

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables and Text Boxes</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
Introduction: Finding Testaments	3
1 Notaries and the Making of Testaments in Ixil	21
2 Defending and Governing Ixil	45
3 Ixil's Economic Life	71
4 God in Ixil	92
5 Family in Ixil	120
<i>Appendix A: List of the Ixil Testaments, by Date, 1738–79</i>	137
<i>Appendix B: The Testaments of Ixil</i>	141
<i>References</i>	281
<i>Index</i>	289

Introduction

Finding Testaments

MATTHEW RESTALL: In the spring of 1990, I was hunting in Merida, Yucatan, for documents written in Maya during the colonial centuries. With the naïve doggedness of a graduate student in my mid-twenties, I went from archives to libraries, from professors' offices to priests' anterooms, convinced that there were hidden stashes of Maya land records, testaments, and even a few Books of Chilam Balam. The latter—quasi-notarial compilations of knowledge descended from the famous and (mostly) destroyed codices of the pre-Columbian Maya—were not to be found in desk drawers in Merida.¹ But in a local school library a teacher told me there was a Maya manuscript in red ink gathering dust on a back shelf.

The manuscript was indeed in Yucatec and in red. But it had been typed on an old typewriter and, as best as I could make out, consisted of erotic poetry (whether bad or good, I was not qualified to judge). My hopes, raised momentarily so high, were dashed again. Then I noticed that at the bottom of the pile of loose papers was a bundle of folios tied with old twine. The ink was black, handwritten, in Maya. The first page was badly faded, but the rest were perfectly legible. Having already spent time with the Testaments of Tekanto—at that point, the only extant corpus of wills from a single colonial Maya town²—I instantly recognized that these were wills, colonial-era wills. Before my eyes was a treasure trove of information about a network of Maya families who two centuries earlier had lived, loved, squabbled, and died in a small town not far from where I was sitting.

The wills numbered sixty-five in total, all from the *cab* (sociopolitical unit for the Maya, plural *cabob*) of Ixil, situated fifteen miles (as the crow flies) northeast of Merida, and all dating from 1765 to 1768. Providing a glimpse into the material and spiritual world of Ixil's residents during that sliver of time, the testaments offered rare details into everyday late-colonial Maya life. Although I was convinced that more such collections remained to be discovered, I knew that these surviving testaments of Ixil were sufficiently rare to warrant publication. I had also given a copy of my index and transcriptions of the wills to a venerable Merida scholar, who held a press conference to announce "his" discovery—complete with a show-and-tell of the original wills and "his" transcriptions—weeks after I had returned to the United States. In retrospect, his betrayal was harmless (and after all, as a Yucateco, he probably regarded the wills as part of his cultural heritage, not mine), but at the time it prompted in me a sense of urgency; in 1995 a small California press published my transcriptions and translations of the wills, as *Life and Death in a Maya Community: The Ixil Testaments of the 1760s*, with minimal analysis. (That venerable scholar is long deceased, by the way, and that small press defunct.)³

The summer after the book came out, I returned to Ixil to donate a copy to the town. I feared the gesture might be a little patronizing and presumptuous (who was I to tell the people of Ixil about their ancestors?), but a local official (whose surname was Pech) put me at ease by laughing at me and asking why I had wasted my time on such a project. He then walked me over to the school, where the teacher accepted the book (figure 0.1); she was as bemused as Señor Pech but very gracious, and I was grateful to them for humoring me so generously.

MARK CHRISTENSEN: In the summer of 2007, I found myself in a small, upstairs room in Merida's cathedral, accompanied by dozens of old cardboard boxes softened from the malfunctioning air conditioner's failed attempts to drive away the smothering humidity and bursting with colonial documents that also showed the effects of the Yucatan's unforgiving climate. I was in the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán, searching for any ecclesiastical text written in Maya. Of course, the nun who accompanied me into the room assured me that no such documents existed, a statement the director of the archive, the late Monsignor José F. Camargo Sosa, delivered to me personally (the same priest had told Restall the same thing seventeen years earlier). Yet any Latin American scholar who has spent time in archives knows the potential rewards awaiting those who graciously, but stubbornly, must "see for themselves."

After days spent rummaging through myriad colonial documents, I had already discovered a handful of religiously oriented Maya texts. Then, after several weeks, I found a collection of bound Maya documents at the bottom of a box titled "*Oficios*."



FIGURE 0.1. The schoolteacher of Ixil receiving a copy of *Life and Death in a Maya Community*, 1996. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)

The word “*oraciones*” was penciled on the top of the first document, but after closer inspection it became apparent that the documents were not prayers but testaments.⁴ Monsignor Camargo Sosa graciously allowed me to digitally photograph the corpus, enabling me to return home to the United States to examine the documents.

Numbering thirty-eight in total, the testaments and codicils largely covered a span of one year—from January to December 1748—but, interestingly, none of the testators had declared their town of residence, thus making the testaments’ origin a mystery. However, after closer inspection, Restall recognized the name of the *batab* and some individuals on the *cabildo*, or town council, as the same as those found in his later corpus of Ixil testaments. A quick comparison confirmed that the 1748 corpus of testaments originated in the *cab* of Ixil. The two sets of wills were almost certainly surviving pieces of the fat book of wills maintained during the colonial period for centuries by the notaries of Ixil. This fact presented us with a unique situation. We now had Maya testaments that detailed aspects of the material and spiritual lives of Ixil’s native residents for over forty years.

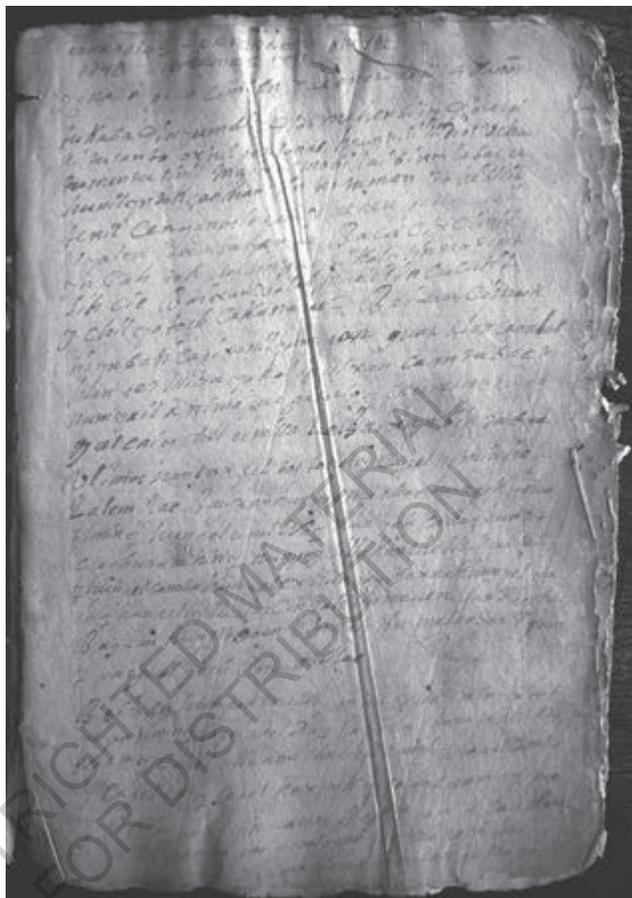


FIGURE 0.2.
Example of a last
will and testament
from Ixil (Ar).

Whereas similar—and admittedly larger—corpora of testaments exist in Nahuatl, until now the Yucatan had been without a Maya equivalent.⁵ In my doctoral dissertation, later published as *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms* (Christensen 2013), I made use of both sets of corpora from Ixil. However, Restall and I had planned immediately to combine the two sets into a single corpus and publish a larger social history of the town. This book is a result of that protracted effort, set in motion over a decade ago.

CHRISTENSEN AND RESTALL: The combined corpus consists of 102 testaments written between 1738 and 1779 and maintained by the *cabildo* (figure 0.2). Within this collection of testaments, a third are from 1748, a third from 1766, and a quarter from

TABLE 0.1. Number of Ixil wills and codicils by corpus and year

	1738	1748	1755	1760	1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1773	1777	1779	Total
Christensen (A) corpus		34	1	3									38
Restall (B) corpus					5	34	24	2		1	2		68
Individual wills (C)	1								1			1	3
Total													109

Note: The letters *A*, *B*, and *C* are our designations for each corpus; see appendices A and B.

Sources: AHAY, "Oficios, 1748–1749, 1801–1884," vol. 1, "Petén Itza"; CAIHY and Restall (1995); ANEY (see appendix B for details).

1767 (table 0.1). The collection also includes three additional Ixil testaments discovered outside the two corpora. Inserted among the two bodies of testaments are seven codicils mostly discussing the affairs and receipts of bequeathed items from various wills (figure 0.3). Aside from their other insights, these codicils offer a possible explanation as to why bound corpora of Ixil testaments have been found in various archives. During the colonial period, the testaments of Ixil were preserved by the town's *cabildo* in a bound collection.⁶ Yet when legal disputes over bequeathed items arose, large sections of testaments were removed and relocated to settle the disputes.

In many ways, and as hinted in the title of this book, this expanded corpus of testaments allows us to return to Ixil with new perspectives and insights. The return illustrates how many of the core elements of Maya society that Restall uncovered for the town in the 1760s likewise existed in 1748. Patterns of inheritance, wealth distribution, nobility, and status all persist throughout the forty years of testaments, albeit with some change over the decades. The expanded corpus allows for more detailed discussion of such topics.

However, our return likewise boasts many new discoveries regarding Ixil and its inhabitants, facilitated not only by the 1748 testaments, but also through an extensive search in the archives for any accompanying documentation shedding further light on obscure issues revealed in the wills. As a result, our return reveals the role of Ixil in the defense of the Yucatan Peninsula against pirates; new details on the role of its native government and the religious workings of the town; and intimate particulars surrounding family and everyday life in Ixil. In the end, this book employs newly discovered testaments and documents not only to update our understanding of Ixil but also to make exciting new contributions to current historiographical conversations—a return trip that is, we trust, worthwhile.

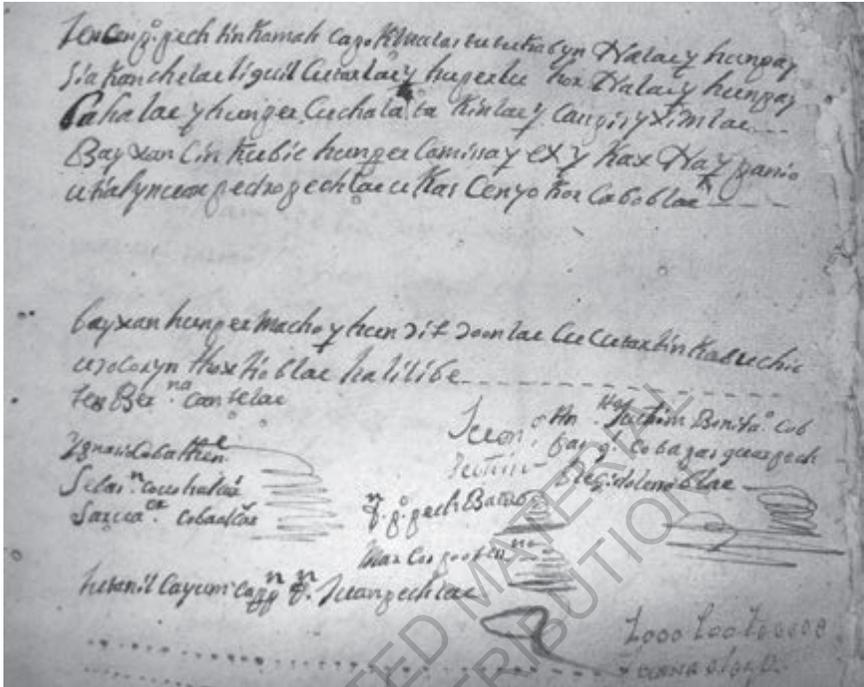


FIGURE 0.3. Example of a codicil from Ixil (A2).

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF INDIGENOUS TESTAMENTS AND THIS BOOK

The last will and testament stands alone in its ability to reveal detailed insights into the lives of the rich and poor, male and female; its formulaic religious preamble provides information on the religious exposure and experience of the town and scribe; the names within provide clues into genealogies, social networks of trust, and communal politics; even the deaths recorded allude to the presence of epidemics and/or famines. Put simply, there is a reason scholars continually return to the last will and testament as an invaluable source to the past; those studying the indigenous cultures of the colonial Americas are no exception.⁷ In many instances, certain people and places would simply not exist in the historical record, or the subsequent histories it inspires, without the last will and testament. And Ixil is a perfect example.

Excluding last wills and testaments, the archival footprint of Ixil is limited in details. Indeed, without the wills, the town would hardly ever appear in the historical narrative. The town shows up in a few census records and in a few reports and travel accounts. Even the Chilam Balam of Ixil—produced in the town itself and

portrayed proudly on its town sign (figures 0.5 and 2.6)—is little referenced and known compared with others more popular, such as the Chilam Balam books from K'aua, Tizimin, and Chumayel.⁸ Hence the importance of this corpus of last wills and testaments from Ixil. These documents, although emerging from death, breathe life into this otherwise ignored Maya town.

Other colonial towns in New Spain have seen similar acts of historical resurrection. S. L. Cline and Miguel León-Portilla (1984) placed a spotlight on the Nahua town of Culhuacan with their publication of sixty-five Nahuatl testaments. Philip Thompson's 1978 dissertation and 1999 publication employed the Testaments of Tekanto to produce an insightful social history of the town. As mentioned, Restall initially focused on Ixil and its testaments in 1995, and others such as Stephanie Wood (1991) and Caterina Pizzigoni (2007) would do the same for the Nahua region of Toluca.⁹ In most of these works the testaments and their transcription and translation take center stage, oftentimes accompanied by brief, yet insightful, commentary. Recently, however, scholars have begun to use testaments as the backbone of illustrative social histories that place emphasis on the everyday life of the town rather than its testaments. The works of Pizzigoni (2012) and Miriam Melton-Villanueva (2016) provide apt examples.

The present work attempts a marriage between both historiographical trends. The book follows the more recent pattern of reconstructing the social history of a colonial town through its testaments and additional documentation. Indeed, rather than presenting the testaments with their translations and a few comments, the chapters of this book convey new and detailed descriptions of various aspects of life in Ixil so that, to the extent possible, a better portrait of the everyday life of families in the town emerges. This portrait of quotidian life is placed within the larger context of colonial life in Yucatan to better understand the similarities and differences evident in Ixil. That said, the testaments themselves are valuable documents, essential in illustrating this portrait of Ixil, and this book includes frequent references and callouts to their transcription and translation provided for interested readers in full in our appendix B.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Each of the book's chapters engages a different aspect of colonial life in Ixil. Although the work, on occasion, employs insights and commentaries found in Restall's original 1995 publication, the overwhelming majority of the content in each chapter reflects revised and updated interpretations of family life in Ixil. That said, the 1995 publication contains valuable observations on the wills themselves, and we refer readers to the earlier work for additional insights.

Chapter 1 identifies the Maya notaries of Ixil and their role in composing the town's testaments themselves. Often overlooked as mere scribes parroting the dictates of their superiors, notaries played an important role in shaping the material and spiritual lives of those dying in Ixil. The chapter employs the expanded corpus to provide an innovative comparison of notarial styles and preferences that better distinguishes between the contributions of the notary and those of the testator himself or herself.

Chapter 2 exposes in new ways the role of Ixil in the defense of the Yucatan from pirate attacks. The military titles adorning the names of a few nobles in their testaments reflects the presence of a militia in Ixil and the role of the Maya in staffing the nearby coastal watchtower, and the chapter employs a wide array of documents to reconstruct the town's contribution to the defense of the town and the colony. While contributing to the burgeoning scholarship on native militias in Yucatan, this chapter also illustrates how those who defended the town likewise served as its governors. Through an examination of the *cabildo* signatures included in every will within the corpus, the chapter provides an uncommonly clear view of which family lineages maintained their noble positions within the *cab* through its local governance.

Chapter 3 examines the economy of Ixil and its participants. The chapter exposes the connection between noble lineages and wealth while detailing patterns of gender ownership and the means and modes of production in Ixil compared over spatial and temporal lines. Importantly, the chapter exposes the large population of Ixil families claiming nobility—an image that sharply contradicts the assumption of a small noble minority.

Chapter 4 addresses religious life in Ixil through a triangulation of three types of source materials: the religious formula, vocabulary, and items in testaments; religious texts found in the Chilam Balam of Ixil; and ecclesiastical reports and records. All combine to provide a clearer image of God in Ixil and the role of the Maya and ecclesiastics in creating such an image.

Finally, chapter 5 uncovers the intimate familial relationships betrayed by the wills. The chapter provides deeper understandings of inheritance patterns, genealogical connections throughout the decades covered by the wills, and marriage patterns that reveal the frequent practice of endogamy among the Pech lineage. Two appendices follow the conclusion, providing an overview of the Ixil corpus and its relation to other archival documents (appendix A) and our transcriptions of the original Maya documents and our translations of them into English (appendix B), which provide additional details and scholarly fodder.

IXIL, THEN AND NOW

As it was back then, Ixil is now a small Maya town, or *cab*, located in the northwest of the Yucatan Peninsula in what was the Ceh Pech region—the network of *cabob* dominated by the Pech lineage, or *chibal* (plural, *chibalob*), for an uncertain number of centuries prior to the arrival of Spaniards in the early sixteenth century.¹⁰ Although archaeologists have not surveyed Ixil and its neighbors (as far as we know), it is clear from the town's layout and its surviving mounds of ancient masonry that colonial-era Ixil evolved from precolonial Ixil. Its ancient plaza remained in the same location, while the church was built upon an existing platform, using stones from what were presumably pyramidal and temple structures (figures 0.4–0.9). Centuries of repurposing such structures have left overgrown masonry mounds immediately behind the church (on what was once the same platform) and beside it, marking one end of the large original plaza. In addition to the two surviving mounds, a third, far larger mound—facing the plaza and across from the church—lasted until 1940, when it was destroyed by the town's government under a mayor named Lorenzo Poot. Ixil baker and local historian Juan Francisco Orilla Canche lamented that such “destruction benefited nobody and removed one of Ixil's attractions, from which one could very nicely watch the baseball [played in the plaza] and enjoy the breeze from the sea [nine miles away].”¹¹

An eighteenth-century document written in Yucatec Maya and known as the Title of Yaxkukul records Ixil's first appearance in colonial history, albeit retroactively. The document is an *ex post facto* attempt to record the aid Macan Pech and his town Yaxkukul provided to the Spanish conquistadors—a common tactic employed by many indigenous towns and nobles throughout New Spain to encourage favor with, and petition benefits from, the new regime. Macan Pech's assistance included tribute payments, and the document records how he and other Maya nobles “were the first to pay tribute to the foreigners.”¹² Included among these other Maya nobles was Ah Dzulub Pech of Ixil.

In general, towns located on the *camino real*, or the main road connecting Campeche and Merida, experienced greater Spanish contact, and Ixil's location on the other side of Merida and away from that main road allowed it some degree of anonymity. Nonetheless, in 1549 the conquistador Julián Doncel was recorded as the *encomendero* of Ixil, which supplied him with six *fanegas* of salt and three *arrobas* of fish in annual tribute.¹³ These items reflect the fact that Ixil's northernmost lands extended to the ocean and lagoons important in the production of salt—a practice long predating the arrival of the Spaniards. Moreover, reports indicate that in 1686 Ixil was among those towns contracted to provide maize to Merida, a common condition given the growing urban population of the region's most populous city.¹⁴ Like many Yucatecan towns on the frontier of Spanish colonialism, Ixil



FIGURE 0.4. Ixil's colonial-era church and plaza, 2009. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)



FIGURE 0.5. Ixil's colonial church and its modern town sign (*letras turísticas*), painted by Óscar Ek and erected in the plaza in August 2018. This photo was taken a week after the sign was unveiled. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)



FIGURE 0.6. One of the precolonial mounds, unrestored and mostly obscured by trees, behind Ixil's colonial-era church, 2009. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)



FIGURE 0.7. A view from near the top of the precolonial mound shown in fig. 0.6, looking toward the church, 2018. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)



FIGURE 0.8. The view from the mound shown in figs. 0.6 and 0.7, looking across to a second, smaller precolonial mound, 2018. The smaller mound likely marked one corner of the ancient plaza on which the colonial church was built. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)

would remain an *encomienda* throughout the colonial period despite the Crown's attempts to end the practice in 1542.¹⁵

As for its religious status, or its position within the church's jurisdictional structure, Ixil's modest size prevented it from ever making head-town or *cabecera* status, and instead it remained throughout the colonial period a subject town, a *sujeto* and *visita*, to various other, larger towns. As early as 1582, Ixil appeared as a *visita* to the town of Conkal.¹⁶ Later, in 1609, Ixil was recorded as a *visita* to nearby Mococho and its few resident ecclesiastics (there were three in 1808) until early in the eighteenth century when it became reassigned back to the *cabecera* of Conkal.¹⁷ Indeed, although Ixil appears as a *visita* of Mococho in 1700, various reports from 1721 to 1803 list Conkal as the *cabecera* of Ixil.¹⁸

For example, in his summary included in a 1785 *visita* report, the curate of Conkal, fray Francisco Sánchez y Gálvez, identified the towns in his *doctrina*. A *doctrina* consisted of a *cabecera*, or head town where the priests typically resided, and its constituent *visitas*, or smaller towns that ecclesiastics would visit on occasion. Sánchez



FIGURE 0.9. A view of the second, smaller mound seen in fig. 0.8, with Ixil's church beyond it, 2009. (Photograph by Matthew Restall)

y Gálvez placed Conkal as the center of the *doctrina* with Chicxulub, Cholul, Sicpach, Ixil, and Chablekal as its *visitas*. In the end, the reasons for Ixil's reassignments between Mococho and Conkal are unknown, but such were not wholly uncommon as populations changed and jurisdictions of *doctrinas* were reevaluated.

Regarding population, in 1700 Ixil had a tributary population of 729, down to 715 in 1721.¹⁹ Moreover, in his 1785 summary report, Sánchez y Gálvez paints an image of a parish once beautiful and great but which in the recent past largely consisted of towns with dilapidated and forgotten buildings. Sánchez y Gálvez blames this on the “epidemics and horrible famines that in the past had come to this our province” and claims that the parish is just beginning to recover. For evidence of the devastation, he comments that in 1769 tribute included 300 *mantas* (a blanket or measure of cotton cloth).²⁰ Yet by the following year “the calamity that again was suffered which, in truth, should forever be remembered in our annals” reduced the tribute quota to a little more than 100 *mantas*. According to the priest, many Maya abandoned the towns and fled into the wild during the “lamentable epidemic,” but then returned, and by 1785, the collected *mantas* increased to 242.²¹

Ixil's modest size and small, fluctuating population in the late eighteenth century may help explain why today there appear to be few, if any, stone houses that date from the colonial period. Orilla Canche reports the local belief that “the large

houses that are on the plaza” date from the nineteenth century.²² A few of them show signs of having colonial-era bones, with lower walls built from repurposed precolonial masonry, but much or all of what is clearly visible does indeed reflect renovations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We might thus reasonably imagine that in the eighteenth century the vast majority of Ixil’s buildings, including those around the plaza, were wattle-thatch structures on stone foundations.

Like the corpora of testaments from Cacalchen and Tekanto, Ixil’s testaments correspond to periods of epidemic and famine reported by colonial officials and even the Maya themselves.²³ In their insightful study concerning the topic, Victoria Bricker and Rebecca Hill employ both death records and wills to illustrate the intimate relationship between testament composition and periods of famine and disease.²⁴ Indeed, the Ixil corpus of 1765–67 correlates with, and reflects the impact of, the famine of 1765–68. Locusts in 1765 and a hurricane in 1766 accompanied by more locusts destroyed crops, leading to widespread hunger and starvation that affected young and old alike. The wills themselves contain examples of this tragedy. For example, in 1766 Diego Chan (B14) left a parcel of land to his grandson, Gabriel Tec. Yet Gabriel had little time to enjoy his inheritance, as just six days later he himself was dictating his will (B15). Moreover, the terse will of Nicolás Chan (B60) in 1767 provided a brief but specific reference to Nicolás Chan’s condition—he was *sof*, “drowsied, swollen-bellied.” The term recalls modern photo images of malnourished children in famine-ravaged countries, and in a moment what was the mundane business of dying in a Maya community is now tragedy brought to life.

The wills in the 1748 corpus could relate to the 1747 El Niño that caused droughts due to the cooler temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and the subsequent fewer hurricanes in the summer and fall. The drought seemed to last only a year, and Tekanto fared better than Ixil, losing forty residents in 1747 but only seven in 1748.²⁵ Whether the 1748 deaths in Ixil corresponded to the El Niño is uncertain, yet likely. More certain is the heightened loss of life during that year, generating thirty-four testaments and thereby matching 1766 as the two years producing the most wills.

Children are among the testators, and comparative analysis of the two sets of wills paints a revealing and poignant picture. The hardships of 1748 forced many parents to bury their children, and the children to compose statements bequeathing any future inheritance they are to receive from their parents to others—29 percent of testators in 1748 made such a request of expected inheritances. The full corpus of wills also contains examples of young children passing, at times before a proper testament could be drawn up. For example, the will of Joseph Couoh (B16) contains simply a religious preamble with no property bequeathed. Opaque on its own, when compared with the death’s entry in the parish records, additional details emerge, including the fact that Joseph was nine years old and died on January 3,

1766. Two days after his death, his grief-stricken parents had a will composed that included the proper requests for a mass to speed the soul of their young child through purgatory.²⁶

One of Ixil's most significant roles during the colonial period, at least potentially, concerned defense. From the late sixteenth century into the turn of the eighteenth century, pirates were an all too frequent reality for those in the port cities of the Caribbean, and their presence threatened larger metropolises like Merida. Contrary to popular belief, Spain lacked a standing army in New Spain and would not begin to provide such until the 1760s. Thus, the defense of colonial Yucatan largely fell to local militias consisting of free and enslaved black men, mixed-race *mulatos* or *pardos*, and Mayas.²⁷ The colonial government required towns situated on or near the coast, such as Ixil, to staff a militia and defend important roads and coastal watchtowers, or *vigias*. The *vigia de Yxil* (watchtower of Ixil) appeared in various colonial maps of the coastline illustrating both the watchtower's importance and its connection to Ixil. Indeed, an eighteenth-century map detailing the depths and contours of Scorpion Reef (figure 0.10)—located sixty miles north of Progreso on the northern coast of Yucatan—marks its location from Ixil's *vigia*. As will be seen in chapter 2, various noble families in Ixil acquired military titles such as “captain” and “*alférez*,” for their service in the militia.

Today, although it is roughly twenty miles southeast of the port city of Progreso and fifteen miles northeast of Merida, Ixil's seeming proximity to these two popular Yucatecan cities has not endowed it with much notoriety. Simply put, the vast majority of Yucatecans, not to mention American tourists, will never visit the town, although numerous high-end beach houses continue to appear along the picturesque coastline of the municipality. Yet this does not prevent Ixil from having a vibrant life of its own, with a particular local identity and set of cultural traditions—as reflected in the images painted on the *letras turísticas* erected in the plaza in 2018 (figure 0.5). The town celebrates the feast day of its patron saint, San Bernabé, with a variety of festivities—including a bullfight. Just as the ancient plaza has witnessed baseball games, beauty contests, reenactments of Caste War battles between “*blancos*” and “*indios*,” and other Carnival celebrations, so has it hosted generations of bullfights. The wooden ring is placed within throwing distance of the church. The small, local bulls, soon worn down by torment and fear, are then butchered in the ring; as dusk descends on the ancient plaza and blood soaks into its soil, the people of Ixil crowd round to claim choice cuts of meat.²⁸

Throughout the peninsula, Ixil is perhaps best known for its *cebollitas*, or small onions, depicted on two of the four letters of the new town sign. Ixil, reportedly, is the only town to grow the vegetable, and the unique soil around the town gives the onions their distinct sweetness. The industry is closely and proudly guarded by a

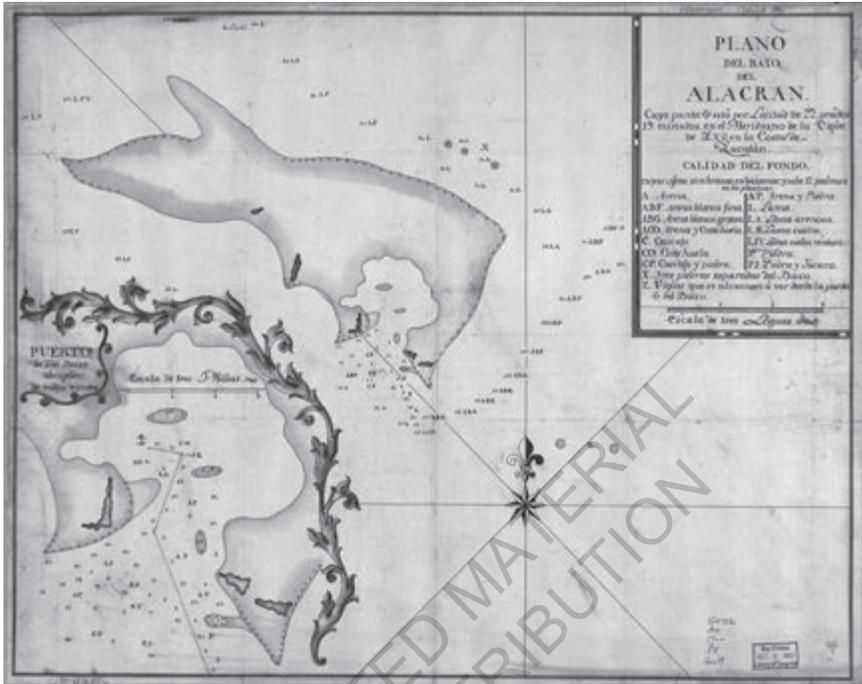


FIGURE 0.10. Map of Scorpion Reef. (“Plano del Baxo del Alacran: cuya punta esta por latitud de 22. grados 19. minutos en el meridiano de la Vigia de Yxil en la costa de Yucatán,” undated [17-?], Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G4752.A4 17-.P5)

handful of local families who fiercely defend its traditions and struggle against the frequent flooding that occurs.²⁹

Ixil was for long a Maya town that was exposed to and involved in, but was not overrun by, Spanish society; it remains a town with deep Maya roots whose families—bearing the names of both their Maya and Spanish ancestors—continue to actively engage the outside world while continuing to maintain a highly local life, as they have for many centuries.

NOTES

1. For summary of the Books of Chilam Balam and their relationship to other colonial texts see Christensen (2016: 12–18).

2. By 1990, the original Tekanto documents had disappeared from the ANEY in Merida, where they had been found by Philip Thompson in the 1970s, but I was able to access

photocopies in private hands in the United States; Thompson's doctoral study of the wills had also been filed in 1978 and published as *Tekanto, A Maya Town in Colonial Yucatan* in 1999. By 2014, the Tekanto wills had been recovered and deposited in the AGEY. The other corpus of Yucatec Maya wills whose originals remain long lost, but which survive in the form of copies (in this case, photostats), is the semilegible set from Cacalchen, mentioned further below, but see Restall (1997: 435, detailed "Cacalchen" index entry; 1998b: 145–47).

3. The original 1765–68 wills are, to the best of our knowledge, now in CAIHY; hereafter we refer to them as the Restall corpus or the B corpus, also citing Restall (1995). The bulk of Restall's original analysis of the Ixil wills went into his 1992 doctoral dissertation, revised as 1997's *The Maya World* (also see 1998b).

4. Years later I noticed that Nancy Farriss commented in her *Maya Society* (1984: 450n44) on a collection of testaments misfiled in the AHAY and certainly the same collection I found.

5. The seventeenth-century wills from Cacalchen, mentioned above, survive only in barely legible photostats and are few in number; while the extant wills from Tekanto number 412, only a few go beyond testamentary formulae to make bequests or discuss other personal arrangements.

6. The identical holes on the top of each testament indicate that they were kept in a bound collection. The Christensen or A corpus originals are in AHAY, "Oficios, 1748–1749, 1801–1884," vol. 1. The individual wills or C corpus are in ANEY, 1819iv, fols. 19r, 19v, and 37r (note that the colonial-era volumes of ANEY, for some time stolen and lost, were recovered and are currently in the AGEY).

7. For a general overview of the historiography of examining wills, see Christensen and Truitt (2015: 5–7).

8. Although Caso Barrera (2011) does much to remedy the situation.

9. Other notable works of a broader spectrum include Martina Will de Chaparro's work on New Mexico (2007) and Gabriela Ramos's study of native testaments and conversion in Lima and Cuzco (2010).

10. Restall (1997: 14, 28, 64, 87–97, 149, 278–89; 1998a: ch. 6).

11. Orilla Canche (2005: 25). We are grateful to Tatiana Seijas for finding Orilla Canche's memoir and buying a copy from one of the members of Ixil's baker family. As historians of the Ceh Pech region, we would be thrilled if archaeologists were to survey and dig in Ixil. But it seems unlikely. The peninsula is peppered with over a hundred similar towns.

12. Restall (1998a: 112–13).

13. Roys (1957: 46); Quezada (2014: 134). For the eighteenth-century beneficiaries of Ixil's *encomienda* see García Bernal (1972: 72, 144). A colonial-era Spanish *arroba* was roughly 25 pounds (11.5 kilograms), and a *fanega* was typically 55 liters but varied greatly.

14. Patch (1993: 79). This contract continued into the eighteenth century.

15. García Bernal (1972: 144).

16. Hanks (2010: 44).
17. Carrillo y Ancona (1883: 56).
18. AGI, México, 1035; Patch (1993: 60); AHAY, Visitas Pastorales, 1803–4.
19. AGI, México, 1035; Cogolludo (1688: bk. 4, ch. 20, 237); Patch (1993: 60).
20. For an overview of the annual tribute that Mayas owed, see Farriss (1984: 41, table 1.1).
21. AHAY, Visitas Pastorales, 1782–85, Conkal.
22. Orilla Canche (2005: 8).
23. For an overview of such reports, see Farriss (1984: 61–62); Bricker and Hill (2009: 235–36); Hoggarth et al. (2017: 82–113).
24. Bricker and Hill (2009).
25. *Ibid.*, 250.
26. For the death record of Joseph Couoh, see FS-MY, “registros parroquiales y diocesanos, 1543–1977,” Conkal, San Francisco de Asís, Defunciones 1682–1802, image 220 of 452; parroquias Católicas, Yucatan.
27. For more on colonial militias see Vinson (2002); Restall (2009: 153–77, 239–42, 252–55).
28. As observed by Restall on San Bernabé’s Day in 1990 and 1996.
29. José Tec Poot, an anthropologist and promoter of Maya culture native to Ixil and well known in the town, wrote a piece on the *cebollitas* for *Diario de Yucatán*.