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Elements of Maya Style

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INTRODUCTION

Systems of discourse have been a central focus of investigation in Maya studies for many years, and scholars have theorized the cultural basis of linguistic and literary forms in a variety of ways. Following on Garibay's studies of Nahuatl poetry and Léon Portilla's observations of Yucatec formal style, Edmonson (1970, 1973) has proposed a far-reaching account of Maya discourse throughout its post-Conquest history. Edmonson's account rests on the dichotomies between oral and written discourse, literature and nonliterature, and poetic and nonpoetic style. In this view, the traditional written discourse of the Books of Chilam Balam, for example, contain mostly literature, whose formal language is cast in a poetic style dominated by the semantic couplet (Edmonson and Bricker 1985:59; cf. Bricker 1974). Other scholars have found the use of paired lines of verse to be an important stylistic principle in discourse in other Mayan languages as well, including Tzeltal (Becquelin Monod 1979, 1981, 1986), Tzotzil (Gossen 1974a, b) and Quiche (Norman 1980), among others. Norman (1980) gives an excellent formal description of one canonical variant of the couplet in Quiche ritual language, defining it as two immediately adjacent lines that are identical in all respects except one. The nonidentical parts thus form a pair of terms which, in this system, acts as a single lexical unit with a single metaphorical interpretation. The potential significance of such a finding is not only that it can lead to a richer interpretation of Maya literature, but also that the metaphorical equivalents discovered in discourse embody the very constituents of Maya cultures (Edmonson 1973).[1]

A number of studies in the Mayan family have sought to incorporate the couplet into a broader system of style which includes extended parallelism as well as triplets, cycles, and other construction types. Gossen (1974a, 1974b, 1985) has demonstrated the prevalence in Tzotzil of what he called "metaphorical stacking," which he defines as "the tendency to repeat lines and themes for emphasis, in slightly different form; the greater the repetition, the more crucial the information" (1974b:399). This general principle of style operates across Tzotzil genres according to a single cultural esthetic of "heat." Relatively hot genres are more repetitive and more fixed in form, thematic content, and setting of performance than are relatively less hot ones (see also Gossen 1985:72ff).

For Chorti, Fought (1985) has shown the emergence of a cyclic principle of style, whereby discourse is formulated in an ordered series of lines which recur in fixed sequence, as in {ABCD,ABCD,ABCD,....n}. Assuming that the cycles follow upon each other in an unbroken chain, the period of the cycle is equal to the number of elements it contains, four in the notation just illustrated. Each one of these elements is part of a series whose length determines an epicycle within the larger sets of cycles, as in the two-member series of C in {ABC,ABC,ABD} (Fought 1985:134). Fought suggests that the couplet as a construction type arises naturally from the two-part predicational structure of Chorti sentences (and other Mayan languages as well) and, furthermore, that couplets are used in discourse to construct larger cyclic patterns. Hence, in Chorti, there is a systematic interaction between syntactic structure, the couplet, and the general Maya tendency to elaborate cycles.

Working from Quiche ritual and narrative, D. Tedlock (1983) has criticized Edmonson's emphasis on

the couplet as a stylistic device, and adduced evidence of at least three other significant devices in Quiche: (1) the use of isolated lines containing presentative deictics to introduce segments of text, (2) triplets in which the third member differs from the first two, and (3) the combination of triplets with couplets in larger constructions. Tedlock's work opens up important new questions about Maya literary tradition, including the range of principles it subsumes, the role of pause phrasing and other performance factors in literary form, and the delicacy of interpretation required to even *find* the structure in discourse.

This paper explores elements of style and construction in Colonial Yucatec Maya discourse (henceforth simplified to Maya, as opposed to Mayan, which refers more generally to any language in the family or to the language family as a whole), primarily from the sixteenth century. It builds on and seeks to contribute to the research summarized above, by showing a range of discourse structures resulting from the application of broad constructive principles. These principles include poetic *parallelism of variable length and density*; what Woodbury (1985) called "*particle phrasing*," whereby the syntactic placement of particles interacts with other rhetorical components, in some cases creating a level of organization of the discourse into blocks; *iconic prose* description, which reproduces the structure of referents in the form of the discourse; two kinds of *cyclicity*, in which cycles are immediately adjacent to one another, versus separated by intervening noncyclic text; and the *combination of couplets, triples, and four-part series*. A central focus in the analysis is the evidence of simultaneous alternative phrasings in discourse, which is viewed not as an indeterminacy to be overcome, but as a resource in the composition and reception of the text. As Woodbury (1985) argued, the "rhetorical organization" of discourse is an outcome of the interaction of multiple phrasings at several levels—prosodic, grammatical, and thematic. One important difference between the materials discussed here and the Yupik narratives analyzed by Woodbury is that in the Maya examples, the multiple phrasings are less regular and less obviously coordinated with one another. Rather, the coincidence of reinforcing poetic series in Maya is a periodic and noteworthy occurrence, rather than a systemic default condition. Consequently, verse constructions, such as the couplet or triplet, will be viewed as the variable outcome of constructive principles, not as fixed types of structure toward which the discourse necessarily tends.

While building on a shared empirical and theoretical foundation, this paper also differs basically from the other studies cited so far. The main difference lies in the kinds of texts studied, since the primary focus of this paper is official and bureaucratic discourse instead of high literary, ritual, or "traditional" forms. I will explore rhetorical and poetic style in letters to the Spanish king, land surveys, parts of a chronicle, and official agreements, all dated prior to 1600. The dichotomy between literary and nonliterary language may be justified as a native category within a given culture, but it does not constitute an analytic difference between codes. In Maya, the very principles familiar from Mesoamerican literary and ritual traditions are used and even elaborated in official discourse. Rather than boundaries between pre-established genres, one confronts frequent transpositions of stylistic features across discourses of widely different types. As an unavoidable corollary of the Conquest, Maya discourse forms incorporate Spanish features as well, resulting in blends between genres as different as the sign of the cross in catholic prayer and the official record of a land survey.

The early Colonial bureaucratic texts document a series of rhetorical experiments, adjustments, and creations which are no less Maya for having been formulated in response to the Colonial experience. Furthermore, it is my position that these texts provide some of the best exemplars of literary, poetic, and rhetorical style. Although I will not attempt to demonstrate it here, there are also numerous analogues between official Colonial discourse, such as the land survey of Yaxkukul (Barrera Vásquez 1984) and modern Maya ritual practice (Hanks 1984; Love 1984, 1986). These facts all belie the idea that literary history consists in the study of literature; they lead, rather, to the transposability and manipulability of structure across generic categories. In the early Colonial period in particular, the whole concept of a genre is thrown into question, along with the concepts of history, time, space, and other mediated representations (Bricker 1981; Hanks 1987).

While illustrating general elements of Maya style, the Colonial discourse also displays several particular features. These include the specification of the deictic coordinates in which the discourse was produced—the authors, addressee, witnesses, place and date of production. These factors are notably lacking in the better studied Books of Chilam Balam (Edmonson 1982), which have been recopied repeatedly and are not anchored to any one specific set of deictic coordinates. This is part of their very generality, and raises significant problems of interpretation, some of which Edmonson has addressed in the work cited. Furthermore, the features of format which appear in letters and agreements include well-marked beginnings and endings, conventional page layouts (e.g., official insignias centered atop the first page, placement of signatures at the end, and oaths of truth signed by scribes and other principals), and formulaic citations of date, place, and title. The themes treated are clearly focused on the historically specific conditions which gave rise

to the documents, and do not always recur in other texts. Hence, to offset the generalized characteristics of these texts, there are relatively individualized ones as well. This play between uniqueness and generality is typical of literary as well as other kinds of works. Following comparative analysis of segments of discourse from official texts, the final example is drawn from the Ritual of the Bacabs (Roys 1965). The purpose of this is to show the relative continuity of style between ritual and bureaucratic discourse, while nonetheless clarifying the differences between the two. I begin with a summary of the documents to be discussed.

FORMAT AND STYLE OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MAYA DOCUMENTS

In order to appreciate the stylistic diversity of early sixteenth-century official Maya documents, it is necessary to outline in brief some of their main shared features. Table 7-1 lists the documents on which the discussion will be based. The Ritual of the Bacabs and the Chilam Balam texts have been included for the purpose of comparison, and lack many of the format features common to the remaining ones.

All of the others show dates and places of completion. Authors and witnesses are identified by signatures (or at least names), and each document has an explicit, relatively elaborate opening (except for document 1 of Sotuta, the beginning of which Roys does not reproduce) as well as an ending, which brings the work to a close. Unlike the letters, the land documents from Yaxkukul and Sotuta, as well as the Chronicle of Mani (see Tozzer 1941:nn43, 45, 58, 62), contain surveys of the local area around the place of signing. Both Yaxkukul

documents and the chronicle of Chicxulub (Brinton 1882:193–215) contain historical narratives which legitimate a set of Maya nobles as being from that area. All of these documents repeatedly assert their own truth or contain oaths of truth.

The presence of a specific "now," "here," and "we" in the discourse, along with explicit opening and closing frames for the whole, and the assertion and display of truth are all features common to early Colonial documents produced in response to Spanish actions. As the Chronicle of Chicxulub describes plainly (Brinton 1882:213-15), the Maya understood that the López Ordenanzas required a new reckoning of space. Pech lords had received the official commission measuring out the boundaries of the area and participated in the dividing of the forest. Although it is primarily a historical narrative, not a land survey, the Chronicle of Chicxulub is told in the first person by Nakuk Pech, as well as being anchored to a here and now. These features of deictic grounding in the discourse are conspicuously absent from other types of native text, such as the Books of Chilam Balam (Edmonson 1982, 1986) and the Ritual of the Bacabs (Roys 1965). Although both of these contain segments of discourse in the first person, in both cases these are reports of speech, and the "I" is some quoted speaker, not the "speaker" or narrator of the work as a whole.

Finally, discourse directed to a Spanish audience, either to the king in the second person or to the official record without overt addressee, has a strong tendency to appear as part of an intertextual series. Thus, Yaxkukul documents 1 and 2 are clearly related in that they issue from the same place, just eight days apart; both describe the placement of boundary markers to indicate the limits of the forest; and although they do not bear the same signatures, many of their signatories

Table 7-1. Sixteenth-century official Maya documents consulted.*

Chicxulub chronicle (Brinton [1882]1969:189–215), part of a set of Documentos de tierras de Chicxulub, 1542, Chicxulub (Ceh Pech)

Yaxkukul document 1 (Barrera Vásquez 1984), April 30, 1544, Yaxkukul (Ceh Pech)
Yaxkukul document 2 (Martinez Hernandez 1926), May 8, 1544, Yaxkukul (Ceh Pech)

Letter of March 19, 1567 (described in Hanks 1986), Merida
Letters of February 11, 1567 (Zimmermann 1970:31–32), Merida
Letters of February 12, 1567 (Zimmermann 1970:31–32), Merida

Sotuta survey (Roys 1939:421–33), September 2, 1600, Yaxcaba (Sotuta)
Sotuto conciertos (Roys 1939:428–30), September 6, 1600, Yaxcaba (Sotuta)

Ritual of the Bacabs (Roys 1965), no date, no place
Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Edmonson 1986), no single date or place

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* Dates cited are the ones that appear on the documents. Most are disputed (see Hanks 1987:686f).

are clearly kinsmen in the Pech patriline. The Sotuta documents, partially reproduced in Roys (1939), are dated September 2 (document 1), September 6 (document 2), and September 6 (document 3), 1600. As in the case of the Yaxkukul series, the first document is the longest and most wide-ranging thematically, and the following ones appear to have been provided in order to reinforce its legitimacy. Curiously, the letters of 1567 also appeared in a series: seven similar versions of two main variants of a letter, dated February 11 and 12, 1567, respectively, followed by a longer and more encompassing letter dated March 19, 1567 (described in Hanks 1986). The appearance of these letters in a series was initially taken by scholars to indicate that they had been copied or otherwise faked. Viewed in light of the serial appearance of chronicles, it is tempting to suggest that this is a generic feature of early Colonial Maya productions. As I have suggested elsewhere (Hanks 1986:724), it is likely that this is an authenticating device, best understood in relation to the display of verisimilitude in the rhetoric of each text.

Verse Forms Addressed to the Spanish Crown

The first textual example is taken from a letter written in Maya, sent from Merida to King Phillip II of Spain, and dated March 19, 1567. The letter presents a broad-ranging description of the contemporary scene in Yucatan, focusing on the conduct of official representatives of the Spanish government and Catholic church and on the relation between them and the Maya ("we" in the letter). The exact circumstances under which the letter was composed are not known, although it was rendered in script by Gerónimo de Castro, royal scribe, and bears the signatures of twenty-six Maya nobles from the provinces of Ceh Pech, Ah Canul, Ah Kin Chel, Chakan, Campech, and Chakan Putun (see Roys 1943, 1957 for background). It is one in an intertextual series of eight Maya letters, all sent from Merida in the spring of 1567, all expressing devotion to the Franciscan fathers, in many of the same terms (see Hanks 1986 for fuller discussion). The March 19 letter contains a blend of rhetorically dense, persuasive language directed toward influencing Crown policy and relatively "standard" descriptive prose in which a narrative account of current affairs is presented. The first example, taken from the middle of the document, shows a prose statement of one of the communicative purposes of the letter—namely, to elicit the king's sympathy for the plight of the signatories. In the ten orthographic lines preceding the example, the Franciscan missionaries are praised for their good deeds in Yucatan and the misery and destitution of the Maya are described. Following line 114 is an endorsement of the present governor (don Luís Cespedes) and a re-

quest that a census be taken of the Maya, to show that they are numerous and in need of royal dispensation.[2] Abbreviations are listed in an appendix.

Example 1. Excerpt from letter of the Maya nobles to the crown, March 19, 1567 (Hanks 1986).

112.1 lai tah ok-l-al lic-il ca-mul-ok-tic
    Dm Part RN-sf-sf Aux-sf Apro-infx-V-trns-inc
    That reason we collectively weep ourselves
        ca-ba tech
        Apro-rflx Ipro
        to you
    Therefore we all cry out to you for mercy

112.2 ca a-Ca-b ca-ya-tzil
    Comp Apro-V-opt Apro-N-sf
    that you take our misery
    to take pity on us.

113.1 y-ok-l-al he tū ca-patan
    Apro-RN-sf-sf Dm Part Apro-N
    for this our tribute
        t-ac-yum-il-ob e
        Prep-Apro-N-sf-pl Trm
    to our lords
    For our tribute to our masters

113.2 y-et-el lic ca-Ca-ic tech e
    Apro-RN-sf Aux Apro-V-inc Ipro Trm
    and we give it to you
    and that we give to you,

113.3 chambel pak-bil tanam
    Adj V-prt N
    simple folded mantle
    is plain folded mantles,

114.1 hach muk-tzil lic-il u-tal
    Part Adj-sf Aux-sf Apro-V
    Intnsv tolerably it comes
    easy to come by

114.2 ma-ix-tab c-u-chic-t-a ho-il toon
    Neg-Conj-Part Aux-Apro-V-trns-sf N-sf Ipro
    and nowhere it castigates our heads
    and it's not punishing for us.

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[2] The orthography in examples is retained from the original sources, with the exception of a substitution of [C] in place of the "backward c" notation for the glottalized affricate corresponding to plain [tz], as in *Caic* 'give it' for what would be written *t'aáik* in modern orthography. Colonial orthographies are explained in Tozzer (1921:21). The format of examples is as follows: top line is original Maya, with morpheme boundaries indicated by hyphen; second line is grammatical breakdown to morpheme or word; third line is a quasi-literal gloss; and fourth line is a freer translation.

114.3 hach ah   num-ya-on
       Part Agtv V-N-Bpro
       Intnsv we are sufferers
       We're really suffering.

114.4 ma-bal u-bal   ca-ba /
       Neg-N Apro-N Apro-rflx
       nothing the thing of our selves
       We're destitute.

From the perspective of Maya literary style, this example illustrates relatively standard prose language, with little or none of the poetic parallelism that marks verse, to be shown subsequently. The purpose of starting with prose, rather than tightly structured verse, is to point up some relevant facts about the standard grammar of sixteenth-century Maya and to establish a base line against which the elaborations of verse can better be appreciated. In all examples, whole line numbers refer to the number of orthographic line in the original document or reproduction from which the example comes, and the fractional numbers have been introduced for the purpose of analysis. In the absence of parallelism across stretches of discourse, the segmentation of the original text into lines is purely heuristic, and has been done according to the following default guidelines. Where appropriate, one line equals one clause (lexical verb with its core noun phrases), as in 112.1, 112.2, 114.1, and 114.2. A line may fail to be a clause, but be a "heavy noun phrase," as in the nouns plus modifiers in 113.1 and 113.3. Connectives occur in clause initial position and therefore tend to occur initial in lines as well (112.1–113.2). Deictic particles (nominal demonstratives, locative deictics, presentative adverb) also mark grammatical boundaries appropriate to the beginning of lines, since they occur in initial position in major constituents, such as 'that' in 112.1. Other deictics occur in constituent or sentence *final* position, and may be used to indicate the end of a line, as does *e* in 113.1 and 113.2.

Like other Mayan languages, Colonial Yucatec has a number of relational nouns—that is, noun stems which are used in possessive constructions to indicate relations such as 'because', 'by', 'with', 'over', 'and', 'under', 'alongside'. This is the case with line 113.1, where *ok* is a relational noun root possessed by the third person *y-* and followed by the suffix *-ol* (actually -VI), meaning roughly 'it's cause/reason' and glossed 'for, because, on behalf of.' This connective is very common in narrative discourse and occurs even in discourse initial position. It is the same relational noun root in line 112.1 in the example, where it is preceded by the demonstrative particle(s) *lai tah*, rather than being possessed. The first word in 113.2 is another relational noun, based on the root *-et-*, which is used for conjunction ('and'), instruments, and accompaniment ('with'). Relational

expressions typically occur in possessed form, where the possessive pronoun (prefixal, or A set) cross-indexes the immediately following noun phrase (or sentence). 'Under it' appears as *y-an-al* 'it's- under', and 'under the house' as *y₋an-al le nah₍* 'it's₋ under the house₍'.

The structural regularity of relational expressions, in most cases [possessive pronoun-root N-VI suffix], is used as a phrasing device in Maya verse (cf. Fought 1985). For instance, a series of lines may begin with grammatically identical, semantically distinct, relational phrases and may, or may not, display other parallels, including rhyme, parallel syntax, and shared lexical items. The periodic recurrence of relational phrases contributes to the repetition of grammatical features across lines, reinforcing, or even determining the phrasing. Hence, a series of four lines such as "For W, by X and Y, because of Z" would show in Yucatec four grammatically parallel relational expressions in initial position of each constituent line.

Another feature of standard Yucatec that is elaborated in verse is plural marking. In standard Maya, plurality is marked on nouns, verbs, and adjectives by the morpheme *-ob*, the third person B set pronoun: singular reference is indicated by formal zero—that is, it is unmarked. Hence, *mac-ɸ* 'man (person)', *mac-ob* 'men (people)'. As is characteristic of privative oppositions in markedness, the zero form can be used to stand for the entire category; consequently, overt plural marking is grammatically ruled out or optional in some contexts. In fact, to my knowledge, plurality of reference is never obligatorily marked by the plural morpheme, but is most typically understood from context (see also McQuown 1960:237).[3] Overt plural marking is most likely to occur when the predicate is explicitly collectivized, as in *noh xib-tac-ob* 'they are (a collection of) elders'. In combination with quantifiers (e.g., "many," "few," "ten"), it is optional, even rare, *yab mac* 'many people', *cappel uinic* 'two men' (lit., 'two man'). Similarly, distributives which imply a plurality of referents nonetheless do not require overt plural marking, as in (modern) *ká'aká'a-tuúl kubin* 'Two-by-two he (they) go(es)'. Verbs, possessed nouns, and predicate nouns and adjectives indicate plurality of an associated noun phrase by the same morpheme, as in *yab mac₍ c-u-bin-ob₍* 'many men (they) go'. Theoretically, plurality could be indicated, therefore, on the noun phrases and all associated predicative elements in a sentence, with the consequence that a single sentence could contain numerous instances of the *ob* morpheme referring to the same (or overlapping) group(s) of objects. In practice, the opposite is true, and a plural interpretation is typically derived from some other aspect of the surround-

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[3] This statement bears on third person only. Number marking works differently in first and second person references.

ing discourse. In particular, it is rare in standard Yucatec to find two coreferential instances of the plural morpheme within a single (noncomplex) noun phrase or even a single clause. Hence, in lines 113.3–114.1 in example 1, there is no plural marking, but a plural interpretation is possible under which the noun phrase 'bundled mantles' and the verb 'they come' are semantically plural. The authors of the letter could have written *pakbi tanam ob ... u tal* or *pakbi tanam ... utal ob* as well as what they did write, *pakbi tanam ... utal.*[4]

In versified language, overt plural marking is inordinately common, sometimes occurring several times in a single clause. The recurrence of the morpheme *-ob* not only reinforces the grammatical parallelism of the lines but also contributes to rhyme, and may be further extended in alliterative series as well. This is another example of the selective elaboration in verse of a grammatically optional feature of nonverse language. It is typical of Yucatec formal language that it achieves aesthetic intensity by expansion and elaboration, not by contraction and restriction of linguistic resources. No single structure type, such as the couplet, will provide an adequate basis for Maya poetics.

The most noteworthy parallelism is in Yaxkukul document 1 and the letters of February (version 1) and March 1567. These originated from northern and western provinces, especially Ceh Pech, and display what appears to be an emblematic verse construction consisting of mutually reinforcing repetition of the plural morpheme (*ob*), quantitative equivalence of lines (six, seven, or eight syllables), alliteration, syntactic parallelism, and semantic parallelism (complementarity, near equivalence, part-whole relations). The discourse preceding and following this construction may or may not be marked by noteworthy poetic parallelisms, but in each case there is a relatively clean onset and coda to the verse series. In the letter of February 11, 1567, the parallelisms carry over six lines, and can be reasonably read as a couplet followed by a triplet and an isolated (dissimilar) line, or AABBBC (Hanks 1986:734).[5]

Example 2. Excerpt from letter to Spanish king, February 11, 1567 (Zimmermann 1970:32).

2.1 lai tah oklal
    Dm Part RN
    That reason
    For that reason

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[1]A singular interpretation is also possible in which *tanam* is read as a mass term, and 'bundled mantle' is like "stacked firewood" or "canned ham." In this case, the verb could not be pluralized and the equivalences cited would fail to obtain.

[5]This example and the analysis of it come from Hanks (1986:734ff), where it is more fully discussed.

2.2 c-ech   ah tepal e
    Part-Bpro Agt N   Trm
    you majestic one
    You who are Majesty,

2.3 bail-cun a   tum-tic
    V trns   Apro V trans
    make it thus you provide
    would that you provide

2.4 ychil au-ahau-l-il-ob
    Prep Apro-N-sf-sf-pl
    within your realms
    within your realms

2.5 y-ah   bebeç-ah-ul-ob,
    Apro-Agt V-sf-sf-pl
    the guides
    the ministers

2.6 ca   utz-ac u-tich-kak-t-ic-ob
    Comp V-opt Apro-V-N-sf-sf-pl
    that they hold forth fire
    in order that they might illuminate

2.7 y-et-el u-çaç-cun-ic-ob
    Conj Apro-N-caus-sf-pl
    and they make light
    and enlighten

2.8 y-et-el u-cam-beç-ic-ob
    Conj Apro-V-caus-sf-pl
    and cause to learn
    and teach

2.9 himac ma-bal y-ohmah-ob e
    Part   Neg-N Apro-V-pl Trm
    whosoever nothing has known
    whosoever knows naught

In example 2, beginning with line 2.4, there is a series of six lines, all measuring between six and eight syllables, all ending in *ob(e)*. The first two lines in the series (2.4–2.5) form a couplet on the basis of their identical ending *lob*, and of grammatical parallelism, both being possessed N stems with VI suffixes (*-il*, *-ul*). The end rhyme in *-ob* is carried through the next three lines (2.6–2.8). Looking at the beginning and middle of each line, 2.6–2.8 form a triplet distinct from the preceding couplet. Rather than possessed N's, they are all transitive verb stems inflected for third person plural transitive incompletive, [*u*–STEM-*ic-ob*]. Each is preceded by a connective. The final line in the series still shows *-ob*, in the same metrical position (seventh syllable in the line), but this time followed by the isolated terminal particle *e*. The particle brings the series to an abrupt close. The March 19, 1567, letter also breaks into verse at lines 52–53 and 54–55. The former is a single sentence stated in five lines, and the latter is four sentences

in four lines, all bound by verse parallelism, but analyz-
able as two couplets, AABB.

What makes these examples special is the degree of
verse parallelism they show. Phonological, grammati-
cal, and semantic redundancies are common in Maya
discourse, but they often fail to establish a clear poetic
phrasing. Patterns of recurrent structure at different
levels may fail to coincide, or do so only in part, and
no single verse series dominates the others. Edmonson's
observation that semantic couplets in Maya are usually
not accompanied by syntactic parallelism is a special
case of this point. It is relatively rare that parallelisms
at different levels coalesce into a unified construction.
Rather than encountering a single clear scansion, one
is forced to recognize a range of possible scansions,
corresponding to the different parallelisms in play.
Based on the recurrence of particles, we get one phras-
ing; on the recurrence of morphological structures,
another one; and on the semantics, yet another. Much
of the discourse in the chronicles, letters, and surveys
lacks significant parallelism and must be phrased on
the basis of defaults such as the ones proposed above
(see example 1). Thus, when a stretch of discourse shows
foregrounded parallel syntax, semantics, and sound
structure, all coinciding in a dominant phrasing, it is
noteworthy. Although it will take considerably more
research to demonstrate, it is likely that these compact
verse constructions are unique to the early letters and
surveys. They may represent early experiments in the
use of indigenous rhetorical devices to address Span-
ish officialdom.

Prose Cycles in the Yaxkukul Documents

Within prose language, there are various stylistic
alternatives, of which one is particularly noteworthy:
cyclic description.[6] Cyclic description is relatively free
of the line to line parallels that sustain verse. Instead,
the dominant device is periodic repetition, mostly in
fixed order, of selected grammatical forms. Any short
stretch of cyclic discourse in isolation can appear to
be merely linear description, but when placed within
the larger text, it emerges as part of a recurrent series
of lines. More like a periodic refrain than a poetic
parallel, this pattern can be represented as {ABCDE . . .
ABCDE . . . ABCDE . . . n}. In the following example,
taken from the Yaxkukul document 1, lines 186–190.2
and 191–194.2 constitute single cycles. This cyclicity
organizes the second half of the Yaxkukul document

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[6]This section draws heavily on Hanks (1987:674–75, 680),
where the Yaxkukul documents are analyzed and a relation
is posited between cyclic style and persuasive rhetoric. The
generalizations made here about the texts are the same, but
the examples are different.

1 (lines 111–284) exhaustively. New cycles begin at
lines 114, 119, 124, 131, 137, 143, 154, 163, 168, 175, 181,
186, 191, 195, 199, 203, 208, 216, 221, 230, 235, 240, 244,
248, 253, 259, 263, 267, 275, and 279 (Barrera Vásquez
1984:22–34).

Looked at as a whole, Yaxkukul document 1 has three
well-defined parts, (1) a declaration of the nature of the
document itself as an authentic *información [de] derecho*
"report of rights" (Barrera Vásquez 1984:line 17; part 1
is lines 1–110); (2) a detailed account of the lay of the
land and its subdivisions relative to landmarks (water
sources, hills, trees, *tzuc* markers) around the Chacnicte
well (lines 111–308); and (3) a public declaration of soli-
darity among the signatories (lines 309–483). The style
of the language in each of these three parts of the doc-
ument is different, with occasional verse constructions
in the first and third, but cyclic prose description in
the second.

Example 3. Excerpt from *Documentos de tierras de
Yaxkukul*, document 1 from Barrera Vásquez (1984:
27–28). Line numbers retained from Barrera Vásquez;
breaks adjusted to reflect structural parallels; analysis
and gloss by Hanks; ## inserted to mark end of cycle;
/in original; [chh] stands for "barred ch," the glottal-
ized affricate.

186-7   lakin-tan u-bin-el   layli nolo yn   lak e
        Adv-Adv Apro-V-sf Dm N   Apro N   Trm
        Eastfront go still my Nolo others
        Eastward they continue, my companions from Nolo

187-8   tzol tun bi/nel t-u-lac-al
        V   N V-sf   Adv
        count stone going all
        stone counting all the way

188-9   ca   kuchh-uc y-ok   chhen Kanpepen
        Comp V-opt   Apro-RN N   Name
        until arrive over the Yellow Butterfly well
        to Yellow Butterfly well.

190.1   ti   y-an   mul/tun i
        Part Apro-V N N   Trm
        There is stone mound there.
        There is a boundary stone there.

190.2   ca   man-ac ##
        Comp V-opt
        that they passed
        And they passed by it.

191-2   lakin-tan u-bin-el   lay ti   nolo yn lak e
        Adv-Adv Apro V-sf   Dm Part N Apro N Trm
        Eastfront go still Nolo my others
        Eastward they continue, my companions from Nolo

192-3   latulah u-kuchh-ul
        Adv   Apro V-sf

until they arrive
until they arrive

193   y-ok-ol   chhen cacabil utzte
       Apro-RN   N   Name
       above well of village utzte [uncertain]
       at the Utzte village well,

194.1 ti   y-an   pictun i/
       Part Apro-V N-N   Trm
       there is a boundary marker there.
       there is a boundary marker there.

194.2 ca   man-ac *##*
       Comp V-opt
       that they passed
       And they passed by it.

195   lakin-tan u-bin-el   layli nolo yn lak e [. . .]
       Adv-Adv Apro V-sf Dm N   Trm
       Eastfront go still Nolo my other [. . .]
       Eastward they continue, my companions from Nolo
          [. . .]

Although the cycles are clearly identifiable, they are
not all identical, varying somewhat in length, exact con-
tent, and order of elements. Each cycle begins with a
statement of the direction of motion, as in 186, 191, 195,
followed by description of the subjects conducting the
survey—the Nolo people. The internal composition of
cycles is fairly regular throughout the survey, but par-
ticularly so in this segment: (1) (inter)cardinal direc-
tion of motion in which the representatives of the nar-
rator ("I") are said to be proceeding while counting
boundary markers (lines 186, 191, 195); (2) name of the
next goal or landmark at which they "arrive" (lines
189, 193); (3) the assertion that there is a *multun* 'mound
of stones' or *pictun* 'boundary stone' at the landmark,
presumably authenticating the accuracy and propri-
ety of the survey as conducted.

There are variations in the text on this general cy-
clic pattern. For example, in line 187 within the first
cycle shown, the description of the surveyors' motion
is elaborated in a second partly parallel phrase, 'East-
ward they go, . . . counting stones they go'. This detail
is passed over in the following cycle, where we find
'Eastward they go, . . . until they arrive over Cacabil
Utzte well'. Similarly, in some cycles, in addition to the
stone marker at the landmark, there is said to be a
cross. The two are simply conjoined, as in 'Sicipach,
dependent of Yaxkukul, where there is a cross and a
mound of stones' (Barrera Vásquez 1984:26, lines
166–167). Naturally, the combination of cross and stone
marker was not found in all places, and, therefore, this
verbal elaboration is not typical of all cycles. The vari-
ation in such cases indicates that there are different
degrees of elaboration on a single cyclic pattern. A sur-

vey of the other cycles in this text indicates that there
are several patterns, not just one. As is often the case
in Maya discourse, we find a range of different stylistic
finalizations combined and sequenced within a single
work.

The order of appearance of the (inter)cardinal di-
rection terms in this survey provides another example
of variation within a pattern. Between lines 111 and 284
there are thirty prose cycles, each beginning with the
directional term. If we list the thirty terms in the order
of their appearance, the pattern is clear: the surveyors
started off heading westward (119–136), then proceeded
south (137–174), then east (175–220), then northeast by
north (221–235) then they 'returned' (*sutnac*) to the west
(240–258), then north by northwest (259–274), then west
(275–282) until they completed the perimeter by return-
ing to their point of departure. Just as one finds in
Maya ritual performance (Hanks 1984; Love 1986), this
is a counterclockwise progression ending in the cen-
ter from which it starts. Unlike ritual, the point of out-
set is westward rather than eastward.[7]

The stem *tzol* in line 187 is familiar from the calendri-
cal system called *tzolkin* 'day count' (see MacLeod, this
volume). It is a commonly encountered stem in both
Colonial and modern Maya texts and dictionaries, with
a range of meanings both verbal and nominal, includ-
ing 'count, order, series, succession, chronicle, expla-
nation, explain' (see, for instance, Barrera Vásquez et
al. 1980:863). *pictun* are 'boundary markers, regional
division markers' (Martínez Hernández 1929:folio 389r).
The narrator describes his action, then, as 'I go along
counting out boundary markers'.

Cyclic prose style foregrounds the iconic relation
between the discourse, moving through a series of reg-
ular cycles, and the actual act of walking the perimeter
of the area by following a series of boundary markers.
This act is what the discourse "counts out." It is not
accidental that this section of the document, which *ex-
ecutes* the counting out of boundary markers, is cast in
cyclic prose rather than verse. This is a reflection of
the more general tendency for all acts of ritually sig-
nificant "counting" in Maya to be done in predeter-
mined cycles (cf. Fought 1985).

This interpretation implies that the Yaxkukul land
document records a ritual (re)creation of social space
rather than a simple survey of geographic boundaries.
In the other land surveys, the surveyors are said to

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[7] Dell Hymes asked whether the number of elements in a
cycle or the number of cycles in a segment were significant,
and they may well be. When we count the number of cycles
intervening between changes in direction in the survey, we
find the following: three cycles westward; five cycles South;
nine cycles East; three cycles North by Northeast; four cycles
West; three cycles North by Northwest, and two cycles West.
The motivation for this sequence is unclear to me.

place, or *put down* boundaries markers in order to divide the land rather than count ones already there. This implies that the "survey" was a means of defining space, not merely describing it, by a process of counting out points on the perimeter in regular cyclic fashion. Barrera Vásquez's glosses reflect this active sense of counting as establishing order rather than merely cataloguing it.[8]

In all of the official documents, there is a recurrent emphasis on truth and the tie between actors and the spaces they inhabit (Chi [1582:231] states that public acts were performed under oath prior to the Conquest). Official documents are grounded in the context of their production, tied through signatures, dates and places to a deictic "we," "here," and "now." This indexical framing is typical of "official" discourse directed toward the Spanish rather than of native prophetic history or ritual curing. The Yaxkukul documents explicitly assert their own authenticity, certifying with signatures that the accounts are in fact what they appear to be (not just vehicles for some hidden agendas) and that what they state is true, not fabricated. (Compare Yaxkukul document 1 [Barrera Vásquez 1984:lines 61, 318, 359, 397, 428, 431]; document 2 [Barrera Vásquez 1984:91, 97]; Chicxulub *documentos,* sec. 40 [Brinton 1882:214–215]; Sotuta documents 2 and 3 [Roys 1939: 428, 430]). Similar assertions of truth are common in the letters of 1567. This concern with *true* description and *authentic* provenience stands apart from the merely descriptive content of the documents. It reflects the un-

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[8] There are significant parallels between the Yaxkukul survey and the Maya ceremonial circuit in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Edmonson 1986:lines 924–938). In the latter, a group of Maya nobles (including ritual specialists) make a walk from place to place along a circuit, stopping at a series of places to name them and perform other ritual enactments. Both illustrate the ordering of space by means of walking a perimeter. In the Chumayel (lines 927–934), this process of *tzol* is attributed also to the Catholic God (*ca yumil Ti Dios* 'Our lord in God') and associated with the creation of the world. However, in the Chronicle of Chicxulub (Brinton 1882:209), Naum Pech is said to have announced the arrival of the Christian God to the people of his area, and instructed them not to resist, by traveling *CuCucenil* 'from *tzuc* marker to *tzuc* marker'. When we view these examples side by side, it seems likely that the paths defined by series of boundary markers served as the channels through which ritually effective and politically authoritative power passed. Whatever the specific circumstances of composition of the Yaxkukul documents, they embody a form of discourse organization associated with the re-creation of space by an ordering process of *tzol* 'counting'. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to relate these discourse forms to the Maya calendar, it is obvious that a fundamental relation exists, given that stones were placed and counted as markers of time as well as space, and the prototypical exemplars of *tzol* 'counting' are the cycles of the calendar (cf. Fought 1985).

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certainty of the context and the necessity of projecting an image of verisimilitude. It shows, further, that credibility was a form of capital, an unsurprising fact given that the role of these documents was to create the record of Yucatan, a record that could subsequently be used to legitimate claims to land and rights.

Further rhetorical devices which indicate a directive, persuasive, or "authorizing" aim in the Maya documents include the following: (1) inclusion in the document of a testimony of truth by some recognized official(s) other than the primary authors, found in all of the land surveys and the letter of March 1567; (2) signatures of witnesses, implying public consensus on the contents of the document, found in all of the surveys and the March 1567 letter; (3) specificity of reference by naming lists of individuals and locations, displaying accountability to publicly verifiable facts, found particularly in the surveys and agreements. in the Chicxulub chronicle (sections 11, 32, 35, 39), and somewhat less in the March 1567 letter; (4) display of virtuosity in the stylization of the discourse through verse structuring in the letters (Hanks 1986:735), Yaxkukul document 1 (see example 4, above), and the Chronicle of Chicxulub (section 11 and see example 3, above), and cyclicity in the survey of Yaxkukul document 1; (5) the invocation of authorizing powers, both Spanish and Maya, through reference, found in all of the documents under study as well as in ritual language, both Colonial (Roys 1965) and modern.

Additional elements reflect a focus on persuading or securing the "uptake" of a specific addressee (human or divine). In the 1567 letters to the king, parts of the Chumayel, and parts of the Ritual of the Bacabs, imperative verbs and statements in the second person direct an addressee to act in a certain way. The justification for the request may be further spelled out. There is a recurrent appeal to intense affect, both positive and negative, in the addressers' relation to the addressees or to some state of affairs. In the letters, authors confess to past offenses against Catholic doctrine and express heartfelt remorse. Affect, confession, and remorse are also part of modern Maya shamanic prayer.

Looking back to Table 7-1, we can summarize the shared features of these texts. All but the Chronicle of Chicxulub show the following features: date and place of formulation, names of principal author(s) and witnesses are specified in the body of the text, along with signatures or a list of those responsible at the end. All of these works also have formulaic opening and closing routines, separating them clearly from any other discourse. The Yaxkukul and Sotuta land documents contain surveys formulated with iconic signs—cyclic prose in the former and use of graphic representation in the latter. The Yaxkukul documents and the Chronicle of Chicxulub contain historical narratives (of vary-

ing length) legitimating the identity of the principles as descended from the founders of their respective areas. Common to all of these documents, despite their generic differences, is the assertion and display of truth.

Sixteenth-century official Maya texts, therefore, show a variety of rhetorical and poetic effects characteristic of speech whose objective is to change reality, not just describe it. These apparently bureaucratic documents display a broad range of distinguishable styles. All of the texts are made up of a combination of unadorned prose description with variably elaborate verse parallelism. The most salient verse structuring of the corpus is found in Yaxkukul document 1 and the letters of 1567, authored by some of the same individuals, but penned by different scribes. In these texts, poetic parallelism is raised to the level of relatively bounded constructions, in which regular length and phonological and grammatical parallelism reinforce one another. Other, less full-blown examples show multiple parallelisms without any integrating structure. This results in discourse cohesion, but without any single dominant phrasing. Cyclic prose is a particularly good illustration of the ritual overtones of the language of the Yaxkukul survey. The fact of cyclicity is itself indicative of the activity of *tzol* 'counting out', analogous to the calendar. Furthermore, the direction of spatial progression obeys well-recognized conventions on ritual invocation. The merely referential appearance of the language in the chronicles is misleading when viewed in this broader context.

Cyclicity as a Rhetorical Device

There is another form of cyclicity attested in the prose of the March 19, 1567, letter to the king. Like the cycles in the Yaxkukul survey, this discourse shows the successive recurrence of an ordered series of lines. We can speak of this recurrence as "cyclic," insofar as the repeated lines form a series that it recapitulated, as in {1, 2, 3, 4, # 1, 2, 3, 4}. Nevertheless, the present examples differ from the cycles of ceremonial counting in several important respects. The most obvious is that the cycles recur just once instead of twenty or more times. This corresponds to the difference in genre between fully consummated *tzol* events in which space and time are constructed and the narrative description in the letters to the crown. Just before the lines in example 4, the March letter describes its purpose as *patcante t a xicin* 'recount to your ear', rather than *tzol*. This may have been a recognized form of advising or merely a way of directing the discourse to its addressee.[9] Whereas the cycles in *tzol* events are immedi-

ately adjacent to one another, one picking up where the preceding one leaves off, the cycles in the letter are not immediately contiguous to one another. Instead, they are separated by intervening text (three orthographic lines). Rather than {ABCD, ABCD, ABCD, ... n} in a continuous revolution, we find {ABCD, .. X .., ABCD}. Finally, the order of the lines themselves in the letter is apparently not motivated by any iconic relationship to nonverbal action, or to the distribution of objects in space. Rather, the theme of this example is the contrast between the Franciscan friars and the secular clergy. The friars are described first and in a positive light, and the clergy second and in a negative light.

If *tzol* events show the cycle in one of its maximal expressions, this example shows it in its minimal condition. A single, noncontiguous repetition serves as the frame within which two referents can be contrasted. Given this, we do not even recognize the first cycle until it is later recapitulated in the second. The parallelism emerges briefly, then dissipates. Lines 6–10 form the first cycle and, separated by intervening discourse, 13–14 form the second.

Example 4. Excerpt from letter of March 19, 1567, lines 6–14 (Archivos General de Indias, Mexico 356; whole numbers indicate orthographic lines, fractions introduced; transliteration and analysis by Hanks).

6.2 he tun ca-than lae
    Dm Part Apro-V Trm
    Here then we speak this
    Here then we speak:

7.1 hach kanan uuilal uay ti   provinçia yucatan
    Ints Part   Part Dloc Part N   Name
    Very neededhere in province Yucatán
    Truly there is need here in the province of Yucatan

7.2 Sant fran^co padre-s-ob toon
    N   N   N-pl-pl   IPro
    San Francisco fathers for us
    of Franciscan fathers for us,

8.1 uchebal y-al-ic-ob   u-than-il dios
    Comp Apro-Vtrns-inc-pl Apro-N-sf N
    in order that they say it   his word god
    in order that they say the word of God

8.2 heklai doctrina x̃piana u-kaba e
    Relpro N   Adj   Apro-N Trm
    which Christian doctrine is its name
    which is called Christian doctrine,

8.3 uchebal-ix y-al-ic-ob   missa
    Comp-conj Apro-Vtrans-inc-pl N

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[9]Note that the reference to the addressee's ear raises the question of orality and suggests that this letter was composed

to be received aurally. The presence of verse components based on sound structure reinforces this inference.

in order also they say it   mass
in order too that they say mass

9.1 ca-chant-e
Apro-Vtrns-opt
we attend
for us to attend.

9.2 ca-ix   utz-ac u-tzect-ic-on-ob
Comp-conj V-opt Apro-Vtrans-inc-Bpro-Bpro
that it be good they instruct us
        tac   uayil than e
        Part-AproN-sf N   Trm
        in our   here language
So that they might instruct us in this our language

10.1 u-than-il c-ah-çiçah-ul
Apro-N-sf Apro-Agt-V-sf
their language our born ones
the language of our fellow humans

10.2 heklai   evangelio u-kaba
Relpro N   Apro-N
which gospel its name
which is called the Gospel

10.3 t-u-men   español-es-ob e /
Part-Apro-RN N-pl-pl   Trm
by   Spaniards
by the Spaniards.

11–
12.3 [. . .]

12.4 ca-ix   u-thox-ah   ek padre-s-ob
Comp-conj Apro-Vtrns-pst Adj N-pl-pl
then   he distributed   black fathers
Then he distributed the black fathers

13.1 clerigos ucate   u-kaba-ob e
N-pl   Apro-N(?)Apro-N-plTrm
clerics [uncertain] their names
clerics, his lesser brothers(?) as they are called.

13.2 ca   u-uacun-ah-ob
Comp Apro-V-pst-pl
then he posted them[10]
Then he placed them

13.3 ti-canan-cah-ob
Part V-N-pl
as town guardians
as community priests

13.4 ychil ca-cah-al
Prep Apro-N-sf
inside our town
within our towns

13.5 y-al-ab-ob   u-than dios
Apro-V-opt-pl Apro-N N
they say   the word of god
(that) they might say the word of God

14.1 toon.
Ipro
to us
to us

14.2 uchebal-ix   y-al-ic-ob   missa
Comp-conj Apro-V-inc-pl   N
in order too they say mass
in order too that they say mass

14.3 ca-chant-e
Apro-Vtrns-opt
we watch it.
for us to attend.

14.4 tamuk u-tzect-ic-on-ob
Comp Apro-Vtrans-inc-Bpro-pl
while/whereas they instruct us
Whereas they instruct us

15.1 t-u-me   y-ah-tzol-than-ob
Part-Apro-RN Apro-Agt-V-N-pl
by   their speech-counters
through their interpreters

15.2 y-okl-al   ma-il y-oh-el-ob
Apro-RN-sf Neg-sf Apro-V-sf-pl
because   not they know
For they do not know

15.3 uay-il   than e
Dloc-sf N   Trm
of here language
the language of this place here.

The first cycle in example 4 occurs in just the same position in the March letter as does example 2 in the February one: right after the opening address frame of the letter. Like the February excerpt, this one provides the rationale for the letter as a whole; both letters request that the crown send more Franciscans in order that they convert the natives, and this request is justified by the great love and beneficence which the friars are said to share with the Maya.[11] Starting at line 8.1, the Franciscan mission in Yucatan is described in a triplet—"In order that A, in order that B, so that C." The first two members of the triplet have the same

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[10] The precise meaning of *uacunah* 'place' is uncertain. The Cordemex (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:908, 958) shows 'guide, accompany, substitute for, perform a role'. My gloss reflects the hypothesis that what is being described is the placement of the secular clergy, either in substitution for Fransciscans or in new locations not already serviced by the friars.

[11] The ironies of such a statement and the historical background of the letters are explored in Hanks (1986).

complementizer, followed by identical verb complexes (*yalicob* 'they say it') and distinct but semantically related direct objects, 'the word of God', 'Christian doctrine' and 'mass for us to attend'. The third line is partly parallel grammatically as well as semantically, but has a different purposive complementizer (*ca utzac* 'in order that', still used in modern Mayan), a different transitive verb of communication with same subject (*utzecticonob* 'they instruct us'), and a different but still related direct object, 'the language of our fellow humans which is called the Gospel by the Spaniards'. Overall then, this block of text presents the Franciscan mission in a series of three transitive predications linking the Maya to the friars by communication. In example 2, lines 2.6–2.8, the February letter also presents the friars' mission as a triplet, 'in order that they illuminate and enlighten and teach'. Semantically, the first two parts of this triplet are more similar, focusing on the metaphor of light, than either is to the third. Hence, all three strips of discourse illustrate triplets in which the third line is dissimilar, a pattern noted by Tedlock (1983) in Quiche verse.[12]

It is worth noting, in both of these cases, that the Maya texts show a fusion of apparently indigenous Maya literary style, with Franciscan metaphors. The triplets read like alternative *difracismos* of the Franciscan role in the conversion of the natives, showing a familiar range of parallel features found elsewhere in Mayan literature. These metaphorical descriptions of their practices, however, are stated in Franciscan terms. The Franciscans defined their role in the New World as bringing light to the darkness and teaching by way of *doctrina*, the sacrament of mass, and the study of the gospels. Under Franciscan guidance, the Indians would become perfect children of God, God of light (Phelan 1970). This new message is traditionalized by the verse form in which it is embodied.

In the lines intervening between the first cycle and the second one (beginning at 13.2), Bishop Francisco de Toral is said to have arrived in Yucatan, as ordained by the king, and to have brought and distributed 'black fathers clerics' in Maya towns. The second cycle is thematically equivalent to the first, in that it describes the mission of the church ministers as 'saying the word of God to us, saying the mass for us to attend and instructing us'. At a gross level of structure, the triplet is the same as the one describing the Franciscans; two instances of the verb "to say" with coreferential sub-

ject markers, the same set of three referents as direct objects. However, this overt sameness is only a framework within which to oppose the so-called "black fathers" and the Franciscans.

Much of the letter is devoted to a harsh and relentless criticism of the seculars, formulated as the negative opposite of the benevolent, loving, enlightened friars. One recurrent theme in this critique is the inability of the seculars to speak Mayan, to communicate with the natives at all, contrasted with the Franciscan virtuosity at Mayan language. This passage is the first introduction of this theme, in lines 9.2 and 14.4–15.1: the Franciscans instruct the Maya in 'this our language', whereas the black fathers instruct 'through their interpreters'. The contrast is foregounded by the parallel between the two cycles up to this point, as in the pattern {ABC, ... ABD}. The unstated but unmistakable message is that the seculars don't speak Mayan. As of line 15.1, this is an inference based on the rhetorical contrast with the Franciscans, along with the assumption that if they did know Mayan language they would teach in it.

Hence, Franciscan practice, as viewed by the friars themselves, provides the standard against which the seculars are judged. This judgment is executed in a description of their conduct and relation to the Maya, as the point-by-point opposite of the friars. The device of cyclic parallelism, with three lines per cycle, is used to foregound the opposition in its first introduction. From the perspective of the range of contructive principles in Maya discourse, what is most interesting about this example is that the parallel series are nonadjacent. This illustrates a general characteristic of Maya style: namely, that parallelism *emerges* at different "rates" as different texts unfold. Otherwise discursive segments of prose commonly turn out to be elements in parallel constructions, but this becomes obvious only later in the discourse when they recur in altered form. Similarly, immediately adjacent lines may bear no obvious syntactic or semantic parallelism, but be woven together in a series of alliterations or purely superficial similarities, as in the vowels in lines 13.2–14.1: au, wa, u, a, o // i, a, a, a, o // i, i, a, a, a // ya, a, o, u, a, yo // o.

ORGANIZATION OF A RITUAL PRESCRIPTION

The final example to be presented here is taken from Roys's (1965:99) Ritual of the Bacabs. This represents a distinct genre of discourse, with a distinct style and tact. Roys calls these texts "incantations," but it would be more accurate to say that they consist of a numbered series of "episodes," each of which describes the cure for a specific illness. Many episodes do in fact contain incantations in the form of quoted speech which is to be performed by the curer as part of the cure. Unlike

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[12] This implies that a block of verse, such as a triplet, can be repeated at selected intervals in a discourse, thus embedding it in a kind of minimal cyclicity. Verse forms like the couplet and triplet should be viewed in relation to prose forms like the cycle, since they obviously combine in the discourses under study.

the sixteenth-century official documents, these do not describe any addressee, nor any speaker (aside from the generic one of the reported speech), nor a "here," nor any specific human actors. There are no signatories. These obvious contrasts in format reflect the distinct frameworks and goals of the discourses. Whereas the official documents made specific claims to representing, or creating, space and time in Colonial society, the ritual texts are anonymous, timeless, and made to be spoken by any qualified reader. The power of the ritual discourse is in its ability to assimilate the specific condition of an ill person to a scheme of generalized axiomatic categories, including typologies of illnesses, spirits, cardinal directions, and body parts. The official discourse works in the opposite direction, making specific that which is general, by fixing the coordinates of space, time, and recent experience. Official language expresses the limited perspectives of interested parties, its authors, whereas ritual speech is universal and anonymous, or at least presented that way.

Example 5. Section 24, Ritual of the Bacabs (from Roys 1965:99; p. 143 in original ms. Line numbers introduced by Hanks).

1 he ca bin lub-uc tancas y-ok-ol   uinic-ce
   DM Part Aux V-opt   N   Apro-RN-sf N Trm
   the will fall   paralysis upon human
   When paralysis befalls a person,

2 ca   chha-b-ac ye ci y-an   ych lum tam-il e
   Comp V-psv-opt N N Apro-V PrepN   Adv-sf Trm
   be taken thorn of sisal it is in ground deep
   a sisal thorn is to be taken from deep in the ground,

3 ca   tok-ok ti   can-ppel ye bin
   Comp V-opt Prep Num-NC N Part
   be lanced with four thorns, it is said,
        u-xay   u-chi
        Apro-N Apro-N
        its corner his mouth
   *the corners of his mouth are to be lanced with four thorns
        by custom.*

4 taban-tac t-u-bac-el   u-pach
   Part-Part Prep-Apro-N-sf Apro-N
   [uncertain] at its bone his back
   Along with his spine

5 luk-ul t-u-theth-e
   V-sf Prep-Apro-N-sf
   leaving at his hip
   from his hip

6 luk-ul t-u-pukzik-al
   V-sf Prep-Apro-N-sf
   leaving at his heart
   from mid chest,

7 luk-ul t-u-ni   y-oc
   V-sf Prep-Apro-N   Apro-N
   leaving at its tips his leg
   from the tip of his foot.

8 he ca bin dzoc-oc u-tok-ol   e
   Dm Part Aux V-opt   Apro-V-sf Trm
   the will finish he be lanced
   When he has been lanced,

9 ca   man-s-ab-ac   y-ok-ol
   Comp V-trans-psv-opt Apro-RN-sf
   be passed over him
   let there be passed over him

10 hun-ppel chac-bi ha y-ok-ol
   Num-NC V-prt   N Apro-RN-sf
   one   boiled water over him
   one (container of) heated water over him

11 y   hun-pul zil/ tun-t-ab-il   y-al-il
   Apro(RN) Num-NC ? V-trans-psv-opt-sf Apro-N-sf
   Conj one pour moderated water
   and one pour of tepid water,

12 pay be   ti   y-oc   uinic
   Adv   Prep Apro-N N
   initially/before on his leg person
   first on the person's leg.

13 he u-than-il lae
   Pres Apro-N-sf Trm
   Here its speech
   Here is what is said:

14 la   tun bacin lub-i hadz u-hol   tancas e
   Part Part Part V-pst V   Apro-N N   Trm
   Oh! enough then! fell down strike his head
       paralysis
   Enough then! Paralysis struck down on the head.

15 lub-i y-ok-ol   sac uinic tun
   V-pst Apro-RN-sf Adj N   Part
   fell down upon white person then
   down upon the white person.

16 sac-al yk y-ik-al   lub-ic
   Adj-sf N Apro-N-sf Vb-perf
   white wind its force has fallen[13]
   White wind was the force in which it descended.

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[13] If we compare this line to lines 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, and 30, it appears that a spirit causing illness has at least five identifying components: an *ikal* 'force, momentum, wind', a *wayasbah* 'realization, manifestation in a given context', a *che* 'tree (perhaps a perch)', and a *aban* 'bush', and a *sikin* 'undoing'. In line 16, the *-ic* suffix on the verb is glossed as perfective, but may be motivated by the adverbial role of the phrase preceding it. To descend in the force of "white wind" is a manner of descending.

17 dza-ex   tun a-than y-ok-ol
   V-imp-Bpro Part Apro-N Apro-RN-sf
   Give then your speech over him
   So place your word upon him,

18 ca   c-man-s-ex   c-ex   can-tul
   Comp Apro-V-caus-Bpro Part-Bpro Num-NC
   that we-you make it pass you who are four
     ti   ku
     Prep N
     of god
   that we together might make it pass, you who are Four
   Gods.

19 c-ex   can-tul ti   bacab e
   Part-Bpro Num-NC Prep N   Trm
   You who are four of Bacab
   you who are four Bacabs.[14]

20 ek-el   yk u-uayasba
   Adj-sf N Apro-N
   black wind its realization
   Black wind was its manifestation[15]

21 ca   tal-i y-ok-ol   ek uinic tun
   Comp V-pst Apro-RN-sf Adj N   Part
   when it came upon black man then
   when it descended upon the black man.

22 he tun bacina can-te   ynu-al-ic
   Part Part Part   Num-NC Apro-V-inc
   But then better four times I say it
   But then better four times I say it

23 ca   t-in-hadz-ah   max u-che
   Comp Aux-Apro-V-sf N   Apro-N
   then I struck it who its tree
   when I struck the one who is its tree

24 max y-aban
   N   Apro-N
   who its bush
   the one who is its bush.

25 sac-al copo uy-aban
   Adj-sf N   Apro-N
   white copo its bush
   White copo is its bush

26 chac-al copo y-aban
   Adj-sf N   Apro-N
   red copo its bush
   Red copo is its bush.

27 lic   tun bacin ynu-al-ic   u-sikin / hun-ten-ili
   Part Part Part Apro-V-inc Apro-N Num-NC-sf
   then how so? I say its undoing once and for all
   So how then I say its undoing once and for all.[16]

28 bin han-eb-al hu-mac ti   kin hun-ten-ili
   Aux V-opt-sf Num-NC Prep N Num-NC-sf
   it will eat throughout the day once and for all
   It will eat throughout the day once and for all

29 bin uk-ul-n-ah-eb-al hu-mac ti   akab xan
   Aux V-sf-pst-sf-opt-sf Num-NC Prep N   conj
   it will drink throughout the night also
   it will drink throughout the night also.

30 lay u-sikin lae Amen
   Dm Apro-N Trm Interjection
   that its undoing Amen.
   That is its undoing. Amen.

The discourse illustrated in example 5 comprises the entire episode numbered XXIV in Roys's reproduction of the manuscript. A cursory glance at the text indicates some regular recurrences of demonstrative and connective particles in initial position in lines 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 18, 21, 22, 23, and 30. This is a familiar feature found also in the official documents. Line 13 presents the reported speech directly to the reader, 'Here is what is said', after which it is reproduced as quotation. The quoted utterances continue at least until line 29, which is the second part of a couplet in which two pairs of terms, 'eat-drink' and 'day-night' are combined. I believe that line 30 can be read either as part of the quoted speech, with 'Amen' marking the close of the incantation or as following the end of the quote, which on this

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[14] The epithets in lines 18 and 19 are coreferential, as I understand the text. The Bacabs are well known as the four brothers who hold up the sky, separating the two planes, sky from earth (Morley and Brainerd 1983:465). *ku* can be glossed 'god (class uncertain)' or possibly 'temple (where adoration takes place)' (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:416). The epithet *cantul ti ku* is parallel to the well-known *bolon ti ku* 'nine Gods (of the underworld)' and *oxlahun ti ku* 'thirteen Gods (of upperworld)' (Morley and Brainerd 1983:466), with the exception that it has the classifier *tul* (animate) inserted between the numeral and the preposition *ti*. Line 18 then identifies the addressees as "four Gods" and line 19 specifies the class as "four Bacabs." This phrasing is not the standard one for quantified nouns, which would be simply *cantul bacab* 'four Bacabs'. In this context, it is motivated by the phrasing in the preceding line, of which it is a verse parallel.

[15] (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:917) glosses *wayasba* as *'figura, parábola, opinión o calidad en que uno se tiene'*. In this context, it says that the malady came down upon the sick person in the form of "black wind."

[16] At this point the translation becomes difficult and I am uncertain of the gloss of the sentence initial particles, even though they are all in the dictionaries (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:204, 28, 192). Also, the gloss 'undoing' for the term *sikin* is a guess based on *sik'* 'dishevel, tussle' (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:728). In this context, I take it to be a reference to the ritual effect of the prayer in curing the illness caused by the spirit.

reading ends with the conjunction *xan*. In the second case, line 30 is part of the larger discourse frame, bringing it to a close by summarizing both quoted and direct discourse: 'that's it'. In the first case, it ends the incantation by a similar reference to prior discourse, but only within the quote.

All thirty lines in example 5 are naturally divisible into blocks introduced by bundles of particles. In the direct portion of the discourse, these bundles occur at lines 1, 8, and 13. That line 8 in fact marks a significant boundary in the text is also indicated by the preceding triplet 'from his hip, from mid chest, from the tip of his foot'. Note that this triplet reproduces the familiar pattern of the dissimilar third line, in this case ending in a nested possessive structure (lit., 'its tip his foot') instead of a simple one. Against this background, the particles in 8 make an abrupt, foregrounded transition. Furthermore, 8 is parallel to 1, which begins the episode: the same three particles followed by an intransitive verb in the optative stem shape begin the lines, and there is partial end rhyme between *yokol . . e* and *tokol e*. Within the first block, the situation is posited to be *pasmar* which Roys translates as 'paralysis' (I am doubtful of this gloss, since *pasmar* is also used in current shamanic curing to describe a state of fever or systemic disequilibrium brought on by the shock of hot and cold qualities in the body. Paralysis is not one of its common symptoms). The verticality inherent in the description of *tancas* as descending upon a man is elaborated in the following line, which ends 'deep in the ground'. There is a somewhat minor verse series linking the verb complexes in the first three lines, all in the optative stem with the complementizer *ca*. This is left unreinforced, however, since the last half of each line is distinct.

Lines 3–7 all contain phrases introduced by the preposition (or relational particle) *ti*, and there is a progressive increase in the parallelism as one proceeds through the lines: 4–7 show the reduced form *t-* prefixed to body part nouns possessed by the sick person; 5–7 also begin with the derived form *lukul* 'coming from', in addition to sharing *t-* and possessive structure. Thus, the series of particle phrasing, syntactic parallelism, and lexical parallelism combine gradually to a crescendo at the end of the series, where they all end at once.

Whereas lines 3–7 describe the bleeding of the patient, 8–12 describe how the patient should be bathed in hot and then tepid water. The sequence of lancing and bathing, as well as the serial combination of hot and cold, are common elements in modern Maya shamanic practice. In light of current practices (outlined partly in Hanks [1984]), it is likely that *tancas* '*pasmar*' is a hot illness which is allowed to ventilate through lancing and which leaves the body in a state of dangerous overheat. The hot bath would stabilize the heat, and the tepid one moderate it. Beyond the negligible parallelism of verb complexes in lines 8–9, and some euphony in 11, there is no noteworthy verse structuring in this block. Thematically, it completes the preparations for the performance of the ritual discourse, starting in line 14.

Particle phrasing continues in the incantation as the primary segmenting device at lines 14, 22, and 27, all beginning with the bundle {*la, he, lic*} *tun bacin(a)*. Each of these three blocks displays internal parallelisms. The first creates the addressee of the incantation, by overt second person address and directives (17–19). The particles *la tun* (*bakin*) are glossed by Barréra Vásquez et al. (1980:44) as an interjection of pain or admiration, and might be rendered more idiomatically here as '*Aáy! Basta pues!*'. The best overview of particle compounding in Colonial Yucatec Maya is McQuown (1960:242–47). Following the directives, the addressees are honored with epithets 'You who are four gods, you who are four Bacabs'. This dual nomination of the addressees is cast in a canonical couplet, which suggests that the epithets are coreferential, so that the four gods *are* the four Bacabs. Like the description of the illness at the outset of the text, this ritual speech describes the illness of *tancas* as falling down upon the victim, 'the white person', 'struck down on the head'. The opposition between the black of the sickening wind and the white of the victim is undoubtedly motivated by the symbolism of color, in which black is associated with west, death, underside, and so forth, and white with north. Color coordinates recur at lines 20, 25, and 26, but their specific values in this discourse remain obscure to me.

The second block (22–27) presents the incantation itself in the performative formula 'But then better four times I say it', which picks up on the quadripartite distribution of the Bacabs. Lines 23–24 make up a couplet grammatically and appear to reflect the pair 'tree-bush', which may in turn be emblematic of the sickening spirits. The shaman, or curer, strikes the tree and bush as the spirits strike down on the victim. The bush is then said to be 'white copo, red copo'. The couplet in 23–24 shows a familiar elision of the verb complex in the second part (giving 'I struck the one who is its tree, *I struck* the one who is its bush', with the italicized material deleted). In 25–26, however, even the identical material is repeated rather than being deleted. The reason for this discrepancy is probably that elements are prone to elision when in leftmost position in the line and are not deleted when to do so would result in a fragment rather than an entire constituent. Norman (1980:395) derives canonical couplets in Quiche by a copying rule, which takes a single lexical entry consisting of the paired items, say [*sacal copo$_N$, + chacal*

copo$_{N_2}$], and copies in the identical material (*uyaban* or *copo uyaban*). This results in Quiche examples like 'It echos in the forbidden tree, *it echos in the* forbidden vine', where the italicized material would be inserted at the left of the second-pair part (forbidden vine) by copying the material to the left of the first part. In the current example, *copo yaban*, is repeated to the right, not the left, of the second-pair part, thus suggesting a different process than the Quiche rule. In any case, identical repetition is generally avoided in Yucatec, as in the nonrepetition of 'when I struck' in the couplet ending at line 24.

The final block begins at line 27 with the framing of the entire invocation as 'I say its undoing' (?), evidently a veiled reference to the effectiveness of the invocation in moving or countervailing the spirits by speaking them. The same expression *usikin* recurs in line 30 as the final framing of the text. Its precise meaning is uncertain to me. Within this outer frame which specifies the category of the invocation, there is an inner couplet (28–29) which describes the event in the intriguing but opaque trope, 'it will eat throughout the day . . . it will drink throughout the night'. The verbs are both optative stems governed by the auxiliary element *bin*, a future whose precise connotations are unclear to me. The pairing of day and night could well be a metonymic emblem of time, and the one of eating and drinking a reference to ritual offerings or other nourishment, but these notions are undemonstrated.

This example adds several more constructive principles to the Maya system of style. The progressively more compact parallelism in lines 3–7, reaching a peak at the very end is a type of construction unattested, to my knowledge, in the official documents from which we began. The appearance of reported speech, in the form of direct quotation, sets this discourse apart from the letters, surveys, and accords. Quotation is encountered in parts of the books of Chilam Balam, and in other historical "chronicles," but not in the official documents I have examined to date. The forms of address embodied in the reported speech reproduce the primary address to spirits verbatim, and therefore provide an objective document of the evaluative characteristics of the spirits. For instance, they are nominated in the 'four Gods, four bacabs' couplet in 18–19, similar to the way the Spanish king is nominated throughout the official letters as *tech cech noh ahau ah tepal* 'You you (who are) great lord, majesty', or some variant of this (Hanks 1986:731 ff). On the other hand, the mode of address in the ritual discourse differs starkly from that in the official documents, in that it starts out in bald directives: 'So place your word upon him, that we together might make it pass', whereas official discourse is less coercive in its rhetoric. The inclusive first person in line 18 really puts the practitioner and the spirit addressees on equal footing in achieving the cure. None of the letters to the king, for instance, shows such an equalizing speech tact.

Interestingly, the means of cure is to lower the spirits' word onto the patient, a description which rests on the same vertical principle shown in the first block above (see also Gossen 1974a, 1974b; Hanks 1984). The word laid down is evidently the one reported in lines 22 and 27, which implies that within the quoted invocation there is a further embedding of quoted speech that belongs to the spirit addressees. The performing curer is in a mediating position linguistically, in that he is the speaker reported to be uttering the word ("*I* say its *sikin*"), which nonetheless gets its effectiveness from the spirits to whom it belongs. A similar two-part definition of the speaker obtains in the surveys, where one group of nobles (primary "we") is said to have published the survey in front of witnesses, who lent their names to the document, and thereby became joint authors in the event. Such events, in which a group of actors shares responsibility and authorship of the act, are what Hancher (1979:12) called "collective." What is distinctive about the ritual invocation is that the spirit addressees are made part of the collective "we," a form of persuasion, whereas in official discourse the indigenous authors remain distinct from their superordinate addressee (crown or the bureaucracy).

CONCLUSION

It may appear ironic that a study focused on early Colonial official documents is used as the basis for proposals bearing on Maya literary history. These bureaucratic documents are all tainted with Spanish and especially Franciscan features, and were all produced in response to events in the Colonial context. But there is no language without style, and historical poetics cannot rule out persuasive, officializing acts, such as surveys and appeals to higher authority, while focusing on more recognizable ritual or narrative genres. In formulating these documents, the Maya adapted and fused stylistic and rhetorical principles from their own cultural tradition with new ones introduced by the Spanish. The hybridization is indigenous even if the addressee and, therefore, much of the rhetoric are not. In the historical study of Maya discourse systems, it is essential to move beyond the standard icons of indigenous myth, prophetic history, and ritual, in order to come to terms with the grounding of the Maya system in the post-Conquest social world. As a matter of principle, the structure of the works themselves takes precedence over the sorting of their features into a Maya and a Spanish pile. When we look at examples of such documents, their clear aesthetic regimentation bears

out the point empirically, and they are recognizably Maya improvisations.

Improvisation is one of the key phenomena in the study of discourse systems. From the perspective of the event of communication, actors must always improvise their utterances, if only to the extent of appropriately adapting available templates to the situation at hand. In early Colonial contexts especially, institutional and conventional structures undergo more or less radical transformations, like the ones announced in the López Ordenanzas for the conversion of Yucatan (Cogolludo 1688:bk. 5, sec. 16–19, Tozzer 1941:71, n318). These changes make it unavoidable that actors manipulate, adapt, and transform conventional resources in the course of action, since the resources themselves are in question. From the perspective of the literary tradition, improvised discourses show the application of constructive principles to new sets of circumstances. As Tynianov (1924) observed long ago, poetic principles are most clearly studied in their minimal conditions, rather than in maximally versified language, in which numerous factors reinforce. coincide with, and obscure the effects of given features. The political and bureaucratic demands of Colonial Yucatan provided a field for the production of such "minimally literary" discourse, along with some maximal examples as well.

Looking across all of the examples, there are a number of immediately recognizable features which are reproduced widely in Maya discourse. These include particle phrasing, the elaboration of syntactic and semantic couplets, triplets and more intermittent parallelism, and the repetition of the plural morpheme *ob* as a phrasing device. More interesting are the features indicative of one-time productions. The iconicity of counting out boundary stones while surveying the land in response to the López Ordenanzas is one example. The unquestionably indigenous activity of *tzol* 'counting', with its inherent cyclicity, is applied to the geography of Ceh Pech province, in accordance with the counterclockwise order of ritual invocation. Yet this is done in response to the legal exigencies of the Spanish government. Whereas other surveys contain lists and some evidence of cyclic enumeration, none that I have seen displays the intensity or regularity of part 2 of Yaxkukul document 1. Cyclic counting in discourse relies on the iconic relation between the text and that which it represents.

In the March 1567 letter, there is another kind of cyclicity which is not iconic, but which consists of the repetition in serial order of a three-part description of the Catholic mission in Yucatan. The cycles are discontinuous, unlike counting, and the images Franciscan rather than traditional Maya. The use of the triplet here may be motivated at least partly by the Franciscan teaching of the sign of the cross and the trinity. The use of

verse constructions in the 1567 letters and Yaxkukul document 1 is another improvisation. In these constructions, four, five, or six lines of regular length are unified by mutually reinforcing phonological, grammatical, and semantic parallels. There is ample evidence of rhythm and metrical regularity, as in examples 2 and 4, if not of rhyme or meter as fixed structures.

A final set of apparently new devices resulting from the exigencies of the Colonial context are the serial production of works, the use of a whole range of authenticating devices to display the legitimacy of the authors' identities and expression, and the introduction of a first-person narrator into Maya discourse. The letters of February 1567 consist of two very similar but not identical texts, each of which was sent in multiple copies to the crown—at least four copies of version one, and two of version two, all dated February 11 or 12. Each copy has its own distinct set of signatories. The Yaxkukul survey published by Martínez Hernández (1926) is dated May 8, 1544, and the survey published by Barrera Vásquez (1984) is dated April 30, same year. The texts are thematically identical and purport to survey the same perimeter around Yaxkukul, but the signatories are distinct and so are some of the locations cited as boundary markers. In the Sotuta series, all three from Yaxcaba, the first is considerably longer than either of the following two, and is dated four days earlier than them. Labeled *concierto* and *otro concierto*, the "agreements" bear different names as authors and witnesses and cite different places as constituting the boundaries of "here" (it is unclear to me whether these other boundaries were contradictions or complements to the ones cited in the first survey).

The emerging pattern of producing several responses to a Spanish interlocutor seems to have sustained two modes of collective action. The one most evident in the letters was the display of consensus among a large number of individuals, by multiple signed reproductions of the same or similar discourse. In the surveys, the discrepancies in the accounts seem to indicate that serial production was a vehicle for contradictory or at least contravening voices struggling to assert themselves. In both cases, the cosigners of each individual document displayed their alignment with each other by joining their names in authorship. Thus, it appears that the social field of collective action helped give rise to an apparently new form of intertextuality.

Each of the documents, including the letters, asserts its own veracity and legitimacy as fact. The concern with authenticity is ubiquitous in these discourses, and gave rise to format features such as signatories, witnesses, specification of date and place of promulgation, and the invocation of Spanish officials. All of these anchor the accounts to a determinate event context,

making the texts themselves accountable in the sense of being within the responsibility of named principals. These authorities, and the particular places, events, and relations to which they refer, are all further legitimated by the display of consensus and by the precedent set by the documents. Chi (1582) states that oaths were uttered in public before witnesses as a form of contract in pre-Conquest Yucatan, which suggests a possible precedent for some of the Colonial devices mentioned. Still, the terms of legitimation were in dispute in the new colony, and the way the Maya authenticated themselves and their claims was oriented, at least in part, to the dominant Spanish addressee.

The requirement that official documents be attached to responsible authors in the Colonial bureaucracy is reflected in the emergence in these texts of an explicit "we," or sometimes "I." Although there are noteworthy segments of the Chilam Balam texts, and even the so-called Ritual of the Bacabs, that are cast in the first person, these are, to my knowledge, all quoted speech. Like example 5 above, the "I" may be an empty node representing the role assumed by any speaker who per-

forms the text, in which case it is an anonymous first person. In the *katun* accounts of the Chilam Balam texts, actors are cited by name, and their words sometimes presented in quotation, as in the reproductions of prophetic address (Edmonson 1982:34, line 577ff). Here the quoted speech is attributed to someone quite distinct from the voice of the narrator. The absence of determinate individual speakers "telling" the katun accounts is an important part of their universal character. They purport to recount *What Happened*, not what happened from a defined perspective. The engagement of Maya nobles in the Colonial society entailed the creation of new forms of address and the transformation of linguistic style and practice. That situational innovations were nonetheless fundamentally indigenous is evidenced in the powerful continuities in Maya style, both across the language family and through post-Conquest history. As the embodiment of a discourse tradition, these continuities are not formal structures, but are schematic resources and constructive principles that endure precisely because they do not remain quite the same.

APPENDIX: Abbreviations

Adj	adjective		Num	numeral
Adv	adverb		opt	optative
Agt	agentive nominalizer		Part	particle
Apro	A set pronoun (prefixal)		perf	perfective
Aux	auxiliary to verb		pl	plural
Bpro	B set pronoun (suffixal)		Prep	preposition
caus	causative		Pres	presentative
coll	collectivizer		prt	participal
Comp	complementizer		pst	past
Conj	conjunction		psv	passive
Dloc	deictic locative		Relpro	relative pronoun
Dm	demonstrative		rflx	reflexive
imp	imperative		RN	relational noun
inc	incompletive stem shape		sf	stem formative
infx	infix		trns	transitive
ints	intensive		Trm	terminal particle
Ipro	independent pronoun		V	verb
NC	numeral classifier		(·)	morpheme boundary
Neg	negative		(/)	slash marking line break in original

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