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Primus inter pares: The Ruling House of Cocom

Resumen: En este artículo la autora cuestiona la importancia exagerada que se le atribuye a los Xiu en varias fuentes etnohistóricas, en comparación con la forma en que el linaje de los Cocom, igualmente importante, aún preeminente, está relegado a un segundo plano. Se examinan las razones históricas para explicar la ascendencia de los primeros y el descuido de los segundos bajo el gobierno español. También se examina de nuevo la vieja enemistad entre los dos linajes y el episodio de Hunac Ceel en varios de los Libros de Chilam Balam. Finalmente, se presenta nuevos datos sobre los Cocom provenientes de manuscritos inéditos.

Summary: In this article the author takes issue with the exaggerated importance attributed to the Xiu in ethnohistorical sources, in contrast with the way in which the equally important, even preeminent, lineage of the Cocom is relegated to a secondary role. Historical reasons are examined to account for the ascendancy of the former and neglect of the latter under Spanish rule. A new look is also taken at the age-old enmity between the two lineages, and the episode of Hunac Ceel in various of the Books of Chilam Balam. In addition, new genealogical data from unpublished documents is presented on the Cocom.

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History is supposed to render a true account of events that transpired in the past, but it is a truism that such accounts are only as good as the historians who render them. As all else, they are subject to interpretation, often colored by bias, political or propagandistic intent and so forth. In the best of cases, such tendencies are kept to a minimum, so that a rather accurate picture is presented, while in the worst, they can lead to a skewed version of events. In this article we will examine an instance in which a native informant (Gaspar Antonio Xiu) was in an ideal position to influence and alter the historical record, glorifying his own lineage and downplaying the role of his adversaries, the Cocom.

One is struck by the black-and white picture painted of the two lineages. The Xiu are generally depicted in positive terms: mainly from the Spanish vantage point as early allies and among the first converts to Christianity, and as “victims” of Cocom “treachery” in the Oztamal incident. Yet, by contrast, history renders a neutral account of the Xiu uprising against the ruling Cocom and consequent destruction of Mayapan. It does not consider it “treason”, but glosses it over by the apparent justification offered by the Xiu that the ruling Cocom was a tyrant and had made slaves of his people¹.

The Cocom, on the other hand, suffer from a negative historical image; as cruel and vindictive enemies of the Spaniards (for example, in the description of the Great Maya Revolt);² late to accept Spanish overlordship or Christianity, and in the proceedings of the *auto da fe* in Mani, as apostates, idolators and sacrificers (Scholes/Adams 1938). Later attempts to throw off the Spanish yoke, for example that of Andrés Cocom³, are equated with obdurate rebelliousness (a kind of *lèse majesté* against the Spaniards), and not from an indigenous vantage point, positively, as a continued effort to expel the foreign invaders, the work of a “freedom fighter” to use a more recent concept.

When the Spaniards arrived on the shores of Yucatan, they found a “house divided”, made up of 18 provinces,⁴ composed of a series of small independent and semi-independent *cacicazgos*⁵ which were marked by three different types of territorial organization (Roys 1957,1972; Gerhard 1979).

(1) The first was headed by a single ruler, the *halach uinic*⁶, to whom all the other local heads of towns, or *batabs*⁷, were subject and expected to pay tribute and

1 These points will be referred to again and discussed further.

2 *Relaciones de Yucatán* 1898, 1: 40-41; 1900, 2: 64; 10: 115; 16: 143-144; 18: 157.

3 See Gunsenheimer, this volume.

4 Earlier (1957) Roys had made a slightly different grouping of only 16 provinces, excluding Cehaches and Tayasal.

5 A native province or territory pertaining to a *cacique* or local chief. The term is of Arawak derivation and, while its application is more appropriate for the West Indies and parts of South America, it has been applied rather loosely to other parts of the New World.

6 Literally, “real man” (Roys 1957: 6); “head chief or territorial ruler of an independent Maya state” (Roys 1972: 196).

7 Local heads of town.

render military service if required. Mani and Sotuta, ruled by the Xiu and Cocom, respectively, are examples of this type of organization.

- (2) In the second type there was no single territorial ruler, but a large number of *batabs*, often belonging to a single lineage, but by no means always unified. In the province of Ah Canul the relationship was harmonious, whereas in that of Cupul, the *batabs* were frequently at odds with one another.
- (3) Finally, the third type of organization was made up of a collection of loosely-allied towns of a given area, who often acted independently and were frequently on unfriendly terms.

Yucatan's system of divided power made conquest and pacification extremely difficult, since the shifting alliances created a constant need for the Spaniards to reconquer territory they had considered pacified and to resecure the loyalty of the ruling elite. The two-decade long struggle (1527-1547) waged by the Maya of Yucatan against the invaders in many ways had made the conquest more arduous than the relatively easy solution in the kingdoms of Mexico and Peru where, with the death of the ruling monarch, the land was soon brought to its knees.

While several other Yucatec lineages had played important roles in pre-Conquest times- the Canul⁸, Cheel, Couoh, Pech, etc.⁹ – two seemed to be preeminent and to dominate the political scene when the Spaniards arrived on the shores of Yucatan: the Xiu and the Cocom. Historically, they represent antithetical attitudes towards the invading Spaniards, cooperation on the part of the former, unabated hostility on the part of the latter, a fact that was in great measure to determine their respective roles once the Conquest was an established fact.

Owing to their early submission and friendly relations with the Spaniards, as recorded by Cogolludo (López de Cogolludo 1971, book III, ch. VI: 177), the *Relaciones de Yucatán* (1898, I: 45); Landa (Tozzer 1978: 51) and Cárdenas Valencia (1937: 16) the Xiu would earn a place for themselves in subsequent historical events once the Spaniards had achieved control of the peninsula. Sources record that, together with the Chel, Pech, Taze and peoples of Hocaba-Homun, they appear to have accepted the Spanish presence far less reluctantly. Divided as they were at the time of the Conquest, doubtless each group hoped to gain some advantage over the others by such an alliance, much as occurred in Mexico and other parts of the New World.

The Cocom, on the other hand, continued to offer bitter resistance up to the last Great Maya Revolt of 1546-1547. Together with the Cupul and Maya of Uaymil-Chetumal, they twice led uprisings that posed considerable difficulties for the Spaniards and were ultimately put down only with great effort. It was only after all their options had run out that they finally submitted to the Spanish yoke; conse-

8 See Okoshi (1993).

9 Information is quite scant, with some data concerning their historical roles and hereditary status. However, see Okoshi (2001: 213-228).

quently they were to play a secondary role on the historical stage, relegated to the continued administration of their own domain.

Reflecting this contrast in their roles, and the ascendancy of the Xiu, the historical record has dealt very unevenly with the two lineages, placing the greater emphasis on the Xiu and making short shrift of the role played by the Cocom¹⁰. Moreover, the manner in which their respective roles are chronicled reflects propagandist bias in the over-emphasis placed on the pre-Conquest importance of the former in relation to the latter. As Nicholson (1975: 490-91; 1976: 3-5) has warned, one must bear in mind that it is characteristic of native chronicles to be biased, inconsistent and lacking in clarity.

In the present instance, we have a good example of the latter in the *Relaciones de Yucatán* ([1580's]; 1898-1900), the fact finding documents ordered by the Spanish Crown in the 1580's, in which we see reflected the long shadow of Gaspar Antonio Xiu¹¹, intent on glorifying his own lineage. Whenever personal or family aggrandisement is at stake, such bias looms large and, as the main informant for the *encomenderos*,¹² Gaspar Antonio was in an ideal position to alter the historical record (Pollock/Roys/Proskouriakoff/Smith 1962).¹³ His historical reconstruction is marked by the exaggerated importance he gives the Xiu, claiming that it was this lineage that headed the joint government at Mayapan (Pollock/Roys/Proskouriakoff/Smith 1962: 52-53), and relegating the Cocom to a secondary role in history¹⁴. The *Relaciones de Yucatán*, so informative on a number of issues, are extremely sparse in their reference to the Cocom, while repeatedly maintaining that it was the Xiu who were lords of the land prior to the Conquest.

This is, however, in manifest contradiction to statements in various ethno-historical sources that stress the preeminence of the Cocom. Landa (1978: 26), Ciudad Real (1976: 368), Herrera y Tordesillas (Tozzer 1978: 215) and Torquemada (1976, book VI, chapter XXIV: 87) all agree in attributing primary importance to the Cocom. Landa (1978: 26) tells us that "after the departure of Kukulcan, the nobles agreed, in order that the government should endure, that the

10 While the Xiu have a historical "face" in the person of Gaspar Antonio Xiu, by comparison the Cocom are a kind of "faceless" historical footnote, symbolizing the indomitable native will to expel the Spaniards from the peninsula.

11 Xiu (1563-1610) was educated in one of the Franciscan schools and was an Indian protégé of Landa and later official interpreter for the Spanish court in Yucatan. He provided historical information for 12 of the *Relaciones geográficas*, some of which he also signed (*HMAI*, 14: 379). The glorification of his lineage was intended to impress the Spaniards, from whom he was at the time attempting to get a financial subsidy (Pollock/Roys/Proskouriakoff/Smith 1962: 53).

12 Holders of an *encomienda*. According to a royal grant, certain Spaniards were rewarded for services rendered during the Conquest, with an allotment of Indians who were obliged to give them tribute, service, or both.

13 According to Roys (Pollock/Roys/Proskouriakoff/Smith 1962: 28), this is the only point on which he can be faulted as a historian.

14 Possibly, given the long-standing enmity between the Cocom and the Xiu, the latter were able to exert their influence with the Spaniards to keep the Cocom in a subordinate position.

house of the Cocom should have the chief power". This choice was based either on the fact that it was the most ancient or richest family, owning twenty two good pueblos (Herrera y Tordesillas 1936; Tozzer 1978: 215), or that at this particular time the head of the lineage was particularly esteemed (Landa 1978: 26). Their claimed descent from Kukulcan also must also have played a role and, as Torquemada (1976, book VI, chapter XXIV: 87) relates, his descendants were called cocomes which meant "oidor" or listener¹⁵.

As proof of their importance, Landa tells us that "all the lords were careful to respect, visit and entertain the Cocom, accompanying him, making feasts in his honor and repairing to him with important business (Landa 1978: 27). Ciudad Real (1976: 368) in particular emphasizes that the Cocom was "más señor y más principal que él [Tutul Xiu]"; a greater lord and more important than he. At this particular point in history, there can be no doubt that the Cocom were *primus inter pares*.

In contrast, as Landa states (1978: 30-31), the Xiu were relatively recent arrivals in Yucatan who had wandered in the uninhabited areas of the peninsula for forty years and settled about ten leagues from Mayapan.

[...] And there they began to settle and to construct very good buildings [...] and the people of Mayapan became very good friends with them [...] and in this way those of Tutul Xiu subjected themselves to the laws of Mayapan and thus they intermarried [...].

Whatever the actual nature of the power distribution between the two lineages, and such shifts as may have taken place over the years, their fates appear to have been deeply intertwined. The alliance had lasted approximately 200 years, but at some point symptoms of rupture became noticeable, bringing to an end the harmonious state described by Landa. Although historical sources do not inform us as to their nature, judging from subsequent events, the Xiu must have been waiting for an opportunity to wrest control from the Cocom. Obviously they were actively undermining the latter and courting the support of other lords in their intended power struggle.

Ethnohistorical sources record that the then-reigning Cocom had "played the tyrant", sold his subjects as slaves and brought in Mexican mercenaries (Landa 1978: 36). However, it is impossible to determine whether such accusations were well-founded for, as Ciudad Real (1976: 368) maintains, they could simply have been a convenient subterfuge for the revolt. Slavery had been an established tradition, so the Cocom do not appear to have departed from traditional usage or to have introduced anything new. As for accusations of despotism and undue accumulation

15 As the *Calepino de Motul* (Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3: folio 077v:1554) attests, the name Cocom means "escucha o escuchador con atencion". Personally I am not convinced that we can automatically equate this with the Spanish term "oidor". The emphasis on being a c a r e f u l listener would be more in keeping with a priestly role, like that of a *chilam*, for example, whose trance, as he listened to the words of the gods, is described in the *Codex Pérez* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 66).

of wealth, it is not unusual for those less favored to level charges of perceived inequalities against those in power. What appears certain is that the ruling Cocom had, over a period of years, continued to bring in Mexican allies to maintain themselves in power, thereby apparently alienating some of the other lords. This could suggest that they considered their power threatened and enlisted the aid of the Mexicans in order to retain control.

The Xiu conspiracy appears to have been a typical case of an upstart group intent on wresting power from an older and entitled lineage, in this case those considered to be the “natural lords of the land”. Obviously the Xiu were adept at the Maquiavellian game, maneuvering behind the scenes, making political alliances and enlisting the aid of a large number of other lords in an attempt to topple the Cocom. In any case, they had played their cards right, the rebellion was successful and the uprising ended with the murder not only of the reigning Cocom but of all of his sons except for one who was away on a trading expedition in Ulua. The walls of Mayapan were torn down and the city razed, ending the federation of allied cities (between A.D. 1441 and 1461)¹⁶. The destruction is recorded in the books of *Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Roys 1967: 137), of *Tizimin* (Edmonson 1982: 10) and in the *Codex Pérez* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 83-84, 139, 156). As the *Chumayel* states: “8 Ahau was when there was fighting with stones at Ich-paa Mayapan because of the seizure of the fortress. They broke down the city wall because of the joint government of the city [...]”

The fall of Mayapan signified the last attempt at a centralized government and marked the beginning of the small polities into which Yucatan was divided at the time of Contact: 18 provinces or city-states with relative autonomy that periodically warred with one another: Ah Canul, Ah Kin Chel, Canpech, Cehaches, Ceh Pech, Chakan, Champoton, Chetumal, Chikincheel or Chauaca, Cochuah, Cozumel, Cupul, Ecab, Hocaba and Homun, Sotuta, Tayasal or Tah Itza, Tazes and Tutul Xiu or Mani (Roys 1972: 11).

On his return, the remaining son of the Cocom and surviving family members settled in the province of Sotuta, first in Tibolon, which according to Herrera y Tordesillas (Tozzer 1978: 216) means “we have been cheated, there is still time to retaliate”, and later founding and settling in Sotuta. The Xiu abandoned Uxmal and chose Mani in which to reside, the Chel settled in Izamal, the Cupul in Chichen Itza and the Mexicans in Ah Canul or Calkini¹⁷. As Landa (1978: 37) tells us:

16 Juergen Kramer (personal communication, 3/26-2002) differs, favoring the account offered by Gaspar Antonio Xiu who dates the founding of Mayapan to the year 1160 and gives the year 1420 as the date of the probable abandonment of the city as the seat of a supreme judge (Cocom) and a high priest of Yucatan (Ahau Can). Nonetheless, as he points out, a scattered population continued to live in the city.

17 Nonetheless, there was general uniformity of language, customs and political ideas, due to which the inhabitants of Yucatan apparently still continued to consider themselves “a single people” (Roys 1957: 3-4).

The quarrels between the Cocom, who said that they had been unjustly expelled, and the Xius lasted so long, that after they had lived in that city for more than five hundred years, they abandoned it and left it in solitude, each party returning to his own country.

The continuing hatred between the two lineages¹⁸ is exemplified by an incident or possibly two distinct ones¹⁹ which are recounted in several ethnohistorical sources (Landa [1978: 54-55], the *Relaciones de Yucatán* [1898, XXIV: 288-289], and the *Codex Pérez* [Craine/Reindorp 1979: 187-188]). According to Landa and Herrera y Tordesillas (Tozzer 1978: 54 and 214, respectively), after a particularly severe drought, the Xiu had undertaken a pilgrimage to Chichen Itza and, having to pass through Cocom territory, asked for safe passage. While pretending to grant it, the Cocom set fire to the building in which they had lodged the Xiu, burning many of them alive and killing those who had survived.

The other version by Cogolludo (López de Cogolludo 1971, book III, chapter 6: 178-179) and the *Relaciones de Yucatán* (1898, XXIV: 288-289) relate that the Xiu had sent ambassadors to the Cocom in an effort to get them to lay down their arms and capitulate, accepting the Spanish presence. Again, these reports attribute a treacherous role to the Cocom, stating that after organizing a great hunt in honor of the Xiu, in the midst of festivities they beheaded them all, leaving only one alive, whom they had blinded, to carry the news to Tutul Xiu. According to the *Relación de Teabo*, more than forty of the Xiu elite were killed (*Relaciones de Yucatán* 1898, XXIV: 288-289)²⁰, touching off a frenzied reaction on the part of the Xiu who went on a war-spree, killing and razing towns. However, the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Roys 1967: 138, 142-143) has no record of such events and simply states that: “This was the katun when the rain-bringer died; his name was Napot Xiu”, and further (Roys 1967: 145-146) giving the names of the principal men who had acted as ambassadors.²¹

The last episode in which the Cocom were to play a major role was the Great Maya Revolt of 1546-1547 in which they formed part of a large coalition deter-

18 Such enmity between princely houses also included the Chel who maintained “that he was as good as they in lineage, since he was the grandson of the most esteemed priest of Mayapan, and for himself personally, he was greater than they ...” (Landa 1986; Tozzer 1978: 40).

19 The two versions are also chronologically distinct. The drought is supposed to have occurred in 1535, while Cogolludo (1971: 180) dates the event he describes at 1541. Whether this is an instance of faulty historical memory or there were indeed two separate events is hard to judge.

20 Again, we do not know if we can fully trust such reports, since both the Spaniards and the Xiu had an axe to grind. In the *Probanza* and the *Relaciones de Yucatán* Gaspar Antonio was in an ideal position to depict his enemies in the worst possible light. Alternately, the Spaniards were no friends of the Cocom and no more intent on giving a fair rendition of events. However, such reprisals would be in keeping with the enmity that existed between the two lineages and the hatred for the invaders.

21 However, see the account of the murder of the Xius in the *Codex Pérez* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 187-188): “Napot Xiu and the other caciques who were with him were killed by the Cocom because they did not want the foreigners in the country”.

mined to push out the hated invaders. According to the historical record, the combined forces fought with frenzy and cruelty, sparing none, neither women and children, Spaniards or even the Indians who had served them; nor were the animals or property belonging to the invader spared. The battle was a long and particularly bloody one, but in the end the Spaniards prevailed and the Maya coalition was defeated.

At this point both sides had a legitimate grudge against each other: the Cocom for the rebellion the Xiu had instigated against them, the loss of their power and the destruction of Mayapan; the Xiu for the murder of their ambassadors. Possibly other reasons were at stake as well and I have postulated (Gubler 1987, 1990, 1992, 1998) that this was related to the Hunac Ceel episode.

In the *Book of Chilam Balam of Mani* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 127) we read that “Discord arose among them, and thus they knew that the time had come in which the thirteenth Flower would sprout, because Hunac Ceel [...] began to use the fragrance of [*plumeria*] flowers for the women he desired”.

This very important – but puzzling and unelucidated – episode of Yucatec history features Hunac Ceel involved in a very specific activity that is associated with the *nichte*. The primary meaning of this word is simply that of a flower, although ethnohistorical sources do not specifically identify it. Landa (1978: 195) refers to it as a kind of rose and the *Calepino de Motul* (Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3: f.328r: 1965) is equally vague, identifying it only as a rose or flower, although clearly stating that it is not known to which specific tree, bush or plant it pertains.²² In modern ethnobotanical dictionaries it is identified as the *plumeria rubra* or *flor de mayo* (Mendieta/del Amo 1981: 274; Barrera Marín/Barrera Vásquez/López Franco 1976: 117).

In its metaphorical sense the *nichte* is associated with immorality, carnal sin and women’s mischief²³ and in the *Kay Nichte*²⁴, in *El libro de los cantares de Dzitbalche* (Barrera Vásquez 1980), it plays a decidedly amoral role, part of an erotic ritual whose purpose it was to effect the return of a lost lover and regain his affections. In the *Ritual of the Bacabs* as well the *nichte* has a negative connotation, describing the *nichte tancas* as a particularly evil frenzy.

Nichte katuns, too, had a distinctly negative association, and in the *Codex Pérez* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 68) the 13th katun, being a *nichte katun*, is described as: “a very erotic and evil katun whose ending will be very difficult”. As we read in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Roys 1967: 151): “the *plumeria* is its bread,

22 Obviously the reference is not to what we specifically call a rose.

23 *Calepino de Motul* (Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3, f.328r: 1965): deshonestidad, vicio de carne y travezura de mugeres. Further, *nichteil than* = palabras deshonestas y lascivias; *nichteil be* = obras deshonestas; *nichteil uinic* = mala muger de su cuerpo (*Calepino de Motul*, Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3, f.328r: 1965).

24 *Nichte kay* = cantares deshonestos y de amores, y cantarlos (*Calepino de Motul*, Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3, f.328r: 1965).

the *plumeria* is its water, its burden...”, foretelling carnal sin, loss of learning and wisdom, an absence of shame, and the hanging of Maya prophets and priests. Further (Roys 1967: 120-123), in connection with the establishment of the *katun* of the *plumeria* flower, it foretells capture, forced settlement, famine, pestilence, and finally deep sorrow at the end of the *katun*. Although this has generally been interpreted to refer to the coming of the Spaniards and the chaotic conditions following the conquest, it may well also refer to previous historical incidents, reflective of that “telescoping of events” which is frequent in Maya history.

While the *nicte* or *plumeria* can stand for sin, eroticism, lewd conduct and misfortune, as shown above, in combining the term *nicte* with *kam* its meaning changes. At one time *kamnichte* connoted marriage, as we find attested in the *Calapino de Motul* (Arzápalo Marín [ed.] 1995, 3: f.237v: 1819), an important point for my argument. While Hunac Ceel is said to have used the flower for his own acquisition of women, Roys (Pollock/Roys/Proskouriakoff/Smith 1962: 47) gives an alternate interpretation, speculating that he gave Chac Xib Chac of Chichen Itza the *plumeria* to smell, causing him to become enamored of the bride of another princeling and leading to the war with, and eventual destruction of, Chichen Itza.

The two interpretations are not necessarily conflicting. Marriage alliances were an important means of maintaining or securing political power. So Hunac Ceel could well have wanted women for himself as a means of alliance with a powerful lineage, but he could also have used women as power pawns in forging marriage alliances for others; in other words, acting simultaneously as a marriage and power broker. This would fit in well with Roys’ interpretation, although I would differ with him insofar as he regards Hunac Ceel’s giving Chac Xib Chac the flower to smell as an act of witchcraft. I interpret the *plumeria* as a metaphor for women in general, and in this case for the bride which Hunac Ceel was proposing to Chac Xib Chac (Gubler 1990).

It is important to remember that Hunac Ceel’s rise to power was due to his role as representative of Ah Mex Cuc, and not because of any inherited status. The *Chumayel* states that his rise to power was due to an act of personal valor; throwing himself into the sacred well in Chichen Itza in order to receive the prophecy. I have postulated elsewhere (1998: 465), that he may well not have actually dived into the cenote, since this would have been a dangerous and foolhardy move, ill-according with his crafty nature. Instead, I would argue that, given the fact that there is a small temple at the well, he may have entered it to take the prophecy there, either receiving it from a priest awaiting him, or purportedly entering in a trance himself.

Given his rather tenuous political position, it stands to reason that he needed to find ways to maintain himself in power. What better way than through an arranged marriage, either his own, that of his ally/allies, or both. Once elected to office, he is said to have demanded, among other things, “one complete *plumeria* flower” (*Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*; Roys 1967: 70). This could well be a metaphor for

a bride, a demand of a marriage partner either for himself or an ally, couched in terms of the language of Zuyua.

Besides being a metaphor for women and for marriage, I have proposed that the *nichte* also stands for a historical personage named *Nichte* (Gubler 1990, 1992, 1998). The genealogical list (to be discussed) records not one, but three *Nichte*, two of which appear to fit in well chronologically with the Hunac Ceel episode²⁵. An intriguing passage in the *Codex Pérez* (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 70) states that: “This will be the end of the rulers of the *nichte* [plumeria] flower” and further that: “After 13 groups of *Nichte Katuns* have passed it will be seen that the sacred house comes to an end, it will be razed” (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 71-72)²⁶. Given the metaphoric and historical association of the *nichte* flower with the Cocom and the historical reality of several *Nichtes*, possibly this is a reference to the end of the power of the Cocom.²⁷ Interestingly, Edmonson (1982: 20, notes 334 and 335) dates the 13th *katun* to 1461 and the ending of the Flower *Katun* to 1559, both historically important dates for the Cocom: the first, the end of Mayapan and the latter to a time when the importance of their lineage had come to an end under Spanish rule and around the time of Nachi Cocom’s death.

As a result of Hunac Ceel’s action, ostensibly Chac Xib Chac then began to desire the wife, or promised bride, of another ruler. Again, it is the *Codex Pérez* that gives us a tantalizing clue: “It was in *Katun 8 Ahau* that Ah Ulil of Izamal was sinned against. Because [he] and the woman who governed with him were offended, war was declared and took place in the 16th year of the *katun* [...]” (Craine/Reindorp 1979: 121-122).

Many clues lead to the conclusion that Hunac Ceel was the instigator of the the plot and subsequent events. My interpretation is that for political expediency he reneged on his pact with Chac Xib Chac of Chichen Itza and subsequently delivered the woman he had initially promised him to Ah Ulil of Izamal. This and following acts of treachery against an erst-while ally were certainly deserving of the opprobrium registered in native accounts. When Chac Xib Chac took matters into his own hands, Hunac Ceel had no option but to support his new ally (either Ah Ulil or Ah Ulmil), participating in the punitive expedition against Chichen Itza and the de-

25 A more detailed discussion would take us too far afield, but see Gubler 1987, 1990, 1992 and 1998.

26 In The *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin* (Edmonson 1982) too, there are various references to “the time of the Flower people”, “the ending of the Flower people (Edmonson 1982: 20, line 329, and 340 respectively; also 54, line 1162). It also speaks of the “great pain [that] will be the end of the Flower *katun* (Edmonson 1982: 189, lines 5297-5298).

27 Interestingly, there is a flower called *cocom*, although it has not been identified. The *Diccionario Maya Cordemex* 1980: 331) states that it is a twining plant with yellow flowers from which cigars, smeared with honey, are made for the day of San Juan. Alternately, as described in *Un Curioso* (1845: 349-350), the tubers were cut into narrow strips, carbonized on a hot griddle, pulverized and placed in a gourd or vessel, although no information is given as to the purpose of this procedure.

struction of the city, which led to the flight of a group of Itza to the forests of the Peten. A legend to the effect of a princeling fleeing with the bride of another was still extant when Villagutierre-Sotomayor recorded it [(1701] 1933).

Hunac Ceel's identity and dynastic affiliation are clear: he was a Cauich as stated in the *Chumayel* (Roys 1967: 75), and not a member of the Cocom lineage, as Roys (Pollock et al. 1962) had originally thought (later correcting himself), and as Okoshi (2001: 217) still maintains. However, his motivation remains a mystery, or exactly what he stood to gain by his act of treachery. Native Yucatec sources are so limited in their historical and mytho-historical material that it is hard to get a coherent picture of events.

Subsequent mention of the Cocom in historical sources is scarce. They figure prominently in the Inquisitorial Proceedings of the *auto da fe* in Mani (Scholes/Adams 1938), accused of performing idolatrous rites and sacrificing children. Some years later, when Don Diego García de Palacio was on his visit of inspection in Yucatan, Andrés Cocom was convicted of idolatry and condemned to exile. Escaping from prison, he attempted to instigate a rebellion in Campeche, was captured and punished accordingly (López de Cogolludo 1971, book VII, chapter 11: 61-66). Members of the Cocom family are mentioned in various land documents: the *Land Treaty of Mani* (Roys (1972: 185-190); the *Calotmul documents* (1557); the *Códice de Calkini* (Barrera Vásquez 1957); the *Titles of Ebtun* (Roys 1939); the *Valladolid Lawsuit* (Brinton 1882: 114-118) and the *Documentos de tierras de Sotuta* (Roys 1939: 412-433), but generally consist simply of names, frequently the same ones. All in all, therefore, there is a noticeable lack of information about the Cocom, possibly a combination of having been purposely ignored or relegated to the sidelines by the Spaniards, or a penchant of their own part for keeping a low profile.

In the early part of the 20th century, with the discovery of the *Xiu Probanzas*²⁸, a series of documents dating to between 1608 and 1816 and relating to the authority of the Xiu, with proofs of nobility and petitions of various kinds, attention once again focused on this lineage. However, the only comparable material for the Cocom, the *Libro de Cacalchen*²⁹, containing parallel genealogical data, and intended to serve analogous purposes, has failed to generate the same kind of interest. It has not engaged the attention of scholars and, if referred to at all, it is only as a kind of

28 Also known as the *Chronicle of Oxkutzcab*, the *Xiu Family Papers*, the *Ticul Manuscript*, the *Libro de Probanzas*, etc., the document contains historical data, petitions for the confirmation of hereditary rights, an important one-page chronicle for the years 1535-1545 or 1549 (copied in 1685) and a version of the *Mani Land Treaty* of 1557. The *Probanza* as a whole has not been published, although a photostatic edition has had limited circulation. A complete commentary by Morley and Roys (1941) remains unpublished (*HMAI*, 14: 237-238).

29 Also called *Libro de los Cocomes*, the original of the manuscript was for years in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. According to the New Union Catalogue (pre-1956, vol. 331: 638), there is a photostatic reproduction of an extract from the Maya manuscript of 164 pages in the Newberry Library and Tulane University.

bibliographic reference. While neither of the two sources was ever published, the fact that at the time the *Xiu Probanzas* were discovered, some of the remaining descendants were still living in Oxkutzcab, generated a kind of human interest.³⁰

Long intrigued by the disparity in the historical record and the lack of information on the Cocom, it was a stroke of luck that, while working on the Willard collection in the Southwest Museum in Pasadena, I came across a small number of unpublished documents that dealt directly with this lineage. T. A. Willard, an amateur buff of Maya civilization, artist and good friend and sponsor of Edward H. Thompson, had for many years made yearly trips to Yucatan. He was an avid photographer and collector of documents, and in the latter capacity had occasion to acquire a number of interesting items. After his death a number of these passed into the collection of the Southwest Museum, among them the above-mentioned documents which form part of the Willard Collection. Among his correspondence and notes he left a draft entitled "Rare Documents of the Royal House of Cocom"³¹ in which he describes his excitement on acquiring them. "No greater thrill can be experienced by the student of archaeology and research delving into the mysteries of forgotten civilizations than that of discovering ancient documents and writings hidden from the world for centuries" (Willard Collection, Southwest Museum). He goes on to say: "such an exciting experience was mine some three years ago when, during a visit to Yucatan, I was fortunate enough to come into possession of several rare documents undoubtedly shedding light on a phase of Maya civilization about which little has been uncovered - namely, the Cocom rulers [...]" (Willard Collection, Southwest Museum).

Genealogical Data in the Cocom Documents

The Cocom documents consist of four separate items which will be discussed in the following order (referred to by Willard as Documents B, A, D and C, respectively):

- (1) a stamped eight-page official 19th century document (Document B);
- (2) a vellum or deerskin parchment which appears to be a kind of cover (Document A);
- (3) an ink-drawing of a family tree (Document D);
- (4) an ink-drawing with a "measuring wheel"³² on the obverse and a drawing of a cross and what appears to be a totemic representation of a bird on the reverse (Document C).

30 A descendant of the Xiu, Gaspar Antonio, still lives in Oxkutzcab and has been, up to recently, actively engaged in political activities.

31 Also another, "Strange Documents from Muna".

32 This is the name given it by Willard.

19th century document

The colonial document (1) is the longest in terms of the number of pages (eight). It bears the seal of Ferdinand VII on the upper left-hand corner of the page and within it a coat of arms featuring what appear to be lions and castles in alternate fields and the dates 1818-19. The text to the right states that it is authorized for the years 1820 and 1821. The sheets of paper measure 12 ½" by 8 ½" and a number of watermarks are visible: "Cambino", "Vallarino", a fleur de lys, etc. The writing on the document is typical for Yucatec documents of the period.

According to the statement on the first page, the document is said to be a copy of the original manuscript that was brought before the notary in Merida on February of 1812 by a certain Juan José Chel, although it is not stated for what purpose. There is no indication that it was a petition of any kind, a proof of nobility, or the justification of land holdings or litigation regarding the settlement of any claim, as one might be led to expect. What is interesting is that it was not a member of the Cocom family who presented the document, but a Chel, although one can not rule out that he may have been related to the family by marriage. In any case, it is clearly stated that the pages being brought to the notary were still the original ones, said to have been found in Valladolid. "Dando fe de los originales presentes sera copiado en orden el manuscrito" (p. 1).

The document consists of eight pages and contains a text referred to as the Table of Laws of the Reign of Nachi Cocom (Tabla de las leyes del Reynado [de] Nachi Cocom), followed by a list of the principal members of the royal court. This in turn is followed by a list of 61 rulers, ancestors of Nachi Cocom who was the last legendary member of the family. The last entry, at the bottom of the eighth and last page, refers to an account that is supposed to follow; a section entitled "Account of the customs and ceremonies of the high priests in the reign of Nachi Cocom made by the priest Zaazil Naah; translated by the Indian Pedro Balam and copied by the same author of these manuscripts in Maya". However, neither this nor the description of the Festival of the Sacred Flower that is supposed to follow, have come down to us. The text ends there, with only these eight extant pages in the collection. Obviously they formed part of what must have been a larger text, but pending a subsequent search and location of the additional pages, we are left to wonder as to their number and what they contained.

The Laws of Nachi Cocom deal with fourteen separate laws that touch upon matters relating to a subject's good conduct, civil obedience and religious obligations, most of which touch upon the respect and obligations due the king. The first law regards what every faithful subject of the king must believe; the second, the manner in which receptions are to be made with jewels and flowers. The fourth and fifth laws establish that the king's will must be respected and adhered to, as well as the privileges of the princes and priests (fifth law).

Respect for the ancestors is also stressed and the people are enjoined to remember past rulers "for the welfare of the King and his race" (tenth law). The sixth law stipulates the ultimate punishment for those who fail to defend their king, princes and priests: incurring the death penalty after having been put to severe torture. The fourteenth law provides that in case of war the king is to be provided with grain and arms. Civil duties include the prohibition against collecting tribute except by those expressly authorized to do so (seventh law); respect for neighboring as well as distant kingdoms eighth law); and the provision that merchants and visiting judges are to be upright men who respect the king's law (eleventh law). The third law regards religious duties, forbidding anyone from looking at or touching the sacred objects in the temples on a Monday; the ninth providing that no one except the king or priest has the authority to name the king's priest or that of the *pueblo*. Further, there are rules regarding royal, religious, and historical festivals: the first to be observed on the eighth day of the year; the second every week and the last according to royal decree (twelfth law). Finally, the occurrence of any death in the kingdom is to be reported to the priest (thirteenth law).

At the conclusion of the fourteenth law there follows a section enumerating titles of the members that constitute the court of Nachi Cocom: the king, the crown prince, a series of priests, all from the royal house, generals, physicians, two priests in charge of festivals and monuments, and finally, the king's councilor. The names of some of the title-holders are given: Pech Balam, Com Cat, Pool Chi, Pool Cocom and Hool Cauich are generals; Nuxib Cuc and Zaazil Naah, priests in charge of festivals and monuments and a certain Camaach Cocom as both councilor and physician to the king. Further, Iz Bool is named as "curandero del pueblo", that is to say, as medical practitioner of the town, and Noox Ni in charge of ensuring the good health of the cattle.

There then follows a list of Cocom rulers, consisting of 61 names in all, beginning with the earliest: Caam Cocom, Cheem Cocom, Eedz Cocom, Tunich Cocom and so on until we come to Nachi Cocom. The names of two females is also given, both named Nichte, and I have postulated that one of these may have played an important role in the Hunac Ceel episode (see Gubler 1987, 1990, 1992, 1998). The names of the rulers on this list are corroborated on two of the other documents that will be discussed, with only slight differences in spelling, except where in individual cases spaces are left blank.

Vellum or Parchment (1698)

The second item in the Cocom papers is a parchment or vellum measuring 9 ½" by 5 ¾" which, because of its decorative border and text, appears to have served as some kind of cover (see fig. 1). Made of fairly thin leather, it was at one time whitened with some kind of dye or paint and, when Willard acquired it, it was rolled up like a tube about one inch in diameter and tied with string made of the *sansevieria*

plant³³. As he describes in his notes (Willard Collection, Southwest Museum), it was so hard and stiff that it was impossible to open without breaking it. Willard's assistant suggested soaking it with wet washcloths, a clever idea that finally enabled them to open it and then spread it out to dry.

The document states that it is a faithful copy ("copia a la letra") from remote times up to 1698 of the ancestors of the Cocom, and asserting that it contained documents of various kinds. These must not have existed when Willard acquired them, because they are not mentioned. Perhaps they were lost and all that remained was this cover on which the names of 18 Cocom are given, twelve with Maya names (listed under "anterior", i.e. earlier rulers) and six with Christian names, referring both to their elite status as "caciques" and their blood relationship "hermanos Cocom" (brothers).

On the lower right-hand portion of the parchment appear two signatures, that of a certain Julian Montejo B. (Baesa), captain, and of Bernardino Cocom. While the direct Montejo line of the Adelantado died out in the 16th century, Baesa apparently belonged to another branch of the family. Although I have not been able to find any trace of the said Montejo Baesa, Willard states that he saw documents in which both names figure in an official capacity; Montejo B. as provincial governor in 1698 and Bernardino Cocom as political chief.

In general, the various Maya Cocom names accord with both the 1820/1821 document and the measuring wheel (which will be discussed presently), the exception being the spaces between Och and Pech Cocom which are marked with Xs to indicate that (as stated) the names of the rulers are not known ("no se save"). Alternately, neither the 1820/1821 document nor the Laws of Nachi Cocom list the names of Hool, Cilch and Cho Cocom. A number of later caciques pertain to the post-Conquest period and have Christian names (Francisco, Bernardino, Diego, Pedro, Juan, Lorenzo). These are frequently found in association with the Cocom, and recorded in some of the land documents previously cited (see also *Autoridades municipales indígenas de Yucatán* (1657-1677)). Moreover, the same names appear repeatedly in 17th and 18th century marriage and baptismal records from the Salt Lake City holdings in the Genealogical Library in Los Angeles, proving that they were favored by members of this lineage. Finally, on the lower left-hand portion of the vellum, under "vallos ("vasallos", vassals) we find the curious listing Zicilpuz Pool and Zakcol Xibalba.

Family Tree

The third document is a Cocom family tree which is of interest both because it features various of the same lineage names that appear in the other documents and also because it serves as a kind of counterpart to the Xiu family tree (reproduced in Sharer 1983: 221, fig. 8.5). However, it is not any perceived similarities, but the

33 *Sansevieria Roxburghiana* Schl. or *Sansevieria zeylanica* Willd., a Liliaceae plant.

differences between them that are of particular interest. The Cocom depiction is much cruder in its conception and the figure that is represented has a markedly more indigenous appearance (see fig. 2).

The paper used for the ink-drawing appears to be made of vegetal fibre and the ink is of a purplish color. At the bottom of the page in crudely-formed capital letters we read: “Arbol principal de la famili. [sic] que reynaron antess y principios de la Conquista” (family tree of those who reigned before and at the beginning of the Conquest). There is a scalloped border running around the drawing and a feather-like element from top to bottom on the left-hand side. A central figure dominates the bottom half of the drawing, evidently an important member of the Cocom family, since a snake or rope-like element, rather like an umbilical cord, issues from his loins and links him to the names of other family members which are contained in cartouche-like³⁴ elements attached to the cord. He is shown holding up, or onto, the cord with both hands as it loops around him. The cord either originates from the cartouche bearing the name Hi Tan Kambul Cocoon, or links the central figure to the cartouche, identifying him.

After curving around the central figure and over his shoulder, the cord winds upwards. In its progression it has five other cartouches attached to it, bearing the names of five Cocom family members: Xiool, 1 Och, 2 Och, 1 Pech and 2 Pech, names that are found in the other two documents already discussed, and in the measuring wheel (an examination of which follows). The cord comes to rest in the upper right-hand corner of the page with a depiction of a seven-stepped base (perhaps representing a “pyramid”), crowned by a cross from which refulgent rays emanate. The name of Nachi Cocom is written between the central and right-hand arm of the cross. Below stand two birds, one on either side, which are very similar to the ones that can still be seen on the Cocom “palace” in Sotuta.

As already mentioned, in comparison with the Xiu family tree, the Cocom document is cruder in conception. Because of various important traditional elements it would, in my opinion, fall rather more within the indigenous tradition. While the central figures in both sources are depicted naked, the Xiu ancestor is rendered with European-type features (as is his wife), a longish beard and drooping mustachios. His languorous pose and slight figure decidedly do not fall within the tradition of forceful figures shown on Maya stela, while the stockiness of the Cocom ancestor has some of that same sense of strength. The Cocom has no facial hair, but a typically smooth face, a trait remarked upon by the Spaniards when commenting on the appearance of the Maya, closed eyes (as in death) and sandals remarkably similar to those depicted on stelae. On his head he wears a band crowned by a bird, the Cocom totem, the *kambul* or pheasant³⁵, while the Xiu ancestor wears a curious

34 The term is used here for want of a better one and because, like real cartouches, it contains names.

35 *Crax rubra* L. in Yucatan; *Crax rubra griscomi* Nelson in Cozumel (*Diccionario Maya Corde-mex* 1980: 376).

pointed cap that is decidedly un-Maya. The manner in which the family tree is represented is also interesting. In the Xiu document, it is in effect a tree, and the cartouche-like elements sometimes emanate from a flower, while in the Cocom document there is no tree and the cartouches issue from the rope-like or umbilical-cord element.

The measuring wheel

The last document to be discussed is the so-called measuring wheel, a document that is unusual because of the genealogical data contained in its circular form (see fig. 3). Running clockwise, it lists the names of 61 rulers from approximately the 11th century³⁶ up to the time of Conquest. Given the Maya tradition of drawing circular maps and the use of *katun* wheels, the circular configuration should not be a surprise. However, what is unusual, and unique so far, is the use of a circular, wheel-like figure as a “family tree”, which to my knowledge is the only one found in existence so far. Alternately, the convolutions of the circle are also reminiscent of a cross-cut of a shell.

The document is a small page, measuring approximately 11 ¾" x 8". There is a watermark in the center which, though rather hard to make out, looks like two capital letters, possibly “L.D.”. Holes in the middle of the page indicate that it was torn from some book. In his personal letters (Willard Collection in the Southwest Museum), Willard recounts that he took the document to a paper company where ink and paper were chemically analyzed and that, according to the report, the paper was made around 1500. Further, when submitted to spectroscopic tests, the ink was found to contain certain ingredients used in a much earlier period, and not iron oxide which was commonly used in the late 19th/early 20th century. Willard also consulted with Juan Martínez Hernández, with whom he had a long and close friendship and who was a well-respected Mayanist, about the documents. Martínez pronounced all of them genuine. (Willard’s notes and correspondence in the Southwest Museum).

The document was used on both sides: on the one, there is a drawing of a compartmentalized wheel-like form referred to above, and on the reverse, side by side, but divided by a border, that of a bird and a cross (with the pages numbered 20 and 23 respectively) (see fig. 4). The bird holds an arrow in its claws, and to the right, directly above its tail feathers, there is a nine-rayed sun. The bird’s beak does not look like that of a raptorial bird, although it has powerful legs and claws. It has stiff tail feathers and some sort of crest on its head. Given the context, it likely represents the sacred bird or totem of the Cocom, the *kambul* or pheasant, stucco renderings of which were still visible on the Cocom “palace” in Sotuta (see figs. 5 and 6) when I first saw and photographed them in 1981 and now to some extent still extant, although somewhat deteriorated.

36 As calculated by Willard (discussion follows).

The text below the drawing states that it replicates an embroidered cloth found in Sotuta which, according to the Indians, is a representation of strength (“bordado de Indios encontrado en Zotuta Representando [sic] la fuerza segun relatos de loss Indios”). On the other half of the page, to the right, there is a drawing of a cross, Indian fashion, with arms of equal length. It stands on some sort of “table” which is covered by what appears to be a cloth (whose folds reach the floor), and two of its legs showing, one on either side. The text reads “Cruz labrada por Pool Cocom” (cross fashioned by Pool Cocom).

Finally, on the other side, taking up the whole page, is what Willard called the measuring wheel itself. It is probably the most exciting of the four documents, both because of its unusual and possibly unique nature and the genealogical data it records. To my knowledge, to date it is the only known example of a circular device used to record such data, although, as already pointed out, this configuration does fall within the Yucatec tradition of drawing circular maps and the use of *katun* wheels.

Running clockwise, the wheel lists the names of 61 Cocom rulers, from approximately the 11th century, as calculated by Willard, up to the rule of Nachi Cocom, the last *halach uinic* of the province of Sotuta and one of the most prominent native rulers of Yucatan at the time of the Conquest. This covers a period of almost 500 years. A short text on the top right-hand corner of the page states that these are the names of the descendants of the Cocom in chronological order: a Spanish copy of the Cocom coat-of-arms in well-understood hieroglyphs: “Desendencia [sic] de los Cocome, en ssu orden: copia al español del escudo de armas de la familia Cocom en geronificos [sic] bien entendios”. Immediately below there are sixteen bars with dots above them, the eight to tenth joined by a downward curving element. The names are listed in the compartments of the wheel and progress in circular clock-wise fashion. In the upper right-hand corner of the page, in the center of the scale, is a small crest, the spaces on either side providing the means of measuring off the number of years each member of the lineage ruled. At the bottom of the page it is stated that the length of the spaces between rulers’ names indicates the duration of their respective reigns: “Las distancias representa loss tiempos que han durado hen su Reynado”.

Having reached the end with Nachi Cocom’s rule, the measuring-wheel breaks out of its neat circular form by fanning out to the left. Within this “appendage” there follow four crosses, or X’s, and under the heading of “cacique”, nine additional names are given: Ih-tz, Tucul 2, Nichte, Cuzam, Pool, Camach, Nooch, Nadz and Chicaan Cocom, in that order. Using this data and the instructions given on the right-hand side of the measuring-wheel, Willard worked out the dates and duration of the reign of each of the rulers of the Cocom lineage describing the manner in which he worked them out:

“At the top and to the right of the document is drawn a scale similar to those seen on modern mechanical drawings. Each division represents one year, four di-

visions, four years, using dividers according to the scale, the number of years each monarch ruled can be quickly determined. In the center of the scale or divisions will be seen a small crest or coat of arms. An average of the spaces on either side is made with a compass or divider and this distance is then ‘walked off’ on the circles in the large central drawing. For each ‘step’ made by the divider, a year is designated in the time-period of the Cocom rule” (Willard, notes and correspondence, Southwest Museum). In order to find the earliest reign of a ruler, Willard began with the reign of Nachi Cocom, then calculated backwards until he reached the center of the wheel in which the name of the first ruler appeared.

List of rulers and the duration of their reign

1.	Cam Cocom ³⁷	1079-1099	20 years
2.	Chem Cocom	1099-1109	10 years
3.	Eedz Cocom	1109-1119	10 years
4.	Tunich Cocom	1119-1135	16 years
5.	Cab Cocom (1)	1135-1142	7 years
6.	Cab Cocom (2)	1142-1148	6 years
7.	Cab Cocom (3)	1148-1157	11 years
8.	Xtux Cocom	1159-1163	4 years
9.	Tam Cocom	1163-1170	7 years
10.	Ek Cocom	1170-1176	6 years
11.	Ekmay Cocom	1176-1183	7 years
12.	Hkin Cocom	1183-1191	8 years
13.	Kan Cocom	1191-1194	3 years
14.	Kuh Cocom	1194-1197	3 years
15.	Dzaay Cocom	1197-1203	6 years
16.	Mooch Cocom ³⁸	1203-1211	8 years
17.	Chuh Cocom	1211-1216	5 years
18.	Chuc Cocom	1216-1220	4 years
19.	Eedz Cocom	1220-1222	2 years
20.	Lobeh Cocom ³⁹	1222-1224	2 years
21.	Zi Cocom	1224-1232	8 years
22.	Keuel Cocom	1232-1238	6 years
23.	Mehen Cocom	1238-1242	4 years
24.	Cuxaan Cocom	1242-1248	6 years
25.	Ixuk Cocom ⁴⁰	1248-1254	6 years
26.	Nahab Cocom	1254-1260	6 years
27.	Toon Cocom (1)	1260-1264	4 years
28.	Toon Cocom (2)	1264-1274	10 years

37 This and the following entry are spelled Caam and Cheem Cocom in the *Laws of Nachi Cocom* (henceforth referred to as *The Laws*).

38 *The Laws* spell it Hooch.

39 Lobeck in *The Laws*.

40 Kiik in *The Laws*.

29.	Toon Cocom (3)	1274-1276	2 years
30.	Toon Cocom (4)	1276-1283	7 years
31.	Tzatzkabil Cocom ⁴¹	1283-1289	6 years
32.	Caan Cocom	1289-1294	5 years
33.	Tzootz Cocom (1)	1294-1306	12 years
34.	Tzootz Cocom (2)	1306-1318	12 years
35.	Zum Cocom	1318-1322	4 years
36.	Te Cocom	1322-1327	5 years
37.	Zum Cocom	1327-1334	7 years
38.	Puuc Cocom	1334-1341	7 years
39.	Kab Cocom	1341-1345	4 years
40.	Toon Cocom ⁴²	1345-1348	3 years
41.	Ik-tz Cocom	1348-1352	4 years
42.	Cho Cocom ⁴³	1352-1365	13 years ⁴⁴
43.	Kuum Cocom (1) ⁴⁵	1365-1373	8 years
44.	Kuum Cocom (2)	1373-1377	4 years
45.	Kuum Kam Cocom	1377-1382	5 years
46.	(name missing) ⁴⁶	1382-1387	5 years
47.	Tucul Cocom	1387-1392	5 years
48.	Nicte Cocom	1392-1396	4 years
49.	Cuzam Cocom ⁴⁷	1396-1401	5 years
50.	Chukuc Cocom ⁴⁸	1401-1406	5 years
51.	Hool Cocom ⁴⁹	1406-1410	4 years
52.	Cilich Cocom	1410-1416	6 years
53.	Cho'Cocom	1416-1423	7 years
54.	Nicte Cocom	1423-1431	8 years
55.	Itan Kambul Cocom	1431-1464	33 years ⁵⁰
56.	Xiool Cocom	1464-1468	4 years
57.	Och Cocom (1)	1468-1470	2 years
58.	Och Cocom (2)	1470-1483	13 years
59.	Pech Cocom (1)	1483-1501	18 years
60.	Pech Cocom (2)	1501-1543	42 years
61.	Nachi Cocom	1543-1551	8 years

As can be seen, the list of reigning Cocom is quite consistent. Barring some differences in spelling, and the few instances in which the names are not recorded and

41 Spelled Tzatz-Kabil in *The Laws*.

42 Dzoon in *The Laws*.

43 Chool in *The Laws*.

44 In an oversight Willard wrote "12 years".

45 The following two spaces are left blank in *The Laws*.

46 Kuxum Kam Cocom (2) in *The Laws*.

47 Cuilzahn in *The Laws*.

48 Chukuc Cho in *The Laws*.

49 This and the following two names are not listed the *The Laws*; the spaces were left blank.

50 In another mathematical oversight, he has "35 years".

the spaces left blank, the Laws of Nachi Cocom and the measuring wheel agree. As regards the parchment cover, it lists only a few of the pre-Conquest rulers: Nichte, Itan Cambul, Xiool, Och, Pech and Nachi, with two spaces left blank (“no se save”: unknown) where the other documents list Och (2) and Pech (1). However, the list provides three other names which are not given in the other documents: Hool and Cilich Cocom In the Family Tree only the last reigning Cocom (numbers 55-61) are listed: again in agreement with both of the other cited documents. These, then are the Cocom papers, surely a welcome addition to our scant data on what was once the ruling lineage of Yucatan.

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fig. 1: Vellum or deerskin parchment which appears to be a kind of cover.

fig. 2: Family tree of the Cocom (ink drawing).

fig. 3: “Measuring wheel” (ink drawing).

fig. 4: A cross and a representation of a bird, probably the *kambul*, or pheasant (ink drawing; reverse of the document showing the “measuring wheel”).

fig. 5: Cocom Palace, said to have once been occupied by Nachi Cocom. On the exterior walls at least half a dozen stucco figures of birds can be seen, very much like those represented on the “Cocom family tree”. The decorations over the doorway of the Cocom Palace represent birds, various pots of flowers and vines. The birds are emblems of the royal house and represent the Cocom totem, the kambul or pheasant. In Willard’s day, the entrance of the “palace” led into the post office, but when I first visited Sotuta in 1982 it was marked “*carnicería*” or butcher shop. At the time several of the original interior walls were still standing, featuring stucco representations of birds. According to a wall plaque on the left-hand side, it now (2002) houses a Marianist seminary. Photograph by Ruth Gubler, 1982.

fig. 6: Detail (coat of arms) of the church of San Francisco in Sotuta (in which Nachi Cocom was ostensibly baptized). The church and large building or “barracks” occupy the sides of a great square. Photograph by Ruth Gubler, 1984.

