commerce. Bustos Rodríguez earlier detailed the consulado’s hostility toward the bank, which had replaced the guild as the crown’s principal source of credit for colonial affairs.

The book’s final portion treats the closing decade of the eighteenth century and the first three of the nineteenth, a period when the severe crisis unleashed by the French Revolution and its aftermath beset the Old Regime. This imbroglio coincided with a new generation in the consulado, one shaped after commercial policy liberalization had changed the rules of the game; but events soon denied these men the tools needed to sustain the guild’s former grandeur. Its role as a major source of credit for the desperate royal treasury returned, but unhappily so, as the guild had less and less to lend. Colonial commerce collapsed during the First British War (1796–1802) and never recovered. Bustos Rodríguez provides new depth to this familiar story, detailing the effects of blockades, neutral trade, and the eventual loss of the continental empire. The consulado experienced progressively diminishing vigor and eventually lost its original reason for being, as commerce with the Indies faded. Guild membership declined, and the once opulent Cádiz withered under economic hardship. Bustos Rodríguez ends with the emergence of yet another generation, which found itself compelled to accept the reduced role and prestige that would define the guild for the remainder of the century.

Vila Vilar and Bustos Rodríguez should be congratulated for their superb contributions to the tercentennial anniversary. Both works will stand as major contributions to the historiography on Spain and America.

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Precontact

Kukulcan’s Realm: Urban Life at Ancient Mayapán.

Kukulcan’s Realm is a formidable book. Across 650-plus pages, 150 figures, and 76 tables, the volume pulls together an incredible quantity and wide range of archaeological, historical, and comparative data. This book details the complexities of political structure, urban planning, settlement patterns, economy, and religious organization at Mayapán, the largest urban center and last regional capital in late Maya history. It draws on decades of work—excavations conducted by the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) in the 1950s, the authors’ own ongoing Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia–Mayapán and Economic Foundations of Mayapán projects, doctoral dissertations, and licenciatura theses.

The book comprises nine chapters. Chapters 1 (“Archaeological Investigations of an Ancient Urban Place”) and 2 (“Politics and Monumental Legacies”) set the backdrop against which archaeological evidence is presented and understood. Chapter 1’s
literature review is pointed rather than exhaustive, a focused survey of scholarship that has influenced the authors’ ideas about Mayapán as a city, an urban center, and a regional capital. Chapter 2 then engages with available historical evidence to surmise Postclassic Maya political and religious offices and hierarchies and to relate Mayapán’s absolute and relative archaeological chronologies to ethnohistoric ones. These opening chapters are densely packed with pertinent contextual information, but they are not for the uninitiated: dynastic family names, specific pottery types, other archaeological sites, colonial-period authors and texts, and CIW archaeologists make up much of the chapters but are given no introduction.

Chapters 3–6 contain a dizzying amount of architectural and archaeological data and analyses (chapter 6 alone is 156 pages long!). But these are the book’s greatest contribution: an in-depth examination of what makes a city, conducted at multiple scales and incorporating all kinds of available evidence. Chapter 3 highlights the information gained by focusing archaeological excavations beyond the monumental center. An outlying temple, a colonnaded hall, and an elite residence in Mayapán’s residential zone are examined, demonstrating how peripheral administrative and ritual features served to integrate political, economic, and religious life within the city. Chapter 4 (“The Urban Cityscape”) details the top-down structuring principles of the settlement: the roads, pedestrian pathways, water sources, public plazas, and architecture that linked residential and public districts. Chapter 5 (“The Social Mosaic”) then identifies bottom-up processes that complemented or competed with Mayapán’s urban plan. Quantitative analyses examine familiar indexes (residential patterns, settlement density, pottery distribution, and burials) of independent decision-making but also incorporate dividing walls, workshops, animal pens, and agricultural fields in and around dwellings to reveal individual experimentation within normative practices. Chapter 6 (“The Economic Foundations”) turns to the artifacts recovered during excavations. Rather than offer simplistic models of craft specialization or market exchange, the authors argue that diverse economic activities (including specialized food production) occurred in commoner and some elite households, which in turn depended on a well-developed market economy and regional networks of towns and polities connected to the city. One of the most interesting examples comes from the analysis of shell industries. The authors demonstrate how imported shells became ornaments, such as *Spondylus* pendants, tinkler-type *Oliva* shells, and beads, and then served as currencies (as suggested by historical sources), circulating in and out of and alongside cycles of production and consumption across social strata.

Chapters 7 (“Religious Practice”) and 8 (“Militarism, Misery, and Collapse”) are more thematic but equally synthetic. Chapter 7 presents the analysis of stone sculptures and ceramic effigy censers (for which the city is well known). Certain entities are associated with particular architectural groups, suggesting different emphases in rituals performed at different buildings: burial shafts with death deities, temples with Kukulcan creation myths. Chapter 8 considers evidence for the collapse of the polity, including willful acts of destruction of such ritual items at many public buildings. The authors simultaneously argue for a prolonged decline and for Mayapán’s tenacious resistance in
the face of drought, famine, and plagues, before interelite warfare finally annihilated much of the city. Chapter 9 (“Recognizing Complexity in Urban Life”) reiterates the conclusions of the rest of the volume: Mayapán was a complex, integrated capital in which market commerce bound together producers, consumers, traders, elites, commoners, farmers, locals, and visitors, while the material of centralized and elite-sponsored social gatherings, political life, and religious authority stimulated the production of basic goods in households. State control and independence permeated the ancient city from the ground up, shaping the ways in which its inhabitants navigated their environment, their activities, and their relationships.

*Kukulcan’s Realm’s* density and detail make it closer to a reference book than a monograph. This wealth of data will certainly be selectively mined by many a Mayanist. More importantly, the book demonstrates how to ask questions of an ancient city. As remote-sensing technologies revolutionize Maya archaeology, revealing settlement and population density on an unprecedented scale, Mayapán provides a model for understanding the specific articulations of power, people, and places in the past.

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**Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries**


Rebecca Carte’s trim and elegant book presents an in-depth reading of Baltasar Obregón’s account of the 1564 Ibarra expedition, whose stated purpose was to “establish mining settlements in the borderlands of New Spain and to suppress indigenous rebellions in the region” (p. 7). Obregón, the son of an encomendero, played the part of a soldier-explorer in the initial expedition. He sent his account to the Council of the Indies 20 years later to cement his own claims to lead another expedition to the region (p. 8). Though this attempt failed, Carte demonstrates that Obregón’s *Historia de los descubrimientos de Nueva España* (1584) also provides a sophisticated account of the history of New Spain, complete with a vivid approach to what she terms “landscape textualization” (p. 8). In Carte’s reading, Obregón’s *Historia* provides an account of the Spanish conquest in which landscape plays a leading role, “emerging at times as protagonist and others as antagonist, but always in vivid, life-like, and dramatic ways” (p. 8). As such, the landscape of New Spain as presented by Obregón, to paraphrase Carte, must be viewed as a process developed in dialogue with both the Spanish conquistadores and indigenous communities rather than as a setting or static backdrop.

The book is organized into four chapters. The first two focus on the central purposes that Obregón identifies as animating his narrative. Chapter 1, “Taking Place,”