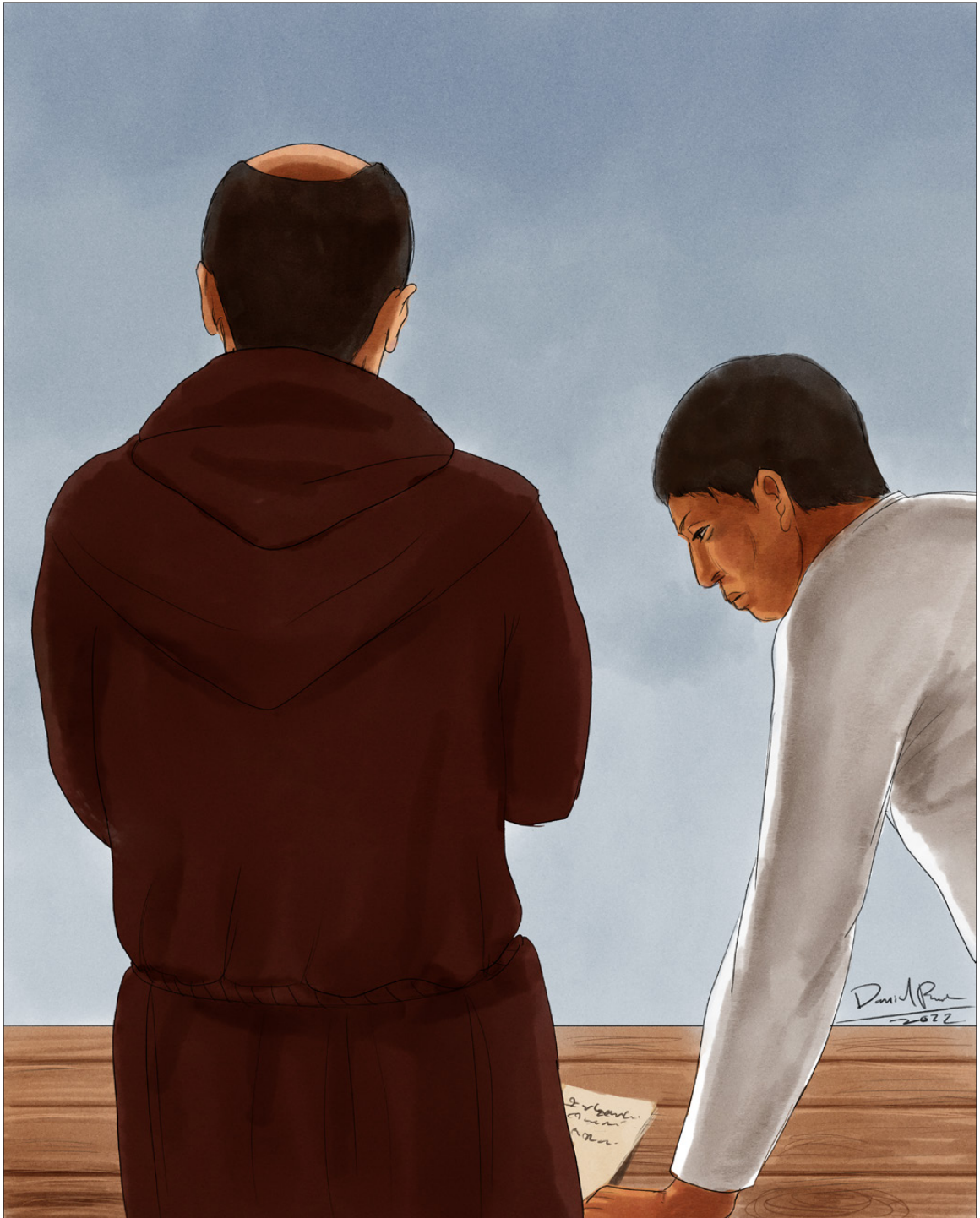
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*Centrally important for our current knowledge of many aspects of Maya culture, the manuscript known as the “Account of the Things of Yucatan” (Relación de las cosas de Yucatán), attributed to the Franciscan friar Fray Diego de Landa, is still shrouded in many mysteries. In terms of understanding the origin, authors, context, creation, copyists, and sources of this “Account” or Relación, many issues remain unresolved. Doubts remain as to its authorship, its strange structure and curious maps and illustrations, as well as who actually composed the Account we know today. In this article, we examine the history of this enigmatic Account and offer evidence to help resolve the matter of the origins of the manuscript, offering information on its copyists, its purpose, and the what, when, who, how, why, and where of its creation.*

Keywords: *Diego de Landa; Relación de las cosas de Yucatán; Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas; Juan López de Velasco; quire marks.*





Fray Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* is arguably the most important primary source for any understanding of contact period Maya culture and religion. Serving both as a "Rosetta Stone" for the decipherment of the phonetic nature of the Maya script, as well as an important eye-witness missionary account of Maya culture and religion, Landa's *Relación* is a crucial source of information on Maya culture. In January 2022, we worked on Landa's *Relación* in Bonn, Germany, as part of the forthcoming critical edition of the manuscript. While going through detailed photos of the manuscript folios, we realized that the current binding of the manuscript is out of order—and consequently, so are all its published versions and translations. The key to this new understanding of the manuscript's composition is based on four complementary analyses: (1) determination of the order of the quire marks<sup>1</sup>; (2) examination of the damage on the edges of the folios; (3) study of the scribal hands; and (4) analyses of internal evidence based on the contents of the manuscript. Based on these analyses, the authors were able to rearrange the manuscript's folios.



The examination of the structure of the manuscript led us to expand the study towards a more comprehensive analysis of its composition and contents, as well as the probable identity of its copyists. These analyses bring together recent studies of copyists' handwriting by John Chuchiak and the dating and physical appearance of the Account by Harri Kettunen (2020). In this article, we offer evidence to help resolve the mystery of the manuscript itself, offering information about its purpose and the *what, when, who, how, why* and *where* of its creation.

### ***What? – What is the Account***

What exactly is the Account? Beyond a doubt, the compilation that we know, and that scholars since the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed to be Fray Diego de Landa's *Relation of the Things of Yucatan*, is not what it seems (see arguments in Restall et al. 2023). It is not an *Account* so much as an extracted copy of notes taken from an original manuscript or manuscripts, or a *Recopilación*, authored by Landa. But what manuscripts or papers did the copyists have access to for their extraction of information from Yucatan?

The title page, copied by one of the scribes from the manuscript held in the archive of the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Council of the Indies, tells us clearly that it was an "Account of the things of Yucatan taken from the writings of the padre fray Diego de Landa of the order of St. Francis." How and when could a scribe or copyist have gained access to Landa's papers in Spain?

The handwriting and paper analysis of the watermarks recently published by Harri Kettunen (2020) reduced the possible period in which this extract or copied notes could have been made from the original manuscript. In his study of the provenience and dating of the watermarks known as the *peregrino* Kettunen (2020:62) reveals that 1574 is the mean date for (and has the highest concentration of) all instances of dated and "provenanced *peregrinos* in the consulted sources." A second "hand with a flower" watermark, dating to between 1561 and 1591, is also found on the paper

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<sup>1</sup>The term "quire" is used in bookbinding to denote a "gathering" or a "section," of "folded sheets gathered together each gathering or section constituting a *quaternion*, from which the name of our word "quire" is derived." See Diehl (1980:14).

of the *Account*, mostly on the blank pages at the beginning and end of the manuscript which appear to be made from paper produced and used in and around Madrid and Toledo during roughly the same period (Kettunen 2020:63). These two instrumental observations indicate that the earliest date that the scribes of the *Account* could have made their notes is during the final three decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

At the top of folio 1r of the *Account* is the Roman numeral date of **MDLXVI** (1566), which the scribe indicates as being the date of the original manuscript from which he took his notes. Clendinnen (2003: 125) suggested that in 1566, “after the committee had entered its judgement, in the quiet of a Spanish monastery, he wrote his *Relación*.” However, this (i.e., writing the *Relación* after the judgment) is not possible as Landa did not receive his “judgment” until 1569. Most scholars have observed that the surviving manuscript was an incomplete text, yet as scholars have recently shown, they otherwise accepted and treated it as a single work produced by Landa in 1566 (Restall et al. 2023). This brings us to the question of when could any paper or manuscript written by Landa have arrived in Spain? And more importantly, when did the scribes make their notes on the *Account*’s late 16<sup>th</sup> century paper?

### ***When? – When did Landa present his writings and when was our Account written?***

The Landa-Toral affair concerning Landa’s alleged illegal usurpation of the inquisitorial jurisdiction of a bishop in his infamous 1562 *auto-da-fé* of Mani created the need for Landa to present information before the Council of the Indies and the Crown (Chuchiak 2005:614-618; Clendinnen 2003:97-100; Restall et al. 2023:22-27). After having received information against Landa, the King issued a royal order on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1564 for Landa and three of his fellow friar-inquisitors to be returned to Spain.<sup>2</sup> Before being recalled in 1564, however, Landa decided in late March 1563 to leave to personally meet “face to face” with King Philip II and give him “an account of the things of this land” (Lizana 1633:folio 66v). Shortly after his arrival in Spain, he traveled to Toledo and then to Madrid where he prepared to present himself to the Council of the Indies and request a personal visitation with the King. He brought with him a massive amount of information: letters, *memoriales*, and other writings which he “submitted to the Council of the Indies” during one of his two audiences before the Council from 1564-1566.<sup>3</sup>

Landa first appeared before the President of the Council of the Indies, Francisco Tello de Sandoval (President from 1564-1567) and his councilors, presenting them with his evidence in late 1564, including a *recopilación* of materials he had compiled and brought with him to justify his actions and to speak to the natives’ idolatries needing remedy. Tello de Sandoval, a royal *visitador* in Mexico who personally had conducted idolatry trials against Zapotecs in Oaxaca in 1543-1544,

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<sup>2</sup> See *Real cédula al alcalde mayor de Yucatán que Fray Diego de Landa, Fray Pedro de Ciudad Rodrigo, Fray Miguel de la Puebla, y Fray Juan Pizarro de la orden de San Francisco sean enviados a estos reinos con la informaciones y autos en contra de ellos*, 26 de febrero, Barcelona, 1564, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 4 folios.

<sup>3</sup> See *Memorial de Fray Diego de Landa al Rey y al Consejo de Indias presentando varias probanzas y documentos para su defensa en el asunto de la idolatría de los indios*, Sin fecha, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B; also see *Catalogo de las consultas del Consejo de Indias*, pp. 366, 624.



was sympathetic, preferring to take no action against Landa. In their decision and accord with the King to remit the case to the Franciscan order, they noted that they had “reviewed the testimonies, information, and other documents and reports presented before us.”<sup>4</sup> Shortly after, on February 13, 1565, the Crown ordered that copies of the materials and documentation be made and sent to the Provincial of the Order.<sup>5</sup>

After this, Landa was ordered to stay close to Court and finally notified of the formal charges against him on March 6, 1565.<sup>6</sup> Landa spent 1565 to 1566 in Toledo and Ocaña compiling even more information, including most probably completing the text or *recopilación* from which the *Account* came and which he no doubt had begun in Yucatan (Restall et al. 2023:325-326). He hinted at this later in 1565, stating that besides what he had already submitted he also had “other papers and *memorias* which if Your Majesty should be served I will submit, and they will greatly help in knowing and inquiring about the truth of these things.”<sup>7</sup> In 1566, Landa reported that while at Court in Madrid he wrote and submitted a longer report to the Council detailing that the Maya were “very evil idolaters” which he argued “can be confirmed in the summary information that I presented before the Council” (see discussion in Restall et al. 2023:394-395).<sup>8</sup>

Landa also personally met twice with King Philip II, once in 1566 (as part of the process of Landa’s trial in the Council of the Indies) and again in 1569, at the request of the monarch who wanted to “consult and communicate with him on several very important matters” (Ayeta 1695, folio 21r). Philip II was undoubtedly in the process of ordering the creation of Inquisition Tribunals in the New World (and he may have consulted with Landa about his eventual exemption of the Indians from the Inquisition’s jurisdiction) on January 25, 1569 (Chuchiak 2012:81). Curiously, Landa’s own exoneration came shortly after in the form of the decision of Fray Antonio de Cordoba, the new Provincial Minister of the Order in the province of Castile, just days after the King created the Inquisition tribunals of the New World.<sup>9</sup>

Based on this timeline, Landa likely presented some or all of the papers at various meetings with the Council of the Indies from 1564-1566. We do have records that Landa submitted materials which amounted to more than 321 folios (more than 642 pages) worth of documentation.<sup>10</sup> It may be possible that the now lost *recopilación*, or some part of it, was submitted to the Council of the

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<sup>4</sup> See *Auto del Consejo de las Indias, por el cual mandan que se remite al Provincial de Castilla el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, Madrid, 30 de enero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 1 folio.

<sup>5</sup> *Cedula de su Majestad para que el Provincial de San Francisco haga justicia en el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, 13 de febrero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 2 folios.

<sup>6</sup> *Cargos hechos contra Fray Diego de Landa por Fray Francisco de Guzmán*, 6 de marzo, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 10 folios.

<sup>7</sup> *Memorial de Fray Diego de Landa sobre su llegado a corte y su negocio con el Consejo de Indias*, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 16 folios.

<sup>8</sup> See *Respuesta de Fray Diego de Landa a los cargos hechos por Fray Francisco Guzmán*, 1566, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B, 2 folios.

<sup>9</sup> *Sentencia del padre Fray Antonio de Córdoba, Ministro Provincial de la Orden de San Francisco de la Provincia de Castilla*, Toledo, 29 de enero, 1569, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009B.

<sup>10</sup> See *Inventario de los papeles que existen en la Escribanía de Cámara del Consejo de Indias y causas que en él tuvieron origen y se fenecieron*, Volumen 1, 1547-1738, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Códices, Libro 1135, folio 136r.

Indies in 1566, the date on the *Account* (Restall et al. 2023:395). But the question remains: who were the scribes, and how and why did they make the copy of the *Account* we have today?<sup>11</sup>

### ***Who, How and Why? – Who were the scribes or copyists, how did they transcribe extracts in the Account, and why did they do it?***

Who would have had access to Landa's papers and a possible *recopilación*? The answer to that question requires a brief description of the secret nature of the Council of the Indies' documentation and the restriction of access to those papers (see Restall et al. 2023:390-404). All papers, memorials and letters submitted to the *Consejo de las Indias* became property of the Crown and held in absolute secrecy. As the Crown ordered, all papers submitted were not to be "returned to the said parties" but were "to remain in the custody of the secretaries" and "shall be kept secret, so as to prevent their being seen or read by anyone not in possession of the secrets of the Council."<sup>12</sup>

Documentation like Landa's *recopilación* was privileged and only seen or transcribed by officials with permission of the Council. Initially only the *Cronistas* and the Secretaries of the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Crown could access or see the documentation. The ordinances required that the secretary of the Chamber of the Council of the Indies keep "a book where they should place the names of those who took papers out of the archive."<sup>13</sup> This book was kept in the *armarios* where the papers of the Indies were archived. The Secretaries had to "take notice which persons were given or had documents handed over to them" so that "they could know which papers are missing, and who has them, and from whom they should ask for them."<sup>14</sup> Luckily the original inventory list for the judicial papers of the period still exists, and it notes on folio 136r that, in the case against Landa, 321 folios of documents existed in the archive.<sup>15</sup>

Although initially very few, outside of the Councilors and the official secretaries, would have had access to the originals, this changed in 1571 when the Crown created the position of *Cronista y Cosmógrafo Mayor*.<sup>16</sup> After 1571, then, the hands who copied from the original would have been those of the *Cronistas* themselves. The secretaries of the *Cámara* were not authorized to copy the notes. Instead, the new law required the *Cronista* to make his own notes and copies by hand and that "all descriptions thus made should be organized, kept and held in total secret without communicating them, nor allowing anyone else to see them, only allowing those whom the Council

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<sup>11</sup> Tozzer believed that it would be "impossible to ascertain the date in which this copy was written." (p. viii), but as argued below this is not the case.

<sup>12</sup> See *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias*, Lib. II, Tit 2, Law 55 (Vol. 1, p. 245).

<sup>13</sup> Ley 90: "Que ay libro donde se asienten los que sacaren del archivo," in *Ordenanzas reales sobre el Consejo de Indias*, Valladolid: Imprenta del Licenciado Varez de Castro, 1603, folio 16v.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, folio 16v.

<sup>15</sup> *Inventario de los papeles que existen en la Escribanía de Cámara del Consejo de Indias y causas que en él tuvieron origen y se fenecieron*, Volumen 1, 1547-1738, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Códices, Libro 1135, folio 136r.

<sup>16</sup> In a *consulta* the Council deliberated and proposed candidates for the two now separated positions. See *Siendo conveniente la separación de los oficios de cosmógrafo y cronista mayor de Indias*, Madrid, 12 de febrero, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N. 209, 2 folios. The King's response in the margins stated "Concerning the position of *cronista*, give it to Antonio de Herrera, giving him the office and stipend of the current holder."

permits by special order to consult them.”<sup>17</sup>

Knowing this, Chuchiak began the painstaking compilation of handwriting samples of the *Cronistas of the Indies*, who were the only people with access to the secret archives and papers that arrived from the Indies. However, even the *Cronistas* often needed special permissions to access specific documents.<sup>18</sup> In sum, the *Cronistas* by law had to extract notes from the official documents and reports and carefully return the originals to the archive. No one besides the secretaries of the Council or the *Cronista Mayor* was allowed access to any of the reports of the Indies, or the letters and *memoriales* of the friars and colonists, as these were essentially state secrets.

After a review of the minutes of the Council of the Indies, the *cedulario* of the royal orders issued during the time period, the lives and work of the first five *cronistas* were reviewed in detail. Out of the first five chroniclers, López de Velasco’s successor served merely a month, a third (Juan Arias de Loyola, 1591-1594) was fired for lack of production after several years; and a fourth (Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz, 1594) served for a little under half a year.<sup>19</sup> Arias de Loyola left behind few written or extracted notes, and for this reason he was eventually terminated in 1594 for not doing his job.<sup>20</sup> After Arias, the Council appointed Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz<sup>21</sup> who was replaced in less than a year after he was sent to Seville to conduct astronomical and other scientific observations.<sup>22</sup>

Having had serious problems with the holders of the dual office of Cosmographer and *Cronista*, the Council of the Indies decided to separate the two positions in February of 1596, only four months after the last holder of the office left the post.<sup>23</sup> The Crown agreed and issued new orders for the post of *Cronista Mayor* which were communicated in March 1596 to the new holder of the office, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas.<sup>24</sup>

After this review – and considering the paleography and dating of most of the handwriting (which appears to date from the period 1560-1630) and the evidence of the watermarks (1561-1595)

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., folio 22r.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the Chronicler Juan López de Velasco needed a special royal order to access and have the entire library and collection of the writings of Fray Bartolome de las Casas brought from the Dominican *Colegio de San Gregorio* in Valladolid to Madrid, where he worked in the Royal Palace. See *Real cédula a Juan López de Velasco, cronista, para que tenga en su poder las obras del obispo de Chiapa que se trajeron de Valladolid*, San Lorenzo, 25 de septiembre, 1579, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 26, folio 178r.

<sup>19</sup> *Real Provisión al licenciado Juan Arias de Loyola, dándole título de cronista de Indias, en lugar de Juan López de Velasco, asignándole 400 ducados de salario*, San Lorenzo, 19 de octubre, 1591, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folios 110v-112r.

<sup>20</sup> *Sobre la conveniencia de denegar la pretensión del licenciado Arias de Loyola, cronista, de que se le pague su salario, no habiendo cumplido con su obligación de escribir la historia*, Madrid, 8 de abril, 1594, AGI, Indiferente General, 742, N.153, 2 folios.

<sup>21</sup> *Real Provisión a Pedro Ambrosio Onderiz, cosmógrafo mayor, dándole título de cronista mayor de Indias y señalándole un salario de 400 ducados*, San Lorenzo, 16 de septiembre, 1594, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folios 217r-218r.

<sup>22</sup> *Carta acordada del Consejo a Diego Ruíz Osorio, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 400 reales a Pedro Ambrosio Orderiz, cosmógrafo y cronista mayor, para gastos de su viaje hasta Sevilla*, Madrid, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folio 225r-225v.

<sup>23</sup> *Consulta del Consejo de Indias sobre la separación de los oficios de cosmógrafo y cronista mayor de Indias*, 12 de febrero, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N.209, 2 folios.

<sup>24</sup> *Consulta del Consejo para informar a Antonio de Herrera de las condiciones puestas por su majestad para hacerle merced del oficio de cronista de Indias*, Madrid, 28 de marzo, 1596, AGI, Indiferente General, 743, N.229BIS, 2 folios.

– it became obvious that only two contenders had potential access to extract material from Landa’s original papers submitted to the Council from 1564-1566. The first was a prolific compiler and extractor of documentation on cosmography, geography, and history – Don Juan López de Velasco (years in office as cosmographer and royal chronicler: 1571-1591) – who appears to have been Scribe A<sup>25</sup> (see Chuchiak’s arguments in Restall et al. 2023:411-413) and a prolific historian – Don Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (arguably Spain’s first professional historian) – who appears to be Scribe B (see Chuchiak’s arguments in Restall et al. 2023:413-417) (see Table 1).<sup>26</sup>

Based on a comprehensive paleographic analysis of the handwriting of the manuscript, in conjunction with recent work on the dating of the watermarks on the paper of the *Account*, this article offers a robust argument for when the *Account* was written, and how many stages and additions were made after the initial copying began as early as 1571. In another forthcoming article we will present more conclusive documentation and evidence to offer definitive proof of the identities of the two major copyists of the Landa Account (Scribe A and Scribe B).

### **Where? – Where did the Scribes extract their notes from Landa’s Account?**

The final question to answer about the composition of the *Account* is where might the two major copyists have consulted the original manuscript and subsequently written their extracted notes? All evidence points to the Royal Palace or *Alcazar* of Madrid, where the Council of the Indies took up residence in the late 1540s and remained until a terrible fire destroyed the Palace in 1734, taking with it a great deal of precious artwork and a considerable amount of the papers, documents, volumes, and original relations of the Council of the Indies (see Castaño Perea 2012:181-183 and Checa 1994:7,17).

In 1571, shortly before naming the first *Crónista Mayor y Cosmografo de las Indias*, King Phillip II ordered “that henceforth the Council of the Indies shall reside together with a president thereof in our capital near our person.”<sup>27</sup> This order ceased the Council’s previous re-locations that

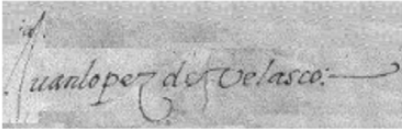
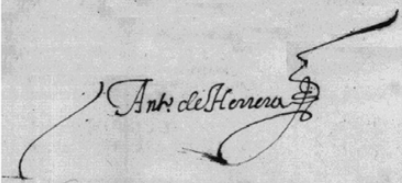
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<sup>25</sup> A comparative analysis of Juan López de Velasco’s handwriting and the script of Scribe A in the *Account* share a majority of their characteristic brush strokes, inclination, curvature and all of the other diagnostic characteristics which mark the individual style of handwriting of a scribe. Even with the subtle variance in the scripts seen in the *Account*, an examination of all examples of a letter within each sample, offers us the underlying structure of a given individual’s handwriting. The systemic similarities between the samples all tend to show the similar characteristics of Scribe A and López de Velasco’s handwriting. A comparison of these letter forms across a three decade period of documents produced by Juan López de Velasco suggests evidence that he was indeed Scribe A in our *Account*.

<sup>26</sup> As argued elsewhere, a paleographic comparative handwriting analysis of the script of Scribe B, compared to the known handwriting of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, also suggests a positive identification of Antonio de Herrera as the identity of Scribe B. Just like in the case of Juan López de Velasco, the systemic similarities between the samples, including the major characteristics of the use and direction of the quill and writing, as well as the relative height of capital and lowercase lettering, all tend to show these characteristics of Antonio de Herrera’s handwriting. A similar comparison of these letter forms across a three-decade period of documents in the varied types of handwriting styles produced by Antonio de Herrera suggests strong evidence that he was indeed Scribe B in our *Account*.

<sup>27</sup> See *Cédula de Felipe II de 29 de septiembre 1571* in Libro II, Título 2 “Del Consejo Real de las Indias,” Ley 1, “Que el Consejo Real de las Indias resida en la Corte y tenga los ministros y oficiales que esta ley declara,” in *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias*, Volume II, fo lios 228-229.

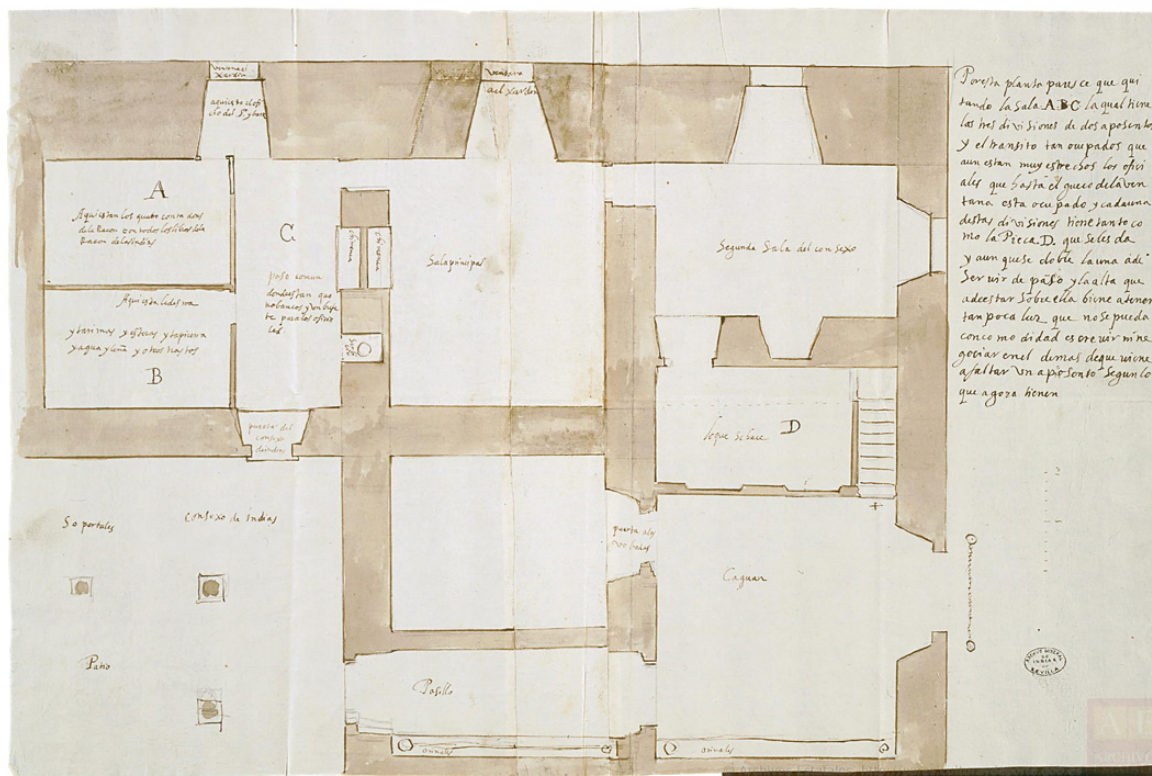


Primary Scribal Hands	Folios in the original MS	“chapters” or “sections” [Themes & overlap with published histories]	Documented date of handwriting (Dates for the watermarks of the paper: 1548-1591)
<p><b>Juan López de Velasco</b></p>  <p>(Cronista Mayor de las Indias, Cosmógrafo de las Indias, 1571-1591) <b>Rapid Transcription Hand</b></p> <p>[Tasked with writing the <i>Historia y Cartografía de las Indias</i>, compiled materials, maps, charts, and geographic studies, but never completed it as he was promoted to Royal Secretary of King Philip II]</p>	1r-17v	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history]	1571-1591
	18r-45r	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion, culture and calendar]	1571-1591
	46r-49v	XLI-XLII [Maya calendar, architecture]	1571-1591
	59r-66v	XLVIII-LII [Natural history]	1571-1591
<p><b>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas</b></p>  <p>(Cronista Mayor de las Indias, 1596-1625) <b>Polished Book Hand</b></p> <p>[Compiled materials on natural history from the Account and Cervantes de Salazar's <i>Cronica</i> for his <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1601)]</p>	50r-58v	XLIII-XLVIII [Natural history]	1596-1601
	55v-56r (paragraph headings)	XLIII-XLVIII [Natural history]	1596-1601

**Table 1**, part 1. Solving the Mystery: Identifying the various Scribal Hands in the *Account*.

Secondary Scribal Hands or Additions	Folios in the original MS		
<p><b>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas</b> (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) <b>Rapid Transcription Hand</b></p> <p>[Corrected earlier transcriptions and re-consulted original to add in unfamiliar Maya terms, names and places for his Volumes of <i>Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del mar Océano que llaman Indias Occidentales</i> (1601-1615)]</p>	3v-4r (13-line inserted passage)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	4v-7r (inserted phrases and names)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	11v (inserted lines)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	11r (6-line inserted passage)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1598-1601
	20v, 21v, 26r (inserted lines)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	26v-45r (inserted names)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	34r-43v (calendrical inserts)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
<p><b>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas</b> (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) <b>Polished Transcription Hand</b></p> <p>[Prepared schematic maps for his <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1601)]</p>	46v, 47r, 48v (drawings with captions)	XLI-XLII [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1599-1625
	67-68 (maps)	[Geography and Cartography]	1596-1601
<p><b>Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas</b> (<i>Cronista Mayor de las Indias</i>) <b>Marginal Note Hand</b></p>	15v-16r, 16r-v (inserted passages)	I-XXIII [Contact/Conquest history-themes <i>Decadas</i> , v. II (1601)]	1596-1625
	23r, 23v, 24r (marginalia)	XXIII-XLI [Maya religion and culture in later <i>Decadas</i> , (1601-1615)]	1596-1625

**Table 1**, part 2. Solving the Mystery: Identifying the various Scribal Hands in the *Account*.



**Figure 1.** Hand drawn plan and map of the Office Suite of the Council of the Indies with the Scribal and Chronicler's offices (Mapa y plano de los aposentos del Consejo de Indias en el Palacio Real, Madrid, 13 de agosto, 1598, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Europa y Africa, 5, 1598)

occurred sporadically under the orders of Charles V. After 1571, the Council and its central offices, archives and the *Cronistas* offices would be located in the Royal Palace of Madrid.

We can pinpoint exactly where the *Account* would have been written based on an illustration. An anonymous drawing of the Royal palace of Madrid (1596-1597) illustrates the place where, earlier, the *Account* would have been extracted by the two copyists who occupied the office of the *Cronista* in the Palace. The next year, in 1598, a fascinating hand-drawn annotated map of the office suite of the council of the Indies indicates where the libraries and writing room existed for the *cronista mayor* and the secretaries (see Figure 1).<sup>28</sup>

It was in this suite of offices that both Scribe A and Scribe B made their extracted copies from the Landa materials archived within the *Escribanía de Cámara* of the Royal palace. Landa's original manuscript must have been placed here after his 1565-1566 *consultas*. Unfortunately, the fact that so many works of art, archives, and documents were destroyed in the great fire on Christmas Eve in 1734 may explain why the original Landa manuscript is no longer extant. Luckily for us, at least

<sup>28</sup> See marginal note in the hand of Antonio de Herrera, *Mapa y plano de los aposentos del Consejo de Indias en el Palacio Real*, Madrid, 13 de agosto, 1598, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Europa y Africa, 5, 1598.

the *Account* and its extracted notes survived the fire and eventually arrived at the Royal Academy of History (Restall et al. 2023:396).

The saga of the *Account* and its creation continued with the final scribes who added minor materials on the document sometime in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century. Final pieces of the puzzle appear to be sporadic additions from the workshop of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Royal Historian Juan de Muñoz, when the manuscript moved from the archives of the *Consejo de las Indias* to the *Real Academia* in 1744, where the Abby Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg found the *Account* over a century later.

### **The copyists' assembling of the *Account*: Internal evidence for the analysis of the manuscript from paper purchases, manuscript production, and preparation of the manuscript for binding.**

An internal look into the copyists' construction of the manuscript we know as the *Account*, and how the copying and eventual binding of the manuscript occurred is useful in order to understand the contents and their original ordering before being bound. Between 1572 and 1578, the royal chronicler and cosmographer of the Indies, Juan López de Velasco, acquired massive quantities of paper for his duties. On several occasions he ordered anywhere from 6-8 *resmas* or reams of paper at a time, each one containing 500 full sheets.<sup>29</sup> These full sheets would then be folded or cut to make books and manuscripts of the sizes 2° (*folio*), 4° (*quarto*), and 8° (*octavo*) (the *Account* was made into an 8° booklet). In 1578 alone, he ordered more than a *balon* of paper for his work, amounting to over 16,000 folio sheets!<sup>30</sup> Most of this paper came from papermakers in Madrid and Toledo, who during these years were using variations on the *peregrino* watermark in their paper manufacture.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, there is evidence that royal chroniclers like López de Velasco prepared and marked many of their manuscripts and booklets for later binding or publication. Our *Account* also has the characteristics of a booklet that was similarly organized and compiled into groupings of folded and sewn sets of folio pages known as “quires.”

In order to properly assemble their manuscripts, scribes used “quire marks” or “signature marks” which often were letters, numbers, or other symbols placed at the bottom of the first page of a quire or bundle of folded sheets.<sup>32</sup> These markings helped book binders assemble the sheets in

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<sup>29</sup> Each time López de Velasco wished to buy paper he had to have a royal order to approve his purchase. For several examples from 1571–1585 see *Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Antonio de Cartagena, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 80 reales a Juan López de Velasco, cosmógrafo y cronista por 4 resmas de papel para imprimir ciertas instrucciones para la observación de eclipses*, Madrid, 27 de agosto, 1580, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 26, folio 214v; and *Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Antonio de Cartagena, su receptor, dándole orden de pago de 12 ducados a Juan López de Velasco, cosmógrafo y cronista mayor, por 6 resmas de papel*, Madrid, 12 de agosto, 1583, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 27, folios 60r-60v. All told he was authorized to purchase more than the equivalent of 16,000 sheets of paper during those years.

<sup>30</sup> A “*balon de papel*” was a crate or package filled with 32 reams made up of 500 sheets of paper each. Equivalent to 16,000 sheets of paper. See *Diccionario de Autoridades*, Tomo I (1726), folio 539.

<sup>31</sup> See Valls i Subirà (1982). For an excellent analysis of similar “*peregrino*” watermarks in another important Mesoamerican document see Batalla Rosado (2010:229–248).

<sup>32</sup> The term “signatures” describes the “small letters and numbers printed at the beginning of each quire or section to enable these to be bound in order.” See Marks (1998:89).





**Table 2.** Evidence of the “quire” letter markings script at the bottom pages of the *Account* (Photos by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

the right order. As in other manuscripts, we see the organizational “quire” letter markings at the bottom of certain pages in the *Account* (see Table 2). A full analysis of these pre-print or pre-binding “letter markers” reveals that either these letters were copied by Scribe A from an original published or pre-publication Landa manuscript, or that he annotated them for his own organization, binding, or possible later publication (Restall & Chuchiak 2002:662).

Quire marks regularly occurring at the bottom of every 8 folios in a properly bound manuscript also allow us to conjecture the original order in which the manuscript of the *Account* was laid out (Restall et al. 2023:413-414). Consequently, we would expect groupings of 8 folios to have been marked on the first facing front “recto” side of a bunching of folios in a proper “quire” notation. The letters marking the *Account* quires were clearly bound out of sequence (lettered quire sections “b” and “c” were bound out of order), and some quire sections contain an irregular number of unmarked pages. A manuscript with the proper markings for a volume labeled alphabetically (a-k) would have had at least 11 quires or 88 folios (176 pages). Our current *Account* has a total of 68 folios (136 pages). This suggests that, based on the regular style of numbering, our present *Account* is missing approximately 20 folios (40 pages) of text.

We can also posit that, in several sections missing obvious intervals of 8 folios (i.e., 16 pages), we may indeed be missing folios from the original extracted notes. This occurs in sections with only 2 or 6 folios between the quire numbers, which would be an irregularity. Furthermore, numerous letters that should have been used to mark “quires” are also missing (the manuscript is missing a section labeled “j” skipping instead to “k”).

This organizational schema also involved marking the ends of specific quires with special offset words, called “catchwords.”<sup>33</sup> Catchwords were composed of the first words of the first line of the following quire and they commonly wrote them in the lower right-hand margin of the last “verso” page of the preceding marked and lettered quire. Although catchwords are not rare, and they do occur throughout numerous pages of the *Account*, they are especially important for unraveling the corresponding sections of folios of specific quires. The use of these catchwords in the case of the end folios of specific sections also helped the binder ensure the correct order of quires in their binding. The indication of the sequence of quires by numbers or letters was introduced in the later 15<sup>th</sup> century, adopting it from medieval manuscript markings. The same scribe who copied the text wrote these signs and symbols to inform the binder of the order in which to join quires (see Table 3 below with examples from the *Account*).

This same ordered structure of manuscript assembly occurs in the *Account* as well. For example, the final folio of the quire labeled by Scribe A as “e” ends on folio 12v with a catchword in the

<sup>33</sup> For an illustrated detailed discussion of the use of signatures and “catchwords” in marking specific quires in manuscripts in the medieval and Renaissance periods, see Shailor (1988:52-55).

<p>Marked Quires and Folios of the Account</p>								
	<p>Folio 5r (Beginning of Quire "e")</p>	<p>Folio 13r (Beginning of Quire "f")</p>	<p>Folio 32r (Beginning of Quire "b") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 40r (Beginning of Quire "c") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 46r (Beginning of Quire "g") Out of order</p>	<p>Folio 50r (Beginning of Quire "h") Apparently marked by Velasco but left blank— Added to by Scribe B</p>	<p>Folio 62r (Beginning of Quire "y")</p>	<p>Folio 66r (Beginning of Quire "k") Apparently last quire marked by Velasco</p>
<p>"Catchword" on last "verso" folio of preceding marked "quire"</p>					<p>No preceding "catchword"</p>			
	<p>(Bottom of folio 4v, ending of Quire "d")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 12v, ending of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 31v, ending of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 39v, ending of Quire "b")</p>		<p>(Bottom of folio 61v, ending of Quire "h") Last part of quire "h" reverts back to Scribe A</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 65v, ending of Quire "y") Last part of quire "h" reverts back to Scribe A</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 66v, Marks end of Quire "k") As well as end of the manuscript written in hand of Scribe A</p>
<p>First word on the first "recto" page of the next marked quire of pages</p>								<p>No connection of this final section with the Maps, probably added later</p>
	<p>(Top of folio 5r, Beginning of Quire "e")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 13r, Beginning of Quire "f")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 32r, Beginning of Quire "b")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 40r, Beginning of Quire "c")</p>	<p>(Bottom of folio 49v, appears to be the final part or ending of Scribe B's work at end of Quire "g")</p>	<p>(Top of folio 62r, Beginning of Quire "y") Return of Scribe A's text</p>	<p>(Top of folio 66r, Beginning of Quire "k") Return of Scribe A's text</p>	

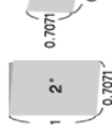
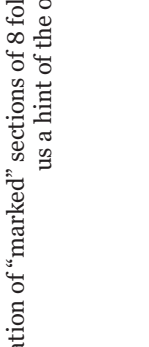
**Table 3.** Example of "quire" letter markings and "catchwords" used by the Copyist (Photos by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

lower right hand of the page: "que no." This "catchword" is repeated and begins the first "recto" folio of the quire that Scribe A labeled as "f" on folio 13r.



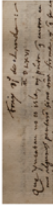


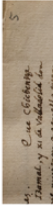

Besides the quire marks, water damage on the folios provides us with an additional indication of the original order of the folios within the manuscript. On folios 17r-27v and 31r-33r we have light color stains at the bottom of the folios, while folio 11 has a darker color stain that looks independent from the other stains. Furthermore, and more importantly to our understanding of the beginning of the *Relación*, folios 13-17 show matching patterns of minor stains along the top edge of the folios.

It is interesting that folios 14 and 15 have disconnected contents, even though the water stains continue throughout. This might have happened after the folios were reorganized or the scribe just copied the contents of folios 14-15 even though they were probably not connected in the original manuscript. This gets us back to the beginning of Landa's surviving *Relación* which does not appear to be folio 1 but, instead, appears to be folio 15 – based on (1) internal evidence (context & contents); (2) the quire marks; and (3) water damage.

Folio 1 has a quire mark <d> which indicates that the copyist later reorganized the notes so that Folio 1 became the start of the compilation. This may be because he was more concerned about geography than the cultures of New Spain. Quire mark <a> is found on the title page of the manuscript, which makes perfect sense. However, when we proceed, we go (out of order) from quire marks <e> and <f> to <b> and <c>, and then to <g> and <h>, and <y> and <k>. To find the starting point of Landa's *Relación* – if it indeed survives – we should backtrack from folio 32r (= quire mark <b>) all the way back to folio 28r (=4 folios). This can be done without a break in contents or noticeable difference in the wear or damage to the folios (see Table 4 for a quire-by-quire analysis of the *Account*).



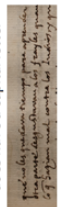
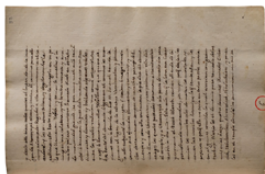

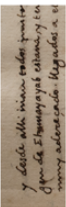
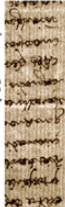
Pagination of "marked" sections of folios of the bound "quires" or groupings of 8-folios pages sewn together (Compilation order of the original Account)—Marked by lowercase letters at bottom of page	Marked folios	Sequence of pages between the "recto" marked pages of the Account and the next section	Sections and Themes of the Account in the folio Spread of the "quires"	Observations
18r-45r, 1r-17v, 46r-68r  Groupings of sheets in an 80 sized book like the Account are marked on a "recto" folio of the first page of a "quire" for binding or printing.  	1r-49v, 58, 63  Watermarks usually occur on the second "recto" folio in a collection of a "quire" in a manuscript bound and ordered evenly for binding or printing.	1r-68r		 "Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "a"
 "Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "a"	Folio Or  Or	Initial "recto" page of the manuscript	Title Page	Sections "b" and "c" are bound out of order

**Table 4.** part 1. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.






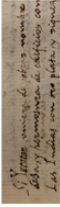
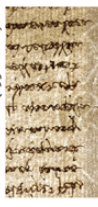
 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “d”</p>	<p>Folio 1r</p>  <p>1r</p>	<p>2 folios later</p>	<p>Sec. 1. Description of Yucatan. Variety of seasons.                  Sec. 2. Etymology of the name of this province. Its situation.                  Sec. 3. Captivity of Gerónimo de Aguilár.                  Sec. 4. Expedition of Cortés to Cozumel.</p> <p>[f. 1r-1v]                  [f. 1v-2r]                  [f. 2r-3r]                  [f. 3v-4v]</p>	<p>Beginning of the manuscript here, but it is out of order</p> <p>Folio 1r starts off with capitalized “Q” and a heading signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p> <p>Themes include the geography and early discovery of Yucatan</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f. 1r: uppermost part of the Peregrino B1 (part of the circle and top part of the hat)</p>
 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “e”</p>	<p>Folio 5r</p>  <p>5r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p>	<p>Folio 5r has an odd space and then starts again with a capitalized “Q” signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p> <p>Themes include the pre-conquest history, and the early Conquest history</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f. 5r: uppermost part of the Peregrino B1 (part of the circle and top part of the hat)</p> <p>Folio 5r has an odd space and then starts again with a capitalized “Q” signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p> <p>Themes include the pre-conquest history, and the early Conquest history</p> <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p> <p>f. 5r: Peregrino A (head, hat, and part of the staff)</p>	

**Table 4, part 2.** Pagination of “marked” sections of 8 folios, or “quires” marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.



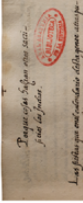


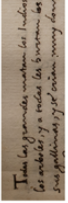
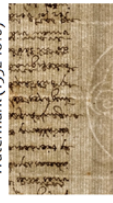
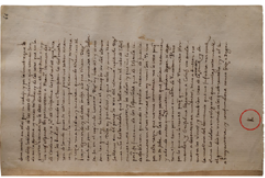

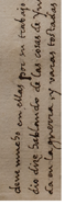


 <p>“Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “4r”</p>	<p>Folio 13r</p>  <p><b>13r</b></p>	<p>16 pages (8 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 18. Vices of the Indians.                  Sec. 19. Arrival of Bishop Toral and release of the imprisoned Indians.                  Sec. 20. Construction of the houses of Yucatan.                  Sec. 21. Food and drink of the Indians of Yucatan.                  Sec. 22. Painting and tattooing of the Indians.                  Sec. 23. Industry, commerce and money.                  Sec. 24. Method of counting of the Yucatecans.                  Sec. 25. Nuptial customs.                  Sec. 26. Method of baptism in Yucatan.                  Sec. 27. Kind of confessions among the Indians.                  Sec. 28. Sacrifices and self-mortifications, both cruel and obscene.                  Sec. 29. Arms and War of the Yucatecans.                  Sec. 30. Penalties/punishments for adulterers, homicides, and thieves.                  Sec. 31. Clothing and ornaments of the Indian women                  Sec. 32. Chastity and education of the Indian women of Yucatan.                  Sec. 33. Funerals. Burials of the priests.                  Sec. 34. Count of the Yucatecan year. Characters of the days.                  Sec. 35. Festivals of the “unlucky” days.                  Sec. 36. Sacrifices for the new year of the character Muluc.                  Sec. 37. Sacrifices for the new year with the sign Ix.                  Sec. 38. Sacrifices of the new year of the letter Cauac.</p>	<p>Folio 13r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter. The start of the section is on 12v and it does have a capital letter</p>  <p>This section, the longest one, begins the missionary work and the basic comparison of their culture with Christian practices (sacrament of matrimony, baptism, confession, death and burial)</p> <p>Mostly even coverage between the themes (1-2 folios per topic)</p>	<p>[f. 13r-14v]                  [f. 14v-15r]                  [f. 15r-16r]                  [f. 16r-16v]                  [f. 17v-18v]                  [f. 18v-19r]                  [f. 18v-19r]                  [f. 19v-20r]                  [f. 20r-21v]                  [f. 21v-22v]                  [f. 22v-23v]                  [f. 23v-24v]                  [f. 24v-25r]                  [f. 25r-25v]                  [f. 27r-27v]                  [f. 28r-29r]                  [f. 29r-30r]                  [f. 30r-30v]                  [f. 30v-31v]                  [f. 31v-32r]</p>
 <p>Quire” or sewn paper section labeled “b”</p>	<p>Folio 32r</p>  <p><b>32r</b></p>	<p>40 pages (20 folios later)                  No markings in-between                  Section of 40 pages out of order with the page/ binding/ printer markings</p>	<p>Sec. 39. The author’s explanation of the various things in the calendar.                  Sec. 40. Months and festivals of the Yucatecan calendar.</p>	<p>Folio 32r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter. The start of the section is on 31v and it does have a capital letter.</p> <p>Section “b” out of order</p>  <p>(Partial) fingerprint of Scribe A on folio 27r</p> <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f.32r: Peregrino B1 (part of the head and hat)</p>	<p>[f. 32r-34r]                  [f. 34r-39v]</p>





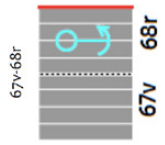



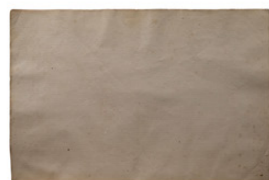

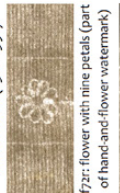
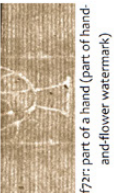
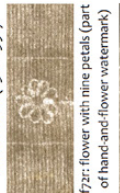
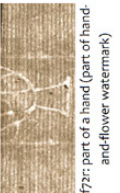
**Table 4**, part 3. Pagination of “marked” sections of 8 folios, or “quires” marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "c"</p>	<p>Folio 40r</p>  <p>40r</p>	<p>16 pages (8 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 40. Months and festivals of the Yucatecan calendar [continued]. Sec. 41. Cycle of the Mayas. Their writings.</p> <p>[f. 40r-43v] [f. 44r-45v]</p>	<p>Section "c" out of order</p> <p>Folio 40r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter.</p> 
 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "g"</p>	<p>46r</p>  <p>46r</p>	<p>12 pages (6 folios later)</p> <p>Folios appear to be missing; irregular jump</p>	<p>Sec. 42. Multitude of buildings in Yucatan.</p> <p>[f. 46r-49v]</p> <p>Note: Only an eye-witness of the buildings could have been able to draw them. The originals from which these were copied would no doubt have been drawn by Landa.</p>	<p>Separate contained section on the buildings and monuments of Yucatan (6 folios of complete coverage)</p> <p>Folio 46r starts off with capitalized "S" (added later) and an initial capitalized "Y" for the heading signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>f.46r: part of the head and hat of Peregrino Bt</p>

**Table 4**, part 4. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "h"</p>	<p>50r</p>  <p>50r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p> <p>Handwriting change to Scribe B</p>	<p>Sec. 43. For what other things the Indians made sacrifices.                  Sec. 44. The soil and its products.                  Sec. 45. The waters and the fishes found in them.                  Sec. 46. How there are serpents and other poisonous animals.                  Sec. 47. Of the bees and their honey and wax.                  Sec. 48. Of the plants, flowers, and trees; of the fruits and other edibles.                  Sec. 49. Of the birds.</p> <p>[f. 50r-51v]                  [f. 51v-53r]                  [f. 53r-55v]                  [f. 55v-56r]                  [f. 56r-60v]                  [f. 61r-61v]</p>	<p>Folio 50r starts off with a chapter heading and a capitalized "L" signifying that it was the start of a chapter</p>  <p>This is the only quire with the handwriting of Scribe B</p>
 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "y"</p>	<p>62r</p>  <p>62r</p>	<p>24 pages (12 folios later)</p> <p>Folios appear to be missing, irregular jump</p>	<p>Sec. 49. Of the birds.                  Sec. 50. Of the larger animals, and of the smaller ones.                  Sec. 51. The author's conclusion and appeal.                  Sec. 52. Criticism and correction of certain statements.</p> <p>[f. 61r-62v]                  [f. 63r-64v]                  [f. 65r-65v]                  [f. 65v-66r]</p>	<p>Folio 62r starts off with Capitalized "T" for the heading signifying that it was initially the start of a chapter</p>  <p>Watermark (1532-1610)</p>  <p>62r: head and hat of Peregrino B2</p>
 <p>Quire" or sewn paper section labeled "k"</p>	<p>66r</p>  <p>66r</p>	<p>8 pages (4 folios later)</p>	<p>Sec. 52. Criticism and correction of certain statements.</p> <p>[f. 66r-66v]</p>	<p>Folio 66r is one of only three marked quire sections that does not start with a capitalized letter.</p> 

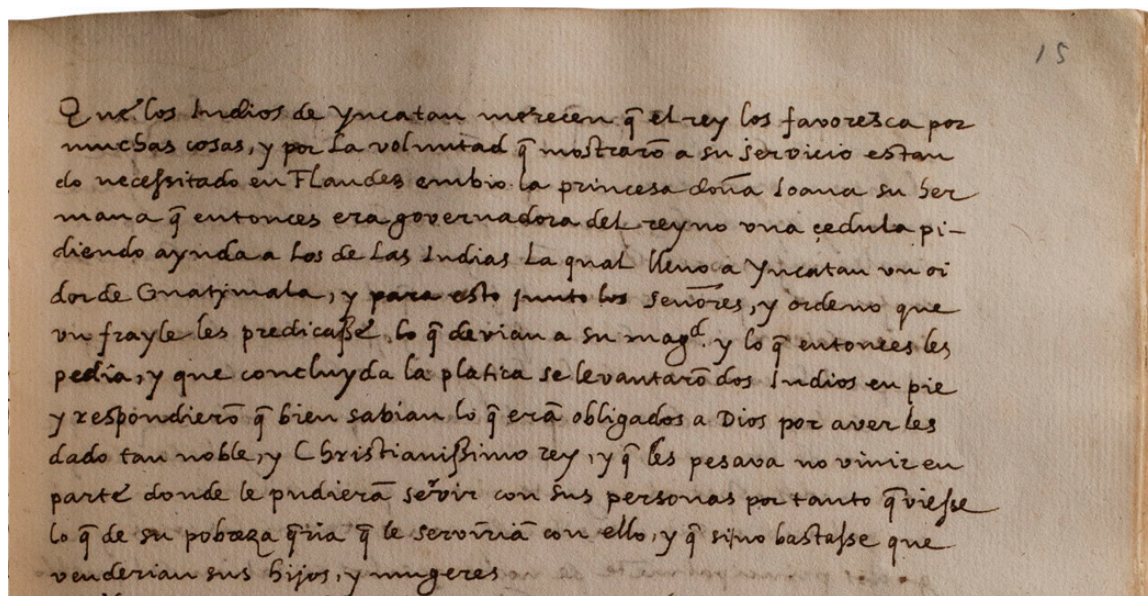
**Table 4**, part 5. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.

	<p>67r</p>  <p>67r</p>	<p>Map 1 (Province of Tabasco) Occupies one page on folio 67r</p>	<p>This map served as the basis for the Cronista Juan López de Velasco's <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1578)</p> 	<p>Map of the coastline and important ports, towns and landmarks of the coasts of the Province of Tabasco</p>
	<p>67v-68r</p>  <p>67v 68r</p>	<p>Map 2 (Province of Yucatan) Occupies two page spread across folio 67v-68r</p>	<p>This map aided Cronista Juan López de Velasco's <i>Descripción de las Indias</i> (1578)</p>  <p>Later copied and re-worked by Antonio de Herrera from notes he wrote on the side of folio 68r for his 1601 Map in <i>Historia General de los hechos de los Castellanos</i></p> 	<p>Map of the coastline and important towns in the Province of Yucatan As expected, there is a partial watermark on folio 68r Watermark (1532-1610) f68r: Peregrino A (torso, head, hat, beard, and the staff) Watermark (1561-1591)</p> 
	<p>69r</p>  <p>69r</p>	<p>8 unmarked pages (4 folios) Mostly blank after the maps</p>	<p>Watermark (1561-1591)</p>  <p>f72r: flower with nine petals (part of hand-and-flower watermark) f72r: part of a hand (part of hand-and-flower watermark) The "hand with a flower" watermark appears on the empty folios at the beginning and end of the manuscript</p> 	<p>Watermark (1561-1591)</p>  <p>f72r: flower with nine petals (part of hand-and-flower watermark) f72r: part of a hand (part of hand-and-flower watermark) The "hand with a flower" watermark appears on the empty folios at the beginning and end of the manuscript</p> 

Note: Watermarks reproduced from Kettunen (2020: 59-60); information on quire markings see Restall and Chuchiak, "A Re-evaluation of the Authenticity."

**Table 4**, part 6. Pagination of "marked" sections of 8 folios, or "quires" marked by the scribes in the *Account* which give us a hint of the original order of the text.





**Figure 2.** Upper section of folio 15r – the most probable starting point of the surviving copy of Landa’s *Relación* based on the “quire” mark organization (Photo by Harri Kettunen, © Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.)

However, folios 27 & 28 do *not* connect in terms of content, or based on wear or damage. Consequently, folio 15r is the best candidate especially based on context and content. Interestingly, however, folio 14v does not connect to folio 15r content-wise either. Furthermore, although folio 15 is followed by an empty folio, folio 15v connects to folio 16r. This means that folio 15 recto (see Figure 2) is our best candidate for the “new” beginning of Landa’s *Relación*, starting (instead of “Yucatan is not an island” on folio 1) with:

*Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca... Or:*  
 “That the Indians of Yucatan deserve that the king favors them...”

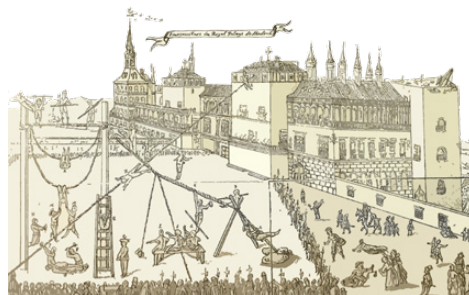
## Conclusions

The manuscript titled *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* attributed to the Franciscan friar Fray Diego de Landa has been an enigmatic work since its rediscovery in Madrid in 1862 by Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg. The many mysteries around the manuscript have been centered around the (1) identity of the author(s) and the copyists of the manuscript; (2) the dating of the only known copy of the manuscript; (3) the missing sections of the original work; and (4) its somewhat odd structure and composition (Clendinnen 1988; Kettunen 2020; Pagden 1975; Restall & Chuchiak 2002; Restall et al. 2023; Tozzer 1941). This study offers new evidence to answer many of these questions by identifying the people and timeline behind the creation of the manuscript – as well as by innovatively documenting its internal structure.

In reality, the “Account of the things of Yucatan” is not really an *Account* but an extracted copy of materials taken from an original manuscript (or even several manuscripts) written by Landa

(Restall & Chuchiak 2002; Restall et al. 2023:390-397). The watermarks on the folios of the only surviving copy of the manuscript point to a date during the final three decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, making this time period the earliest that the *copy* could have been made (Kettunen 2020). As with the *original* manuscript, folio 1r of the *Account* bears the date 1566, which is three years after Landa decided to leave for Spain to personally meet with King Philip II and give him “an account of the things of this land,” i.e., Yucatan (Lizana 1633, folio 66v). Consequently, the date on the *Account* matches the historical records. The first *notes* or *copies* of the manuscript (or sections thereof) were written soon after the original papers were submitted to the Council of the Indies between 1571 and 1591, most likely by Scribe A (Juan López de Velasco), the copyist of a majority of the *Account*. The second copyist, Scribe B, evidently Antonio de Herrera, added his sections between 1596 and 1601. Thus, most of the *Account* was copied and extracted from Landa’s papers between 1571 and 1601.

A later binding of the *Account* saw a reordering of the manuscript, which is evident based on the disordered quire marks in the present-day version of the *Account*. Besides this, the water-damaged folios provide us with additional information on the original order of the folios within the manuscript. These details have led us to conclude that the extant copy of Landa’s manuscript may have originally started on folio 15r rather than folio 1r. Hence the main title of this article, *Que los indios de Yucatán merecen que el rey les favorezca*.



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the *Real Academia de la Historia* in Madrid for their support in studying the Landa manuscript. Special thanks to Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, Feliciano Barrios Pintado, M<sup>a</sup> del Pilar Cuesta Domingo, Asunción Miralles de Imperial y Pasqual del Pobil, Jaime Olmedo Ramos, and Oscar Torre González from the *Real Academia de la Historia* and M<sup>a</sup> Josefa Iglesias Ponce de León from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Furthermore, we wish to thank Bill Ringle and Kathryn Reese-Taylor for their valuable comments and critiques of an earlier version of this article.

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*Real cédula al alcalde mayor de Yucatán que Fray Diego de Landa, Fray Pedro de Ciudad Rodrigo, Fray Miguel de la Puebla, y Fray Juan Pizarro de la orden de San Francisco sean enviados a estos reinos con la informaciones y autos en contra de ellos*, 26 de febrero, Barcelona, 1564, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 4 folios

*Memorial de Fray Diego de Landa sobre su llegado a corte y su negocio con el Consejo de Indias*, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 16 folios

*Auto del Consejo de las Indias, por el cual mandan que se remite al Provincial de Castilla el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, Madrid, 30 de enero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 1 folio

*Cédula de su Majestad para que el Provincial de San Francisco haga justicia en el negocio de Fray Diego de Landa*, 13 de febrero, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 2 folios.

*Cargos hechos contra Fray Diego de Landa por Fray Francisco de Guzmán*, 6 de marzo, 1565, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 10 folios

*Respuesta de Fray Diego de Landa a los cargos hechos por Fray Francisco Guzmán*, 1566, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B, 2 folios

*Sentencia del padre Fray Antonio de Córdoba, Ministro Provincial de la Orden de San Francisco de la Provincia de Castilla*, Toledo, 29 de enero, 1569, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 1009 B

Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Seville, Spain

Indiferente General, 425

*Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Ochoa de Luyando, su secretario, dándole orden de pago de 200 reales para Juan López de Velasco, por un libro que ha hecho trasladar de las cosas de oficio*, Madrid, 15 de septiembre, 1563, AGI, Indiferente General, 425, Libro 24, folio 157r

*Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Ochoa de Luyando, su secretario, dándole orden de pago de 400 reales para Juan López de Velasco por su trabajo de sacar el sumario de las cosas de oficio contenidas en los libros de Indias*, Madrid, 12 de junio, 1564, AGI, Indiferente General, 425, Libro 24, folio 195r.

*Carta acordada del Consejo de Indias a Ochoa de Luyando, su secretario, dándole orden de pago de 40.000 maravedís para Juan López de Velasco por lo que ha trabajado en recapitular las provisiones y cédulas que se ha despachado desde el descubrimiento*, Madrid, 6 de febrero, 1565, AGI, Indiferente General, 425, Libro 24, folio 241v.

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*Real Provisión al licenciado Juan Arias de Loyola, dándole título de cronista de Indias, en lugar de Juan López de Velasco, asignándole 400 ducados de salario*, San Lorenzo, 19 de octubre, 1591, AGI, Indiferente General, 426, Libro 28, folios 110v-112r.

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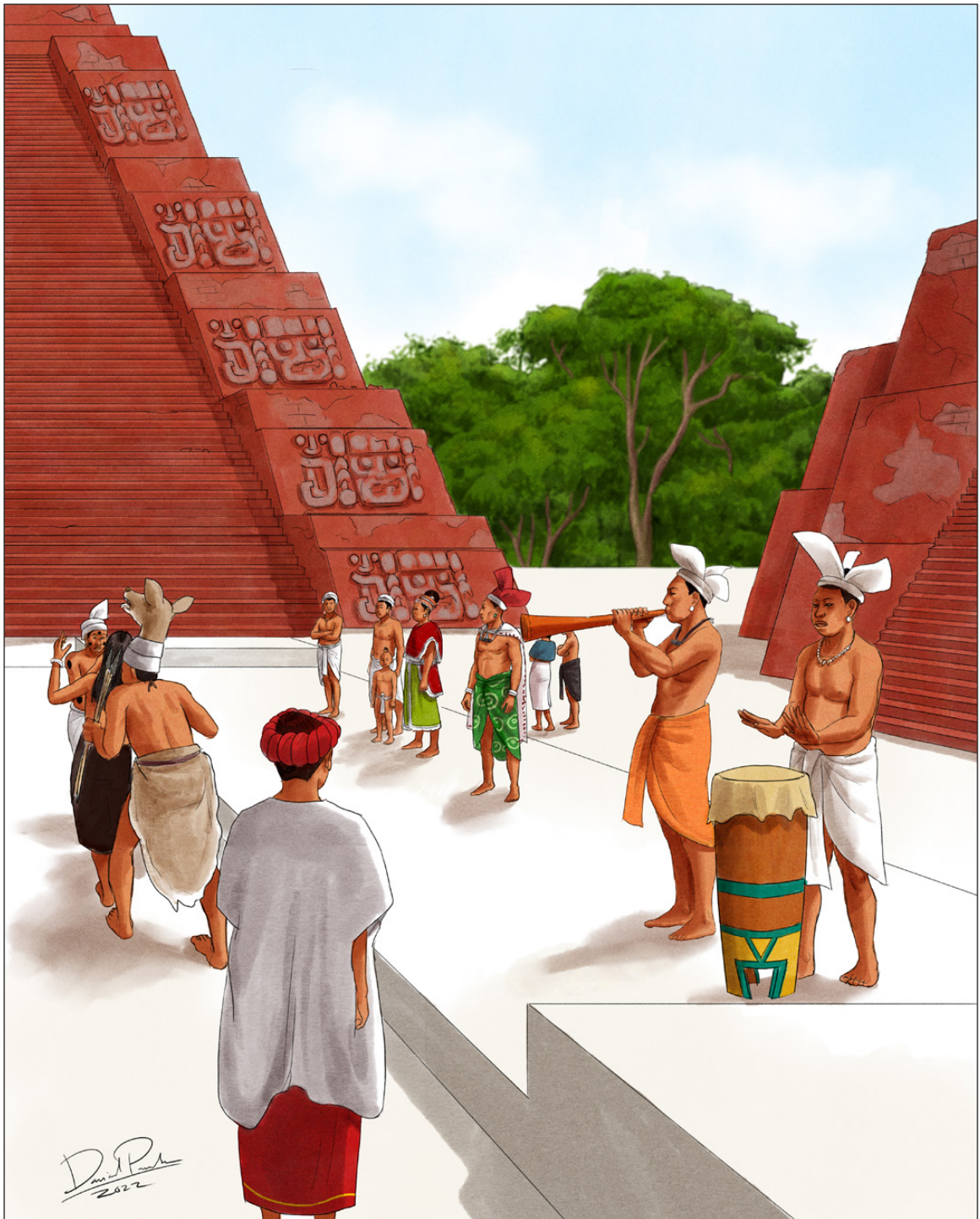
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# Building Ritual Space at Post-Royal Actuncan, Belize

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*The Terminal Classic period in the Maya Lowlands, known colloquially as the Maya collapse, was a period of political fragmentation and social upheaval. At the same time, some local communities, such as at Actuncan in western Belize, were experimenting with new political organizations that were no longer led by Classic period style divine rulers. This transformation produced an ideological crisis because Classic period rulers had positioned themselves as key conduits between the Maya and the gods that controlled the natural cycles. In this article, I report on how the community at Actuncan created a new ritual center within the ruins of an old Preclassic triadic pyramid group as the community built a post-royal political system.*

*Key Words: Terminal Classic, Ritual, Actuncan, Triadic Groups, Architecture*





The Terminal Classic period (A.D. 780–1000), known colloquially as the period of the Maya collapse in the southern Maya Lowlands, was a complex time of political fragmentation, social disruption, economic isolation, and substantial emigration. Recent research has provided increasingly fine-grain data on both elite and commoner behavior during this era and shows that the collapse was a complex, multi-century process that impacted communities differentially (Aimers 2007; Demarest et al. 2004; Iannone et al. 2016; Lamoureux-St-Hilaire et al. 2015). While the ultimate outcome of this collapse was the rejection of the Classic institution of divine rulership, individual political communities reached that outcome in distinct fashions as they experimented with social and political forms (Chase and Chase 2006; Okoshi et al. 2021).

During this period, the communities of the lower Mopan River valley of modern-day Belize adopted diverse political arrangements as they grappled with shifting political ideologies (Figure

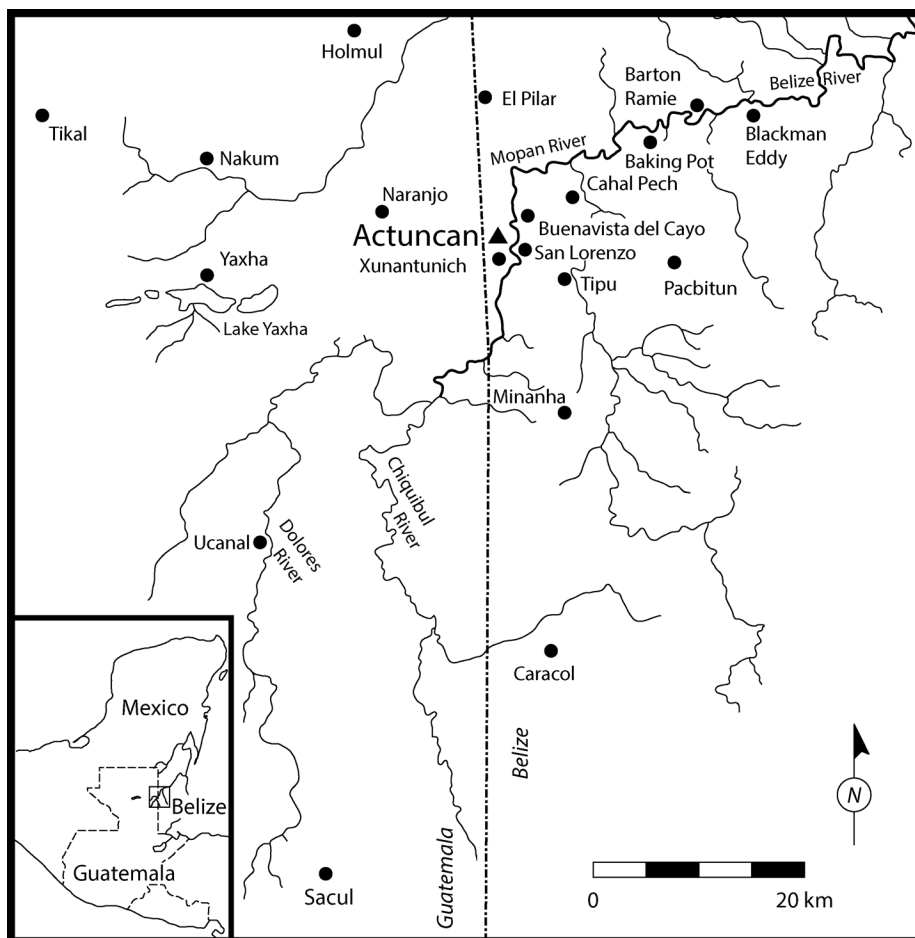


1). The region's Late Classic (A.D. 600–780) capital of Xunantunich clung to the Classic period ideology of divine rulership, even as its rulers' authority contracted (Ashmore et al. 2004; Helmke et al. 2010; LeCount et al. 2002; LeCount and Yaeger 2010; Yaeger 2008). Nearby Buenavista del Cayo, once within the Xunantunich polity, revived its claim to royal authority by burying a king in royal style (Helmke et al. 2008). In contrast, the occupants of Actuncan, located between the previous two sites, rejected divine rulership and the entanglement of politics and cosmology, instead building a new collective form of governance (Mixer 2016, 2017a). This paper explores how the Terminal Classic people of Actuncan built a new ritual

space within Plaza A, the Late-to-Terminal Preclassic triadic pyramid group. This new space facilitated the ritual needs of a community adopting a political ideology that disentangled apical leaders from their divine role as supernatural interlocutors. In previous publications I have argued for the roles of the manipulation of communal memory, the intentional political messaging embedded in the reorganization of Actuncan's site layout, and the careful ritual resignification of select public buildings during establishment of the new Terminal Classic political order (Mixer 2017b, 2020; Simova et al. 2015). In this article, I build on that work by providing new details about the community's renovations and reuse of Actuncan's triadic group. I relate these actions to the cosmological significance of triadic groups and ruins specific to the Maya to explain the function of this space for Actuncan's Terminal Classic community.

## **Actuncan in the Terminal Classic Period: New Ritual Space on Flower Mountain**

Settled by 1000 B.C., the site of Actuncan thrived as a Late and Terminal Preclassic capital (400 B.C.–A.D. 250). During its apogee, the city was laid out around at least six broad plazas surrounded by temples, administrative buildings, and elite residences (Figure 2). The site was subdivided in two sections, Actuncan North and Actuncan South, separated by a broad plastered causeway, or *sacbe*, and a ravine. By A.D. 450, Actuncan was superseded as the local capital, first by Buenavista del Cayo and then by Xunantunich. As Xunantunich's authority waned in the Terminal Classic period, the people of Actuncan partially dismantled and ritually terminated the Classic period palace of a noble vassal of Xunantunich (LeCount and Lawhon 2020; Mixer et al. 2013), tore facing



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of Actuncan in the context of the lower Mopan River valley.

stones from most of Actuncan North’s Preclassic civic architecture (Mixer 2020), and built a broad platform in Actuncan North to anchor a new and more collective form of governance (Mixer 2016, 2017a).

As community members were building this new civic infrastructure in Actuncan North, they turned their attention to Actuncan South (Figure 3)—a monumental triadic pyramid group whose Structures 1, 2, 3, and 4 form the tallest architectural complex at Actuncan, rising 27 m above the surface of Plaza A. Along with Structures 5 and 6—located on the east and west sides of Plaza A—these buildings were constructed on a 4 m tall basal platform accessed from the site’s central *sacbe* by a broad staircase to the north. Collectively, these six structures form a nested arrangement of triadic structures similar to those constructed across the Maya Lowlands in the Late Preclassic period (Hansen 1998).

While Actuncan South was likely originally constructed as the primary locus of ritual for

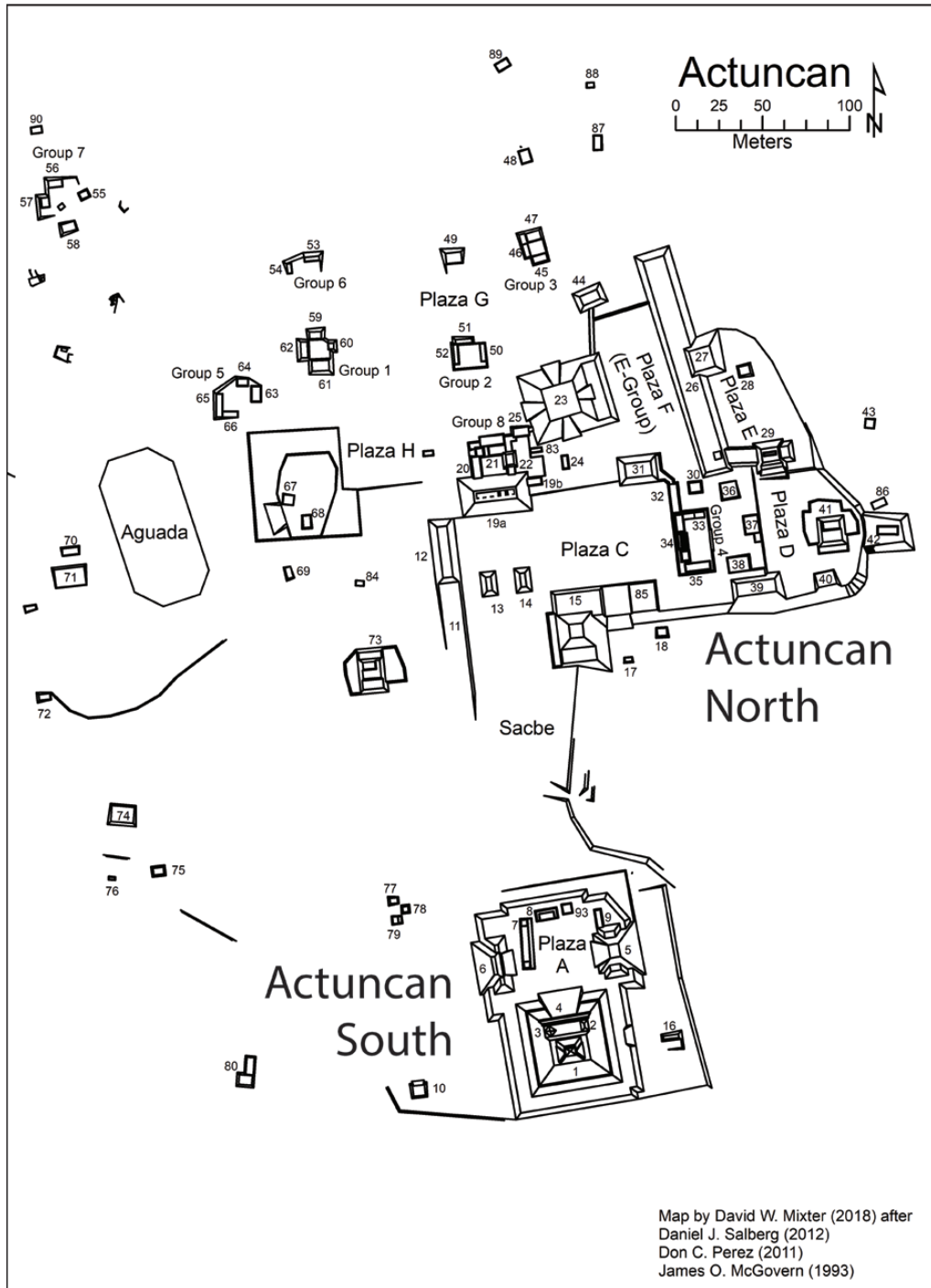
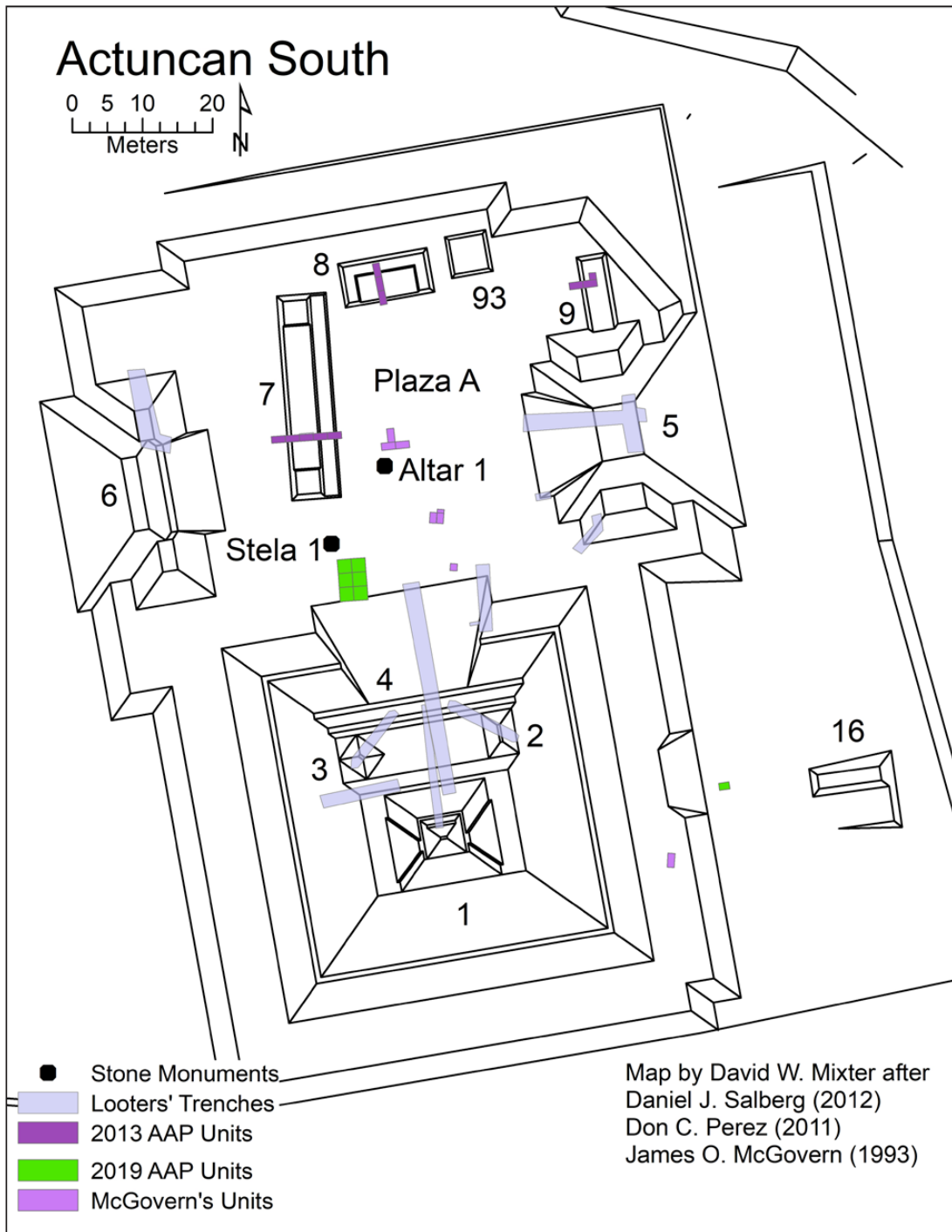


Figure 2. Map of Actuncan.



**Figure 3.** Maps of Actuncan South showing the location of past excavations.



Actuncan's Preclassic rulers, the group's layout referenced concepts that remained relevant to the site's Terminal Classic occupants. Drawing on ancient Maya cosmology, triadic temple groups are often associated with places of origin because they are reminiscent of the three stone arrangement of Maya hearths (Freidel et al. 1993; Hansen 1998:80; Taube 1998). The three-hearthstone place is understood to be the location of creation in Maya cosmology. Recently, Szymański (2014) has argued that triadic groups may also be representative of flower mountain, a lush place conceived as the source of sustenance and the resurrection of the Maize God (following Saturno et al. 2005; Taube 2004). In this interpretation, triadic groups could be the focus of celebrations that connected royal power to the agricultural cycles through reenactments of the rebirth of the Maize God. Similarly, Halperin (2014), drawing on ethnography and the iconography of triadic groups, has argued that abandoned temple-pyramids such as Cerro Mo' at Tayasal were seen as flower mountains—likely with a particular emphasis on the wilderness aspect of these primordial places—and ancestral places. In Halperin's (2014) example, the ancestors inhabiting the effigy mountain were nonspecific. It is likely that each of these meanings were at play in the Terminal Classic understanding of Actuncan, even if the specific political importance of the structure during the Late and Terminal Preclassic periods did not endure (Mixer 2017b).

Approximately 400 years after the end of Actuncan's time as a royal capital, the Terminal Classic community renewed Actuncan South as a space to fit the cosmologically loaded ritual needs of the post-royal community. Because Actuncan was continually occupied from the Preclassic through the Terminal Classic period, community members would have seen and likely passed through Actuncan South during those four centuries. Actuncan South was not a forgotten place. Rather, it had genealogical salience to the local community (Mixer 2017b). Furthermore, I have argued that the physical distance between Actuncan North and South allowed for the creation of separate civic and ritual zones, physically separating the responsibilities previously unified under divine rulers (Mixer 2020). Additionally, the chronological gap in use may have kept Actuncan South safe from the recent negative associations with divine rulership (Mixer 2017b).

In the section that follows, I detail how the architectural transformations that took place within Actuncan South in the Terminal Classic period demonstrate that it was reinterpreted both through transcendent Maya cosmological understandings and the context of specifically Classic period cultural practices.

### *A Terminal Classic Ritual Place*

Our understanding of Actuncan South's Terminal Classic revitalization comes from two sources. First, during the 1990s, McGovern (2004) inspected and mapped the looters' trenches in the triadic group and excavated test pits into Plaza A for a volumetric analysis of the architecture. Through collection of ceramics from the looters' trench profiles, he determined that Actuncan South was largely built during the Late and Terminal Preclassic periods into the Early Classic period (A.D. 250-600). Second, the Actuncan Archaeological Project has undertaken excavations and inspected new looters' trenches within the group since 2013 (Mixer 2019; Mixer and Ferrara 2020; Mixer and Langlie 2014). A radiocarbon date indicates that the last major construction phase of Structure 4, the triadic group's large central structure, occurred A.D. 235-380 (20

calibrated range; UCIAMS-261344). Actuncan South then seems to have been left alone until activity resumed during the Terminal Classic period, as indicated by both radiocarbon and ceramics. One radiocarbon date (A.D. 680-995; 2 $\sigma$  calibrated range; AA-31355; LeCount et al. 2002) comes from a large, burned deposit of Terminal Classic ceramics on the summit of Structure 5 (described below), while a second date (A.D. 725-885; 2 $\sigma$  calibrated range; UCIAMS-261345) comes from a tread of the Structure 4 staircase, pointing to renewed activity and possibly renewed construction. These dates are associated with Terminal Classic ceramic diagnostics, which LeCount et al. (2002) argue emerged around A.D. 780.

McGovern (1994:112–113, 2004:159) identified conclusive evidence of Terminal Classic ritual reuse of Actuncan South. He found a dense deposit of burned Terminal Classic ceramics in a masonry room at the summit of Structure 5, the eastern structure of the triadic complex:

A .6 to .75 m. thick layer of [...] burnt Late Classic II and Terminal Classic sherds, broken but complete bowls, dishes, and vases, and charcoal resting on the floor and stairs [...] They were obviously smashed and burnt in situ in what can only be considered a termination ritual. (McGovern 1994:112–113)

The remarkable depth of the deposit on Structure 5 suggests it was likely produced through multiple events rather than a single conflagration. Similar deposits relating to post-royal activity have been identified across the Maya Lowlands (Braswell et al. 2004; Chase and Chase 2004; Navarro-Farr et al. 2008; Stanton et al. 2008). McGovern's (1994:110) clearing of the looters' trench on the summit of Structure 4 provides additional evidence for the Terminal Classic reuse of Actuncan's monumental architecture in the form of a smashed Terminal Classic plate and 12 lithic eccentrics in nearby postholes. Additionally, Mixer and Ferrara (2020) recovered ceramics at the foot of Structure 4's basal staircase near the Terminal Classic radiocarbon date described above (analysis is pending).

### *A Terminal Classic Constructed Place*

Actuncan's triadic group was the site of renewed construction in the Terminal Classic period. Four new buildings, Structures 7, 8, 9, and 93, were built in Plaza A at this time. Their construction blocked access to Plaza A, disrupted the group's Terminal Preclassic symmetry, and created a new ceremonial space reflecting a Classic rather than Preclassic spatial logic. The placement of these buildings shifted focus from the largest Preclassic pyramid, Structure 1 located to the south, to Structure 5, Actuncan South's eastern pyramid. I argue that this shift in orientation reflects the locally salient association between the east and the burial of ancestors that likely was not a major ordering principle for the construction of triadic groups in the Preclassic period when Actuncan South was originally built. During the 2013 field season, narrow trenches were placed across Structures 7, 8, and 9 to determine their layout, date of construction, and function (Mixer and Langlie 2014). Analysis of ceramics from all contexts were used to assign Terminal Classic construction dates to all these buildings following the established ceramic chronology for the region (Gifford 1976; LeCount 1996; LeCount et al. 2002). Structure 93, located between Structures 8 and 9, was first mapped during the 2013 field season, but has not been excavated, and is assumed to be

contemporaneous because it also disrupts the original form of Plaza A.

The following sections detail Structures 7, 8, and 9 based on observations made during mapping and excavations within Plaza A. Additionally, primary artifact deposits from Structures 8 and 9 are described in detail. I have interpreted these buildings and the new space they created as primarily ritual in function based on their location within a Preclassic temple group and the massive contemporaneous ritual deposit on the summit of Structure 5. Additionally, artifact densities and patterns were used to rule out other possible functions (following work from Tidwell 2020). The vast majority of artifacts recovered from Structures 7, 8, and 9 were broken ceramics sherds and lithic debris accompanied a very small number of freshwater jute snail shells (*Pachychilus* sp.), obsidian fragments, groundstone objects, and slate objects. Based on Tidwell's analysis, these contexts were unremarkable in their ceramic density, neither showing the high densities expected in domestic contexts nor the low densities found in non-ritual administrative contexts at Actuncan, such as Actuncan's contemporaneous Terminal Classic civic center (Mendelsohn and Keller 2011; Mixter 2016). Densities of lithics were among the lowest found anywhere at the site, indicating an absence of economic activities. Other artifact classes were recovered in small enough numbers that density figures may not be reliable; however, it is notable that no daub fragments were recovered from these excavations as is typical where platforms supported domestic superstructures. These findings combined with the clear evidence for ritual activity on Structure 5 and 8, as well as the performative setting created by these building, point to a primary ritual function for these Terminal Classic buildings.

*Structure 7.* Built in three construction phases, Structure 7 is a long and low structure located in the western portion of Plaza A that blocks the front of Structure 6, the triadic group's western pyramid. It was composed of two raised square platforms measuring 3.4 m by 3.4 m connected by a 28 m long lower linear platform. Structure 7 is not wide enough in its earlier phases to have held a superstructure. Rather, the building could have served as a venue for numerous performers to spread out across a broad space with Structure 6 as a dramatic backdrop (Figure 4). Alternatively, the building could have been a location where local dignitaries sat, framed by Structure 6 to observe performances happening in Plaza A on or in front of Structure 5. Each subsequent version of Structure 7 expanded the performance space, allowing for larger performances.

To understand Structure 7's construction, a single 1x10 m trench was placed south of the structure's centerline (Figures 3 and 5). Structure 7-3<sup>rd</sup>, the earliest version of of the building, was built on a well-polished plaster floor likely built in the Late Classic period over an Early Classic fill layer (likely reflecting the initial renewal of Plaza A). Structure 7-3<sup>rd</sup> was a 2.4 m wide platform about 30 cm in height. It was built of cut limestone block facings and covered by a plaster floor that may have been built in the Late Classic II period (A.D. 670 to 780).

Sometime before the construction of Structure 7-2<sup>nd</sup>, the plaza floor between Structures 7 and 6 was raised approximately 15 cm. Although largely eroded, the construction of this plaster floor meant that all future versions of Structure 7 were taller to the east than the west. Structure 7-2<sup>nd</sup> was a 2.9 m wide platform constructed through a minor modification to Structure 7-3<sup>rd</sup>. The western side of the structure was extended 50 cm further west with the construction of a new exterior platform face.





**Figure 4.** Photograph facing west of Structure 7-1<sup>st</sup> during excavation. Note Structure 6 in the background, which would have served as a backdrop to activities taking place on Structure 7 during the Terminal Classic period.

Structure 7-1<sup>st</sup> was a 4.3 m wide, 50 cm high platform with a lower 2.3 m wide, 25 cm high terrace extending from its eastern face (Figure 4). This was built by adding additional courses of thin, horizontally placed cut stones on the earlier eastern platform face to raise its height to 50 cm. A new stacked stone western platform face was built in the raised portion of Plaza A between Structures 7 and 6, while the eastern face of the terrace was formed by a row of thin cut limestone blocks placed on their ends so that the wide edge formed the terrace riser. Plaster surfaces covered both the terrace and platform. The addition of this low terrace created a dual-level platform with each level rising 25 cm in height.

All three of Structure 7's construction phases date to the Terminal Classic period. These data indicate that the Terminal Classic Actuncan community was able to marshal labor on multiple occasions to expand and refurbish both ritual and civic structures, implying that the site's Terminal Classic occupation was not short-lived. As the platform widened, it could have accommodated a larger number of performers or observers, while the addition of the terrace would have provided additional space for multiple levels of individuals, increasing possibilities for performative drama. Importantly, as a broad space, the building does not provide a space to elevate a single primary individual. Rather, people on Structure 7's 28 m length would have been at two visual levels. The



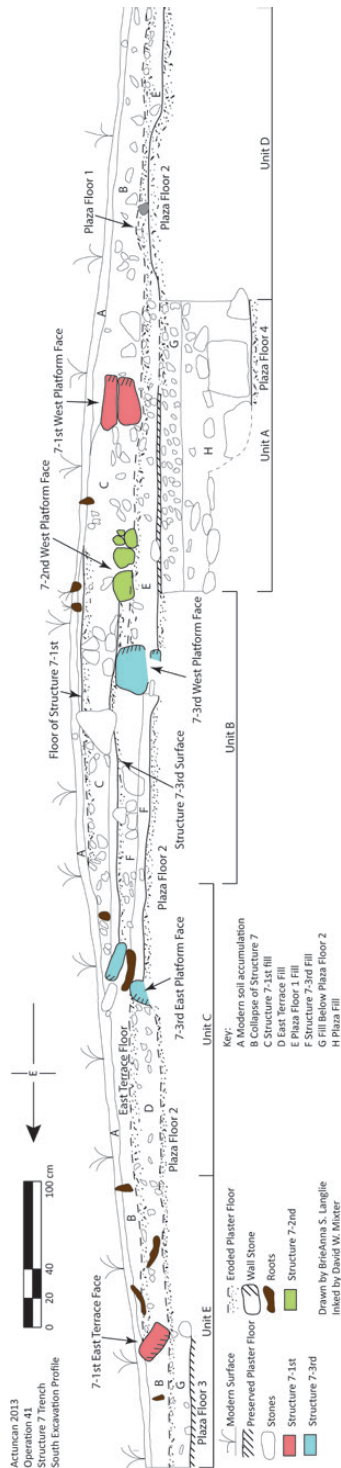


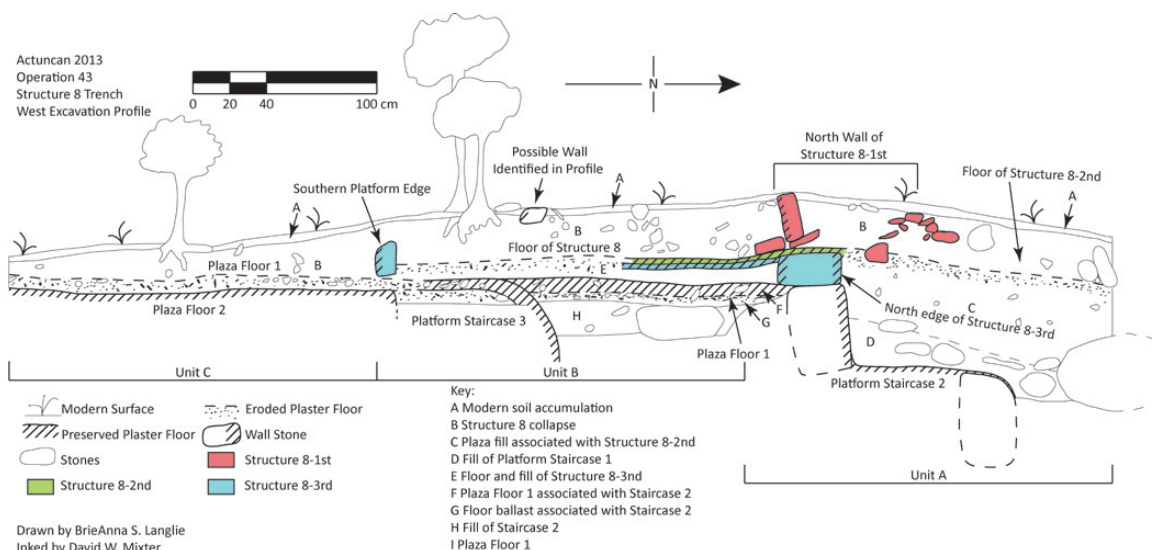
Figure 5. Excavation profile showing the construction phases of Actuncan Structure 7.

building's length and location also fundamentally reoriented the Preclassic layout of Plaza A. The construction of Structure 7 shifted the center of the plaza east towards Structure 5, emphasizing the group's east-west axis, and away from the looming Structure 4, by far the group's tallest building.

*Structure 8.* Structure 8 is a low rectangular mound centered on the northern margin of Plaza A. This structure blocks the monumental staircase that served as a point of entry to Plaza A from the *sacbe*, creating a threshold building at the top of a previously unimpeded staircase. This kind of building is quite common in the Classic period at the entrance to monumental platforms, but less common in the Preclassic period. A single 1x6 m wide trench was placed to determine the construction sequence and purpose of Structure 8 (Figures 3 and 6). Structure 8 was built in three phases all in the Terminal Classic period, first as a gradually widening platform and then as small structure with a C-shaped wall that was open to the south.

The earliest version, Structure 8-3<sup>rd</sup>, was a 2.5 m wide plastered platform measuring 20–30 cm in height that was built on the top step of the Early Classic staircase up to Plaza A. The north platform edge sits on the top step of that earlier platform, requiring people to step up and over Structure 8 to gain access to Plaza A. This construction would have restricted access, likely requiring community members to step through a perishable superstructure to access the plaza. The platform faces were built of cut limestone blocks. The northern face was built of a single course of large blocks set flat, while the southern face was built of a single course of thinner stones set on their ends. These upright stones were used as the southern face of the building in each further renovation.

Structure 8-2<sup>nd</sup> was constructed at the same time as a new primary staircase was built on the north edge of Actuncan South, replacing the old Early Classic staircase and moderately expanding the size of the platform under the entire group. The stairway expansion represents the largest known Terminal Classic construction event



**Figure 6.** Excavation profile showing the construction phases of Actuncan Structure 8.

in Actuncan South. Built on top of this staircase renovation, Structure 8-2<sup>nd</sup> is an expansion of Structure 8-3<sup>rd</sup> to the north. It was at least 4 m wide at perhaps continued to the top step of the terminal staircase; however, the north platform face lies outside our trench and was not identified.

Structure 8-1<sup>st</sup> was a C-shaped structure built on the Structure 8-2<sup>nd</sup> platform. A line of vertically set limestone slabs, visible on the modern surface, identified the building's north and side wall. These vertical stones appear to have formed the inner line of a 35 cm tall double-faced masonry wall that served as a footing to secure the poles of a perishable superstructure (Figure 7). A central door in the north wall is evident from a break in the upright stones, and two additional flanking doors may have been blocked in antiquity. The building did not have southern wall and instead was open to Plaza A, with only the 20–30 cm eastern platform edge separating the building from the plaza.

It is possible that one final renovation added a raised interior space approximately 35 cm tall within Structure 8. Several stacked stones were identified in the eastern profile that may form the southern face of this raised area; however, this area is heavily disturbed by bioturbation, so this interpretation is tentative.

In summary, Structure 8-1<sup>st</sup> was likely a perishable structure with C-shaped walls that was open to the south. The building and its northern wall restricted access to Plaza A from the staircase and limited the visibility of activities happening in Plaza A to those approaching from the north. It also created a formal entrance into the plaza space. The open south side of Structure 8-1<sup>st</sup> would have allowed free interactions from its interior to Plaza A. Notably, buildings with C-shaped walls become more common in the Terminal Classic period and appear to be the antecedent of the C-shaped open halls (Proskouriakoff 1962) that are common in the Northern Lowlands and Petén Lakes region during the Postclassic period. As such, Structure 7 may provide some evidence of Actuncan's



**Figure 7.** Photograph of Structure 8-1<sup>st</sup> facing south into Plaza A. Note the double-faced wall that formed Structure 8-1<sup>st</sup>'s northern edge.

participation in broader Terminal Classic post-royal networks.

The final events surrounding Structure 8 appear to have been ritual. Along the southern edge of the building platform, a collection of broken Terminal Classic ceramics was uncovered along with a quarter of a jade bead and two groundstone objects resting directly on the step recorded as Feature 43-1 (Figure 8; see also Mixer 2017b:286–288; Simova et al. 2015:201–202). This dense collection appears to be an isolated deposit and could either represent a midden from some event that took place in Plaza A or vessels that had been stored in the western portion of Structure 8 at the time of abandonment. At a minimum, the ceramic materials included fragments of an imitation Fine Orange vase, at least two large partially reconstructible McRae Impressed dishes, a Pedregal Modeled censer, 16 Mount Maloney Black incurving bowls, and 29 large unslipped Cayo group jars with flared or piecrust lips diagnostic to the Terminal Classic period. Based on their location within the open-sided Structure 8, this deposit would have been visible to individuals gathered in the plaza. As

such, my colleagues and I (Simova et al. 2015:201–202) have previously argued that these objects represented a public display visible to the broader community. Whether these objects were in storage in anticipation of future events or were intentionally broken in place, as the partial jade bead might suggest, their visibility indicates they were associated with inclusive rituals and gatherings that occurred in Plaza A.

*Structure 9.* Structure 9 is a low, linear platform attached to the southern edge of Structure 5, measuring 10 m in length and 60 cm in height, and is the most enigmatic of the Terminal Classic structures in Plaza A. Initially, a 1x4 m trench was placed to penetrate Structure 9 from the west (Figures 3 and 9). A 1x1 m unit was added to the north to fully uncover Feature 45-1, a cached



vessel described below. Excavations revealed a single construction phase built of large, piled river cobbles, similar to the construction of Actuncan North. Because of crude construction methods and extensive bioturbation on the platform's surface, the boundaries of Structure 9 proved difficult to define. The platform surface that likely topped this structure is now fully eroded. Excavations did not uncover a clear western platform wall. Either the façade was stripped of its cut-limestone block facing stones in antiquity, or the platform face was constructed of river cobbles piled so that their naturally flattened sides faced outward. Structure 9 was constructed on top of a well-preserved polished plaster floor that formed the terminal surface of Plaza A. Ceramics recovered from Structure 9 indicate that it was likely constructed in the Late or Terminal Classic, with continued occupation through the Terminal Classic period; however, the dry-laid fill and unpreserved surface make this chronological attribution only tentative. The construction of Structure 9, when paired with Structures 93 and 7, drew the focus to the patio's northeast.

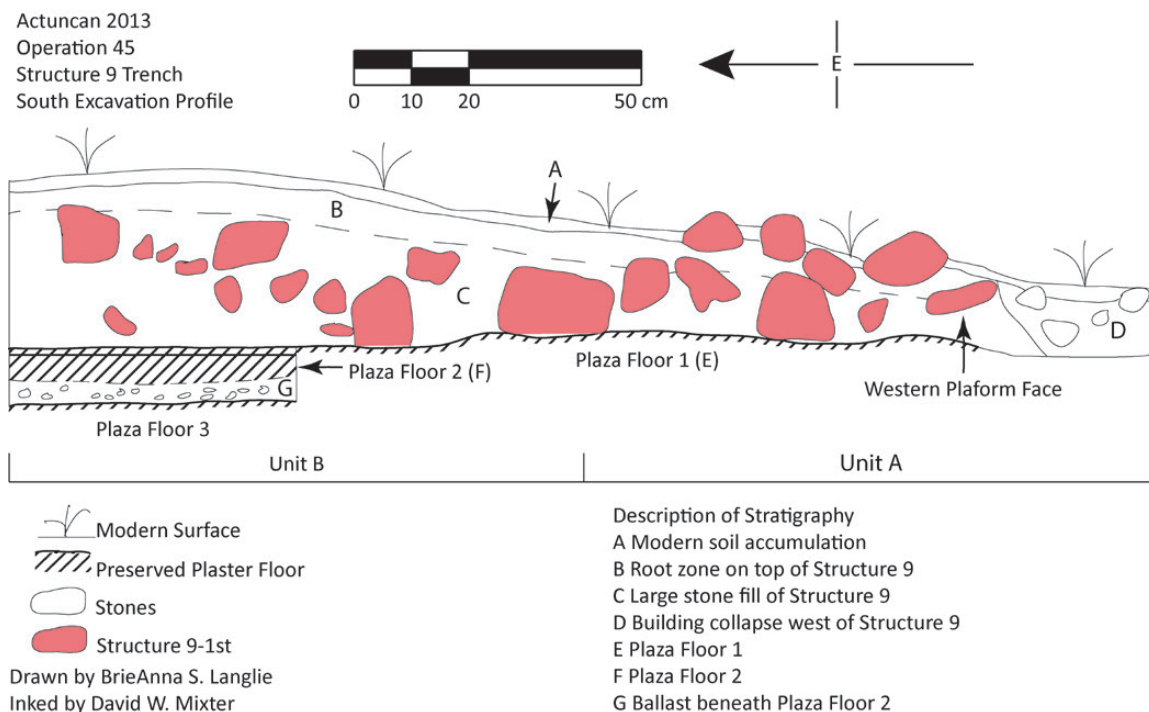
A cached ceramic vessel, Feature 45-1, was found at the center of Structure 9 on the terminal plaza floor (Figure 10). The vessel is a long, narrow, rectangular platter measuring 57 x 23 cm with low walls that flare out slightly. This unusual vessel was placed upright and oriented north-south. Placed prior to the construction of Structure 9, Feature 1 was likely a dedication offering intended to ensoul the platform (Freidel and Schele 1989).

Together, Structures 7, 8, 93, and 9 created a new ritual center for Terminal Classic Actuncan anchored by a new formal entrance structure and a long, linear performance platform that used Structure 6 as a dramatic backdrop. These buildings centered Structure 5 as the central ritual building of the group's Terminal Classic occupation. By placing these buildings within Plaza A, the center of focus shifted towards the northeast to the center of this new ring of buildings. That focus is



**Figure 8.** Images of Feature 43-1, a Terminal Classic deposit of ceramics and a quarter jade bead left on the southern step of Structure 8. A) Photograph of the deposit *in situ*. B) Detail of Terminal Classic diagnostic ceramics from the deposit, including at least two McCrae Impressed dishes and a Cayo Unslipped jar with a downflaring rim.





**Figure 9.** Excavation profile showing the construction of Structure 9.

anchored by Structure 7, which faced Structure 5 and produced a performative space between these two buildings. The renewed importance of Structure 5 is emphasized by the massive deposit of ritual materials that McGovern reported from its summit. These deposits point to a space constructed to facilitate periodic ritual gatherings. The focus on Structure 5 is important because the Terminal Classic community chose to focus on the smaller eastern pyramid rather than the taller Structure 4. I argue that this choice reflects how the community's repurposing of Plaza A was produced through a combination of Actuncan's history and an understanding of Late Classic norms.

## Discussion

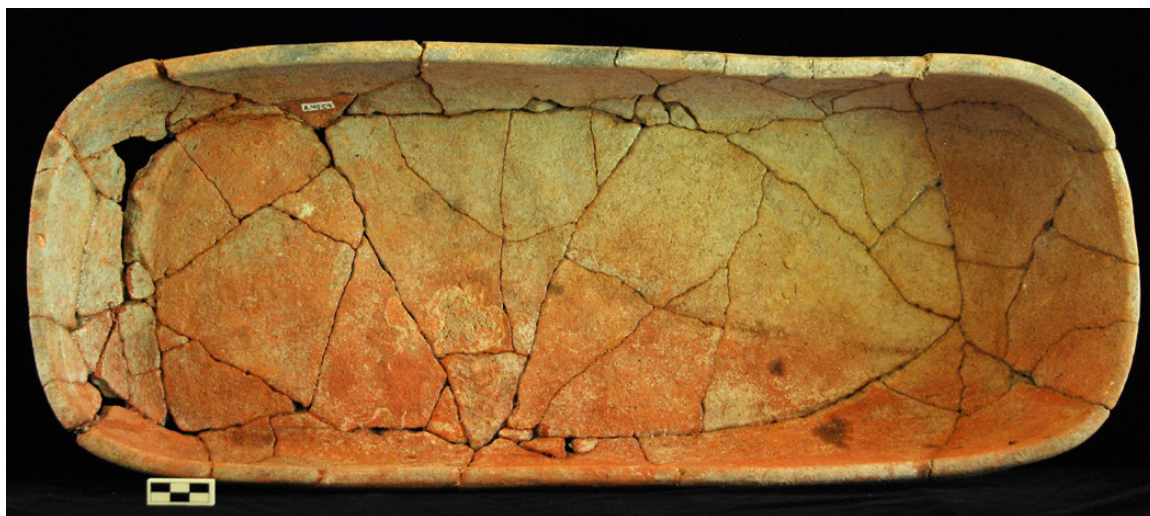
It has long been understood that Maya pyramids were metaphors for sacred mountains (Benson 1985; Stone 1992, 1995; Stuart 1997). Halperin (2014) argues that if abandoned or left unused, these pyramid-mountains become part of the wilderness, home to spirits, wild animals, nonspecific ancestors, and other supernatural beings. For the Maya, ruins often reference the time of creation (Hamann 2002), especially when those ruins are constructed in a triadic form referencing the Maya three hearthstones of creation. Additionally, both ruins and mountains can be associated with ancestors even if no genealogical connection is known (Borgstede 2010; Halperin 2014).

However, as I have previously argued (Mixer 2017b), the treatment of individual temple-pyramid-mountains during the political upheaval and experimentation of the Terminal Classic period depended on the specific historical context and the choices of individual communities in addition

to their broader cultural meaning. At Waka', for example, we see the transformation of the site's primary Classic period mortuary temple into a community shrine during the Terminal Classic period (Navarro-Farr 2016; Navarro-Farr et al. 2008; Navarro-Farr and Arroyave Prera 2014). This reaction, and contemporaneous urban repurposing at other Late Classic period centers (Bazy and Inomata 2017; Braswell et al. 2004; Child and Golden 2008; Demarest et al. 2016; Halperin and Garrido 2020; Schwake and Iannone 2016; Żrałka and Hermes 2012) is conditioned by a relatively detailed community understanding of that building's use in its recent past. At Actuncan, we see reactions to this kind of specific memory in the treatment of buildings within Actuncan North (Mixter 2017b, 2020; Mixter et al. 2013).

In contrast, the end of Preclassic construction at Actuncan South happened centuries before its Terminal Classic reworking. As at Actuncan, Terminal Classic populations reused Preclassic triadic groups at other sites. I consider here the few examples I identified of triadic groups that were abandoned before their Terminal Classic reuse. At sites such as Calakmul and Lamanai (Braswell et al. 2004; Pendergast 1986) triadic groups were used and renovated continually from the Preclassic to Late Classic periods and therefore their Terminal Classic treatment was conditioned by their recent use rather than their antiquity. These two examples were both transformed into complex spaces that served as part of those communities' Late Classic palace administrative infrastructure following the Calakmul model (Ashmore and Sabloff 2002; Folan et al. 2001)

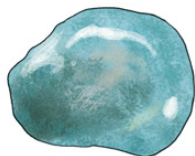
At El Mirador, Tayasal, and Cerros, Terminal Classic populations reoccupied triadic groups or their environs after a period of disuse; however, unlike at Actuncan, these places were not reused by the same populations. A Terminal Classic village was built on the collapse debris of the Danta triadic pyramid group at El Mirador (Hansen et al. 2008). At Tayasal, a Terminal Classic village sprung up around the Cerro Mo' triadic group, and residents passed by and left small offerings within the triadic group (Halperin 2014). The Tayasal community never built on Cerro Mo' during the Terminal Classic period. Rather, it was a place to leave offerings for the spirits and ancestors. Each



**Figure 10.** A unslipped cache vessel found in Feature 45-1.

of these actions reflects the specific ways these places were remembered. At El Mirador, Danta's repurposing was logistical, whereas at Tayasal the local community did not remember the original importance of Cerro Mo' but understood that it was occupied by someone's ancestors. Similarly, Cerros, Belize was reoccupied as a residential center during the Terminal Classic period; however, Structure 4, one of that site's triadic groups, was not reused until the Postclassic (Walker 1990).

On the other hand, Actuncan -- along with nearby rural settlements (Lindley 2021) -- was occupied continuously, from the construction of Actuncan South during the Late Preclassic period to the Terminal Classic period (Fulton and Mixter 2022; LeCount et al. 2019; Mixter et al. 2014). Even though they fell out of use during the Late Classic period, Actuncan's pyramids were visually dominant on the landscape and could not have been forgotten by the community living at their bases. In contrast to Tayasal, I suggest that the construction of new buildings within Actuncan South reflects the community's genealogical connection to these buildings. Because of this persistent connection, Actuncan South never became fully understood as dangerous wilderness. Instead, the persistent association of triadic groups with places of origin, sustenance, and the rebirth of the Maize God drew the Terminal Classic community to this place so that they could propitiate their gods for rain and productive harvests as they built new ritual practices that did not reify the authority of a divine ruler.



Yet, the orientation of the low Terminal Classic architecture in Plaza A towards Structure 5 combined with the primary evidence of massive repeated ritual on the summit of that structure recorded by McGovern (2004) indicates that the Terminal Classic ritual practices were focused on Actuncan South's eastern pyramid rather than the much larger southern pyramid. This is strange because the central nested pyramid would have been the focus of Preclassic use of the plaza. This reorientation speaks to the legacy of the recent and therefore well-remembered Classic period spatial logic (Mixter 2017b). During the Classic period in the Mopan River valley, people were consistently buried in the east in both domestic and monumental contexts. In local domestic groups, the eastern structure is very frequently an ancestor shrine in the mold of Becker's (1971) Plaza Plan 2 (e.g. Braswell 1998; Connell 2000; Helmke 2000; Iannone 1996). In Late and Terminal Classic domestic contexts at Actuncan, the shrine was less important than the direction. In Group 1, burials were placed in the eastern portion of the domestic patio rather than under a structure (Freiwald 2012; Freiwald et al. 2015; Freiwald and Micklin 2013), indicating that it was the direction rather than the shrine that held more importance for long established households. Indeed, at Actuncan's Group 8, a noble compound established during the Late Classic period, a tall and visible eastern shrine structure contained no burials (Mixter and Freiwald 2013). To my colleagues and I, this indicates that the local household constructed the shrine to create the appearance of ancestral legitimacy, even though they were new members of the community (Mixter 2017b; Mixter et al. 2013). Additionally, in local monumental centers, community leaders and royal individuals were often buried in pyramids on the eastern edge of public plazas during the Late Classic period (Audet 2006; Awe 2013; Healy et al. 2004; Novotny 2012). In sum, during the Late Classic period, eastern buildings of both public plazas and domestic patios were understood to be homes to important ancestors.

When the Terminal Classic community focused attention on Structure 5 through new construction and enacted repeated ritual practices on its summit, I argue that they assumed that location was a burial place for Actuncan's ancestors. I have previously argued that Actuncan's Terminal Classic community was intentionally building connections to the site's mythic Preclassic to bypass the

unpleasant more recent past associated with the site's domination by divine kings from elsewhere (Mixer 2017b). Ironically, it is unlikely that anyone was ever buried in Structure 5 because important ancestors were rarely buried in Preclassic triadic temple groups (Hansen 1998:89). Yet, the Terminal Classic community may well have believed Structure 5 to be Actuncan's primary ancestral place because of the way community memory became conditioned by Classic period planning logic.

The construction of platforms in Plaza A is important because it points to the community's intentionality in adopting the triadic group as their primary sacred precinct. The community understood Actuncan South as cosmologically significant and may also have remembered it as historically significant, even if the details were no longer known. This context was key to establishing a new ritual space that could be isolated from the community's political institutions as they attempted to reconfigure religious principles as divine rulers disappeared from the equation.

Within a broader regional context, the ritual strategies at Actuncan represent just one of many possible reactions to the end of divine kingship. Indeed, the nearby communities of Xunantunich and Buenavista del Cayo clung to the ideology of divine kingship as they tried to rebuild or maintain political authority. This solution was easy because it was familiar and did not require any new ideological formulations. In contrast, Actuncan's solution to building new ritual infrastructure that no longer centered a royal person worked because it built on the fundamental Maya understandings of the cosmos and their built environment. Yet, it was locally conditioned by the historical and cultural contingencies of the Actuncan community. As political networks fragmented and long-distance communication frayed in the turmoil of the Terminal Classic period, it seems likely that similar experiments of building post-royal ritual infrastructure at other sites across the Maya Lowlands came to different outcomes. At Actuncan, this new ritual formulation lasted several generations, as evidenced by the multiple construction phases of Structures 7 and 8, before final abandonment. These kinds of localized institutional experiments during this time of political fragmentation provided inspiration for the broader coherence later achieved during the Postclassic period.

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Film Review:  
*PastPresentFuture: Archaeology and Tourism in  
the Yucatán.*

Directed and produced by Sam Pack. 2022.  
Berkeley Media. 34 minutes.

by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire

Sam Pack – Professor of Anthropology at Kenyon College – just released a highly relevant ethnographic film based in the Puuc region of Yucatan, Mexico, entitled *PastPresentFuture: Archaeology and Tourism in the Yucatán*. This 34-minute-long bilingual (subtitled) documentary presents an uninterrupted string of interviews with diverse people ranging from American archaeologists and Yucatec field technicians to dedicated tour guides and clueless tourists.

This series of short, interesting interviews gives a strong multivocal flair to this film, tackling several complex questions without ever really naming them: How has archaeology contributed to cultural preservation in Yucatan? Who are the different groups involved in the archaeological process in Yucatan? How do Yucatec economies, the tourism industry, and archaeology interface? To what degree do modern Yucatecos feel connected with the peninsula's archaeological heritage?

This documentary sits at a crossroad. Interviews with both scholars and grassroots archaeological professionals open a window on contrasting views about archaeology's positionality. In this, the film correctly reflects how the broader field is transitioning in terms of practice; and how the many agents participating in this transition do so in their own way and at their own rhythm.

*PastPresentFuture* also shines a light on the generational divide between the younger and older archaeological field technicians and professionals of Yucatan. Interviews with a tour guide and artisans also address the complex – and not always positive – intersections between archaeology, INAH, and the tourism industry. Amongst them all, interviews with Tomás Gallareta Negrón, Pedro Gongóra Interián, Evan Parker, Patricia Martín Morales, and José María Osorio González stand out.

Despite some technical challenges – in both sound and image capture – *PastPresentFuture* is a valuable contribution to the archaeology documentary genre. Notably, the film deftly uses archival and artistic visuals, including some artwork by Aaron Alfano taken (with permission) from the first issue of *The Mayanist*. The film’s original guitar soundtrack is also excellent. One critique I do have concerns the film’s sparse credits, where the names of the interviewees and collaborators do not appear. Nevertheless, Sam Pack’s strong multivocal and unstructured approach gives his film an impressionistic lens that adequately captures the heterogeneous – Indigenous, archaeological, and touristic – reality of Yucatan’s Maya cultural heritage. I highly recommend this film—especially to university and high school instructors wishing to infuse a solid dose of multivocality in the classroom. *PastPresentFuture*’s humanity and introspective tone will also make it appealing to the general public interested in questions of indigeneity, cultural preservation, and tourism.

This film will soon be available for purchase on the Berkeley Media LLC website: <https://www.berkeleymedia.com/>



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**John F. Chuchiak IV** is the Dean of the Honors College and the Director of the Latin American, Caribbean and Hispanic Studies program at Missouri State University, a Distinguished Professor of Colonial Latin American History, and the holder of the Rich & Doris Young Honors College endowed professorship. His research interests include Spanish colonization in the Maya area, and Maya reactions and resistance to the religious, cultural, social, legal, and economic imposition of Spanish Colonialism in the region.



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The editors (from left to right): C. Mathew Saunders, Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire (photo by Laura Mueller), and Kathryn Reese-Taylor.

### **The Mayanist Team**

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**Executive Editor:** C. Mathew Saunders teaches anthropology at Davidson Day School and is the Founder and Executive Director of AFAR. He is also the creator of the long-running Maya at the Playa/Lago Conferences. He is co-editor (with Pamela Voelkel) of the new book *Maya Archaeology: Tales from the Field* (Precolumbia Mesoweb Press).

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**Layout and Advisor:** Joel Skidmore is associate editor of *The PARI Journal* and associate director of Precolumbia Mesoweb Press.

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**Copy Editor:** Jack Barry, M.A., RPA, is a former field archaeologist with extensive experience in Belize and Southern Ontario. Although currently employed outside the discipline, he remains passionate about archaeology and is honored to contribute to this wonderful publication.





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